

IN THE NEWS

Condoleezza Rice to head State Dept.

Condoleezza Rice, who established close ties with the Israeli government as President Bush's national security adviser, was chosen as the next U.S. secretary of state. Rice will replace Colin Powell, who resigned Monday.

Rice, who is considered one of Bush's closest confidantes, enjoys generally good ties with the American Jewish leadership. [Story, Pg. 3]

Complaint over rocket fire from Lebanon

Israel lodged a complaint with the United Nations about a rocket salvo from Lebanon.

The complaint was filed Tuesday after troops discovered the remains of a Katyusha rocket outside the northern town of Shlomi. A second rocket fired Monday did not make it across the frontier.

A little-known militia, the Martyr Ghaleb Awali Group, claimed responsibility for the attack, but Israeli officials blamed Hezbollah, which effectively controls southern Lebanon.

Israeli security sources said cross-border retaliation could be mounted if such attacks continue.

Jerusalem Post to have new owners

A Canadian media company and an Israeli media group appear set to take over the Jerusalem Post.

CanWest Global Communications Corp. and the Mirkaei Tikshoret Group each will own 50 percent of the newspaper, as well as the Jerusalem Report magazine and other properties, according to media reports.

The sale by Hollinger International group is believed to be for \$13.2 million. Hollinger paid \$21.5 million for the newspaper, which it acquired in 1989 and 1990.

Hollinger International has been selling off its holdings after Conrad Black, its CEO, resigned amid an internal investigation that found that Black and others stole tens of millions of dollars from the company. Black has denied any impropriety.

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Under new UJC leader, G.A. focuses on reinventing image of federations

By RACHEL POMERANCE

CLEVELAND (JTA) — In the pink halls of the Cleveland Convention Center, a black Jew opened the annual conference of the North American Jewish federation system by belting out familiar Hebrew prayers with a gospel twist.

Under the banner "Imagine," the theme of the United Jewish Communities' 2004 General Assembly, Joshua Nelson's rousing rendition underscored the conference message of reworking an old song to a new tune — that is, reinventing the image of the federations.

Giving a younger, hipper face to the largest American Jewish charity, Josh Malina, star of the "West Wing" television drama, moderated the Sunday night opener of song, sermon and stories, inspiring many in the audience.

But with the closing of the opening act came a focus on more mundane matters — the ins and outs of federation fund raising and ways to reach new donors and contributors.

In a sense, in this city of ultimate insiders — Cleveland has an impressive track record of spawning national federation leaders — came the ultimate insider's G.A.

Of course, there was the traditional reunion of handshakes and hugs, the occasional "Nu?" — the Yiddishist's "What's up?" — among colleagues, and networking about new ideas and programs.

But this G.A. was markedly different, and it was meant to be.

The United Jewish Communities, the umbrella group for the federation system, created a committee to envision a new G.A. that would focus on grooming Jewish leaders. A track

was devoted to professional development with an emphasis on reaching a younger generation, whose attention is tougher to garner amid a slew of competing charities.

Keynote speeches mainly were from business gurus and focused on how to retool federations. Except for a post-election analysis with James Carville and William Kristol, this G.A. lacked the slew of luminaries — such as senior U.S. officials or Israeli leaders — that have, in the past, helped to draw participants who like to hobnob with policymakers or feel they know the inside scoop.

That may account for the fact that this was the smallest G.A. in years. UJC officials estimate that fewer than 3,000 people attended, while participation has ranged from 3,250 to 6,000 over the past six years.

Others said the choice of Cleveland as host city didn't help. Indeed, many federation professionals said they struggled to recruit participants from their communities.

Take Chicago, which sent some 50 lay leaders to the G.A., but only a few years ago sent nearly twice that number. Steven Nasatir, president of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago, could not explain the drop.

Still, many in attendance felt this year's G.A., coming five years after the UJC was formed from the merger of three national Jewish organizations, was right on target.

"It's time to focus" on strengthening federations to raise more money, said Steve Rakitt, CEO of the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta. "We're doing that."

"We're talking about more relevant things," agreed Fred Zimmerman, president of the Jewish Federation of Nashville and

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BEHIND THE HEADLINES

■ *Pride in the federation movement's accomplishments amid calls for vision*

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a member of UJC's board of trustees. "I think they're making great strides" in areas such as reaching younger activists and interfaith families.

The challenge is refurbishing the image of the federation system, which many see as closed to new and younger voices, Zimmerman said.

The perception is that "it's your parents' philanthropy," Zimmerman said. But, he said, "this can be a place where great things happen, and it is."

