

**IN THE NEWS**
**PLC approves  
 Hamas government**

The Palestinian Legislative Council overwhelmingly approved Hamas' Cabinet.

Legislators chanted "God is Great" on Tuesday after the 71-36 vote in Gaza City.

The United States, Israel and Europe have pledged to shun a Hamas-led Palestinian Authority until the group renounces terrorism and recognizes Israel, but Western assistance has continued since the Jan. 25 legislative elections that the terrorist group won.

With Hamas now in power, donor nations are expected to look for ways to give money to the Palestinians while circumventing Hamas, possibly through P.A. President Mahmoud Abbas, a relative moderate.

**Bush names Bolten  
 to be chief of staff**

President Bush appointed Josh Bolten as his new chief of staff.

Bolten, 51, replaces Andrew Card.

He is the second Jew to serve as White House chief of staff, following Ken Duberstein, who filled the position during the Reagan administration.

Bolten, 51, has been director of the Office of Management and Budget for three years.

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**Weinberger, who sent  
 Pollard to jail, is dead**

Caspar Weinberger, the Reagan-era defense secretary whose intervention in Jonathan Pollard's case led to a life sentence for Pollard, died at 88.

Pollard, a U.S. Navy analyst who pleaded guilty to spying for Israel, reached a deal with the prosecution that would have spared him a life sentence.

However, Weinberger intervened with a confidential memo to the judge, who sentenced Pollard to life in 1987.

**[Story, Pg. 3]**

# WORLD REPORT

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

## Kadima and Olmert win election, look to coalition with Labor, others

By LESLIE SUSSER

**J**ERUSALEM (JTA) — A major shift in Israeli politics was cemented this week, with Ehud Olmert's centrist Kadima Party poised to form the next government.

The party didn't fare as well as expected in Tuesday's elections, but Olmert is likely to be able to form a solid majority in the Knesset, allowing him to move ahead with his stated intention of further withdrawal from the West Bank.

The elections, the first since Ariel Sharon's abrupt departure from the Israeli political scene, were seen in large part as a referendum on the withdrawal proposal.

As is often the case in Israeli politics, there were surprises.

The biggest were Kadima's weaker-than-expected showing; the emergence of the hard-line Yisrael Beiteinu as the third-largest party, ahead of Likud; and the strong showing of a newcomer, the Pensioners party, which hadn't been expected to win any seats.

Exit polls Tuesday night gave the centrist Kadima 29 to 31 seats, the left-tending Labor 20 to 22 seats and the right-wing Likud Party 11 to 12 seats.

Yisrael Beiteinu, which drew significant Russian support, garnered 12 to 14 seats, according to the exit polls.

Shas and United Torah Judaism, two fervently Orthodox parties, won 10 to 11 seats and five to six seats, respectively.

The Pensioners, led by 79-year-old former Mossad agent Rafi Eitan, appealed to senior citizens with its focus on benefits for the elderly and won six to eight seats.

Arab parties won seven to eight seats.

Voter turnout was 63 percent, by far the

lowest in Israel's history.

Most significantly, the center-left parties — Kadima, Labor, the Pensioners, Meretz and the Arab lists — together have around 70 seats in the 120-member Knesset.

That means that the right wing and religious bloc — Likud, Yisrael Beiteinu, National Union-National Religious Party, Shas and United Torah Judaism — have only 50 seats between them, 10 less than they needed to stop Olmert from forming the next government.

So how did Kadima win?

For one, Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu's scare tactics — raising the specter of an Iranian-supported, fundamentalist, Hamas-led Palestinian entity on Israel's doorstep — backfired. Those he frightened didn't necessarily see him as the leader best-equipped to deal with the threat, and many of them voted for parties further right, such as Yisrael Beiteinu.

Under the leadership of Avigdor Lieberman, who immigrated in 1978 from Moldova, Yisrael Beiteinu is a hawkish party with an immigrant-rights focus.

The party backs Olmert's proposed West Bank withdrawal in order to separate Israelis and Palestinians, but also proposes redrawing Israel's border to exclude large numbers of Israeli Arabs who live close to Palestinian areas.

Many other Israeli voters moved to the center, backing Olmert's plan for unilateral disengagement from the Palestinians as the most rational way of dealing with the threat from a Hamas-led Palestinian Authority.

Likud lost much of its traditional Sephardi working-class base to Labor, with its strong

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NEWS  
 ANALYSIS

## ■ To a large extent, the election served as a referendum on Olmert's withdrawal plan

*Continued from page 1*

socioeconomic message, but Labor lost even more of its middle-class Ashkenazi voters to Kadima and the Pensioners.

