

IN THE NEWS

FBI wants to talk to Israeli diplomat

The FBI wants to interview an Israeli diplomat at the center of an espionage investigation.

Federal agents contacted the Israeli Embassy in Washington to interview Naor Gilon, who this month is completing a three-year term as the embassy's top political officer, a spokesman said Thursday.

"There are contacts between the U.S. and the Israeli government on this topic," the spokesman told JTA.

Larry Franklin, a Pentagon analyst, has been indicted on charges of leaking classified information to Gilon, and two former staffers at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee allegedly face indictments as early as next month on charges that they relayed classified information to Gilon.

Vatican, Israel in a verbal tiff

The Vatican lashed out at Israel for demanding to know why the pope left attacks on Israelis out of a condemnation of terrorism.

"The Holy See cannot take lessons or instructions from any other authority on the tone and content of its own statements," the Vatican said Thursday.

U.S., Israeli fight over arms exports

The United States reportedly is demanding that Israel's defense minister apologize in writing for a dispute over arms exports.

Shaul Mofaz was expected to fly to Washington last week to sign an accord with the Pentagon that would clarify terms for Israeli weapons sales to China and India, but called off the trip after American officials made the demand for an apology, Ha'aretz reported Wednesday.

A spokesman at the Israeli Embassy in Washington said, "Consultations on this issue with the administration continue."

■ **MORE NEWS, Pg. 8**



WORLD REPORT

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



Amos BenGershom/GPO/BP Images

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, center, inspects temporary housing being built for settlers due to be evacuated from Gaza at the Nitzanim construction site in southern Israel.

As Gaza withdrawal approaches, worries mount for Israel's Sharon

By LESLIE SUSSER

JERUSALEM (JTA) — With the planned Israeli withdrawal from Gaza less than three weeks away, right-wing leaders say they haven't yet given up hope of preventing it.

According to the Israeli Defense Forces, about 2,000 right-wingers have managed to pass through the army cordon around Gaza and are planning to join up with radical settlers there to resist the evacuation by force.

But that's not Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's only worry.

Palestinians continue to launch terrorist attacks in and around Gaza, and they will al-

most certainly try to step up their activities during the evacuation.

Sharon promises firm action on both fronts. More than 60,000 soldiers and police have been assigned to respond to recalcitrant settlers or rogue Palestinian terror attacks.

Should the Palestinians attack, Sharon has warned that Israel will employ harsher retaliatory measures than in the past. Some pundits speculate that this could even mean shelling civilian areas in retaliation for Palestinian attacks on Israeli population centers.

As difficult as carrying out the withdrawal may prove to be, an even larger question looms: What happens after Sharon pulls out of Gaza

Continued on page 2

NEWS ANALYSIS

■ Sharon in a difficult juggling act as pullout nears

Continued from page 1

and the northern West Bank? He will be under enormous pressure from the United States, the international community and the Palestinians to make further withdrawals from the West Bank — and under equally strong pressure from the Israeli right wing and his own Likud Party to stay put.

And there's another taxing issue that is critical for Israel's future: How will religious Zionists at the forefront of the settler movement redefine their relationship to the secular state they have been defying so bitterly for so long on the withdrawal issue?

The settler leaders say that they're planning more large-scale anti-withdrawal protests in advance of the pullout, which is scheduled to begin Aug. 15. They say they were heartened by the huge turnout for last week's demonstration at Kfar Maimon, a national religious movement community about 8 miles east of the Gaza Strip.

The demonstration took place at Kfar Maimon only because police and army units prevented the protesters from marching to the Gaza Strip itself. This exercise of control by the Israeli security forces and the fact that there was no serious violence in the two-day standoff between the security forces and the demonstrators led several pundits to conclude that the withdrawal will go through more peacefully than expected.

Still, some pundits fear that the 2,000 activists who have slipped into Gaza could turn the withdrawal into a violent showdown.

In an editorial, the Ha'aretz newspaper urged the government to act now to head off the potential threat: The Gaza settlements, the paper wrote, "must be combed to locate the infiltrators, and they should be arrested and tried." Otherwise, Ha'aretz argued, the government would be projecting weakness and inviting more infiltration.

