

## IN THE NEWS

## Bush seeks more money to help the Palestinians

The Bush administration is seeking another \$50 million in assistance to the Palestinians.

David Welch, the top State Department envoy to the region, told the U.S. House of Representatives on Tuesday that the money is needed for water infrastructure in the wake of Israel's planned departure next month from the Gaza Strip and a portion of the West Bank.

Welch said the Bush administration wants Congress' approval to draw the \$50 million from funds approved in 1999 but yet to be disbursed because of the Palestinian Authority's past corruption and ties to terrorism.

The Bush administration has separately sought a total of \$350 million for the Palestinians, but Congress approved only \$300 million, diverting \$50 million of that money to Israel to build transit stations.

## Study: Gaza cops not up to the job

A U.S. study determined that Palestinian Authority security forces may not be capable of securing the Gaza Strip after Israel's withdrawal.

The Strategic Assessments Initiative, a Washington think tank, released its findings on Gaza on Tuesday.

Corruption-ridden P.A. forces "lacked the capacity and capability to fulfill core functions" and might not be able to prevent Gaza from descending into chaos once Israeli soldiers and settlers leave next month, the report said.

## Sharon's son indicted in scandal

The son of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was indicted on charges of illegally financing his father's Likud Party primary campaign.

Attorney General Menachem Mazuz filed charges against Omri Sharon on Tuesday, prompting the Likud lawmaker to forfeit his parliamentary immunity.

# WORLD REPORT

PUBLISHED WEEKDAYS BY JTA—THE GLOBAL NEWS SERVICE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE • WWW.JTA.ORG

## Bush's choice for Israel posting known as direct, affable family man

By RON KAMPEAS

**W**ASHINGTON (JTA) — Richard Jones, President Bush's nominee as the next U.S. ambassador to Israel, is a career Middle East hand well-known among his colleagues as a straight-shooting purveyor of U.S. foreign policy, with a disarmingly goofy sense of humor.

Israelis will be pleased to know that one of Jones' few brushes with controversy came in 1997 when, as the U.S. ambassador to Lebanon, he incurred Hezbollah's wrath for grieving 73 Israeli troops who died in a helicopter accident en route to the front.

In his most recent capacity as a senior adviser on Iraq, Jones' willingness to stump for a troubled occupation that many of his colleagues would rather avoid has won him the affection of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

Since March 1, Jones, 54, has served as Rice's senior adviser on Iraq policy, entering her inner circle of advisers.

That qualification makes Jones a good choice, said Abraham Foxman, the national director of the Anti-Defamation League, who noted that Jones otherwise is an unknown quantity in the Jewish community.

"The key part is his relationship to the secretary of state and his experience in the Middle East," Foxman said. "The secretary of state is building her team. This is a very good indication of how seriously she's looking at it."

If confirmed by the Senate, Jones — an Arabic speaker who has held several Middle East posts — will succeed Daniel Kurtzer, the first observant Jew to serve as ambassador to Israel. Kurtzer is currently completing a four-year term.

One immediate advantage for Jones is that he is not burdened by Kurtzer's Jewishness, Foxman said.

"Kurtzer ended up being analyzed and subanalyzed" by Jews in Israel and the United States, Foxman said, "which was not appropriate. He was a representative of the U.S. government, period."

Jones has been best known in recent years for his unstinting optimism about Iraq. In May 2004, he told a conference in Kuwait, where he was serving as ambassador, that "despite the steady drumbeat of negative news that we all receive every day about the situation in Iraq, I am absolutely optimistic about the country's long-term prospects."

That preceded a deepening of the Iraqi resistance that has proven increasingly bloody.

David Mack, a former assistant deputy secretary of state, attended the Kuwait colloquium and said at the time that the outlook Jones put forward was naive.

In an interview this week, Mack — the vice president of the Middle East Institute in Washington — stressed that he had not meant to criticize Jones directly. Jones was acting as a consummate professional, Mack said, advocating U.S. policy to the best of his abilities.