■  
If the exit poll numbers hold up, Olmert will be prime minister with wide coalition options.

He has made support for his plan to establish new borders between Israel and the Palestinians a condition for joining his coalition.

That rules out the hawkish National Union-National Religious Party and the Likud, and makes Labor the most natural coalition partner.

Around the Kadima-Labor core, Olmert will be able to choose one or more additional coalition partners from the Pensioners, Meretz, Yisrael Beiteinu, Shas and United Torah Judaism.

Ideally, he would like to achieve a balance between left and right and between secular and religious parties.

That would entail a broad-based coalition of 70-90 Knesset seats.

Whatever form the coalition eventually takes, Olmert will have a clear majority in the Knesset for his plan for separation from the Palestinians, which is likely to become the centerpiece of his new administration.

Because Olmert made his intentions crystal-clear before the elections, right-wing opponents of the plan won't be able to demand a referendum on the grounds that he misled the nation, as they did with Sharon's pullback from Gaza last year.

To a large extent, the election itself was

a referendum on the withdrawal plan. It calls for a large-scale Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and the establishment of permanent borders with the Palestinians within four years, by negotiation if possible and unilaterally if not.

The plan is certain to dominate the political agenda in the new Knesset's term.

The second major item in the government guidelines will be the administration's socioeconomic agenda.

As the price for bringing Labor into the government, Labor leader Amir Peretz will make a number of key socioeconomic demands, including raising the minimum wage from \$730 to \$1,000 a month, providing pensions for all and increasing the basket of subsidized medicines.

■  
The Pensioners will back him up, and Olmert will be forced to incorporate at least part of these demands in the government guidelines.

Both agendas, the political and the socioeconomic, are extremely ambitious. But how realistic are they?

To set new borders unilaterally, Olmert will need international, especially American, backing. It's by no means certain that the Bush administration will see eye-to-eye with him on where the new lines should be drawn.

The key American document on the territorial issue is the Bush letter of April 2004.

It refers to "already existing major Israeli population centers" being taken into account in setting permanent borders, but

doesn't specifically mention any of the large settlement blocs — Ariel, Etzion and parts of Jerusalem — that Olmert wants to keep.

Moreover, the American position is that permanent borders should be the product of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, and it's difficult to see Washington recognizing borders that Israel sets unilaterally.

Olmert argues that with Hamas in power on the Palestinian side, Washington is likely to be more receptive to Israeli ideas on the border issue.

■  
To implement a Peretz-style socioeconomic package, Olmert will have to

approve increased government spending.

The trick will be to do that without impeding the impressive economic growth of the past few years — which was achieved, in large part, through fiscal austerity.

Much will depend on Olmert's diplomatic initiative on the Palestinian track.

If it leads to a prolonged cease-fire, that will help Israel's growth prospects — while, possibly, postponing conflict until a future time. It also will make it easier for the government to cut the defense budget and release funds for social spending.

The bottom line: Though Kadima did worse than expected, Olmert will be able to form a stable coalition and will not have to shelve any of his major policy goals.

But his personal prestige has been compromised by the party's relatively poor showing, and his first order of business will be to establish his leadership credentials.

The withdrawal plan is certain to dominate the political agenda in the new Knesset's term.

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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](http://www.jta.org).  
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## Torah cover finds home in Brooklyn

NEW YORK (JTA) — A Torah cover lost during the Holocaust was returned to family members Monday in Brooklyn.

The heirloom, looted in 1938, arrived after the Vienna City Council voted unanimously to transfer the item from the city's Jewish Museum to a Chasidic congregation in Brooklyn.

The 35 recipients who accepted the artifact were descendants of Miriam Wesel, who commissioned the cover before fleeing to the United States.

Wesel was among the founders of Congregation Adas Yereim, where the cover will be housed.

The New York State Banking Department's Holocaust Claims Processing Office facilitated the five-year negotiation process.

The commission was established by New York Gov. George Pataki in 1997 to help Holocaust survivors and their heirs recover assets that had been lost in the Holocaust.

# Bush's new Jewish chief of staff

By MATTHEW E. BERGER

WASHINGTON (JTA) — When Josh Bolten walked into his first meeting as a member of President Bush's Cabinet in the summer of 2003, he was asked to lead the president and the Cabinet in prayer. He chose to pray for the welfare of the American government, both in Hebrew and English, a sign of his strong Jewish identity.

Bolten was named Tuesday as Bush's second chief of staff. He succeeds Andrew Card, who served more than five years in the post. The move comes amid low approval ratings for the administration and calls from both parties for new leadership at the White House.