On the Palestinian side, the Palestinian Authority has promised to deploy 5,000 policemen as a "shield" against rogue terrorists. The P.A. also has reached an agreement with Hamas not to launch attacks on the withdrawing Israelis.

But rogue organizations like Islamic Jihad and some groups associated with the Palestinians' ruling Fatah movement aren't part of the cease-fire deal. Both groups claimed responsibility for Saturday night's shooting of an Israeli couple near the Gush Katif junction in the Gaza Strip.

In addition, a new report by a Washington think-tank prepared in close coordination with Lt. Gen. William Ward, the American-appointed coordinator of the effort to overhaul the P.A. security apparatus, found P.A. security forces in disarray and unable to function effectively, suggesting that they will be hard-pressed to maintain security once Israel withdraws from Gaza.

In the past few days, Sharon repeatedly has said that Israel will not tolerate terrorist attacks during the planned pullout. At a top-level security meeting Sunday, Sharon warned that if the Palestinians fail to restrain rogue terrorists, Israel will feel free to retaliate with a ferocity not seen in the four-year-long intifada.

IDF generals acknowledge that this could entail a sweeping land operation through Gaza, as well as a more-powerful use of air power and artillery.

During the evacuation, the IDF says it expects that 70 percent of Gaza's 8,000 settlers will leave voluntarily. That means the generals estimate that about 2,500 settlers will dig in, joined by at least 2,000 "infiltrators" from the outside.

Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz says he expects the entire operation, which will start in northern Gaza and sweep south, to last for two to four weeks.

Ironically, the smoother the pullout goes, the higher the stakes for Israel. Sharon has been saying that once the army pulls back to the new lines, he does not intend to go any further.

But the Americans and other key

players in the international community see a successful Gaza pullout as a prelude to further Israeli concessions in the West Bank that kick-start a new peace dynamic with the Palestinians.

As for the Palestinians, they are expected to launch a new intifada if, after the Gaza pullout, the process bogs down — or, as many observers warn, even if it doesn't.

In the internal Israeli debate, hawks like Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu argue that further withdrawals will only whet the Palestinian appetite and invite international pressure for more pullbacks without any Palestinian quid pro quo.

But doves in the Labor Party and to its left argue that unless Sharon follows up with a substantial withdrawal from the West Bank, the Gaza pullout will not achieve its basic goals: the establishment of a clear Jewish majority in an Israel with something akin to internationally agreed borders, the end of the nightmare scenario of a binational state with a Palestinian majority, and the regaining of the moral high ground by rolling back the occupation.

Any further pullbacks will have a profound effect on the national religious movement.

The run-up to the Gaza withdrawal has sparked animated debate over future relations between religious Zionism and the Jewish state. Others call for an end to religious Jews' obsession with "the land" and for a new focus on the state's Jewish content.

These political and religious debates, at the cutting edge of Israeli society today, hold the key to Israel's future character. ■

Some pundits fear that the 2,000 activists who have slipped into Gaza could turn the withdrawal into a violent showdown.

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.
© JTA. Reproduction only with permission.

Roberts nomination meets little Jewish opposition

By MATTHEW E. BERGER

WASHINGTON (JTA) — So far, the nomination of Judge John Roberts to the U.S. Supreme Court has ruffled few feathers in the American Jewish community.

Many Jewish organizational leaders were poised to fiercely oppose a conservative nominee — and to earmark resources to influence senators who must confirm him — but many have decided to wait until after Roberts' confirmation hearings before determining whether to officially endorse or oppose him.

That's despite the fact that delaying any initiative to oppose Roberts likely would lessen its impact compared to a push before the hearings, which are scheduled for later this summer.

Groups that have a high standard for speaking out against a nominee say that, barring unforeseen circumstances, they won't advocate against Roberts.

Most Jewish groups have taken a step back since Roberts was nominated July 19, acknowledging that his views on issues — to the extent that they're known — are within what the groups consider acceptable bounds for a Supreme Court justice.

At the same time, they say that not enough is known about Roberts' legal ideology to judge him before the confirmation hearings.