The conference embodied the tension of tradition and change as the organization focuses on remaking itself to attract new donors. But some in attendance felt the G.A.'s inward focus meant that some of the broader communal issues and ideas weren't given as much attention.

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John Ruskay, executive vice president and CEO of the UJA-Federation of New York, said he hoped future G.A.'s would become the meeting ground "where major issues in Jewish life are debated and discussed."

"Over many years we've moved away from that," he said, suggesting that issues such as Jewish continuity or the Israel-Diaspora relationship amid the intifada should take center stage.

Others said the gathering seemed to lack a spark.

"Show me the passion," said Elie Kaunfer, the leader of an egalitarian minyan on Manhattan's Upper West Side, who was participating in his second G.A.

"The excitement about UJC does not

come through," he said. "Give me some of your passion and I could get excited about it."

Participants seem to be coming with a mission, which is figuring out, "How can I fix my broken federation?" Kaunfer said. "People at UJC should be proud of the stories they have to tell."

One of those stories came from Alina Gerlovin Spaulding, whose family was brought from the former Soviet Union to the United States by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, a UJC partner that runs relief and welfare services for Jews abroad.

At the opening plenary, Spaulding told how her father suffered a broken leg in a skiing accident and could not get proper medical attention for months, straining his already impaired health. The family was adopted by a host family in Passaic, N.J., and a network of Jews helped put her father in touch with a top heart surgeon, who saved his life. The surgery was paid for by the local federation.

Many audience members were moved by the powerful story from the stage.

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Others found inspiration in the hallways. "I think the sessions are fabulous, but I think the real reason to come is what happens in the halls," said Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi, president of the Israel Project, which aims to bolster Israel's public image in America.

The opportunity to connect with so many colleagues allows Mizrahi to create partnerships and do business.

Additionally, it's "good for me to see young people who are given real responsibility," said Mizrahi, 40, who chairs her local federation campaign in Annapolis, Md.

Yosef Abramowitz, CEO of Jewish Family & Life!, an online provider of Jewish material, said the G.A. shows that the UJC is "doing a better job of listening to their constituent federations" by providing "tacheles," or basic, "trade association kinds of things."

But that is "still no substitute for a vision," he said. "I think people here want clarity and courage," and they expect it to come from the UJC's new president, Howard Rieger, Abramowitz said.

Mega-philanthropist Lynn Schuster-

man stressed the challenge for the federation system to attract younger donors.

"Instead of expecting the next generation to come to us, we have to go to them," she said.

Take Aaron Tapper, 31, co-executive director of Abraham's Vision, which aims to train Palestinian and Jewish Americans to lead dialogue on the Arab-Israeli conflict on college campuses.

A fellow in the Wexner Heritage program, which trains

young Jewish leaders, Tapper admitted, "This is a pretty major event, and it's completely not on my radar."

Tapper said he found the session on post-denominational Judaism interesting.

But some younger participants weren't as captivated.

Some of the 300 Hillel students in attendance said they felt spoken to, not spoken with, said Avraham Infeld, president of Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life.

Infeld recommended that the G.A. be held only every two years.

"It would increase the excitement for the G.A. and would allow an opportunity for participants at the G.A. to deal with real organizational issues on a regular basis," he said.

Other kernels of advice for the federation system came in a keynote speech from Jim Collins, author of the New York Times bestseller, "Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...and Others Don't."

Put the most passionate people in key positions before determining direction, Collins said. Meanwhile, "Keep the values. Change the traditions. This is the secret. This is your challenge."

Rieger hinted at some of the same concepts when he introduced Collins, whose book was given to him by a colleague when Rieger took over UJC's reins.

"Why is the UJC not seen as a great organization," he asked, "when federations in their own communities are seen as really setting the standard for others to follow?"

One reason may be poor communication, Rieger said. But he also emphasized the need for the organization to narrow its focus.

"We can't be all things to all people," he said.

At this G.A., the UJC appeared to make that point.



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Rice is President Bush's key conduit to Israel

By MATTHEW E. BERGER

WASHINGTON (JTA) — As President Bush's national security adviser over the past four years, Condoleezza Rice has been his key conduit for foreign policy, eclipsing the State Department in the day-to-day handling of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and other burning international issues.

Now tapped, as the nominee for secretary of state, to lead the very organization she has helped marginalize, Rice is expected to continue playing a lead role, something welcomed by many Israelis and American Jews.

Many anticipate that support for Israel's strong anti-terrorist stance now will be endorsed throughout the Bush administration.

Bush picked Rice as the next secretary of state Tuesday, calling on one of his most trusted advisers and a woman who some say has been treated like a member of the Bush family. The nomination must be approved by the Senate.