Bolten, 51, has been one of the senior Jewish officials in the White House through much of Bush's administration. Before this week's appointment, he served as director of the White House Office of Management and Budget, a Cabinet-rank position, and as a domestic policy adviser.

Colleagues and friends say Bolten has been vocal about his religion and willing to participate in Jewish events at the White House. He frequently has been seen at White House Chanukah candle lightings, and participated in a Megillah reading at the White House during Purim this year.

He also has been a quiet advocate for Jewish concerns, say Jewish organizational officials, sometimes bringing issues past the White House bureaucracy and straight to influential leaders, like Karl Rove, the president's deputy chief of staff and political adviser.

"Since the beginning of this administration, he has been a senior-level force for making sure the Jewish community had a voice at the very highest levels of the administration," said William Daroff, vice president for public policy at United Jewish Communities, the umbrella organization of the North American federation system.

"Josh Bolten as chief of staff to the president will open up great opportunities for the Jewish community to make sure we are heard," Daroff added.

However, several Jewish groups have complained in the past about the lack of White House access for liberal organizations that do not share the Bush administration's mind-set on issues such as the Iraq war and faith-based initiatives.

Bolten becomes the second Jew to serve as White House chief of staff.

Ken Duberstein served in that post under President Reagan. Republican Jewish leaders noted repeatedly Tuesday that no Democratic president had a Jewish chief of staff. The Clinton administration did, however, have several Jewish Cabinet members.

As chief of staff, Bolten remains a member of the president's Cabinet. Bolten was the first Jew appointed to Bush's Cabinet, but was later joined by Michael Chertoff, the secretary of homeland security.

Rabbi Levi Shemtov, Washington office director of American Friends of Lubavitch, called Bolten a "quintessential American Jewish public servant."

"He's a Jew who's constantly seeking to learn and understand more about the Jewish traditions," Shemtov said. "He's someone who identifies proudly with the Jewish people and is always there for the community."

Noam Neusner, a former White House Jewish liaison, served as Bolten's communications director at OMB and described his former boss as "brilliant."

"He's extremely genial and extremely

hard-working," Neusner said. "He's a great guy to know."

Bolten first began working for George W. Bush when he was campaigning for president in 1999. Laura Bush and others made sure barbecues for campaign staffers had vegetables on the grill for Bolten, while the rest ate barbecued pork, colleagues said.

Once at the White House, he would bring dreidels and chocolate gelt to senior staff meetings at Chanukah, and has a mezuzah on his White House door.

Bolten grew up in Washington. He received his bachelor's degree from Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs in 1976 and a law degree from Stanford University in 1980.

He served the senior George Bush administration as general counsel to the U.S. Trade Representative and in the White House as deputy assistant to the president for legislative affairs. He also served on Capitol Hill as trade counsel to the Senate Finance Committee.

Between the senior Bush and the current Bush administrations, Bolten was executive director of legal and government affairs at Goldman Sachs International in London.

BEHIND  
THE  
HEADLINES

Bolten was the  
first Jew appointed  
to Bush's Cabinet.

## Pollard nemesis Weinberger dies

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Caspar Weinberger, the former U.S. secretary of defense who pushed for a life sentence for Jonathan Pollard and oversaw U.S. forces in Lebanon, has died.

Weinberger led the Pentagon under President Reagan from 1981 to 1987. He died Tuesday in a Maine hospital at age 88.

Weinberger was best known for his entanglement in the Iran-Contra scandal, but he made headlines in the Jewish community when he pushed for a strict sentence against Jonathan Pollard, a U.S. Navy intelligence analyst who pled guilty in 1987 to spying for Israel.

Weinberger authored a 40-page, classified assessment of the damage Pollard's actions caused to U.S. interests. A four-page version, which was not classified, compared Pollard to other well-known spies.

In the unclassified version, Weinberger said it was difficult to conceive a greater harm to national security than what Pollard had caused. He said Pollard "both damaged and destroyed policies and national assets which have taken many years, great effort and enormous national resources to secure."

The statements were "a significant, if not the most significant factor in implementing the breach by the government in their agreement to not seek a life sentence against Jonathan Pollard," said Eliot Lauer, one of Pollard's attorneys.

Weinberger had a Jewish grandfather, but — given his surname — always stressed that he was not Jewish, according to "Jewish Power," a book on the relationship between American Jews and the U.S. government by J.J. Goldberg.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### MIDDLE EAST

#### West Bank gunman killed

Israeli soldiers killed a Palestinian gunman during a sweep of the West Bank.

The Palestinian, who was on Israel's wanted list, was shot dead Tuesday by commandos near Jenin.

His affiliation was not immediately clear. In Nablus, Israeli forces arrested four suspected terrorists.

