

IN THE NEWS

Sharon, Cheney discuss differences

Ariel Sharon met with Vice President Dick Cheney to follow up on Sharon's summit with President Bush.

Cheney and the Israeli prime minister met Tuesday in Washington, a day after the summit at Bush's Texas ranch, when differences emerged between Israel and the United States over Israeli settlement expansion and the U.S.-driven "road map" peace plan.

Sharon and Cheney also discussed Israel's plan to leave the Gaza Strip this summer.

Sharon also was to meet with the congressional leadership; Jewish members of Congress; and Paul Wolfowitz, the newly confirmed president of the World Bank. Sharon wants the World Bank to help ease Gaza Palestinians into self-rule.

Sharon to meet U.S. Jewish leaders

Ariel Sharon will meet Wednesday with U.S. Jewish leaders.

The Israeli prime minister is scheduled to meet in Washington with members of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, two days after his summit with President Bush at Bush's Crawford ranch.

Mormons again vow to stop baptizing Jews

Mormon church leaders again agreed to end the church's practice of posthumously baptizing Holocaust victims and other Jews.

The pledge came at a meeting Monday in Salt Lake City, when a delegation of five Jews also agreed with a group of leaders from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to establish a committee to explore issues related to the practice, known as proxy baptism.

In May 1995, the Mormons agreed to end the practice, but some members of the church have since resumed the practice.

WORLD REPORT

PUBLISHED WEEKDAYS BY JTA—THE GLOBAL NEWS SERVICE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE · WWW.JTA.ORG

Grim faces, tense words show that summit didn't bridge Israel-U.S. gaps

By RON KAMPEAS

CRAWFORD, Texas (JTA) — As photos go, this one didn't develop quite as expected.

The meeting Monday between Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and President Bush at Bush's vast Texas ranch was to have affirmed the special U.S.-Israel relationship and paved the way forward in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, a triumphant summit between two friends, farmers and statesmen.

Instead, what emerged between the tense lines the two men delivered as a stiff Texas breeze ruffled their scripts were profound differences over how Sharon and Bush perceive Israeli and Palestinian obligations and the future of the peace process.

Bush made his position clear: Israel's settlement expansion in the West Bank must stop.

"I told the prime minister of my concern that Israel not undertake any activity that contravenes 'road map' obligations or prejudices final-status negotiations," Bush said, referring to the "road map" peace plan his administration launched three years ago. "Therefore, Israel should remove unauthorized outposts and meet its road map obligations regarding settlements in the West Bank."

That was just the first of three emphatic calls by Bush to end settlement expansion.

Just as emphatically, Sharon reserved the right to build in major settlements that Israel plans to keep in any final agreement.

"It is the Israeli position that the major Israeli population centers will remain in

Israel's hands under any future final-status agreement, with all related consequences," Sharon said.

The only thing keeping a lid on the tensions was the joint commitment to the success of Sharon's planned evacuation of settlements in the Gaza Strip and part of the West Bank, scheduled to begin July 20.

Bush urged Israelis and Palestinians to coordinate the pullout.

"By working together, Israelis and Palestinians can lay the groundwork for a peaceful transition," he said.

At the heart of the dispute were conflicting visions of the road map. Bush sees it as under way; Sharon believes the plan will go into effect only when the Palestinian Authority meets its initial obligations to eradicate terrorism, dismantle terrorist groups and end anti-Israel incitement.

Until that happens, he made clear, Israel will not begin considering its settlement obligations under the plan.

"Only after the Palestinians fulfill their obligations, primarily a real fight against terrorism and the dismantling of its infrastructure, can we proceed toward negotiations based on the road map," Sharon said.

Sharon was even more emphatic later, in a meeting with Hebrew-speaking reporters.

"We are not at the road map, we are before the road map," he said. "As long as the Palestinians don't take the necessary steps, the road map is not under way."

Sharon acknowledged that P.A. President Mahmoud Abbas has made some progress in maintaining quiet since his January

Continued on page 2

NEWS
ANALYSIS

■ Summit doesn't bridge gap between the U.S. and Israel

Continued from page 1

election, but argued that Israel has no simultaneous obligations — at least when it comes to settlements, which Sharon believes should be addressed only in the final stage of negotiations.

Sharon recalled Israel's historic commitment to settlement building, a commitment he helped advance as a minister during the rapid settlement expansion in the first Menachem Begin government, from 1977 to 1981. The United States, he said, historically opposed the settlements, but Israel forged ahead because of its strategic interests; the bilateral relationship never suffered.

The history lesson was Sharon's way of chiding Israeli reporters who asked whether his tense joint appearance with Bush was evidence of a "crisis."

Even if there were a crisis, Sharon said, "not every crisis needs to lead to a revolution of the soul."