"We're pursuing a positive new direction to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict, an approach that honors the peaceful aspirations of the Palestinian people through a democratic state and an approach that will ensure the security of our good friend Israel," Bush said Tuesday in announcing the nomination.

"Meeting all of these objectives will require wise and skillful leadership at the Department of State, and Condoleezza Rice is the right person for that challenge."

Bush also named Stephen Hadley as his new national security adviser. As Rice's deputy, Hadley was considered a supporter of Israel on the National Security Council.

Hadley worked with Elliott Abrams, the council's Middle East director, to draft U.S. endorsement of Israel's Gaza Strip withdrawal, rejecting the Palestinian demand for a refugee "right of return" to their former homes in Israel and supporting some Israeli claims to the West Bank.

Analysts say Rice's appointment is likely to change how the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will be tackled in the next Bush administration. As new Palestinian leaders emerge, Bush is likely to look for Rice and the State Department to play a leading role in bringing Israelis and Palestinians together and setting the stage for renewed peace talks.

But Rice also will have to change her

focus from working for a constituency of one person to overseeing a large bureaucracy, and mending fences between the government's internationalist foreign policy entity and an administration that often has ignored the State Department's advice.

Rice's predecessor, Colin Powell, who announced his resignation Monday, was seen in Foggy Bottom as a man advocating on the Foreign Service's behalf.

But many believe that by the end of his tenure Powell had been relegated to a more minor role, presenting a more appealing face to the Arabs and Europeans while the White House and Pentagon orchestrated a Middle East policy that often angered those same circles.

State Department officials long have advocated a more "even-handed" approach to Middle East peacemaking. They have sought international engagement and have been tougher on Israel than has the rest of the administration, criticizing steps such as the assassination of Palestinian terrorist leaders, which sometimes have caused civilian casualties.

The department also has been more hesitant to support Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plans to withdraw unilaterally from the Gaza Strip and erect a security barrier along Israel's West Bank border.

Powell at times endorsed those criticisms, but it was unclear whether he truly agreed with them or was merely representing his organization.

Rice is considered less likely to follow that course. U.S. Jewish officials hope her appointment will bring consistency to foreign policy, minimizing concerns they had over the past four years of divergent policy declarations from the White House and State Department.

"We can't have a divided foreign policy," said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. "You have to have a clear foreign policy, and hopefully Dr. Rice will have the authority to create a consistent policy."

Rice has been Bush's key conduit to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon during a period of unprecedented closeness between the two governments, and Israeli reaction to her appointment was positive.

As Bush's national security adviser, Rice was a key architect of Mideast policy, and Bush seemed to rely on her National Security Council to spearhead policy development in that region.

Notably, Bush named Rice as a Middle East envoy in the summer of 2003, when there was a prospect for peace negotiations between Sharon and then-Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas.

Rice was a vocal advocate for Israel from her White House perch, laud-

ing the U.S.-Israel relationship several times to Jewish audiences and putting the onus squarely on the Palestinians to abandon terrorism and establish a credible government.

"The Palestinian people must replace the failed leadership of decades and build a practicing democracy based on tolerance and liberty," Rice told the American Israel Public Affairs Committee on Oct. 25.

In an exclusive interview with JTA a day later, before the demise of Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, Rice suggested that the best time for U.S. re-engagement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would be when Israel disengages from the Gaza Strip.

"I think what you will see is, if Prime Minister Sharon is successful in moving forward on his disengagement plan, that that could provide a new impetus for the Palestinians to move toward reform as they get ready to take responsibilities in the Gaza, and it could provide an impetus then for a beginning of negotiations between the parties," she said.

That stance isn't likely to find fans among the Palestinians, who see Rice as more willing than Powell to overlook Israel's commitments under the "road map" peace plan. Hamas has called Rice "a Zionist," and Arab media at times have ridiculed her in racist language.

Rice has forged some ties with both Israelis and the American Jewish community. She often has been on the phone with leaders of both groups to explain U.S. Middle East policy and, more than once, to alleviate fears that the White House would sacrifice support for Israel to its broader foreign policy considerations.



NEWS IN BRIEF

WORLD

Nazi-hunting program yields a find

An alleged World War II criminal was located in Austria.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center's Efraim Zuroff announced this week that Austrian and Croatian police have found Milivoj Aschner, 91, who allegedly deported hundreds of Jews, Serbs and Gypsies to Nazi concentration camps during the war.

The discovery of Aschner was made possible by the center's Operation Last Chance, a program offering financial rewards for information on suspected war criminals.

Argentine Jewish cemetery desecrated

A Jewish cemetery near Buenos Aires was desecrated. On Sunday, the Israeli Cemetery of Ciudadela, on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, suffered its fourth anti-Semitic graffiti attack this year, said Abraham Kaul, president of the AMIA Jewish group.

