

# United States

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## National Affairs

**A**MERICANS, ISRAELIS, and Palestinians held elections during 2006, leaving a dramatically different cast of leaders by year's end. When all the ballots were counted in the U.S., a record number of Jews were among the winners.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict influenced all aspects of the American Jewish public-affairs agenda. Internationally, it impacted Jewish attitudes toward the war in Iraq, the prospect of a nuclear Iran, and even Jewish advocacy to end the genocide in Darfur. Domestically, ad hominem attacks on "the Israel lobby" had the ring of anti-Jewish conspiracy charges, and much of the Jewish interfaith encounter revolved around the positions of evangelical and mainline Protestants on Israel.

### THE POLITICAL ARENA

#### *Midterm Elections*

On Election Day 2006, Democrats swept into power in both houses of Congress, returning to full control after 12 years in political exile. In the House, Democrats gained 30 seats, sending 22 incumbent Republicans down to defeat. They would have a 17-vote majority in the 110th Congress. In the Senate, Democrats defeated six incumbent Republicans, increasing their own strength from 44 to 49. With the benefit of two independents opting to caucus with the Democrats, they would hold a 51-49 Senate majority.

Polls showed that the war in Iraq and the condition of the economy topped the list of issues motivating voters, displacing appeals to "values" that had spelled success for Republican candidates in recent elections. Amendments and referenda restricting marriage to heterosexual couples

were on the ballot in several states, but the issue seemed to be losing steam, going down to defeat in one state and passing in others by closer margins than in previous years. Pundits also suggested that swing voters and even part of the Republican base were turned off by an unpopular war and a series of scandals involving administration officials, congressional leaders, well-placed lobbyists, and an outspoken evangelical leader (see below).

Every Jewish member of Congress who sought reelection was successful. In all, 43 Jews were elected to the new Congress, all Democrats with the exception of the two independents in the Senate and three Republicans, one in the House and two in the Senate. A record 13 senators would be Jewish, including two newcomers, Ben Cardin (D., Md.) and Bernard Sanders (I., Vt.). Two incumbent senators, Dianne Feinstein (D., Calif.) and Herb Kohl (D., Wis.), were handily reelected.

In the House, newly elected Jews came not just from areas with high Jewish populations but also from states with few Jews, including Tennessee, Kentucky, and New Hampshire. Another Jew, Gary Trauner, narrowly lost his bid to replace Barbara Cubin (R., Wyo.) for Wyoming's at-large seat. The six new Jewish House members were Steve Cohen (D., Tenn.), Gabrielle Giffords (D., Ariz.), Paul Hodes (D., N.H.), Steve Kagen (D., Wis.), Ron Klein (D., Fla.), and John Yarmuth (D., Ky.).

Two Jewish Democrats were widely credited with doing much to aid their party's return to power. Charles Schumer (D., N.Y.) and Rahm Emanuel (D., Ill.) chaired, respectively, the Senate and House Democratic campaign committees. Meanwhile, the ranks of Jewish governors grew to three with Elliott Spitzer (D., N.Y.) joining the reelected Linda Lingle (R., Hawaii) and Ed Rendell (D., Pa.).

The new Congress included the first Muslim and the first two Buddhists. It would also witness the highest political rank ever achieved by a Mormon and a woman, with Harry Reid expected to become Senate majority leader and Nancy Pelosi speaker of the House. And for the first time, Congress would include more Jews than Episcopalians. Jews, just 2 percent of the population, would hold 7 percent of House seats and 13 percent of Senate seats.

To be sure, Episcopalians, Methodists, and Presbyterians together continued to hold a larger share of seats in Congress than pews in America. Albert Menendez, a researcher and writer who biennially tracked the religions of members of Congress, noted that those mainline Protestant denominations would account for 20 percent of the new Congress, four times their share of the general population—but down from the 43-per-

cent share the three denominations represented in the 1972 Congress. Among religious groups, the most notable electoral shift, according to John Green of the Pew Center for Religion and Public Life, was that Democrats garnered a majority of Catholic voters for the first time in many years.

The Jewish electorate remained unresponsive to a concerted campaign to get it to vote Republican, giving as much as 87 percent of Jewish votes to Democratic candidates. The 12 percent of Jews voting for Republicans was half the level of support given to President Bush in 2004, and a rebuke to the Republican Jewish Coalition, which had taken out numerous ads painting the Democratic Party as anti-Israel, weak on terrorism, and beholden to critics of Israel such as Jimmy Carter and antiwar activist Cindy Sheehan.

The largest segment of Jews to vote against a Democratic candidate lived in Connecticut, where Joseph Lieberman garnered just 60 percent of the Jewish vote in winning reelection. The three-term senator ran successfully as an Independent, having lost the Democratic primary to antiwar candidate Ned Lamont.

Pro-Israel campaign contributions bolstered several successful incumbent candidates including Lieberman, and aided challengers such as Sheldon Whitehouse (D., R.I.), who ousted Republican Lincoln Chaffee, considered cool towards Israel. However, significant pro-Israel campaign dollars did not stave off defeat for four Republican senators: Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania, Mike DeWine of Ohio, Conrad Burns of Montana, and James Talent of Missouri. In the House, one race that was closely watched and later celebrated by friends of Israel was in southwest Indiana, where six-term incumbent John Hostettler, a Republican, went down to a crushing 20-point defeat at the hands of a local sheriff, Democrat Brad Ellsworth.

On Election Day, the residents of Somerville, Massachusetts, handily defeated a hard-fought, multiyear, pro-Palestinian effort to pass two non-binding resolutions. The first, affirming the so-called Palestinian "right of return," was defeated by 55 to 45 percent. The second, calling for divestment from Israel, failed by 70 to 30 percent. A broad coalition led by the Boston Jewish Community Relations Council and the Jewish Labor Committee was instrumental in defeating the measures. Speaking out in various forums against them and in support of Israel were Congressman Mike Capuano, Massachusetts governor-elect Deval Patrick, Lieutenant Governor Kerry Healey, and Somerville mayor Joe Curtatone, as well as the *Boston Globe* and the *Boston Herald*.

### *Election Controversies*

Republicans in Congress seemed unable to recover from a series of political scandals during the year. On January 3, lobbyist Jack Abramoff entered a guilty plea on felony counts of conspiracy, fraud, and tax evasion related to his lobbying work for Native American tribes. He also agreed to pay a \$1.7-million fine to the Internal Revenue Service. Still unproven was the accusation made in 2005 that the pro-Israel Abramoff had diverted money from an urban charity to Israeli settlers. The Abramoff scandal was but one of a chain that had brought down such powerful figures as House Majority Leader Tom DeLay (R., Tex.), who ended his reelection bid after being indicted on campaign-finance charges. His former colleague Randy "Duke" Cunningham (R., Calif.) was sentenced on March 3 to more than eight years in prison and fined \$1.8 million for bribery, fraud, and tax evasion.