Translation: Ariel Sharon, the visionary of the settlement movement, hadn't given up on his dreams of expanding Israel's narrow waist and offering the country a bit of strategic depth.

Sharon followed his day at the ranch with two in Washington. He met Vice President Dick Cheney for lunch Tuesday and had scheduled meetings with congressional leaders, the congressional Jewish caucus and World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz later in the day. Sharon wants the World Bank to help shepherd the Palestinians to economic self-governance. On Wednesday, Sharon was to meet

with the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

It was clear even before it began that there would be tensions, and the visit might not go as well as originally had been expected. Sharon spent Sunday night at a hotel in Waco, 30 miles away, while virtually every other world leader accorded the privilege of an overnight stay in central Texas has slept in the Crawford ranch's guest house.

A preparatory meeting Sunday night between Sharon, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Stephen Hadley, Bush's national security adviser, at a dimly lit Waco bar-and-rib joint, stretched to two hours as Secret Service agents kept locals seeking refreshments at bay. Participants finally emerged grim-faced.

The grim looks reappeared when the negotiators stood outside Bush's office building, watching the two leaders deliver their statements. Almost all of the negotiators adhered to a White House-imposed dress code meant to suggest unanimity — dark blue jacket, open-necked shirts the color of the Texas bluebonnets dotting the Bush ranch, and khaki trousers — but the Israelis stood to one side, the Americans to the other.

Hadley is to visit Israel next week to resume the conversation.

Bush got no relief on the specific issue that helped precipitate the recent tension: Israel's decision to add 3,500 apartments in Ma'aleh Adumim, a major West Bank settlement and Jerusalem bedroom community that Israel intends to keep in any final peace agreement.

The development would choke off a major north-south West Bank artery. Palestinians claim this would affect the territorial contiguity of the state they hope to build, something Bush regards as critical to the success of the peace process.

Sharon turned the contiguity question around.

"We are very much interested that it will be contiguity between Ma'aleh Adumim and Jerusalem," he said, standing alongside Bush.

There were areas of substantial agreement: Bush restated his historic concession, made last year, that Israel's major settlements are "facts on the ground" that must be taken into account in any final peace deal.

He also agreed to consider U.S. assistance in developing the Negev and Galilee, regions of Israel that are expected to absorb thousands of evacuated settlers. A senior Israeli Treasury official is to visit Washington

next week to discuss the parameters of such assistance.

Bush is biding his time until the Gaza withdrawal. Sharon laughingly told Israeli reporters that U.S. admonishments about settlement expansion took the mild parental tone of "we'll discuss this later."

In his recent dealings with the United States, Sharon repeatedly has stressed that he must placate a restive Israeli right wing before the settlement evacuation this summer. He spoke Monday of a "civil-war atmosphere" in Israel.

That's something Bush appreciates, but he has his own political constraints. Bush is trying to mend alliances with Europe and the Arab world that were fractured by the Iraq war, and he believes that substantial progress on the Israeli-Palestinian front would heal many wounds. Bush also believes that the death last year of Abbas' predecessor, Yasser Arafat, removed the principle obstacle to progress.

Rice followed up the summit with phone calls to Abbas, as well European and Arab foreign ministers.

Bush expects Sharon to change his mind once the trauma of evacuating Gaza is past. Delaying any Israeli action until the Palestinians have fulfilled all their commitments, he said, suggests "a rather pessimistic point of view."

He glanced over at Sharon and continued, "I just suspect that if there is success in Gaza, in other words, if there's a state that's emerging, the prime minister will have a different attitude about whether or not it makes sense to continue the process."

'Israel should remove unauthorized outposts and meet its road map obligations regarding settlements in the West Bank.'

President Bush

JTA
WORLD
REPORT

Howard E. Friedman
President

Mark J. Joffe
Executive Editor and Publisher

Lisa Hostein
Editor

Michael S. Arnold
Managing Editor

Lenore A. Silverstein
Finance and Administration Director

JTA WORLD REPORT is published five days a week, except holidays, by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Inc., 330 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001-5010. For more information about how to subscribe by e-mail, fax or regular mail, call (212) 643-1890, or visit our Web site at www.jta.org.
© JTA. Reproduction only with permission.

Tanner surprise choice to lead Council of Presidents

By RACHEL POMERANCE

NEW YORK (JTA) — The nomination of Harold Tanner as chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations came as a surprise to many following the process.

A past president of the American Jewish Committee, Tanner was less public than other candidates had been about his desire to chair the leadership body of American Jewish organizations, which includes 52 American Jewish groups.

The umbrella body for Jewish organizations represents American Jewry in lobbying policymakers worldwide. The chairman is the group's official face, shuttling around the world to promote Israel's strength and security and combat anti-Semitism.