"He has come across with the highest praise, from host governments and U.S. governments," Mack told JTA. "He's a damn good choice."

Bart Marcois, a former Foreign Service officer who was close to Jones in Kuwait, agreed.

"He was always keenly interested in carrying out the exact instructions of the White

*Continued on page 2*

BEHIND  
THE  
HEADLINES

## ■ Richard Jones appointed to Israel post

*Continued from page 1*

House and the Department of State," he told JTA.

Journalists appreciate Jones for his straight-up answers; in one instance, that got him into trouble when a reporter in Beirut asked him to comment on the 1997 helicopter accident on Israel's border with Lebanon.

The accident "makes you feel sorrow for the individuals involved and for their families," he replied. "I think that anytime you see the loss of life on that scale, no matter what side of the conflict you're on, you should not rejoice."

That was too much for Hezbollah, which issued calls for his ouster. The terrorist group had called the crash of Israeli helicopters headed for a mission inside Lebanon "divine justice."

Jones would not back down, but issued a statement saying that his "humanitarian" comments had been misconstrued.

Colleagues went out of their way to praise Jones, saying he was a good manager and extremely affable.

Friends who would drop by Jones' home in Beirut when he was serving as ambassador there recalled finding the tall, good-looking Nebraskan poolside atop his unicycle, wearing bike shorts and juggling. He is a devoted father to his four children, friends said.

A photo on a Pentagon Web site shows Jones getting up close and personal with a couple of mine-detecting dolphins during his stint in Kuwait.

Jones has a business doctorate from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and is

something of a math geek, having patented a math game. His directness and affability could serve him well in Israel.

"He's professional, detached, extremely personable, capable of analysis," said Aaron David Miller, an adviser to six U.S. secretaries of state on Arab-Israeli negotiations. "He's direct and honest, and Israelis are direct and can be blunt."

That directness will serve him well in coming months, Miller said, as the United States seeks to nudge Israel and the Palestinians back to substantive peace talks once Israel withdraws next month from the Gaza Strip and northern West Bank.

"Israel's a close friend, and at times friends have to talk with great candor and honesty with friends," said Miller, who now heads Seeds of Peace, a nonprofit dialogue group for teenagers from regions of conflict. "Dick is capable of that."

Career diplomats rarely face problems getting confirmed by the Senate, but one incident involving contractors in Iraq may shadow Jones.

Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.), the ranking member of the House of Representatives' Committee on Government Reform, discovered last November that in December 2003 Jones intervened as the am-

bassador to Kuwait in pressuring Halliburton — the major contractor in the Iraq war — to retain a Kuwaiti subcontractor.

Waxman uncovered an e-mail from Jones urging Halliburton officials to "get off their butts and conclude deals with Kuwait NOW!"

Altanmia, a subcontractor to Halliburton favored by the Kuwaiti government, at the time was the

sole company providing gasoline to Iraq. Jones said he wanted "a deal done with Altanmia within 24 hours and don't take any excuses."

Military personnel objected, saying the directive ignored guidelines that encouraged competitive subcontracting. A Pentagon audit later said Altanmia might have overcharged the U.S. government by as much as \$61 million.

A State Department spokesman said at the time that Jones was simply trying to get gasoline into Iraq as quickly as possible, but his intervention might have violated U.S. government guidelines that restrict contract negotiations only to career government-contracting officers.

Waxman went out of his way at the time to single Jones out for criticism, a factor that might influence Senate Democrats during confirmation hearings. ■

**'He's professional, detached, extremely personable, capable of analysis.'**

**Aaron David Miller**

Former U.S. diplomat

## Polls: Americans, Europeans for pullout

WASHINGTON (JTA) — A vast majority of American opinion elites and Europeans support Israel's upcoming Gaza withdrawal, according to new polls.