Many suggest that President Bush's selection of Roberts may have been designed to avoid an immediate fight — and that Bush's choice may even have been influenced by the fact that Jewish groups and other liberal advocates were ready to oppose an arch conservative.

"He picked someone we're going to have to take a close look at the record on," said Rabbi David Saperstein, the director of the Washington-based Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism. "It wasn't someone who is so well known or controversial beforehand that folks would have lined up against him in advance."

Roberts served on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit for just two years. He also has a body of work from his four years as deputy solicitor general under the first President Bush, but it's unclear how much can be made of his writings in that post because he

was advocating for a client — the federal government — and not expressing his personal views.

One organization already has announced its opposition to him: The National Council of Jewish Women says Roberts has worked to erode fundamental rights, including abortion rights. They cite a brief he authored in the Solicitor General's Office advocating the overturn of *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark 1973 case that legalized abortion.

The NCJW also opposed Roberts when he was named to the appellate court in 2003.

"We felt his record showed him as someone who failed to defend constitutional rights, including reproductive rights," the NCJW's president, Phyllis Snyder, said.

While Roberts is more conservative than most of the Jewish community on issues such as abortion and church-state separation, he is well-respected as a legal mind. In addition, his personal views on the controversial issues of the day are less clear than those of past nominees, such as Robert Bork, who was nominated to the Supreme Court in 1987.

Bork, whose nomination was rejected by a Democrat-controlled Senate, raised the ire of many Jews. Analysts say it's unlikely Roberts' confirmation will be as contentious.

Before Roberts' nomination was announced, Jewish organizations and other groups were bringing pressure on the Anti-Defamation League and the American Jewish Committee, two groups that largely avoid nomination battles, to weigh in. That pressure has eased in the past week.

Both the ADL and the AJCommittee said it would take extreme circumstances for them to weigh in on Roberts.

Meanwhile, Republican Jews have been working to sell the nominee. The White House has been reaching out to Jewish leaders to gauge concerns and, thus far, hasn't heard serious qualms or hints of fierce resistance, sources said.

The White House also expressed hopes that Orthodox organizations might come to Roberts' defense if his devout Catholicism becomes an issue. An Op-Ed in Monday's Los Angeles Times by a law professor at George Washington University suggested that Roberts would be torn between constitutional law and Catholic dogma on questions such as abortion or the death penalty.

Nathan Diament, the director of the Orthodox Union's Institute for Public Affairs,

said his group would work to ensure that there's no religious litmus test for judges.

"If senators are suggesting they are going to inquire whether John Roberts is fit for office on the basis of his devout Catholicism, then we are going to say loudly and clearly: 'That's offensive and unconstitutional,'" Diament said.

The Republican Jewish Coalition also circulated an e-mail highlighting Roberts' comments during his 2003 confirmation hearings, in which he called the Supreme Court's position on *Roe v. Wade* "binding precedent."

"He was very clear that he was not necessarily representing his own views, he was representing the views of his client," said Matthew Brooks, the RJC's executive director.

The RJC's e-mail seems to challenge what many of Roberts' advocates have been saying about his abortion-rights views, especially to the White House's conservative base. While conservatives claim that Roberts opposes abortion, the RJC's message to the Jewish community is aimed at mollifying pro-choice Jews, including Republicans.

"This is an issue that's on a lot of people's minds," said Brooks, who would not rule out an advertising campaign in support of Roberts. "We are giving people the facts to draw their own conclusions."

Ira Forman, the executive director of the National Jewish Democratic Council, said his group was considering whether to campaign against Roberts.

'He picked someone we're going to have to take a close look at the record on.'

Rabbi David Saperstein

Director, Religious Action Center
of Reform Judaism

FOCUS
ON
ISSUES

Jews take personal responsibility to teach

By TZVI KAHN

NEW YORK (JTA) — For most college students, road trips are a time for relaxing and escaping the rigors of school.

But for Talia Kahn — no relation to this writer — a 10-day car trip served a far loftier purpose: to educate people about the genocide occurring in the Darfur region of Sudan.