Two of the most salacious scandals of the year, each with broader electoral implications, involved ironic twists on an issue that had helped Republicans in recent years, opposition to homosexuality. Mark Foley (R., Fla.), a six-term congressman known for his initiatives to protect children from exploitation, resigned on September 29 after it was revealed that he had sent sexually suggestive telephone "instant messages" to teenage boys who were serving as Congressional pages.

Conservative candidates who wished the Foley scandal would disappear from the headlines were hardly happy when it was replaced by revelations that Ted Haggard, a giant in the evangelical Christian world, was implicated in a sex-for-hire scandal with a male prostitute, from whom he had allegedly purchased the drug methamphetamine. Haggard, head of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), at first denied the charges, but his accuser produced voicemail recordings. On November 3—just four days before the midterm elections—Haggard resigned his NAE post. Jewish leaders, who remembered Haggard's veiled threat that Jewish criticism of Mel Gibson's film *The Passion of the Christ* could jeopardize evangelical support for Israel, had little sympathy.

Former Florida secretary of state Kathleen Harris's unsuccessful campaign for a Senate seat from that state was not helped by her prayer, uttered on a conference call, that God would "bring the hearts and minds of our Jewish brothers and sisters into alignment." When confronted about it, Harris said the prayer was intended to request that Jews become Republicans, not Christians, but many doubted her sincerity, as she had made similar comments in the past.

Conservative columnist Dennis Prager, who was Jewish, set off a firestorm with a scathing piece he wrote assailing the patriotism of Minnesota's Keith Ellison, the first Muslim elected to Congress, who had announced that he would take the oath of office on a Qur'an, the Islamic holy book. Prager charged that Ellison's oath would do "more damage to the unity of America and to the value system that has formed this country than the terrorists of 9/11." Prager's column was rife with errors, perhaps the most significant being that in fact, members were sworn in en masse, and could opt, as Ellison did, for private ceremonies later. Rep. Virgil Goode (R., Va.) echoed Prager and wrote a letter to his constituents asserting that swearing an oath on the Qur'an posed a threat to "the values and beliefs traditional to the United States of America." The major Jewish organizations strongly defended Ellison.

### *Judicial Appointments*

With the confirmation of Judge Samuel Alito Jr. to fill the seat of Associate Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, who had announced her retirement, President Bush succeeded in placing a second justice on the Supreme Court. Alito was actually Bush's third choice for the seat. He withdrew his first choice, White House counsel Harriet Miers, and then, upon the death of Chief Justice William Rehnquist, nominated his second choice, John Roberts, to succeed him as chief justice. Alito's 58-42 Senate confirmation marked the first time that a majority on the Supreme Court would be Catholic.

There was no consensus in the Jewish community about Alito. A letter from the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America (OU) to the Senate Judiciary Committee expressed the agency's policy not to weigh in on judicial nominations, but offered praise for Judge Alito's record on religious liberties. The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) opposed the nomination, calling Alito an "ideologue with a demonstrated commitment to pulling the court to the far right." The Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) agreed, asserting that adding Alito to the court "would threaten protection of the most fundamental rights."

The American Jewish Committee maintained its traditional policy of neither supporting nor opposing judicial nominees. Instead, AJC sent a letter to the Judiciary Committee urging it to examine closely the nominee's record and judicial philosophy, focusing in particular on issues related to religious liberty and the separation of church and state, civil rights and civil liberties, and separation of powers. The Anti-Defamation

League (ADL) sent a similar letter raising such concerns. More than two dozen religious groups signed a letter to the Judiciary Committee that posed a range of Establishment Clause questions for Alito. Among the signatories were the NCJW, Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA), URJ, and United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

The midterm elections, by placing the Senate under Democratic control, would apparently diminish the influence of the so-called "gang of 14" senators, which had played a key role in confirming judges during 2005. The seven Republicans in the group had agreed to take off the table the "nuclear option" of revoking, for judicial nominations, the requirement of 60 votes to end a filibuster; the group's seven Democrats, in exchange, agreed to filibuster nominations only in "extraordinary circumstances." Together, the 14 had allowed the confirmation of three controversial nominees to the federal bench in 2005 and blocked two others (see AJYB 2006, pp. 34–35).

The Jewish defense agencies closely watched the actions of the three confirmed judges during 2006 because their previous positions and statements raised concerns. They were William Haynes, who faced criticism for his approval of interrogation methods at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, while he was the Pentagon's general counsel; William G. Myers, whose record on environmental issues aroused controversy; and Terrence W. Boyle, who was opposed by civil rights groups. In keeping with Senate rules, several of the unconfirmed nominations were returned to the White House before the August recess. They were renominated in September, only to have the clock run out on them before the midterm elections.

## THE INTERNATIONAL POLICY ARENA

### *U.S.-Israel Relations*

#### A NEW ISRAELI GOVERNMENT

The year started with great uncertainty in the U.S.-Israel relationship. Late in 2005, Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon dissolved the Knesset and called for new elections. Sharon also announced his intention to run at the head of a new centrist party, Kadima, on a platform that included continuing the policy of unilateral territorial withdrawal that had resulted in Israel leaving Gaza and several settlements in the northern West

Bank. Sharon suffered a mild stroke in mid-December 2005, but returned to work soon after. Four days into the New Year he was felled by a massive and debilitating stroke. Doctors announced that he was in a coma from which he was not likely to emerge.

Statements of support and concern for the ailing prime minister poured in from many quarters, a remarkable turn of events considering how unpopular he had been among “dovish” groups prior to his disengagement plan. Television evangelist Pat Robertson, however, took a different approach on his 700 Club cable broadcast, suggesting that the stroke might be divine retribution. “He was dividing God’s land, and I would say, ‘Woe unto any prime minister of Israel who takes a similar course to appease the [European Union], United Nations, or the United States of America,’” Robertson said, adding, “God says, this land belongs to me, and you better leave it alone.”

These comments evoked a stinging reaction from liberals and conservatives alike, revealing a telling faultline within the evangelical Christian world. The public policy director of the Southern Baptist Convention, Rev. Richard Land, scored the televangelist who had often upstaged him and other more mainstream evangelical powerhouses, saying he was “appalled” by Robertson’s “spiritual ignorance and . . . arrogance.”