A series of polls released Tuesday by The Israel Project show that 89 percent of educated, well-off Americans are in favor of Israel's upcoming withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank, and 88 percent favor the establishment of a Palestinian state under present conditions.

When asked about their views regarding Israel's plans to "close settlements and withdraw from Gaza and parts of the West Bank," 56 percent of the 500 U.S. respondents said they strongly support the move and 33 percent said they somewhat support it, as opposed to 5 percent who

oppose the plan. In France and the United Kingdom, the planned disengagement was cited as the factor that most inspired favorable views of Israel.

The disengagement will cause "a profound paradigm shift in how Europeans look at Israel," Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi, president of The Israel Project, told JTA on Tuesday. "This is tremendously positive news for Israel and for the Jews who live in Europe, because there's a close link between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism."

The polls, conducted by Stanley Greenberg, also showed a marked drop since 2002 in the number of Europeans saying their governments should favor the Palestinians. ■

### JTA WORLD REPORT

**Howard E. Friedman**  
President

**Mark J. Joffe**  
Executive Editor and Publisher

**Lisa Hostein**  
Editor

**Michael S. Arnold**  
Managing Editor

**Lenore A. Silverstein**  
Finance and Administration Director

**Noa Artzi-Weill**  
Marketing Director

JTA WORLD REPORT is published five days a week, except holidays, by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Inc., 330 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001-5010. For more information about how to subscribe by e-mail, fax or regular mail, call (212) 643-1890, or visit our Web site at [www.jta.org](http://www.jta.org).  
© JTA. Reproduction only with permission.

# Guidebook is road map to Jewish innovation

By RACHEL POMERANCE

NEW YORK (JTA) — Young Jews flocked recently to a narrow lounge on Manhattan's Lower East Side, where black-clad servers mixed tangerine cocktails and offered fried zucchini and pizza with figs.

Welcome to the launch party for Slingshot, a guidebook to the 50 most innovative Jewish groups in North America, published by a division of the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies that works with family foundations.

The idea is the brainchild of young Jewish philanthropists who wanted to fuel innovation in the Jewish world. Slingshot, which is expected to be published annually, aims to showcase meaningful but often cash-strapped programs to philanthropists who can help fund them.

The Lower East Side occupies a key place in the collective American consciousness as the urban mecca, where hundreds of thousands of immigrants launched their American dreams in the late-19th and early-20th centuries. The project organizers referred to the area's past as they stressed the importance of revitalizing North American Jewry — a goal the 50 honored groups share.

"These groups collectively represent the future of American Jewry," said Jeremy Burton, the director of strategic initiatives for the Jewish Fund for Justice, which fights poverty in the United States. "They are doing programs that speak to a younger audience, and they're not tied to, just because we did it this way we continue to do it this way."

After assembling recommendations from Jewish philanthropists, 25 foundation professionals who fund Jewish programs chose the final 50 groups based on their performance in innovation, impact, leadership and efficiency.

The Slingshot project comes just months after the demise of a key grant maker for American Jewish innovation, Joshua Venture: A Fellowship for Jewish Social Entrepreneurs, which awarded two-year fellowships to young Jews pioneering pluralistic programs in the Jewish community.

After five years, the program, which had been partially funded by Steven Spielberg, closed in March due to a shortfall in funds.

There are other initiatives to jump-start creative programs in Jewish life. Natan, a

network of young philanthropists, wants to "transform the Jewish future by funding innovative solutions to address crucial questions in Jewish life," according to its Web site. Bikkurim: An Incubator for New Jewish Ideas, sponsored by the Jewish Education Service of North America, the United Jewish Communities federation umbrella, and the Kaminer family, gives start-ups office space, professional support and access to established Jewish groups.

Slingshot's supporters say backing the 50 groups is smart because these groups are already

remaking the Jewish community.

"This is the low-risk, high-reward investment," Jeffrey Solomon, the president of the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies, told the crowd, a mixture of representatives from the 50 honoree groups and members of philanthropic foundations.