Kahn, who is entering her junior year at Claremont McKenna College in Claremont, Calif., recently joined four friends — Melinda Koster, Betsy Marder, Daniela Urban and Candice Camargo, all college students or recent graduates — for a whirlwind tour of Los Angeles, San Diego and Santa Barbara, among other locales, where the quintet spoke at various schools and synagogues and distributed fliers and solicited petition signatures at grocery stores.

The group also met with several state legislators in Sacramento, as well as staff members at the offices of Democratic U.S. Sens. Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein, to encourage them to speak out on Darfur.

The initiative by Kahn and her friends is one of a growing number of grass-roots efforts by Jews throughout the country who have taken it upon themselves to raise awareness about the genocide in Sudan.

The violence in Darfur began in February 2003 when government-backed Arab militias launched a systematic campaign

to wipe out members of three African ethnic communities.

According to the United Nations, more than 400,000 people have died, and 2 million have fled their homes.

Many of those involved in raising awareness of the violence say a chief motivating force in their activism is the Jewish people's history of persecution, adding that they believe their Jewishness entails special social responsibilities.

Kahn and her friends were particularly well received at Adolfo Camarillo High School in Camarillo, Calif., where the group spoke to several classes about the situation in Darfur and urged them to sign petitions and write letters to local newspapers.

The visit "was really inspiring because a lot of the students were really appalled that they hadn't heard of this," Kahn says.

Individual members of the group had been promoting activism about Darfur on their own campuses, and Urban says they wanted to bring some of that awareness to the

broader Jewish community.

The five first met last spring on a trip to El Salvador sponsored by the American Jewish World Service aimed at promoting social justice and global responsibility.

The recent road trip, which received partial funding from the AJWS, was a follow-up project designed to apply the lessons and skills they learned on their El Salvador visit.

Urban notes that the road trip has made her realize how much one individual can achieve.

"We were really touched by

how much we were able to accomplish," she says. "It really encouraged me to take on similar projects."

In California's Marin County, grass-roots work took a somewhat different form. Gerri Miller, a retired teacher and a lay leader in the county's Congregation Rodef Shalom and the Jewish Community Relations Council, founded a local organization called Dear Sudan, Love Marin, which seeks to raise

awareness of the Sudan crisis among local synagogues, churches, schools and other community groups and collect funds for the relief effort.

Miller says the initiative was inspired by a similar effort in neighboring Petaluma County — known as Dear Sudan, Love Petaluma — launched by the Church World Service. The two groups have inspired several similar initiatives across the country.

The groups' titles refer to a symbolic letter to the people of Sudan that expresses each county's solidarity with their ordeal.

"The letter basically says we refuse to turn our backs on genocide," Miller says. "The way it was written really spoke to me as a human being."

In addition to its educational and fund-raising efforts, Dear Sudan, Love Marin is organizing a public candlelight prayer vigil slated for October.

Marilyn Hirsch, an activist in Contra Costa County's Temple Isaiah who founded Dear Sudan, Love Contra Costa, says religious groups of all denominations in her community have united in support of the Darfur issue.

"It's truly an interfaith effort," she says.

Both Hirsch and Miller say they've been particularly encouraged by the support they've received from local federations and organizations such as the AJWS.

Still, though the AJWS has helped publicize their efforts and provided them with information about the crisis, the initiative was entirely their own.

"It's a grass-roots effort in the Bay Area to become a leader to raise awareness," says Elizabeth Friedman-Branoff, the director of the AJWS' Bay Area

Many say a chief motivating force in their activism is the Jewish people's history of persecution.

FOCUS
ON
ISSUES



Teens 4 Peace

Teens 4 Peace members protest the Darfur genocide on April 22 in Washington.

regional office. "People are encouraged not only to do something themselves but to spread the word back to their communities."

Grass-roots efforts haven't been limited to college students and synagogue lay leaders. In Yardley, Pa., Rachel Koretsky, 12, raised more than \$10,000 in her community for Darfur victims by sending letters to synagogue congregants, organizing raffles and selling plastic bracelets that read "Save Darfur."

Jaime Bergerson, who will be a junior at Winston Churchill High School in Potomac, Md., this fall, recently founded

Teens 4 Peace, a nonprofit organization that seeks "to empower and utilize the energy, interest and resources of teens to address issues of social injustice and to become a force in addressing their resolution," according to the group's mission statement.

