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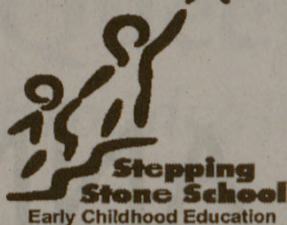
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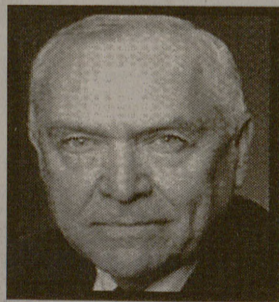
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Kirk defeats Morales

DALLAS (AP) — Democratic Party favorite Ron Kirk defeated schoolteacher Victor Morales Tuesday in a sizzling Senate runoff to decide who battles the Goliath GOP nominee in the fall.

With 97 percent of precincts reporting, Kirk had 350,584 votes, or 59 percent, and Morales had 244,558 votes, or 41 percent.

In the end, Kirk's money, party support and backing from several high-profile Hispanic leaders hoisted him to victory over Morales, a part-time campaigner who was grossly underfunded.

Kirk, the former mayor of Dallas, is the first black nominated in Texas for a U.S. Senate seat. "I feel great, absolutely relieved and exhausted," Kirk said after learning of his win.

Without conceding defeat, Morales told supporters at an Austin Mexican restaurant that he was glad he ran and had no regrets.

"In terms of feeling down or sad, you're going to have to look someplace else," Morales said, as he continued to bash the Democrats who backed Kirk. "I thoroughly, completely distrust the

Democrat Party leadership." Kirk's victory completes a diverse, state-wide ticket hand-picked by Democratic leaders to represent Texas' population.

"We are the true Texas, and we have the ability to make their dreams come true," Kirk said. "We are going to win from top to bottom."

Party leaders believe Kirk's nomination will bring national attention and money to the state against GOP nominee Texas Attorney General John Cornyn, while Morales would have been overmatched.

Still, Kirk had to battle hard in the neck-and-neck race against Morales, who reached victory status in 1996 by crisscrossing the state in a pickup truck in a bid to unseat Republican Sen. Phil Gramm, who is retiring.

Kirk now faces a grueling battle against Cornyn, who boasts President Bush's backing, deep war chest and the advantage of being a Republican in a state where Republicans have every statewide office.



Palestinians surrender to Israeli forces in the West Bank city of Nablus Tuesday.

Palestinians ambush Israeli soldiers in refugee camp

JENIN, West Bank (AP) — Palestinians ambushed Israeli troops in the cramped quarters of a West Bank refugee camp Tuesday, setting off a suicide bomb trap in a narrow alley and firing on soldiers in a courtyard, the military said. Thirteen Israelis were killed, the biggest blow to the army in its West Bank offensive.

The carefully planned double attack in the Jenin refugee camp also wounded nine Israeli soldiers. A military spokesman said a rapid series of blasts went off in the alley — one of them detonated by a suicide bomber — and collapsed part of a building on several soldiers.

Defying U.S. demands that Israel's 12-day-old campaign wrap up without delay, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon vowed "Operation Defensive Shield" will go on until it fulfills its mission — "the destruction of the infrastructure of the terror groups."

"This is a battle for survival of the Jewish people, for survival of the state of Israel," Sharon said on Israel TV.

There were signs, however, that U.S. efforts were having an effect. Earlier Tuesday, Israel pulled out of Tulkarem and

Qalqilya, two of six Palestinian towns it has occupied; troops remained in Nablus, Bethlehem, Jenin and Ramallah and several villages.

Secretary of State Colin Powell, due to arrive in Israel late Thursday, said he was optimistic his mission could bring a truce and lead to negotiations.

Speaking in Cairo, Powell said he would meet Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat as well as Sharon and said the United States was willing to deploy observers to monitor any cease-fire.



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