Sharon’s deputy, Ehud Olmert, assumed the post of acting prime minister. Kadima finished first in the March 28 election with 29 of 120 Knesset seats, most of them at the expense of Likud, which had been home to both Sharon and Olmert. Less than two months later, Olmert paid his first visit to Washington as prime minister, meeting with President Bush and addressing the U.S. Congress. Warm welcomes and rounds of applause masked divisions over the prime minister’s plan to move unilaterally, something the administration supported only in the absence of a Palestinian partner. The president stressed, and Jerusalem seemed to agree, that the eventual permanent borders between Israel and a Palestinian state would need to come from a negotiated settlement.

#### THE PALESTINIAN ELECTIONS

Palestinian elections were scheduled for January 25, 2006. Wary of the potential for a strong Hamas showing, the U.S. and the EU threatened not to recognize a Palestinian government led by a party whose charter called for the destruction of Israel. In this they went a significant step further than their partners in the “Quartet,” Russia and the UN, which had called on Palestinian groups participating in the election to renounce

violence, recognize Israel's right to exist, and disarm immediately, but did not raise the possibility of withholding recognition.

Even so, as Palestinians headed to the polls, researchers said that Fatah, the party of the late Yasir Arafat and his successor, Mahmoud Abbas, continued to lead, with more than 40 percent of the vote; Hamas was expected to win around 25 percent. The actual result was far different: Hamas drew 60 percent, setting off a flurry of surprised reactions.

Congressional leaders and the Bush administration quickly lined up to oppose U.S. financial aid to a Hamas-led Palestinian Authority, in the hope of driving the Palestinians back to Fatah and other less overtly violent factions. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said, "The United States is not prepared to fund an organization that advocates the destruction of Israel, that advocates violence and that refuses its obligations . . ." The EU followed, boycotting all non-humanitarian assistance to the PA.

With unemployment skyrocketing and household income plummeting, a crisis loomed in the Palestinian areas. American Jewish leaders wrestled with whether a "starve the beast" approach, as the boycott idea was called, was the best way to advance Israeli-Palestinian peace. In the end, even the URJ, a group that had been outspoken about Palestinian suffering, supported a Senate resolution that "no United States assistance should be provided directly to the Palestinian Authority if any representative political party holding a majority of parliamentary seats within the Palestinian Authority maintains a position calling for the destruction of Israel." The director of the URJ Religious Action Center (RAC), Rabbi David Saperstein, wrote: "While we support the democratic process carried out by the Palestinians, we cannot ignore the fact that Hamas has for many years been at the forefront of terror attacks against Israel, designed to thwart the peace process and harm innocent Israelis."

Support for a boycott was not universal, though. Arthur Waskow, head of the dovish Shalom Center, emphasized that much of the electoral support for Hamas was due to its charitable activities. Waskow declared: "Insisting that the Palestinian government recognize Israel's legitimacy is a just and praiseworthy goal, but this is a perverse and unjust way of getting there. It is far likelier to cause even more intense misery for the Palestinians, throwing them even deeper into the arms of a party that has shown great humanitarian success and was elected not for its hostility to Israel but for that humanitarian success." He went on to liken the proposed boycott to Allied punishment of Germans after World War I, which, he said, "produced a demonic Germany."

World leaders sought, and found, ways to get aid to Palestinians while

bypassing Hamas. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, aid to the PA totaled \$900 million in 2006, up from \$349 million a year earlier. Total aid to Palestinians, including that distributed through nongovernmental organizations such as the World Food Program, increased to more than \$300 per capita, and rose overall by more than 20 percent to \$1.2 billion, the UN and the International Monetary Fund reported.

#### A CONTROVERSIAL WAR

Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Gaza in 2005 was met with an increasing barrage of rocket fire into Israel, and Israel returned fire into the newly evacuated territory. As the summer of 2006 approached, tensions escalated. In June, Hamas, now the governing party in the PA, was among the militant groups claiming responsibility for kidnapping an Israeli soldier at a Gaza crossing. The Iranian-sponsored Hezbollah (Party of God) fired rockets from Lebanon into northern Israel, and kidnapped two more Israeli soldiers. After a failed rescue attempt, Israel responded with artillery and airstrikes, destroying Hezbollah rocket caches along with significant parts of the southern Lebanon civilian infrastructure—including roads, bridges, and broadcast stations—which Hezbollah used to support its operations.

President Bush attended a mid-July meeting of the leaders of the G8 industrialized nations in St. Petersburg. The group issued a statement attributing the origins of the conflict to the actions of Hamas and Hezbollah. It called for an end to attacks on Israel and the release of the captured Israelis, to be followed by a withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and the release of detained Palestinian legislators belonging to Hamas. The statement, while critical of the scope and impact of Israel's response, did not call for a cease-fire. American leaders expressed the view that Israel had a right to defend itself, but the president admonished the Jewish state to be "mindful of the consequences."

American Jewish groups quickly organized large pro-Israel rallies in several cities, including Boston, Chicago, Denver, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. In New York, Senator Hillary Clinton said, "We will stand with Israel because Israel is standing for American values as well as Israeli ones." Jewish organizations also launched fund-raising campaigns to help Israelis—Jewish, Christian, and Muslim—affected by the rocket attacks. The families of the kidnapped soldiers became symbols of the grief of all Israelis, and made fre-

quent appearances pleading for the safe return of their loved ones, Gilad Shalit, Ehud Goldwasser, and Eldad Regev.

American opinion about the war was mixed. Some groups were highly critical of Israel. A July 14 statement from the National Council of Churches USA and Church World Service, for example, started the timeline of the current conflict with the Israeli "occupation" and "Israel's missile strike on Gaza and the death of innocent Palestinians." According to the statement, the Palestinian rocket fire and the kidnapping of an Israeli soldier was "retributive." There were also voices of support for Israel. The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) passed a resolution condemning Hezbollah and Hamas for precipitating the crisis with their bombings, killings, and kidnappings, and recognizing Israel's responsibility to defend its borders and citizens from attack. The union defeated a competing resolution that called for an immediate cease-fire and placed blame on both sides.

U.S. diplomats tried to mediate a solution to the crisis but held firm in opposing any Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon without guarantees of security on the northern border. A compromise was reached on August 11, when the UN adopted a resolution that specified a larger UN peacekeeping force as well as Lebanese troops patrolling that nation's southern region.

### *Darfur*

The crisis in Darfur, Sudan, entered its fourth year as government-backed Arab militias and rebel groups continued to wreck havoc on villagers in the troubled region. Estimates of the number of dead through violence and disease ranged from 200,000 to 450,000.