Bergerson says that while the group aims to address a wide range of social issues, Darfur is at the top of its agenda. Teens 4 Peace presently has more than 100 chapters in high schools across the country working on petitions, letter-writing and divestment campaigns, and educational programs on Sudan.

Last April, Teens 4 Peace organized a rally protesting the Darfur genocide in front of the Sudanese Embassy in Washington. More than 500 people attended, Bergerson says.

Bergerson is also working on a film documentary about the crisis, which will feature interviews with family members of people who died in Darfur.

Bergerson says she was inspired to found Teens 4 Peace when her English teacher told her class to write essays about the atrocities in Sudan.

"As someone who's Jewish, I think it's particularly important," she says. ■

Prayer weekend for Darfur marked in Congress and synagogues

By AVI MAYER

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The hustle and bustle in one of the larger Capitol Hill hearing rooms drew to a brief standstill recently as congressional representatives, clergy, activists and journalists paused for a moment of prayer on behalf of the people of Sudan.

The July 19 commemoration occurred in the course of a congressional event launching a National Weekend of Prayer and Reflection for the situation in Sudan, observed last Friday through Sunday by thousands of religious congregations around the country.

The post-Holocaust mantra "never again" echoed throughout the chamber as more than a dozen members of Congress rose to address the crowd.

In welcoming the participants, Rep. Robert Wexler (D-Fla.), who organized the event, said humanity has a moral obligation to ensure that the "darkest moments in history" are not repeated and that the weekend serves as an opportunity to speak out against the situation in Sudan.

"America was founded on the fundamental principles of justice, freedom and sanctity of life," he said. "Humanity cannot afford to sit back as genocide unfolds once again before our eyes. We must raise our voices in hope and prayer for the people of Darfur before it is too late."

Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kan.) called on the audience to "lift up" the people of Sudan in peace and prayer.

"Please, this weekend, pray," he said forcefully. "Pray like you've never prayed before."

Rep. Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.) spoke of the significance of the phrase "never again."

"Never again is a phrase we have all heard before," she said. "We have all said it before. Never again will we let 6 million Jews perish under the noses of the civilized world. Never again will we let Rwandans be rounded up and indiscriminately killed because of their tribal affiliation. Never again will we allow ethnic cleaning in the Balkans."

"My colleagues," Lowey said, "there is a problem with the phrase 'never again.' It is usually said after the violence is over — as a rallying cry against history repeating itself. We have seen, time and time again, that history does repeat itself, and it is simply

not enough to say we will prevent it next time. We must end the genocide in Darfur now."

Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.) recalled saying "never again" in the Capitol rotunda in commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day, and said she looks at the situation in Sudan both as a Jew and as a grandmother:

"I don't want to have to look into the eyes of my grandchildren and have them ask me, Grandma, you were there, you were in Congress when all those innocent lives were taken; what did you do?" she said.

Millions of Americans participated in the prayer weekend as houses of worship held awareness events and religious leaders dedicated their sermons to the Darfur crisis.

Hundreds of synagogues took part, with some providing congregants with information on how to contact their elected officials and others encouraging the recitation of prayers chosen for the occasion.

At the Orthodox Kemp Mill Synagogue in Silver Spring, Md., Bar Mitzvah boy Gavi Brown led the congregation in reciting a prayer he had written on behalf of the people of Sudan.

Rabbi Marcus Burstein of the Reform Temple Rodef Shalom in Falls Church, Va., spoke to congregants about the importance of action.

"What have you done?" he asked congregants.

Drawing on a statement from the American Jewish World Service, Burstein reflected on the opportunity for self-reflection provided by the week's Torah portion, Balak. He noted Abraham Joshua Heschel's assertion that "in a free society where terrible wrongs exist, some are guilty, but all are responsible."

"We may not be guilty," he told the congregation, "but we are all responsible."

The temple also provided congregants with a suggested script for appeals to elected officials as well as information from the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, Burstein said.