The organization that garnered the most recommendations among the "innovative 50" is the American Jewish World Service. The group, which focuses on long-term economic projects in the developing world, has been at the forefront of aiding victims of the December 2004 tsunami in Southeast Asia.

"Twenty years after its founding, AJWS stays innovative by adding fresh programs such as Alternative Spring Break trips to Central America for college-age and other young Jewish volunteers looking to define their Jewish identity in an international service context," the guidebook states.

According to the Slingshot preface, the challenges that American Jews face in 2005 stem from assimilation. Because Jews are not externally compelled to live Jewish lives, they must inspire each other internally to feel connected to the Jewish community.

Many of the guidebook's picks are programs that blend Judaism with American culture and society, allowing participants to nurture each side of their American Jewish identities.

For example, Avodah: The Jewish Service Corps, awards one-year fellowships to recent college graduates to work on urban-poverty issues in America. Over the course of the year, fellows work for social-welfare

organizations, gather for study sessions that combine Jewish learning and social-activism training, and live in a house with seven to 10 others, where they celebrate Shabbat.

Another featured group is Kehilat Hadar, a traditional, egalitarian minyan on Manhattan's Upper West Side. Led by volunteers, the independent minyan has become a hot spot for Jews in their 20s and 30s, drawing crowds to biweekly services, regulars to weekly Torah-study classes, and more than 300 people to a Shavuot retreat.

These groups are "making Judaism matter for the current generation and the next generation," said Aaron Bisman, the executive director of JDub Records, who addressed the gathering on behalf of the 50 honorees.

JDub Records, which promotes innovative Jewish music based on reggae and hip-hop, has reached more than 45,000 people through events and CD sales since its founding three years ago.

One way that the 50 groups become relevant is to draw on traditional Judaism to create programs that meet the needs of people in contemporary society.

Take the example of Rosh Hodesh: It's a Girl Thing!

The organization provides a Jewish context for monthly meetings for adolescent girls to discuss issues ranging from friendship to body image. A moderator leads a small gathering of girls, who meet each month with their peer group from about age 12 through the end of high school.

In its three years of existence the program has grown from 40 to 145 groups across North America.

According to the Rosh Hodesh chairwoman, Sally Gottesman, the group has succeeded because it is "meeting the real needs of girls" — that is, building self-esteem.

But for many of the groups included in Slingshot, simply staying afloat is a struggle.

"We didn't have an office until a couple of years ago," said Josh Neuman, the editor of Heeb, an irreverent magazine with some 125,000 readers.

(A full list of the organizations in Slingshot is at <http://www.2164.net/slingshot.html>)

These groups are 'making Judaism matter for the current generation and the next generation.'

Aaron Bisman

Executive director, JDub Records

FOCUS  
ON  
ISSUES

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### MIDDLE EAST

#### Degrees of separation

Israel further restricted entry to Gaza Strip settlements.

The Israeli army said Tuesday that only residents and their first-degree relatives would be allowed to enter Gaza, which was formally sealed off earlier this month before its planned evacuation in August.

Earlier restrictions had allowed outsiders to visit if they could claim a good reason, but authorities said the provision was abused by hundreds of activists who flocked to the main settlement bloc, Gush Katif, intent on helping residents resist evacuation.

#### Opponents curse Sharon

Israelis opposed to the upcoming Gaza Strip withdrawal reportedly put a death curse on Ariel Sharon.

Yediot Achronot reported Tuesday that 20 religious Jews gathered in the northern town of Rosh Pina over the weekend for an ancient rite, which involves mystical incantations by candlelight.

According to Ynet, the paper's Web site, the participants asked God to strike Sharon down to prevent next month's withdrawal from Gaza and the northern West Bank.

"Better that God, rather than a mortal, kill him because his bodyguards are just too good," one participant was quoted as saying.

The Shin Bet declined comment on the report, which recalled similar curses placed on Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin before his assassination in 1995.