A swastika and a picture of Hitler were drawn, Kaul said.

Russian Jewish group gets new leader

Vladimir Slutsker was unanimously approved as president of the Russian Jewish Congress.

The presidium of the charity group on Tuesday approved the banker, a Kabbalah enthusiast and member of the upper house of Russia's Parliament.

The RJC's former president, Yevgeny Satanovsky, will remain within the group's leadership, overseeing its charity projects, while Slutsker is expected to take over financial matters, religious policy and public relations.

WJC official: I won't go

Isi Leibler refused to leave his post as senior vice president of the World Jewish Congress.

In a letter Sunday to the European Jewish Congress, a copy of which was sent to JTA, Leibler accused the European body of bowing to pressure by WJC governing board chairman Israel Singer and chief operating officer Stephen Herbits, whom Leibler claimed tried to ostracize him after he asked for an independent audit of WJC finances.

At issue was a Swiss bank account containing \$1.2 million that Singer said was set aside for his pension.

The EJC had demanded Leibler's resignation, accusing him of damaging the reputation of the WJC and of hurting the Jewish people by questioning the organization's transparency. But Leibler maintains that Singer dragged the issue to the media in the first place.

In his letter, Leibler also repeats a request to meet with EJC leaders.

MIDDLE EAST

Some settlers want to go

At least 2,000 settlers slated for evacuation have inquired about early relocation, an Israeli official said.

Yonatan Bassi, director of the Disengagement Administration, told reporters Tuesday that "between a quarter and a third" of some 8,000 settlers to be removed from the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank have voiced interest in early compensation.

Bassi said the administration's new Web site allowed settlers to work out how much money they are eligible for.

He added that more applicants are expected once the government's relocation budgets is passed in December.

Israel deports pro-Palestinian activist

Israel deported a British pro-Palestinian activist.

On Monday, Charlotte Carson, who is active in the International Solidarity Movement, was deported for entering Israel illegally.

Carson, who had previously been arrested on charges of trying to thwart Israeli military activities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and of participating in violent demonstrations, entered the country in September by changing her name, government officials said.

Carson is on a list of people who cannot enter Israel.

Tough tactics limited

A new Israeli law restricts Shin Bet interrogators' use of force against suspected terrorists.

The Shin Bet Law was presented Tuesday by the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee after it was drawn up over two years of fierce debate. The law defines the Shin Bet's mandate — counterterrorism, counterintelligence and diplomatic security — and how this should be reconciled with civil rights.

The most burning issue has to do with what the Shin Bet calls "moderate physical pressure," tactics such as sleep deprivation and shaking meant to coerce terror suspects to cooperate with interrogators. Human rights groups denounce the method as torture.

The new law rules out free use of such coercion by the Shin Bet, but allows for interrogators to resort to it if there is evidence the subject is withholding information on an impending terror attack.

If the suspicion is borne out, the interrogator is immune from prosecution.

NORTH AMERICA

Goldman, Cardin honored

Two legendary and beloved Jewish communal leaders received special honors at the United Jewish Communities' General Assembly in Cleveland.

The Jewish Communal Service Association of North America paid tribute at a G.A. breakfast to Ralph Goldman, executive vice president emeritus of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, in honor of his 90th birthday and lifetime of service to world Jewry.

The organization also dedicated a special edition of its Journal of Jewish Communal Service to Shoshana Cardin, who has chaired numerous major national Jewish organizations and umbrella groups.

Mini-E.R. vehicles going to Israel

North American Jews and Christians are donating mini-emergency response vehicles for use in Israel.

The first of six "mini-pumpers" was unveiled Tuesday at the United Jewish Communities' General Assembly in Cleveland.

The pumpers, which are smaller than regular fire-fighting equipment but perform many of the same functions, can be used as first-response vehicles after terrorist attacks.

Jewish communities in Pittsburgh, Los Angeles, New York, Toronto, Mexico and Houston — where the John Hagee Ministries also contributed — paid for the vehicles.

N.Y. show to go on

A New York art show that one lawmaker wanted canceled for being anti-Israel will go on.

After Assemblyman Ryan Scott Karben called on the Westchester County Center to close the exhibit, county executive Andre Spano said he would preview the one-day exhibit, which is slated to be shown this weekend. On Monday, however, Spano backed off his demand, saying any government involvement would constitute censorship, The Associated Press reported.

The slide-show exhibit includes a piece with a tent, called a "Memorial to 418 Palestinian Villages Destroyed, Depopulated and Occupied by Israel in 1948," and another that shows a kaffiyeh trapped in a Star of David made of barbed wire.