The Forward had identified the leading candidates as Joel Kaplan, president of B'nai B'rith International; Jack Rosen, chairman of the American Jewish Congress; Vernon Kurtz, past president of the Rabbinical Assembly, the Conservative movement's association of rabbis; and Eugene Ribakoff, president of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

But members of the conference's nominating committee said Tanner, the head of a Manhattan investment banking company, had been on the short list of top candidates for a long time; he just hadn't been campaigning.

Still, the nomination, announced April 7, has raised some eyebrows. Some Jewish officials feel the nomination was never vetted; others say they don't know who Tanner is.

Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, said member organizations typically are consulted about candidates to head the Presidents Conference.

"We are significant players in the conference, and to find out about" Tanner's nomination from a journalist "is, I think, inappropriate," Foxman said.

"In this case, we lucked out because Harold Tanner is an experienced Jewish leader who has had experience leading a significant Jewish organization, but it could have not been successful," Foxman said. "It could have been somebody's friend."

Malcolm Hoenlein, the Presidents Conference's executive vice chairman, said the process was run with the deepest integrity. The seven-member nominating

committee, for which Hoenlein served only as a resource, was composed of a cross section of people from all sides of the political and religious spectrum, he said.

"Nobody has a right to complain about the process," Hoenlein said.

The committee announced its unanimous recommendation that Tanner succeed James Tisch, whose term ends May 31. The nomination will be submitted to the Presidents Conference for a vote at its next meeting, on May 3. Tanner was traveling and unavailable for comment.

"We're going to have to have somebody who can present the interests of and the views of this community and provide leadership to the community" at a critical time in the U.S.-Israel relationship, said Mortimer Zuckerman, a past chairman of the Presidents Conference and chairman of its nominating committee.

The nomination comes as the Presidents Conference struggles to reach consensus. Several member groups feel the umbrella body is polarized.

Left-leaning organizations long have charged that the conference skews to the right. Those accusations surfaced again last fall, when the ADL accused the Presidents Conference of being insufficiently supportive of Israel's Gaza withdrawal plan.

During a winter mission in Israel, the Presidents Conference publicly endorsed the disengagement plan.

Several observers believe Tanner is a politic choice, because he will help mend rifts between member groups.

"He's a centrist," said Shula Bahat, associate executive director of the American Jewish Committee. Bahat characterized Tanner as an open-minded team player with connections to leaders worldwide, including the heads of Arab states.

But Tanner is a stranger to other members of the conference.

"Who is Tanner?" asked Morton Klein, national president of the Zionist Organization of America. "I am rather perplexed

that someone who has not been active and visible in the conference is the person who was chosen."

"I don't know his views on anything because I've never heard him say a single thing at any of the meetings," said Klein, who argued that the candidates should address the entire conference before the nominating committee makes its choice.

Others agreed.

"I don't know who he is, and I think that will be the question," said Avram Lyon, executive director of the Jewish Labor Committee.

But Betty Ehrenberg, director of international affairs and communal relations at the Orthodox Union, described Tanner as "deeply involved in the conference."

"I think it's a very wise choice of leadership," she said. "He has been active on the international scene for a long time. He's very intelligent, and his experience as a leader in this community has been long-term."

Tanner is chairman of the AJCommittee's Transatlantic Institute and a member of the UJA-Federation of New York's strategic planning committee.

He also is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and has served as chairman of Cornell University's board of trustees.

According to the Presidents Conference, he has close ties to U.S. and Israeli officials.

Jerry Goodman, executive director of the National Committee for Labor Israel, thinks Tanner can help bridge divisions within the conference.

"I think he brings a calming effect, while at the same time he is a strong leader," Goodman said.

And because Tanner didn't seem to campaign for the job, he won't be beholden to anyone, he added.

Rabbi Stanley Davids, president of the Association of Reform Zionists of America and a member of the nominating committee, said, "We just felt unanimously that he had the skills, the presence, the intelligence, to carry the Conference of Presidents through what is projected to be a very difficult time for the State of Israel." ■

'I think he brings a calming effect, while at the same time he is a strong leader.'

Jerry Goodman

Executive Director of the National Committee for Labor Israel

BEHIND
THE
HEADLINES

NEWS IN BRIEF

MIDDLE EAST

Rice calls Arab, European leaders

Condoleezza Rice followed up a U.S.-Israel summit with calls to Arab and European leaders.

The U.S. secretary of state spoke Tuesday to Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, as well as Jordanian, German and Russian foreign ministers.

Differences emerged Monday at a summit between President Bush and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon at Bush's Texas ranch over Israel's plans to expand a major settlement next to Jerusalem, but both sides remained committed to Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and northern West Bank.