The American Jewish community added its voice to the chorus calling for an end to the genocide. On the local level, Jewish groups were instrumental in organizing rallies in Austin; Boulder; Chicago; New York City; Portland, Oregon; Rutland, Vermont; Somerville, New Jersey; Seattle; St. Paul; San Francisco, South Palm Beach; and Tucson.

Nationally, three dozen Jewish agencies were among the 150 organizations in the SaveDarfur coalition. That group launched a campaign, "Million Voices for Darfur," to have one million handwritten and electronic postcards delivered to the White House calling for a stronger multinational force to intervene and protect Darfuris. By April 30, more than 760,000 postcards had been collected, and they were delivered to President Bush in Washington while tens of thousands held a national rally

there for an end to the genocide. Speakers included representatives of the three Jewish agencies serving among the 15 organizations that comprised the SaveDarfur executive committee: American Jewish World Service president Ruth Messinger; JCPA executive director Rabbi Steve Gutow; and Rabbi David Saperstein, director of Reform Judaism's RAC. In addition, Elie Wiesel was among the celebrities who spoke. The coalition reached its goal of a million postcards during the summer.

A peace agreement for Darfur was signed May 5 by the Sudanese government and the Sudan Liberation Movement, the region's largest rebel group. It ostensibly required the government to disarm and demobilize the Janjaweed militia and restrict movements of other militant forces. When the UN General Assembly opened in New York on September 19, Sudanese president Omar Hassan al-Bashir said that Jewish organizations were the source of media "fictions" regarding the atrocities in Darfur. Eighty-eight members of the House of Representatives sent a letter to al-Bashir condemning the remarks and praising the American Jewish community for its efforts to bring an end to the killings.

On October 13, President Bush signed the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act. The law bolstered the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS); directed the U.S. government to assist efforts by the International Criminal Court to bring to justice those guilty of war crimes; and called on the president to freeze the assets of, and impose a travel ban on, those committing atrocities in Darfur. The act also urged a greater NATO role in support of the AMIS and called for the administration to impose other sanctions, including denying entry to U.S. ports, on ships containing Sudanese oil. The bill had passed the House on April 12, and the Senate, by unanimous consent, on September 21. The same day the president signed the bill he also issued an executive order "blocking property of and prohibiting transactions with the government of Sudan."

At year's end, several more Darfur-related bills were pending, including one sponsored by Sen. Harry Reid (D., Nev.) requiring the Department of Defense to report to Congress on ways the U.S. could assist the AMIS, and another sponsored by Sen. Joseph Biden (D., Del.) calling for the creation of a "no-fly zone" in Darfur.

## *Iraq*

The Jewish community continued its delicate dance around the issue of the war in Iraq. Polls, including the annual survey of Jewish opinion

conducted by the American Jewish Committee, indicated that Jews opposed the war by a three-to-one margin. And yet the URJ and the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association stood virtually alone among major Jewish organizations in voicing this dissent. Most Jewish groups avoided issuing statements about the war. One, the Republican Jewish Coalition, took strong exception to Jewish criticism of the war efforts. RJC executive director Matt Brooks told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, "This is a time for people who should know what's at risk and what's at stake and not give in to the prevailing political winds. It sends the wrong message to men in uniform. It sends a white flag to our friends and allies around the world."

The long-awaited report of the Iraq Study Group—a bipartisan panel charged with researching and proposing policy for Iraq, led by former secretary of state James Baker and former House leader Lee Hamilton—included 79 recommendations to President Bush. The report, in fact, went well beyond the immediate Iraq war, endorsing a comprehensive review of U.S. policy in the Middle East. This included a controversial call for a more robust American role in mediating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Baker-Hamilton report's call for consideration of the Palestinians' "right of return" was not appreciated by many in the pro-Israel community, nor was its suggestion that Israel return the Golan Heights in return for peace with Syria.

### *Refugees from Arab Countries*

An "International Rights and Redress Campaign" was spearheaded by the World Organization of Jews from Arab Countries; its American arm, Justice for Jews from Arab Countries; and local groups, such as the San Francisco-based Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa.

Resolutions were introduced in both houses of Congress on May 23 to instruct American representatives at international forums to match any reference to Palestinian refugees with mention of Jewish and other refugees from the Middle East, North Africa, and the Persian Gulf. Proponents of the measure said the plight of Jews who were expelled or forced to flee their Middle East and North African homelands had been overshadowed in the debate about Israeli-Palestinian peace. Greater attention to their narrative, they felt, would counterbalance the "right of return" that Palestinian groups sought for refugees from the 1948 and 1967 wars.

Among the points they wished to stress was that Israel resettled those

Jews who were forced out of countries like Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Morocco, and Libya, while Palestinian refugees, under instructions from the Arab League, were not integrated, but rather kept in refugee camps. The bill was sponsored in the House by Tom Lantos (D., Calif.), along with Jerrold Nadler (D., N.Y.), Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R., Fla.), and Michael Ferguson (R., N.J.). A companion bill was introduced in the Senate by Rick Santorum (R., Pa.), Norman Coleman (R., Minn.), Richard Durbin (D., Ill.), and Frank Lautenberg (D., N.J.).

### *Iran*

Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who had already shocked world leaders in 2005 by calling for Israel to be “wiped off the map” and supporting Holocaust denial, started off 2006 by welcoming Ariel Sharon’s ill health and hoping for his death. More statements proposing the elimination of Israel and questioning the historicity of the Holocaust continued throughout the year. In addition, Iran held a contest for best Holocaust caricatures, in retaliation for cartoons published in Denmark that allegedly depicted the Muslim prophet Mohammed in a negative light (see below, p. 000).

Iranian threats against Israel were gravely exacerbated by Tehran’s continuing nuclear program, which posed an existential threat to Israel and to others. But the debacle over the apparently nonexistent weapons of mass destruction in neighboring Iraq cast a long shadow over the response to Iran’s nuclear quest, making it seem like “boy cries wolf.” It was only when the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) announced that its inspections were unable to remove lingering doubts about Iran’s program that the charges gained international credibility. The American Jewish community found itself in an all-too-familiar position, worrying about Israel’s security but assiduously avoiding public expression of these concerns lest it be seen as a warmonger. Such anxieties were quelled neither by a UN Security Council resolution on July 31 demanding that Iran abandon its nuclear ambition nor by a December 23 resolution imposing sanctions.

