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Israel penetrates end of holy tunnel

Palestinians attack police, Jewish worshippers over archaeological

JERUSALEM (AP) — Asserting control over sites holy to Jews and Muslims, Israel broke through the last stretch of an archaeological tunnel near the Al Aqsa Mosque compound on Tuesday, a move that prompted angry Palestinians to throw stones at police and Jewish worshippers.

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat denounced the tunnel work, carried out just after midnight under heavy police guard, as a "crime against our religious and holy places." The Al Aqsa Mosque is Islam's third holiest site.

Palestinians threw stones at Israeli police from the mosque compound, known in Arabic as Haram as-Sharif, or "noble enclosure." Jews saying prayers at the Western Wall below were briefly ordered by police to step back when stones started flying.

Arafat convened his Cabinet Tuesday evening, and later the Palestinian Authority called for strikes in Jerusalem on Wednesday morning, and protests in Palestinian territories in the afternoon.

Israel claimed the narrow pedestrian tunnel would be a boon to tourism because it links the Western Wall, Judaism's holiest site, to the Via Dolorosa, where Jesus was said to have walked before his crucifixion.

But the 12-year-old project was completed only on the personal orders of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who intended to send a message to the Palestinians that Israel is the only sovereign in Jerusalem.

While Israel maintains police control over the sites, it allows Islamic authorities full religious administration over the mosques.

"The government says, 'Hey guys, we are not playing games here,'" said Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert.

"We will not agree that everything that happens in Jerusalem will be subject to negotiations."

Haram as-Sharif is referred to by Jews as Temple Mount, site of the Jewish Temple destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D.

The mount houses the Al Aqsa and Dome of the Rock mosques. The Western Wall, the last remains of the Temple and Judaism's holiest site, runs along one side of the compound.

The Palestinians want to establish a future capital in east Jerusalem, the sector Israel captured from Jordan in the 1967 Mideast War. The Muslim shrines are in east Jerusalem.

Netanyahu has said he would never relinquish sovereignty over all of the city, and that its future was not negotiable — despite a promise by Israel's previous government to the Palestinians that the status of Jerusalem would be discussed in peace talks.

The tunnel starts to the left of the Western Wall plaza, the first 200 yards consisting of medieval and Roman halls on various levels.

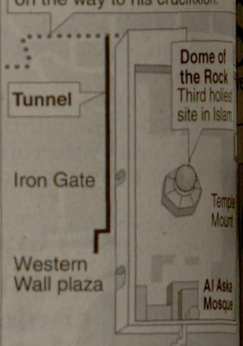
That is followed by a 300-yard-long, five-foot wide tunnel built by the Hasmonaeans about 2,200 years ago to channel water to the Temple Mount. At the end of the water tunnel, a few steps lead up to the Via Dolorosa.

Olmert said Israel's previous government and the Muslim clerics at Haram as-Sharif had reached a tacit understanding earlier this year that the Muslims would not oppose the tunnel opening if they, in turn, would be able to construct a new prayer area at Solomon's Stables inside the compound.

In an apparent attempt to soothe Palestinian tempers, Olmert said Tuesday that the new construction did not violate zoning regulations. This was a change from the city's position earlier this month, when it said the construction at Solomon's Stables was being done without a permit and must stop.

Historic tunnel

Via Dolorosa
Christians believe Jesus walked on the way to his crucifixion.



JERUSALEM



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Columnist



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Senior English major

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Withdrawal of Israeli troops sparks conflict

HEBRON, West Bank (AP) — Palestinians protesting Israel's overdue troop withdrawal from Hebron clashed today with soldiers, who beat demonstrators with rifle butts. Four protesters were hospitalized, officials said.

Hebron Mayor Mustafa Natche and Palestinian Cabinet Minister Hanan Ashrawi were shoved violently by soldiers on their way to the demonstration, Natche said.

"The mentality of the occupation is coming back, like there is no peace process," Natche said.

The struggle broke out after several hundred Palestinians gathered in front of the city's central marketplace for a march, chanting "No to Settlements! No to Occupation! Hebron is our city."

Soldiers ordered the marchers to disperse, and when they did not, the soldiers began shoving them.

The Palestinians responded by throwing vegetables. Soldiers then began hitting the protesters with their hands and rifle butts.

"There will be an explosion, and it is going to lead to a new inte-

fadah," said merchant Eid Ajouni, using the Arabic word for the Palestinian uprising of 1987-1993.

Several dozen of the 450 Jewish settlers who live in Hebron amid the city's 94,000 Palestinians came out to cheer the soldiers on, waving Israeli flags and shouting "This is Israeli land!" Some threw vegetables back at the Palestinians.

Israel was scheduled to pull out of most of Hebron in March, but the withdrawal was postponed after a series of suicide bombings inside Israel by Islamic militants.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has not set a date for the pullout, saying he wants to see arrangements to improve security for the settlers first.

Jaweh Saleh, Palestinian minister of agriculture, said that the demonstrations daily until the troop pullout is scheduled.

"The peace process is finished. Netanyahu destroyed it," he said. "Netanyahu is playing with fire and he's the first one whose people are going to be burned."

SPEAKERS

Continued from Page 1

Valdez said the experience made her realize people need to actively participate in organizations like MAPA.

"I decided it was the very last time I was going to sit there and let somebody treat me like nothing," Valdez said. "Everything I had accomplished, the Ph.D and all, meant nothing."

Theresa Vargas, a junior marketing major and president of the Hispanic Business Student Association, helped bring Navarro and Valdez to Texas A&M.

"It was a good opportunity to inform the local Hispanic area that by organization and cooperation you could form a political organization like MAPA," Navarro said. "It just takes time and dedication."

Armando Chavez, a junior finance major, said the speakers highlighted ideas that needed to be discussed.

"They (the speakers) were very good," he said. "They brought forth a lot of interesting ideas that we should put into work. They (the ideas) don't mean anything unless we put them to work."

The speakers were followed by a presentation of different dances by the Ballet Folkloricos Celestial.

GARAGE

Continued from Page 1

Available areas on Northside were unusable because of the number of buried utility lines that would be covered by a garage, he said.

The space becoming available with the destruction of Lawrence Puryear residence halls was also a consideration, Williams said, the desire was to keep the area for "green space."

"Rec Sports needs visitor parking," he said. "So we selected a location on 'fish lot.'"

The lot "had been due for renovation" Williams said, but officials did not want to spend a million dollars to repair the lot only to destroy it a few years later.

Gay said the architectural engineering firm Prozign Inc. has been hired by the University to draw the plans for the West Campus garage. The firm should have initial plans completed by spring.

"We're anticipating having something ready for the March meeting," he said.

**Golden Key
National Honors Society**

Attention Prospective Golden Key Members

**Golden Key Information Table
Location: MSC Corridor**

Times: September 25 and 26
10:00 am- 4:00 pm

Come by our table and pick up information about Golden Key. In addition, if you have any questions ask one of our officers at the table. Hope to see you there!!!!

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of The Texas A&M University System**

invites you to an
Open House

at the **Regent's Annex**
(located on the West side of the MSC, across from Cain Hall)

6 - 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, September 25, 1996

Refreshments will be served.

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