Burstein said his congregation has held numerous activities to raise awareness about the situation in Sudan over the past year, including a Darfur Shabbat with a speaker from the region and fund-raising activities that have brought in several thousand dollars for the victims. ■

FOCUS
ON
ISSUES

Ex-AIPAC director to head federation

By JOE ESKENAZI
j. the Jewish news weekly
of Northern California

SAN FRANCISCO (JTA) — In 1992, the San Francisco Giants filled a hole in left field by signing a man named Barry Bonds. In 2005, the San Francisco-based Jewish Community Federation filled a hole in its chief executive's office by signing a man named Tom Dine.

An ill-fitting comparison, you say? Perhaps it is. After all, when Bonds came to San Francisco, no one in his or her right mind was anticipating a 73-home run season. But federation executives, lay leaders and myriad members of the Jewish community are fully expecting huge, even historic, achievements from Dine.

And so is he.

"If you don't raise the bar and it's too easy to jump over, you're not living up to your potential," said Dine, 65, best known as the executive who built the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the pro-Israel lobby, into a powerhouse, largely during the Reagan era.

Dine, who has lived in Prague for the last eight years as the president of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, will officially take over at the federation in November.

Without the benefit of serious financial analysis, Dine confidently told members of the federation's search committee that he could augment its fund-raising numbers by 10 percent in each of his first three years at the helm, and 15 percent in years four and five.

These numbers, he said, are "intuitive" and "sound right."

When it comes to fund raising, he said, "this community has fallen behind. It has not kept pace with itself and with its potential."

While the federation's annual fund-raising haul has hovered in the millions — between the high teens and low 20s — for the past 15 years, the number of donors has slid from a high of roughly 18,000 to fewer than 12,000.

With that in mind, Dine, who will start work in November, believes he and the federation have "our work cut out for us to get back to 'Go.'" Simply put, if Boston's federation can raise \$32 million, why can't the Bay Area's? Why not more?

Dine's comments are on par with the reputation he has picked up over the past quarter-century for being an energetic,

aggressive and change-oriented executive. And while he is not yet prepared to go into specifics, it is obvious that Dine has no plans to be a steward of the status quo at the federation, but rather the architect of "big changes."

"I think strong leadership is what any good organization wants. And I think the stronger your constituency, the more able you are to tolerate a strong leader," said Phyllis Cook, the director of the Jewish Community Endowment Fund and the acting CEO of the federation since Sam Salkin's departure in February of last year.

Dick Rosenberg, the chairman of the federation's search committee, predicts Dine "will have a national impact on the federation movement. This is a federation that can institute change."

Dine said he must "familiarize himself" with the inner workings of the federation before drawing up a game plan on how he'd like to make over the organization.

The first thing the federation must do, Dine says, is settle upon a *raison d'être* and revamp itself toward attaining it.

He will ensure that the federation under his watch will keep an active hand in funding social services, but those services — and, indeed, every organization accepting money from the federation — must prove to be "productive."

If his track record holds, there'll be plenty of changes.

When Dine took the reins of AIPAC in 1980, the organization had 24 employees, 8,000 members and a budget of \$1.7 million. When he departed 13 years later, after numerous Oval Office meetings with several U.S. presidents, those numbers had swelled to 158 employees, 55,000 members and a budget of \$15 million.

At Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty since 1997, Dine has expanded broadcasts into 28 languages and made a major effort to bring a Western-style free press into predominantly Muslim nations in Europe, Asia and the Middle East.

Dine's efforts to push for a free and aggressive press in European and Middle Eastern dictatorships have led to confrontational incidents with several of the

world's autocrats. Dine accuses Russian agents of kidnaping one of his reporters in Chechnya and holding him for five weeks before hurling him out of an automobile trunk in Dagestan.

In a hard-hitting May 2004 speech, Dine referred to Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko as a "psychopath"; described the government of Ukraine as "an embarrassment"; and characterized the governments of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan as "a

post-Soviet version of 'The Sopranos' " and "Mafia states."

Why would Dine give up the good fight against dictators and religious fanatics?

"Look, I know it's a big world," he said. "But I want to have a smaller one. I want to blow on the small end of the shofar and make sure the outcome is loud and well-heard."