Both houses of Congress unanimously adopted the Iran Freedom Support Act (IFSA), “to hold the current regime in Iran accountable for its threatening behavior and to support a transition to democracy in Iran.” The IFSA codified sanctions preventing U.S. companies from conducting business with or in Iran that had previously been barred under executive order. The act urged support for democratic forces in Iran, endorsed

American divestment from foreign companies that invested in Iran's petroleum sector, and extended parts of the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act. The Senate bill was sponsored by Rick Santorum (R., Pa.), Bill Frist (R., Tenn.), John Cornyn (R., Tex.), and Bill Nelson (D., Fla.), and the House version was proposed by Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R., Fla.), joined by Henry Hyde (R., Ill.), Tom Lantos (D., Calif.), and Gary Ackerman (D., N.Y.). House action, followed by a same-day presidential signature, came on September 30.

Tehran hosted a Holocaust-denial conference in December. Among the participants were several anti-Zionist Orthodox Jews—including some from the U.S.—as well as other Americans and Europeans who disputed the facts of the Nazi era, among them former Ku Klux Klan leader and would-be politician David Duke. Ahmadinejad said at the conference, "Just as the Soviet Union was wiped out and today does not exist, so will the Zionist regime soon be wiped out." President Bush called the gathering "an affront to the entire civilized world." The House of Representatives unanimously approved a resolution, sponsored by Rep. Alcee Hastings (D., Fla.), condemning the conference.

### *The "Israel Lobby," Imagined and Real*

WALT-MEARSHEIMER

Alarms went off in the Jewish community with the publication of an ostensibly academic article, "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy," by Stephen M. Walt of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard and John J. Mearsheimer of the University of Chicago. Touching on themes of great sensitivity for Jews, the paper suggested conspiracy and dual loyalty—perhaps even disloyalty. Its target was the pro-Israel community, a "Lobby" that allegedly harmed American interests by manipulating U.S. foreign policy in favor of Israel. Among the results of such manipulation, charged the authors, was the war in Iraq. What they meant by the term "Israel Lobby" was those arms of the Jewish and evangelical Christian communities that advocated for Israel, as well as political neoconservatives, a term that many considered code language for influential Jews.

The authors were both well-regarded academics, and their article was posted on the Web site of Harvard's Kennedy School. Shortly after its publication, however, the school distanced itself from the piece by re-

moving its logo from the cover and adding a disclaimer indicating that the opinions expressed were those of the authors, not necessarily those of Harvard or the University of Chicago.

The paper presented the Jewish community with a Catch-22. Since part of the authors' indictment was that the "Israel Lobby" silenced those who differed with it, criticism would feed into that very charge. Such criticism was voiced in Jewish quarters nonetheless. It pointed out historical inaccuracies—such as giving short shrift to Israeli offers of territorial compromise—noted a double standard that seemed to justify Arab terrorism, and pointed to the fallacy of attributing all Middle Eastern problems to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The ADL concluded that the paper "has elements of classic anti-Jewish conspiracy theories." Ironically, even MIT professor Noam Chomsky, one of Israel's most vocal critics, charged that the article exaggerated the role of the "Israel Lobby" and overlooked the role of special interests such as oil companies and the arms industry in devising American policy in the area.

#### JIMMY CARTER

Adding fuel to the fire was former president Jimmy Carter. Never considered a close friend of the Jewish state, Carter launched a missile of his own at Israel with a controversial book, *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*. The Nobel laureate and one-term president inflamed passions, first, with the title's analogy to the old South African system of racial separation and discrimination. The content of the book did little to assuage the worst fears of the pro-Israel community. Carter accused Israel of the "colonization of Palestinian land" and placed blame for the conflict foursquare in Israel's court. The book's lack of balance and significant factual errors led to the resignation of 15 board members from the Carter Center, led by Professor Kenneth Stein of Emory University.

Carter responded to the criticism through a "Letter to Jewish Citizens of America" in which he explained that his use of the term "apartheid" related only to conditions in the Palestinian territories, not within Israel itself. The issue was not racism, he wrote, but the "desire of a minority of Israelis for Palestinian land." He condemned terrorism and said he did not claim that Jews controlled the American media. Rather, he objected to the pro-Israel sentiments of fellow evangelical Christians, who, he said, had been raised to support "God's chosen people." As for the charge that the book contained errors, the president said it had been fact-checked by experts. This letter did not mollify the book's critics.

## AIPAC'S WOES

With accusations flying about the putative "Israel lobby," the actual Israel lobby was dealing with a crisis of its own. Steven Rosen and Keith Weissman, former staffers at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), were awaiting trial. The two had been indicted under the Espionage Act of 1917 for giving "national security information" (presumably about Iran) to parties who were "not entitled to receive it" (presumably the Israeli government). Early in the year, Larry Franklin, the Defense Department analyst who shared the classified information with them, was sentenced to almost 13 years in prison and fined \$10,000. In August, Judge T.S. Ellis III upheld the constitutionality of the law under which the prosecution was proceeding, but ruled that to win its case the government would have to show it had suffered harm as a result of the unauthorized sharing of information.

AIPAC's angst was surely increased by talk of a new and well-funded Jewish "pro-peace" lobby. Supporters of the idea, including Rabbi David Saperstein, the head of the Reform movement's RAC, denied that the effort was intended to provide an alternative to AIPAC, the venerable and unflinching pro-Israel lobby, which more dovish Jewish groups believed hewed too closely to the positions of the Israeli right wing. Powerhouse philanthropists involved in talks about the new initiative included George Soros and Charles Bronfman. As the year ended the project remained little more than a trial balloon.

## THE DOMESTIC POLICY ARENA

*Homeland Security*

Critical provisions of the USA PATRIOT Act, the antiterrorism law passed in the aftermath of the attacks on America of September 11, 2001, were to expire at the end of 2005. Supporters of the law sought to make its law-enforcement tools permanent, while civil rights groups and many of the Jewish organizations pressed for enhanced individual protections and judicial oversight. In 2005, Congress temporarily extended the homeland security measure while it sought to work out an agreement. A Senate reauthorization measure included several safeguards for civil liberties, but the House version was similar to the original legislation. The

conference committee that reconciled the two removed many of the new protections, and President Bush signed the bill into law on March 9.

The administration suffered two setbacks in its attempts to apprehend and try alleged terrorists. On July 29, the Supreme Court ruled in *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld* that the executive order setting up military commissions to try terror suspects on Guantánamo Bay violated both the Uniform Code of Military Justice and the Geneva Conventions. Then, on August 17, a federal judge in Michigan ordered the National Security Agency to stop its Terrorist Surveillance Program. The court held unconstitutional the program's practice of eavesdropping on conversations without getting warrants from the special courts designated to hear classified matters under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA).