Israel has stepped up sweeps of the West Bank following intelligence warnings that Islamic Jihad and the Al-Aksa Brigade planned attacks during Tuesday's Israeli elections.

#### Rocket dud kills two

Two Israelis died after accidentally detonating a dud Palestinian rocket.

Tuesday's fatalities, Bedouin shepherds, are believed to have been scouring for scrap metal in the Negev Desert when they came across the rocket, which had been fired from the Gaza Strip at an unknown date.

A third Bedouin, described in the media as a girl, was wounded. The Palestinian terrorist group Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the original rocket launch.

#### Saudi envoy welcomes Osirak attack

Israel's 1981 attack on Iraq's nuclear reactor was "probably" fortunate, Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Washington said.

Asked March 23 whether Saudis now welcomed the attack on the Osirak nuclear reactor, given Iraq's subsequent aggression against Kuwait, Turki al-Faisal answered, "Probably, yes."

Faisal appeared caught off guard by the question, which came when he called on Israel to disarm to create a nuclear-free Middle East.

"We all know that Israel has atomic weapons and that's why removing these threats from the Middle East on a uniform basis would serve Israel's purpose as well as the rest of the countries in the area," he said.

Israel's attack on Iraq was widely condemned at the time.

#### Documentary to screen in Mideast

A documentary about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will be shown to groups in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"Blood and Tears" will be screened at several locations during the end of April.

The widely praised film shows a "balanced and factually accurate look" at the conflict, according to the filmmakers.

More information is available at [www.concordmedia.com/bloodandtearsmovie](http://www.concordmedia.com/bloodandtearsmovie).

### NORTH AMERICA

#### Montreal school fights for Nazi-looted art

A university in Montreal is trying to recover a trove of Nazi-looted art.

Montreal's Concordia University, one of three educational institutions that inherited the holdings of the late European art collector Max Stern, is intensifying efforts to recover all of Stern's art stolen by the Nazis during the Holocaust.

Stern, who ran an art gallery in Dusseldorf in the 1930s, had his shop closed and his art seized by the Nazis.

He survived the Holocaust and ended up in Montreal after the war.

Concordia, McGill University and Hebrew University were

three of the beneficiaries of Stern's estate, but more than 400 of Stern's works of art were stolen by the Nazis.

So far, the Max Stern Art Restitution Project, in conjunction with the New York-based Holocaust Claims Processing Office, has recovered more than 40 works in public and private hands.

#### Prom clothes for Katrina teens

The United Jewish Communities is sending prom clothes to children in areas ravaged by Hurricane Katrina.

The umbrella group of the North American Jewish federation system sent more than 500 donated dresses and 400 donated tuxedos to teenagers in the region.

The UJC also raised \$28 million for Hurricane Katrina relief.

#### Trump 'fires' Orthodox Jew

One of the Orthodox Jewish contestants on "The Apprentice" was fired.

In an episode aired Monday night, Daniel Brody became the sixth contestant fired this season from Donald Trump's reality show.

Brody, 31, a clothing company owner who lives in New Milford, N.J., was fired after the team he was leading, Gold Rush, lost in a competition to produce an advertisement for Norwegian Cruise Line.

Brody earlier made news when, along with another Orthodox contestant, Lee Bienstock, he opted out of a task in order to observe Rosh Hashanah.

Bienstock remains on the show.

#### Passover food drives serve needy

Two New York agencies will run food drives for the needy this Passover.

The Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty and City Harvest will collect bread products discarded during Passover until April 11.

The items will be distributed to more than 500 social service agencies throughout New York.

The organizations also will conduct a kosher-for-Passover food campaign.

The items, meant to serve the 44,000 hungry Jews in New York who keep kosher on Passover, will be picked up until March 30.

### WORLD

#### Jewish books donated to Nigerian Jews

The Jewish Publication Society is distributing almost 3,000 pounds of Jewish books to a community in Nigeria that some consider Jewish.

The shipment for the Igbo Bnei Israel arrived in February and is being distributed in five Nigerian provinces.

The books include Hebrew-English Bibles, as well as English-language books on Jewish topics.

The donations are part of the JPS Mitzvah Project, which sends slightly damaged Jewish books to communities around the world.

The Nigerian program was coordinated with Rabbi Howard Gorin of Congregation Tikvat Israel of Rockville, Md., and with Kulanu, a grass-roots organization that helps underserved Jewish communities.

Upcoming projects will send books to the Abayudaya Jews of Uganda, and to schools in Haifa, as part of the Books for Israel Project.

The Igbo Bnei Israel's claim to Jewish status is not recognized by Israel, but is accepted by some international Jewish organizations.