Dine's ties to the Bay Area go back several decades. With the encouragement of his old friend Rabbi Brian Lurie, the federation's longtime former director, Dine chose San Francisco as the home of AIPAC's first regional office in 1983. AIPAC now boasts 10 regional offices.

Perhaps the darkest moment in Dine's public life came with his departure from AIPAC in 1993.

In that year, Dine was quoted in a book written by the Israeli journalist David Landau as saying, "I don't think mainstream Jews feel very comfortable with the ultra-Orthodox. It's a class thing, I suppose. Their image is — smelly." Shortly thereafter, AIPAC's board forced Dine to resign.

At the time, AIPAC's then-president, Steven Grossman, said Dine's comments were "so divisive and polarizing that they undercut his ability to lead."

Still, many saw the move as an internal AIPAC power struggle, with Dine, the popular public face of the pro-Israel lobby, being pushed aside by influential lay leaders.

Dine refused to discuss his controversial exit from AIPAC.

His job with the San Francisco federation will be his first foray back into the organized Jewish community in a dozen years.

"I'm setting my goals quite high," he said. "I hope I succeed." ■

'I want to blow on the small end of the shofar and make sure the outcome is loud and well-heard.'

Tom Dine

New CEO, San Francisco federation

ARTS & CULTURE

Manuscripts case creates scandal at French library

By LAUREN ELKIN

PARIS (JTA) — Stolen rare manuscripts, a wealthy Israeli antiques dealer, underground passageways in Paris' first district and a curator who maintains his innocence — it's a story that could easily tempt Dan Brown to write a follow-up to his best-selling "The Da Vinci Code."

Michel Garel, who since 1980 has been head of the Hebrew manuscripts division of France's national library, was arrested in July 2004 for allegedly stealing rare manuscripts, including five Hebrew manuscripts from the Middle Ages and 121 pages torn from precious manuscripts from the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries.

Several anonymous letters to the president of the library had implicated Garel, though not by name. The accusations then were seconded by David Sofer, a London-based Israeli antiques dealer who said he bought a manuscript from Garel in 2000, without knowing it was stolen, for some \$90,000.

Sofer said he also had bought other manuscripts from Garel, for up to \$500,000.

The case against Garel collapsed on a technicality, but Sofer recently renewed his allegations. Garel was brought before an investigating judge in late June on suspicion of aggravated theft. No formal charges have been filed against him.

Initially, Garel admitted to having stolen one manuscript, No. 52, believed to be one of the oldest existing versions of the Torah, copied in France in approximately 1250 and bound in Italy in the 15th century.

He also admitted to forging a certification document to sell the item at a foreign auction. The manuscript was resold at Christie's in New York in 2000.

The day before his June court appearance, however, Garel renounced his confession.

The library has refused to comment on the case, saying only that "the protection of the patrimony with which the library is entrusted is a constant concern."

A financial investigation also is underway in Luxembourg, where Garel has a bank account. ■

Leftists look to God

By SUE FISHKOFF

BERKELEY, Calif (JTA) — The 2008 election may be more than three years away, but one group is hoping to press the Democratic Party to infuse spirituality into its platform for that campaign.

"The right is correct; there is a huge spiritual crisis in America," said the editor of Tikkun magazine, Rabbi Michael Lerner. "And the left doesn't get it."

Republicans and their allies on the religious right have "done a good job" of articulating that crisis, Lerner said, but their analysis is "fundamentally flawed" because it's based on demonizing "feminists, gays, liberals, African Americans."

Lerner made his comments before an opening-night crowd of 1,200 attendees at a four-day interfaith conference on spiritual activism.

An initiative, as several speakers put it, to "take back God" — and the White House — from the religious right was the principle behind the forum, held July 20-24 at the University of California at Berkeley.

The real crisis in the United States, according to Lerner, is generated by the "ethos of greed and materialism" that drives Western culture and impoverishes human relationships. And until the left and the Democratic Party understand that deep human hunger for meaning, the religious right will continue its ascendancy. ■

The organizers hope to create a "network of spiritual progressives" who will, over the course of the next three years, develop a spiritually based platform they hope to take to the 2008 presidential elections.