Congress had already been conducting hearings about the once-secret program. On March 12, Senator Russell Feingold (D., Wis.) went so far as to introduce a resolution censuring the president for initiating the plan, which, the senator argued, was in violation of the FISA's requirement of court approval for wiretaps of U.S. citizens. Feingold, who was being mentioned as a possible presidential contender, was joined by Senators Barbara Boxer (D., Calif.), Tom Harkin (D., Iowa), and John Kerry (D., Mass.). Sen. Patrick Leahy (D., Vt.) also expressed support for the censure.

In the aftermath of the *Hamdan* case, Congress passed the Military Commissions Act to establish a structure for trying "enemy combatants." The law was adopted over the objections of many in the civil rights community and signed on October 17. RAC director Rabbi David Saperstein noted that the legislation's broad definition of "enemy combatant" could allow indefinite detention of individuals who posed no threat to the nation, risked exposing those in U.S. custody to mistreatment, lacked appropriate judicial oversight, and "would put our nation on a collision course with the generally accepted, longstanding interpretation of the Geneva Conventions' prohibition on cruel and inhuman treatment of prisoners." Those conventions, he noted, were adopted in their present form in response to World War II-era atrocities.

Congress acted to improve security at nonprofit institutions that were at high risk for international terrorism. United Jewish Communities (UJC), the umbrella organization for the Jewish federation system, secured \$25 million in federal grants to help such institutions. A House-Senate agreement reached in September, eagerly sought by Jewish communal organizations, set the conditions for release of the funds. The move came just two months after Pam Waechter, an employee of the Seat-

the Jewish Federation, was killed and five others injured after a man who claimed to be “angry at Israel” forced his way through the building’s security door by holding a handgun to a teenage girl’s head. The suspect, Naved Afzal Haq, was arrested and his bail set at \$50 million.

### *Immigration*

Experts estimated that between 200,000 and a million undocumented migrants illegally crossed the U.S.-Mexican border in 2006. The total population of illegal aliens, placed at 8–12 million in 2003 by Tom Ridge, who was then secretary of homeland security, had grown to as many as 20 million by the end of 2006. CNN anchor Lou Dobbs made the situation the mantra of his nightly newscast, becoming a part of the story himself while drawing attention to an immigration system that, most agreed, was in need of repair. Suggested solutions ranged from amnesty for those already in the U.S. and temporary worker programs to allow American businesses—especially agricultural—to benefit from the cheaper labor supply, to increased border security and the construction of a fence stretching all across the 2,000-mile length of the border.

The issue was a priority for several American Jewish groups, especially HIAS, AJC, JCPA, and Reform Judaism’s RAC, all of which devoted resources on their Web sites to the complicated issue. Although far from unchallenged, the consensus in Washington and among the Jewish groups favored “comprehensive” immigration reform. Elements of such an approach included “earned” legal status, enhanced border security and enforcement, cross-border cooperation, increased worker protections, penalties for employers knowingly hiring undocumented workers, and expediting the backlog of family-reunification cases. Even President Bush broke ranks with hardliners in his own party by supporting an ostensible path to citizenship for those in the country illegally.

In the end, though, hopes for a comprehensive solution were dashed. Congress, fearful of facing voters without doing anything about immigration, settled on a fix that was heavy on law enforcement and measures such as the fence, and weak on those provisions endorsed by pro-immigrant groups. Congress passed and the president signed the Secure Fence Act, authorizing construction of up to 700 miles of fencing across the southern border. The project could cost as much as \$9 billion.

The immigration debate also took other forms. On July 1, a new

rule went into effect requiring American citizens applying for or receiving Medicaid to show proof of citizenship. Critics said the regulation could harm eligible beneficiaries who, for various reasons, might be unable to produce the necessary documentation. Also, several states tightened procedures at polling stations to prevent those who were not citizens from voting. Liberal groups decried these moves as voter intimidation.

### *The Environment*

The House passed the U.S.-Israel Energy Cooperation Act. Championed by the American Jewish Congress, this bill would create a grant program to foster joint research between U.S. and Israeli scientists to develop renewable and sustainable sources of energy. The grants would total \$140 million dollars over the next seven years.

The Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL) launched a nationwide campaign to address the global warming crisis. The campaign, called "A Light among the Nations," combined education, awareness, advocacy, and action to conserve energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The centerpiece of the program was to get Jews to install energy-efficient, cost-effective, compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs during Hanukkah 2006. COEJL noted that if every U.S. household replaced one bulb with a CFL, it would have the same impact as removing 1.3 million cars from the road.

## **CIVIL RIGHTS AND INDIVIDUAL LIBERTIES**

### *Voting Rights*

The Jewish community enthusiastically supported extension of the Voting Rights Act, the 1965 law that removed many obstacles to the franchise, such as literacy tests, and required federal approval (pre-clearance) to change voting rules in certain jurisdictions. Congress rejected amendments to the bill that would have weakened its provisions, such as the requirement that translators or multilingual ballots be provided for non-English-speaking voters. On July 27, President Bush signed a 25-year extension of the act.

Claims of voter fraud, often unsubstantiated, were a rallying cry

behind a handful of state legislative efforts to enact more stringent requirements for voting. In Georgia, a bill requiring photographic identification for voting in person was challenged on the grounds that it could infringe on the rights of citizens lacking such identification. More than two dozen civil rights groups sent a letter urging the Department of Justice to block the law. Among those signing were the Atlanta chapters of AJC, ADL, and NCJW, as well as the Atlanta Black-Jewish Coalition and the JCPA. In Arizona, a federal court removed an injunction and allowed enforcement of an identification law for voting that had been approved in a referendum.

The U.S. House of Representatives considered a similar measure for federal elections. The proposed bill would force states to enact proof-of-citizenship requirements for voter registration. Critics said the measure would disenfranchise American citizens, particularly poor, elderly, disabled, minority, and rural voters.

The Supreme Court upheld the controversial 2003 redistricting of several congressional districts in Texas, permitting former U.S. House majority leader Tom DeLay's unusual move to redraw district lines a second time within the same ten-year census period. The court held that one of the districts, however, had to be reconfigured because its new composition constituted racial gerrymandering. The DeLay plan had shifted six seats to the Republican column in 2004, ousting longtime Jewish congressman Martin Frost. In the 2006 election, two of the seats Republicans gained then moved back into Democratic hands.