#### Practicing for the pullout

Israel launched a massive exercise for security forces slated to carry out the Gaza Strip withdrawal.

Several thousand troops and police personnel were dispatched to Tze'elim army base in the Negev on Tuesday for drills scheduled to continue until the actual evacuations of Gaza and the northern West Bank begin next month.

An urban-warfare training ground in Tze'elim has been adapted to resemble a Gaza settlement, and security forces are to practice evacuating it house by house.

There also are combat scenarios to prepare troops for settlers who turn violent or for ambushes by Palestinians.

#### Wary of the West Bank

Palestinian terrorists are gathering strength in the West Bank, Israel's security chief said.

Yuval Diskin, the director of the Shin Bet security service, told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee on Tuesday that Palestinian terrorists may be maintaining relative calm in the Gaza Strip before Israel's planned withdrawal from the area but are improving their capabilities in the West Bank.

"They want to move the scene of the struggle to Judea and Samaria," he said.

### NORTH AMERICA

#### Church group 'appreciates' Gaza exit

A liberal U.S. church coalition that in the past has criticized Israel expressed appreciation for its planned Gaza withdrawal and compassion for settlers.

Churches for Middle East Peace, comprising 21 Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant churches, wrote Monday to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon that it "appreciates your decision to withdraw Israeli settlers and soldiers from the Gaza Strip and northern West Bank."

"We feel compassion for the people who must move from their

homes and for the whole of Israeli society during this difficult time that has generated many strong feelings."

The letter also appealed to Sharon "to stop expanding settlements and building the separation barrier on land in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem."

#### O.U. protests treatment of religious

The Orthodox Union expressed concern about reports that Israeli authorities are singling out the Orthodox in their efforts to prevent withdrawal protesters from reaching the Gaza Strip.

"Recent reports and eyewitness accounts have described security forces stopping, questioning and in some instances detaining persons traveling in both public and private vehicles solely because those persons wore kipot," the Orthodox Union wrote last Friday to Israel's ambassador to Washington, Daniel Ayalon.

"Actions such as these represent religious discrimination and bigotry that would not be tolerated in any country. It is heart rending and distressing beyond words for this to be happening in the Jewish state, for which we pray each and every day." Said David Siegel, a spokesman for the embassy: "No such discrimination knowingly took place. Israel's law enforcement officials, many of them religious, acted under the full authority of the attorney general to prevent an illegal demonstration threatening public order."

#### Agudah welcomes education plan

Agudath Israel of America welcomed an Internal Revenue Service ruling that allows parents to deduct special-education tuition as medical expenses.

In a recent letter to yeshivas and Orthodox accountants, Agudath Israel explained the ruling, issued earlier this year, as well as the terms under which families can deduct their special-education tuition expenses.

"This ruling should be wonderful news for many parents in our community whose children receive special education," said Leah Steinberg, director of the group's community service project known as LEARN.

### WORLD

#### U.N. official urged to condemn colleague

The Anti-Defamation League asked the U.N. human rights commissioner to condemn a colleague's statements against Israel.

Speaking to a pro-Palestinian demonstration in Geneva on July 5, Jean Ziegler, the U.N. special rapporteur on the right to food, reportedly referred to the Gaza Strip as an "immense concentration camp" and to Israeli soldiers as its guards, adding that only an unconditional withdrawal of "colonists" from the West Bank would bring peace and justice.

The ADL's national director, Abraham Foxman, said Monday that he is disappointed by the response to the incident from Louise Arbour, the U.N. high commissioner for human rights, suggesting that Arbour's letter last Friday distancing herself from Ziegler's remarks was not sufficient.

#### Torah scroll stolen from Antwerp synagogue

A Torah scroll was stolen from a Belgian synagogue. Police reported that there were no traces of a break-in after the incident at the Rav Amiel Synagogue in Antwerp last week.

They suspect that a person familiar with the building entered using the regular entry code between July 21 and Saturday morning, and used a key to open the Holy Ark.