Settlements vs. schools

Activists believed to be opposed to Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip blocked entrances to 40 schools in Israel.

Pupils in Tel Aviv, Ramat Gan, Bat Yam and Holon arrived for class Tuesday only to find that the front gates of their schools had been chained shut.

In some cases, notes were left condemning the planned Israeli withdrawals from Gaza and northern West Bank.

Police cut the chains and launched an investigation.

Jewish extremist under house arrest

Israel placed a Jewish extremist under house arrest until after the Gaza Strip withdrawal.

The order, issued Tuesday, extends a curfew on Noam Federman, a member of the outlawed group Kach, that prevents him from leaving his home at night.

It is believed to be the first such curfew issued in preparation for the withdrawal from Gaza, slated to begin in July.

Israel's unfriendly skies

Hezbollah flew a spy drone over northern Israel. The Lebanese militia announced the secret foray Monday, saying one of its Mirsar-1 drones had circled over 18 communities in northern Israel before returning safely over the border.

The Israel Air Force scrambled jets to intercept the intruder, but too late.

It was the second such infiltration by Hezbollah, which said it was retaliating for Israeli overflights in Lebanon.

In November, another drone entered northern Israel but then crashed into the sea.

NORTH AMERICA

New analysis revises '04 Jewish vote

A new analysis suggests that Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.) garnered 77 percent of the Jewish vote in last November's presidential election.

The report, released by the Solomon Project, an organization associated with the National Jewish Democratic Council, combines national exit polls released shortly after the election with state results, which were not widely released.

Previous reports had suggested Kerry received 75 percent of the Jewish vote, compared to 25 percent for President Bush.

The report also found that Republicans have made gains among Jewish men and among those who attend synagogue on a regular basis, particularly the Orthodox.

Jews speak out against immigration reform

Jewish groups joined an interfaith effort to oppose proposed immigration reforms.

David Saperstein, director of the Religious Action Center for

Reform Judaism, said the REAL ID Act, which passed the U.S. House of Representatives, raises extra hurdles for asylum seekers.

"By punishing those seeking asylum — often the very people resisting the regimes that mean us harm — we endanger the lives of those whom our country should protect," he said at a congressional rally Tuesday.

The American Jewish Committee and Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society joined an interfaith opposition to the bill that included Lutheran and Southern Baptist leaders.

The REAL ID Act has been included as part of the emergency supplemental appropriation bill in the House.

The bill is being debated in the U.S. Senate this week, and could be added as an amendment or included in a final version of the legislation.

U.S. official to Arabs: Track terrorism finance

A top U.S. official urged Arab nations to expand intelligence operations against terrorist financiers.

Daniel Glaser, a U.S. Treasury Department official who deals with terrorism financing, addressed the first meeting of the 14-member Middle East North Africa Financial Action Task Force on Tuesday in Bahrain.

Arab leaders say they have eliminated 90 percent of such funding, but Glaser suggested that each nation set up dedicated financial intelligence units.

Down to business

A delegation of top Jewish businesswomen from New York is in Israel to meet their Israeli counterparts.

The group, members of the Women's Executive Circle of New York, arrived in Israel on Sunday for a five-day trip sponsored by the UJA-Federation of New York.

They are meeting Israeli businesswomen and Israeli banking officials and visiting a project that provides mentors for women in Jerusalem who want to start small businesses.

Their host is Lion of Judah-Israel, part of the worldwide network of Lion of Judah, which encompasses 15,000 Jewish women from North America and around the world and initiates, promotes and supports projects for the advancement of women.

WORLD

Yad Vashem honors former Nazi

A German military officer who was known as the "Nazi who saved Jews" was honored Monday by Yad Vashem.

Maj. Karl Plagge was named a Righteous Gentile in the posthumous ceremony at the Jerusalem Holocaust Memorial for saving hundreds of Jews during World War II, the Associated Press reported.

Plagge served as a Nazi officer in Lithuania from 1941 to 1944.

He reportedly took advantage of his position in charge of a factory to employ unqualified Jews to save them from deportation, and warned his workers in June 1944 that German troops were approaching.

Johann-Dietrich Worner, president of the Technical University of Darmstadt, accepted the award on behalf of Plagge, a graduate of the university who died in 1957 without surviving relatives.

German state bans neo-Nazi groups

A German state banned two neo-Nazi organizations.

On Tuesday, the eastern German state of Brandenburg banned Hauptvolk and Sturm 2, the Associated Press reported.

Jewish films part of Buenos Aires fest

The Buenos Aires Independent Film Festival now has a Jewish section.

Seven films on Jewish topics from the United States, Germany, France, Sweden and Argentina are being shown as part of the seventh annual festival, which started Tuesday.