### *Church-State Issues*

#### FREE-EXERCISE AND ESTABLISHMENT MATTERS

The U.S. Supreme Court upheld a portion of the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), ruling in *Gonzales v. O Centro* that Congress had the constitutional authority to require that if actions of the federal government burdened free exercise of religion they were only permissible if they served a compelling government interest. The case involved a church's use of a tea containing a substance barred under federal law. In 1990, in a case involving ritual use of peyote, another controlled substance, the Supreme Court had struck down the "compelling interest" test. In response, Congress passed RFRA in 1993 to prevent federal o

state governments from enacting laws placing substantial burdens on individual religious practice unless the laws served a compelling government interest and were drawn in the least restrictive manner possible. The Supreme Court struck down the part of RFRA that applied to the states in 1997, but had left until this year the question of whether the law still applied to federal legislation.

In September, the House approved by a vote of 244-172 the Veterans' Memorials, Boy Scouts, Public Seals, and Other Public Expressions of Religion Protection Act of 2006. The bill would prevent plaintiffs in Establishment Clause cases from recouping attorneys' fees. The Senate, however, did not consider the proposal before the recess. The legislation was part the "American Values Agenda," a Republican package of legislation dealing with a number of matters, including the Pledge of Allegiance, same-sex marriage, and similar issues designed to energize the party's conservative base.

The two largest Jewish defense agencies, ADL and AJC, filed briefs in a closely watched case that might become a pivotal test of so-called "faith-based initiatives." Ostensibly to reduce recidivism, Iowa funded Prison Fellowship Ministries to conduct a Christian program in which prisoners were granted special benefits for participating, including the chance for early parole. This evangelical Christian program was founded by former Nixon White House counsel Charles Colson, who had served seven months in prison himself for obstruction of justice during Watergate. A federal district court found that the Iowa program violated the Establishment Clause, a position in line with the arguments of the Jewish organizations. At year's end an appeal was pending.

#### STEM-CELL RESEARCH

Therapeutic stem-cell research was one of the rare items of domestic policy that united Jewish agencies, including both the Reform and Orthodox streams. Jewish groups lined up to support research into whether embryonic stem cells—derived from the inner cell mass of developing embryos—might hold the key to treating a wide range of life-threatening conditions, due to their potential to develop into healthy organ tissue. There seemed to be a similar consensus in the country as a whole, as both houses of Congress, by comfortable margins, voted to negate President Bush's executive order of August 9, 2001, that limited federal funding to stem-cell lines derived before that date. Those margins, though, were not enough to over-

ride the president's first use of his veto power, which occurred on July 19, one day after the Senate approved the legislation 63-37, just four votes short of the two-thirds threshold needed to override the veto.

#### PROSELYTIZATION IN THE MILITARY

Early in the year, Mikey Weinstein, an alumnus of the U.S. Air Force Academy, announced the formation of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation to draw attention to the pervasive proselytization that he said had transformed the academy into an institution where religious minorities were harassed and intimidated (see AJYB 2006, pp. 61–63). A lawsuit filed by Weinstein against the academy for violating the rights of religious minorities was dismissed by a federal court in October 2006 on a technicality.

With elements of the religious right complaining that guidelines adopted in August 2005 prevented chaplains from invoking the name of Jesus in their prayers, the Air Force issued new “interim guidelines” in February 2006 on the place of religion in the military. The new rules reasserted the need for religious neutrality and the right of free religious expression, but also affirmed that superior officers could discuss their faith with subordinates and that chaplains could not be coerced into reciting prayers that went against their conscience (i.e., nonsectarian prayers). Jewish groups were divided over the guidelines, some praising them and others characterizing them as marking a retreat from previous efforts to restrain proselytization. After receiving a request from the Air Force in June for their input, four Jewish organizations—AJC, ADL, American Jewish Congress, and Reform Judaism's RAC—jointly presented recommendations for implementing the guidelines.

The issue was also debated in the House of Representatives. An amendment to the 2007 Defense Appropriation Act stated that “each chaplain shall have the prerogative to pray according to the dictates of the chaplain's own conscience.” Rep. Steve Israel (D., N.Y.), a member of the House Armed Services Committee, argued that such language virtually guaranteed the use of prayers for proselytization, and therefore proposed adding that chaplains should “demonstrate sensitivity, respect and tolerance for all faiths present” at the prayer service. On May 4, the committee voted his suggestion down, leaving intact the original amendment. The Senate bill did not contain this language, and the discrepancy between the two versions delayed passage of the appropriations bill until late September, when a conference committee reached a compromise: the

amendment in the House version would be removed; the guidelines issued in February would not be implemented; and the matter would be reviewed in 2007.

## INTERRELIGIOUS RELATIONS

### *Catholics and Jews*

Jewish groups downplayed their disappointment that Pope Benedict XVI did not clearly condemn anti-Semitism when he visited the site of the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp in June (see below, p. 000). Jewish leaders instead emphasized positive statements from the pontiff, including that the death camp was “particularly difficult and troubling for a Christian, for a pope from Germany.” He also said that the Nazis, by seeking to eliminate the Jews, “ultimately wanted to tear up the taproot of the Christian faith . . . .”

Another matter that strained relations was Vatican reaction to Israel’s war against Hezbollah in southern Lebanon a month later. Vatican secretary of state Angelo Cardinal Sodano issued a statement saying: “A state’s right to self-defense does not exempt it from respecting the norms of international law, especially as regards the protection of civilian populations. In particular, the Holy See deplores the attack on Lebanon, a free and sovereign nation, and gives assurances of its closeness to those people who have suffered so much in the defense of their own independence.” Even though Pope Benedict said that “terrorist acts or reprisals, especially when they have such tragic consequences on the civilian population, cannot be justified,” American Jewish leaders believed that the Church’s response was, in the words of ADL national director Abraham Foxman, “terribly one-sided and shortsighted.”

### *Mainline Protestants and Jews*

Tensions between the mainline Protestant churches and the Jewish community had been exacerbated in recent years over Middle East policies, as considerable support emerged in some church groups for divestment from Israel and companies that did business with it. These tensions continued in 2006, although there were also glimpses of reconciliation and improved understanding.

In April, leaders of the Episcopal Church, Presbyterian Church (USA),

and United Church of Christ (UCC) issued statements condemning a terrorist attack outside a Tel Aviv restaurant. Clifton Kirkpatrick, the stated clerk of the Presbyterians, also called on Hamas leaders in the Palestinian government to “renounce tactics of terrorism.” The UCC statement, however, sought to balance the condemnation with criticism of Israel as well, stating: “The killing or wounding of innocent people, whether they are Israelis or Palestinians can never be called legitimate . . . . As we pray for those who grieve the loss of loved ones from this recent attack, we also pray for all who suffer from the impact of the occupation and the separation barrier . . . .”

