



IN THE NEWS

Bush: No settlement expansion

Meeting with Ariel Sharon, President Bush said Israel has a clear obligation not to expand West Bank settlements.

Bush concluded his meeting with the Israeli prime minister at Bush's Texas ranch Monday by repeating the U.S. position that facts on the ground, including major Israeli population centers in the West Bank, must be taken into account in final-status talks with the Palestinians.

However, he also repeated his insistence in recent days that Israel not expand settlements before those negotiations.

Bush also called on the Palestinians to fulfill their road-map obligations.

'Road map' has not started yet

Israel does not regard the "road map" peace plan as active, and therefore will not stop settlement activity yet, Israel's prime minister said.

"We are before the road map, not at the road map," Ariel Sharon said, referring to the U.S.-led plan.

"As long as the Palestinians do not take necessary steps, the road map is not under way."

Only when they do will Israel consider discussing road-map terms that call for a freeze in settlement building, Sharon said.

Sharon made the comments Monday afternoon after a meeting earlier that day with President Bush on Bush's Texas ranch.

Tanner named to head umbrella group

Harold Tanner, a former president of the American Jewish Committee, was nominated to head U.S. Jewry's most powerful umbrella group.

Tanner was nominated to head the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. Tanner headed the AJCommittee from 2001-2004.

If approved, Tanner would succeed James Tisch, who will complete his second one-year term on May 31.

WORLD REPORT

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Jewish leaders across the world fondly remember Pope John Paul II

By RUTH ELLEN GRUBER

NEW YORK (JTA) — The death of Pope John Paul II on April 2 triggered an unprecedented outpouring of tributes from Jews around the world.

Israel's president and a half-dozen Jewish officials from Europe, the United States and Latin America joined the millions of pilgrims who converged on Rome for his funeral. Synagogues offered special prayers in his honor, and leaders of Jewish organizations and local rabbis hailed him as a champion of Jewish-Catholic relations.

Some commentators went so far as to call him "the Jews' pope."

"With the passing of Pope John Paul II, we have lost the strongest advocate for reconciliation for the Jewish people in the history of the Vatican," Rabbi Marvin Hier, dean of the Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Center, declared in a statement.

Much of John Paul's legacy has been enshrined in official church doctrine. But as the College of Cardinals prepared to begin secret deliberations next week to choose a successor, the question remained to what extent John Paul's exceptionally proactive policy regarding Jews would endure.

"It seems unlikely that the next pope will have the same interest in the church's relations with the Jews, and the same sense of responsibility in combating Christian anti-Semitism," professor David Kertzer of Brown University, an expert on papal relations with the Jews, told JTA from Rome.

"John Paul II had an extraordinary biography for a high church official in his early relations with Jews, and of course lived

through an extraordinary moment in history," he said. Born Karol Wojtyla in Wadowice, Poland, John Paul II, who was 84, had Jewish friends and neighbors. He was an eyewitness to both the Holocaust and communism.

As a bishop, he took part in the Second Vatican Council, which modernized aspects of church practice and doctrine. In 1965, the council issued the *Nostra Aetate* declaration that condemned anti-Semitism and called for "mutual understanding and respect" between Catholics and Jews.

Elected pope in October 1978, John Paul made bettering Jewish-Catholic relations a cornerstone of his papacy. He repeatedly condemned anti-Semitism, commemorated the Holocaust and met with Jewish leaders and laymen. He also oversaw the establishment of diplomatic relations with the State of Israel.

In one of the most dramatic demonstrations of this effort, in 1986 John Paul crossed the Tiber River to visit the Great Synagogue in Rome, becoming the first pope to visit a Jewish house of worship. There he warmly embraced Rome's chief rabbi, Elio Toaff, and described Jews as the "elder brothers" of Christians.

"This pope in my opinion was probably the most important force for good understanding between faiths that existed in the last generation," World Jewish Congress chairman Israel Singer, who attended the pope's funeral, told JTA from Rome. "He was the most important person to turn around the relations between non-Jews and Jews, between Christians and Jews, between Catholics and Jews, and he was personally engaged in this process during his lifetime."

Against this background, observers consid-

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HEADLINES

■ Jewish leaders praise pope, look to future

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ered John Paul's decision to mention Toaff in his will to be highly significant, seeing it as an indication to his successor not to turn back from John Paul's path. Toaff and John Paul's longtime secretary were the only living people mentioned in the will.

"It is a significant and profound gesture for Jews," Toaff, who is now retired, told the Rome daily *La Repubblica*. "But I think it is also an indication to the Catholic world."

