

Labor ousts Peretz in Israel

by UPI

JERUSALEM - Israel's Labor Party has ousted Amir Peretz as its leader, less than one year after his controversial role as defense minister in the 2006 war in Lebanon.

The outcome of Monday's primary election may suggest trouble for Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's governing coalition. A strong turnout among Labor's divided membership produced no clear winner, and a runoff election in two weeks is likely to choose the leader of Israel's second-largest parliamentary faction, The Washington Post reported.

Former Prime Minister Ehud Barak and former state security service Chief Ami Ayalon finished at the top of the five-person field, but no candidate received 40 percent of the vote -- setting up a second round of voting.

Ayalon has pledged to leave Olmert's coalition if he is elected to head the party. Barak has said he would work to replace Peretz but keep the government in place.

Copyright © 2007, by United Press International. All Rights Reserved.

Labor ousts Peretz in Israel by UPI