In June, a two-year drama reached its climax as the commissioners of the Presbyterian Church (USA) gathered in Birmingham, Alabama, for the organization’s General Assembly. Over the preceding year, Presbyterians and Jews had met in more than 100 communities to discuss actions taken by the Presbyterians in 2004 deemed harmful to Jews: continued support for conversionary activities aimed at Jews; a call for removal of Israel’s security barrier; a verbal attack on Christian Zionism; and an initiation of “phased, selective divestment” from “companies operating in Israel.” The divestment resolution had laid all the blame on Israel, noting that the occupation of Palestinian territory is “at the root of evil acts committed against innocent people on both sides of the conflict.” Since 2004, more than two dozen resolutions on the matter had been adopted by local Presbyterian groups, most calling for rescission or significant modification of the divestment action and for greater balance in the Presbyterian approach to Middle East peacemaking.

A broad coalition of national Jewish agencies wrote to the Presbyterian General Assembly saying, in part: “Our collective voices can play an instrumental role, working with the American government and others, to help Israeli, Palestinian, and other Middle Eastern leaders to pave a path toward the cessation of violence and a resumption of negotiations . . . . Divestment is a stumbling-block to all we envision collectively. Our prayer is that you permanently remove this obstacle to peace.” Signing the letter were leaders from AJC, American Jewish Congress, ADL, B’nai B’rith International, Hadassah, JCPA, Jewish Labor Committee, Jewish Reconstructionist Federation, Jewish War Veterans, NCJW, OU, URJ, and United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

The General Assembly, by an overwhelming 483-28 vote, “replaced” the divestment language adopted in 2004. Instead, there was a new resolution stating that church holdings in the region would be subject only to “customary” practices of corporate engagement. While those practices did

not rule out the sale of stock, the resolution directed that policy be implemented with an eye toward "practical realities," a "commitment to positive outcomes," and an awareness of the potential impact of strategies on "both the Israeli and Palestinian economies." The General Assembly also recognized Israel's right to defend its pre-1967 boundaries with a security barrier and lamented the pain caused by the 2004 statement. A separate resolution called suicide bombings a "crime against humanity."

Immediately after the General Assembly, however, a new crisis developed. A "Frequently Asked Questions" (FAQ) sheet was distributed regarding the divestment vote that contained several inaccurate statements seeming to suggest that the vote had not really reversed the 2004 pro-Palestinian position. When this was pointed out, yet another FAQ was produced without the objectionable language, and those present were told that either document could be used, presumably depending on the audience. The General Assembly did officially retract two statements originally included in another just-released document, "Assembly in Brief." One was a section on the divestment action that had been removed from the resolution by the drafting committee because it implied that divestment was a likely scenario, and the other was an assertion that the final vote had been taken to calm "volatile relations with the Jewish community," ignoring the strong internal opposition that had developed to the 2004 divestment action.

Controversy continued about the way the organization described its actions. Although the General Assembly had voted to "replace" the earlier divestment resolution, the Presbyterian body later said it had only "re-framed" its previous position, implying that divestment had not been entirely rejected, and subsequently claimed that church policy had merely been "clarified." Even later, the Presbyterian News Service announced that the vote had been "to continue its efforts to 'engage' those multinational corporations whose business in Israel/Palestine, the church believes, promotes violence." Another element that surprised the Jewish community throughout the process was the Presbyterian insistence on meeting only with Jewish denominational bodies, excluding the defense and other agencies that had been actively involved in direct dialogue with Presbyterian leaders around the country.

### *Evangelicals and Jews*

One result of cooling relations between Jewish and mainline Protestant groups was the lowering of barriers that had previously kept Jewish agen-

cies from exploring closer ties with Christian evangelicals. One evangelical leader who called himself a Christian Zionist, Rev. John Hagee, announced in February the creation of a national organization, Christians United for Israel (CUFI), which would network and mobilize pro-Israel churches and their members by, among other activities, sponsoring "A Night to Honor Israel" events in American cities and an annual national lobbying conference. David Brog, former chief of staff to Senator Arlen Specter (R., Pa.), was chosen to head the group.

Whereas in years past the formation of such an organization would have elicited considerable distrust in the Jewish community, the reaction now was generally positive. Lee Wunsch, director of the Houston Jewish Federation, offered strong praise for Hagee, who was based in Houston. Wunsch noted that the minister strictly prohibited proselytizing Jews, and had raised large sums of money for Jewish causes in America as well as many millions for humanitarian aid to Israel. In some communities, top Jewish leaders attended the pro-Israel events run by CUFI, in others they stayed away. In all, CUFI programs run in 40 cities raised more than \$10 million. One event alone, in San Antonio, made more than \$7 million in one night.

A national consultation hosted by JCPA in New York on Jewish relations with evangelicals brought together AJC, American Jewish Congress, ADL, the Israeli embassy and consulate, the New York Jewish Community Relations Council, URJ, OU, and United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. The participants reviewed empirical data, examined the theological and political positions of the American evangelical community, and discussed the major points of cooperation and divergence between evangelicals and Jews.

### *Muslims and Jews*

Judea Pearl, father of murdered journalist Daniel Pearl, used the foundation he had created in his son's memory to promote dialogue and understanding between Muslims and Jews. Such programs notwithstanding, American Jewish groups continued to take a very cautious approach to relations with Muslims. Counterterrorism experts, including Daniel Pipes and Steven Emerson, delivered a continuing stream of warnings, underlining the ties between American Muslim groups and leaders with those responsible for violence against Israelis. In their search for moderate voices with which to dialogue and forge coalitions, American Jews

avoided such national Muslim groups as the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR).

A controversy erupted in Chicago after Nation of Islam (NOI) leader Louis Farrakhan, in his Saviors' Day Speech, condemned Israel and wove conspiracy theories about alleged Jewish control of America. Jewish groups put pressure on Governor Rod Blagojevich to dismiss Claudette Marie Johnson—not only a NOI activist but also Farrakhan's director of protocol—from her position on the Illinois Commission on Discrimination and Hate Crimes when she refused to condemn Farakhan's remarks. When the governor did not dismiss her, four Jewish members of the commission resigned rather than sit alongside Johnson: local ADL director Lonnie Nasatir; Illinois Holocaust Museum director Richard Hirschhaut; Jewish federation and JCRC leader Howard Kaplan; and Lou Lang, a Democratic member of the state legislature representing Skokie.