John Paul, he said, "wanted to indicate a road aimed at further destroying all the obstacles that have divided Jews and Christians through the centuries."

He said he hoped the next pope would uphold John Paul's legacy and "do even better."

But, he added, "it is unlikely that there will be someone else like him. Even if we are optimistic, I see many difficulties in finding a successor of his stature."

Much of John Paul's teachings about the Jews have been promulgated as church doctrine and thus technically are official church policy.

But even before John Paul died, there were indications that his policies had not been accepted unanimously among church leaders — or that they had trickled down to the world's 1.1 billion Catholics.

"The most important challenge for Catholic-Jewish relations is to take the historic changes in church teaching concerning Jews, Judaism and Israel from the Olympic heights down to the grass roots," Rabbi David Rosen, director of interreligious affairs for the American Jewish Committee, told JTA some time before John Paul died.

Indeed, Rosen said, "in many parts of

the world there are even bishops who are ignorant of the teachings on this subject, let alone the rank and file. Ignorance of this and the concomitant residual anti-Jewish attitudes still prevail in many parts of the Catholic world, and there is still an enormous job to do in this regard."

Not only that, he said, but "the younger generation of bishops who have not been through the period of the Shoah and were not part of the official transformation of Vatican II do not necessarily appreciate the historical as well as theological imperatives involved."

Brown University's Kertzer said he already had noted "backsliding in the last few years when the pope had become infirm and no longer really in control. There has clearly been an important reactionary movement within the church that resents much of the legacy of the Second Vatican Council, and with it the sense that the church has a historic problem with anti-Semitism."

At a January conference in Washington, for example, Cardinal Avery Dulles, a major Catholic theologian, affirmed the traditional belief that Christians will want "all men and women, Jewish and Gentile" to "benefit from Christ's teaching" and convert to Christianity.

Also, Kertzer said, "Even John Paul II was unwilling to criticize any of his papal predecessors, nor directly rebuke past versions of canon law. He was thus unwilling to fully come to terms with the church's institutional responsibility for anti-Semitism in the past. There is little likelihood at the

moment that this history will be seriously revisited by John Paul II's successor."

Nonetheless, Jewish leaders hope his legacy will prevail.

Rabbi Arthur Schneier of Manhattan's

Park East Synagogue, who attended the pope's funeral, said the unprecedented gathering of world leaders, religious representatives and faithful "really showed the capacity and the potential of a righteous person to be a magnet for pulling the world together."

Whoever was present at the funeral, he said, "would

just have to, in his memory, embrace a legacy of coexistence, a legacy of reconciliation."

Observers noted that in addition to mentioning Toaff in his will, John Paul also highlighted the Second Vatican Council in his testament. He called it a "great gift" to which the entire church and clergy was indebted, and a "great patrimony" he wished to entrust to future generations of Catholics.

"I hope that there is neither a slowing nor an inversion of the road that was opened by the Second Vatican Council and consolidated by John Paul II in the course of his pontificate," said Tullia Zevi, president of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities. "It was a pontificate characterized by a dialogue relationship with the Jewish world that was very satisfactory, and I hope that in the future this relationship could extend also to the other great monotheistic religion, Islam, and to the secular world." ■

(JTA Staff Writer Rachel Pomerance in New York contributed to this story.)

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Will Jewish 'miracle' help canonize pope?

NEW YORK (JTA) — Pope John Paul II's private secretary claims his late boss "miraculously" cured an American Jewish millionaire's brain tumor.

The Jewish man, who remains unnamed, told a friend that he had been diagnosed with an incurable tumor and had but three wishes left — to see the pope, to go to Jerusalem and to return home to die, according to the *Telegraph*, a British newspaper.

The friend's friend was the pope's secretary, Archbishop Stanislaw Dziwisz, who arranged the meeting; later, the man claims to have been diagnosed as tumor-free.

In order to be canonized as a saint a person must be credited with miracles, like this one, though they must be verifiable.

There is a popular movement to hurry John Paul through the canonization process.

Jewish groups silent on filibuster debate

By MATTHEW E. BERGER

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Could it be that some Jewish groups are taking the Bush administration mantra, “you’re either with us or against us,” too seriously?

Nearly two years after Jewish groups complained about restricted access for organizations that have taken policy positions against the White House, some Jewish organizations appear to have revamped their approach to advocacy, avoiding policy positions that go against the Republican leadership.

That approach has left other organizations frustrated.

“What makes you wonder about these things is when it’s not one or two issues, but time and time again you see the Jewish organizations pull back from their social-action agenda,” said Sammie Moshenberg, Washington director of the National Council for Jewish Women.

Without naming names, Moshenberg said several Jewish groups have been silent on issues on which they used to advocate, such as for women’s rights or against faith-based initiatives.

The problem has come to a head as some Jewish leaders look for allies in an effort to oppose the “nuclear option,” a Republican plan to remove the filibuster and force votes on judicial nominations.

Moshenberg and others have lobbied Jewish organizations for months, stressing that the makeup of the federal court system will affect rulings on issues they care about, such as abortion, gay rights and faith-based initiatives.

But some Jewish civil rights groups, including the Anti-Defamation League, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs and the American Jewish Congress, have not yet joined the fight on filibusters. So far, only a handful of groups, including the American Jewish Committee and the Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism, are actively campaigning against the filibuster proposal, along with a wide coalition of non-Jewish groups.

The organizations that have stayed away from the debate deny that it stems from political calculations.

Steven Freeman, ADL’s director of legal affairs, said the decision was consistent with the organization’s choice not to

get involved in judicial nominations. Marc Stern, counsel for the American Jewish Congress, said the organization’s board is discussing the issue, and had no further comment.

It’s not unusual for one or two organizations in the Jewish community to lead advocacy on a hot topic while others focus on different issues. But Jewish groups often sign on to the policy positions of their peers, demonstrating a broad front of Jewish opinion and strengthening the leaders’ case.

In the case of filibusters, however, many Jewish groups are choosing not to get involved.

Privately, professionals in Washington say they’re being instructed by their lay leaders to be more conservative with political capital, worried about angering the party that controls both the White House and Congress.

“I think for some of these groups, there’s always a concern about going against the administration,” said Mark Pelavin, the RAC’s assistant director.

Access remains part of the calculus. Jewish groups pay close attention to which leaders are invited each year to the White House’s Chanukah party, and who represents the administration at Jewish organizational events.

Good relations with the Republican Party also mean a better chance that key Congressional leaders will co-sponsor legislation close to a group’s heart, which is essential for gaining visibility for legislation and getting a hearing or vote.

The filibuster has been a complex question for Jewish groups. Some have determined that fighting for the filibuster is in keeping with their civil rights and pro-choice message. Others, like the AJ-Committee, have based their support on preserving tools that protect the voice of the minority.

“We’re not taking a position on a spe-

cific nomination,” said Richard Foltin, the AJ-Committee’s legislative director. “Our commitment here is to the process.”

Groups staying away from the fight say

it’s similar to judicial nominations, which they traditionally have avoided. And supporting filibusters could even be viewed as flip-flopping, some said, because Jewish groups sought to end the filibuster when it was used to stall civil-rights legislation decades ago.

Jeff Ballabon, president of the fledgling Center for Jewish Values, spoke Thursday in Washington at

a rally against the filibuster. “The act of filibustering judicial nominees is a subversion of the Constitution,” Ballabon told JTA. But no major Jewish group is backing an end to the filibuster.

Some Jewish groups point to the discussions behind the scenes at the JCPA plenum last month as evidence of changing tactics.

Moshenberg took to the floor at the resolutions session, claiming she had been prevented from bringing a motion about the “nuclear option.”

She said JCPA leaders told her that major participants felt uncomfortable taking a stand on the issue, and leaders told her the future of JCPA was dependent on the issue not being broached.

“The JCPA leadership was very concerned about this coming up right now,” said Pelavin, a plenum participant. “They were worried it would rile waters that they want to calm right now.”

Ethan Felson, JCPA’s assistant executive director, said the organization did not debate the issue because a proposed resolution from the National Council of Jewish Women didn’t go through proper channels.

Felson said JCPA has not taken a position on the filibuster because a consensus has not been reached among the group’s members and the issues have not been thoroughly debated.

‘What makes you wonder about these things is when it’s not one or two issues, but time and time again you see the Jewish organizations pull back from their social-action agenda.’

Sammie Moshenberg

Director, National Council for Jewish Women

**FOCUS
ON
ISSUES**

NEWS IN BRIEF

NORTH AMERICA

Americans support withdrawal

Americans strongly support Israel and view the Gaza Strip withdrawal favorably, according to a new survey.

Released Monday by the Anti-Defamation League, the poll shows that 42 percent of Americans sympathize with Israel, compared with 13 percent that sympathize with the Palestinians.

At 43 percent, the Israeli government's favorable rating is at its highest level in more than a decade.

Nearly three-fourths of Americans think Israel is serious about peace, and 64 percent think the Palestinians are serious, according to the survey of some 1,600 American adults conducted last month.

In another survey released Monday, Hebrew University sociologist Steven M. Cohen found that some 62 percent of American Jews support Israel's plan to withdraw from Gaza and some West Bank settlements, according to a phone survey conducted last week.

In the context of a peace agreement, 41 percent said Israel should withdraw from most Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

Israeli right-winger visits U.S.

An Israeli politician traveled to the United States to campaign against the government's Gaza withdrawal plan.

Benny Elon, whom Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon threw out of his Cabinet for opposing the plan, will travel across the United States this week.

He also will meet with members of Congress and with Jewish and Christian leaders.

MIDDLE EAST

Farewell to arms

Israel intends to disarm Gaza Strip and West Bank settlers slated for evacuation.

Under the plan approved this week, police will confiscate Gaza settlers' firearms a day before they are relocated as part of withdrawals set to begin July 20.

Residents of four West Bank settlements to be evacuated will be expected to disarm two weeks in advance, as they are widely perceived as more politically extreme and likely to resort to violence if they resist the withdrawals.

In carrying out the evacuations, Israel plans to send in unarmed soldiers, and to resort to paramilitary police only if settlers put up a fight.

Iranian leader denies greeting

Iran's president denied that he shook hands with Israel's president at Pope John Paul II's funeral.

"This claim is baseless, like other Zionist claims of the past," Mohammed Khatami told the IRNA news service Saturday.

The handshake at last Friday's funeral was widely reported in Western media, including The New York Times.

For his part, Moshe Katsav told Israel's Channel Two television that the handshake stemmed from politeness and did not represent a policy shift.

Skies under fire

Egypt arrested a Palestinian for smuggling anti-aircraft missiles into the Gaza Strip.

Israeli security sources confirmed a Ha'aretz report Monday that the smuggler was in Egyptian custody after being caught in Sinai, but there was no word on how many SA-7 missiles he managed to get into Gaza.

According to Ha'aretz, Palestinian terrorists in Gaza are believed to have at least one of the shoulder-fired missiles, which could threaten Israeli helicopters and other low-flying aircraft.

Sharon, Sharansky make Time list

Ariel Sharon and Natan Sharansky made Time's list of the 100 most important people in the world.

In the category of Leaders and Revolutionaries, the latest edition of the prestigious magazine named President Bush first, followed by the Israeli prime minister in 18th place — two notches below Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

Sharansky, Israel's minister for Diaspora affairs, whose book "The Case for Democracy" Bush has touted, was 11th out of 16 notables in the Scientists and Thinkers category.

WORLD

Mayors visit Israel

Some 70 mayors from around the world are meeting in Israel.

The mayors on the weeklong visit, which began Sunday, met with Israeli President Moshe Katsav and Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom.

They also will meet with their Israeli counterparts and discuss how Israel deals with political, economic and social issues, and will visit sites holy to Judaism, Islam and Christianity.

The project was organized by the American Jewish Congress-Council for World Jewry and the municipality of Jerusalem.

The AJCongress' new overseas partners, the Federation of Jewish Communities of the Former Soviet Union and the Union of French Jewish Employers and Professionals, helped as well.

Museum marks anniversary of liberation

A new museum was opened on the site of the Mittelbau-Dora concentration camp in Germany to mark the 60th anniversary of its liberation.

Warren Miller, chairman of the U.S. Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad, said the museum would be part of a "never-ending obligation to truthfully remember what happened and to honor the memory of the victims of National Socialism who suffered and died in places like Dora."

The U.S. commission helped develop a site model of the concentration camp in front of the museum.

Kabbalist blesses royals

Prince Charles got a Jewish good-luck charm for his wedding from the wife of Israel's foreign minister.

Judy Shalom-Nir-Mozes, who accompanied Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom to the funeral of Pope John Paul II, said Monday she used the opportunity to bestow on Charles a golden amulet with a Hebrew prayer that had been blessed by an Israeli kabbalist.

"Prince Charles was very charming about it, not at all the drip that Israelis assume he is," Shalom-Nir-Mozes told Army Radio.

At the Vatican for last Friday's funeral, Shalom-Nir-Mozes also found time to appear in a photograph with Syrian President Bashar Assad, Israel's archenemy.

British politician pelted at service

Eggs and vegetables were thrown at a black Jewish politician at a service for Jewish war dead in Britain.

It wasn't clear who threw the items at Oona King at Sunday's event in London, though she has come under intense criticism in a Muslim district for her support of the war in Iraq.

The service commemorated the 1945 Hughes Mansions disaster when 134 people, most of them Jewish, were killed by a missile landing on London.

King is the daughter of a black mother and a Jewish father.