They also plan to call for various international initiatives, including a "Global Marshall Plan" in which the developed countries that are part of the G-8 group of nations would each donate 5 percent of their gross domestic product for the next 20 years to eradicate poverty and hunger and rebuild the infrastructure of Third World economies.

"It's easier to come out as gay in Boston than as religious in the Democratic Party," said the keynote speaker, Rev. Jim Wallis, a well-known progressive evangelical Christian and the author of the best-selling "God's Politics: Why the Right Gets It

Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It."

Wallis, who has just wrapped up a 47-city book tour, told the crowd that many Americans consider themselves people of faith but don't feel the religious right speaks in their name.

The sessions were set apart by musical interludes — from older peace anthems like John Lennon's "Imagine" to New Age rhythms played on drums by men with dreadlocks — in keeping with the organizers' emphasis on using the arts to inspire their politics. ■

Although the gathering's theoretical underpinnings — merging traditional leftist ideas of social justice with spirituality — are very much Lerner's, the conference itself featured speakers from Christian, Buddhist, Hindu and nonsectarian backgrounds, and its focus was clearly nondenominational.

In fact, Jewish attendance from outside the Bay Area was lower than one might expect for a conference carrying the Tikkun moniker.

Lenard Molina, 24, of Tucson, Ariz., was one of the few men wearing a yar-

mulke at the conference — and one of the few attendees under 30.

An Earth First environmental activist, he said he's "definitely" experienced a bias against religious faith in the leftist movements that he's been involved with but added that the total picture is more complex.

"In the radical environmental movement there's also an openness to spiritual language and spiritual motivation coexisting with that religio-phobia," he said.

There was just a handful of rabbis and no leaders of major Jewish organizations in attendance. Some people who helped put the conference together admitted privately that they were disappointed at the lack of response from the organized Jewish world.

Lerner said he expects that the network's next conference, slated for February in Washington, "will attract much more of the Jewish establishment."

Lerner, who is often chastised by mainstream Jewish leaders for his vocal opposition to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, said he is frustrated by the anti-Semitism he has seen lately in the peace movement, "the unfair singling out of Israel" as a pariah state. ■

'The right is correct; there is a huge spiritual crisis in America.'
Rabbi Michael Lerner
 Editor, Tikkun magazine

NEWS IN BRIEF

NORTH AMERICA

House passes CAFTA

The U.S. House of Representatives passed the Central American Free Trade Agreement, which Central American Jews supported but which had divided U.S. Jewish groups.

The act passed 217-215 late Wednesday after heavy administration lobbying in favor. It was passed by the Senate and now goes to President Bush, who has said he will sign it.

Jews from the six nations involved backed their governments in lobbying for the agreement, which eliminates import dues and quotas, as did the American Jewish Committee, which has a Latin American institute.

The American Jewish World Service, which strongly opposed the bill, said the agreement is a disaster that ignores the needs of workers in the region.

Bill would mandate insurance for Israel travel

Lawmakers introduced legislation to protect Americans from being denied insurance based on potential travel destinations.

The bill, introduced Thursday by Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.) and a bipartisan group of lawmakers, stems from the congresswoman's own inability to purchase life insurance because of potential travel to Israel.

"My life insurance application was rejected because I might travel to Israel," Wasserman Schultz said. "There has got to be a better standard."

The Life Insurance Fairness for Travelers Act would make it unlawful to deny any person life insurance or charge excessive fees because of legal foreign travel.

Rep. Rahm Emanuel (D-Ill.) introduced similar legislation Thursday, which would prevent insurance denials based on previous foreign travel.

Questions taken on court nominee

The Reform movement has launched a Web site to solicit questions for U.S. senators to ask Supreme Court nominee John Roberts.

The Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism launched AskJudgeRoberts.com on Wednesday, calling it an opportunity for Reform Jews to submit questions that may be forwarded to members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, who will vet the candidate.

Protestant group opposes Israel barrier

A U.S.-based Protestant denomination voted to oppose Israel's West Bank security barrier.

On Wednesday, the Disciples of Christ Church passed the measure with backing from about two-thirds of the 3,000 members.

The resolution states that the security fence exacerbates hostility between the Israelis and Palestinians and calls on Israel to stop its construction, tear down what already has been built and pay reparations to Palestinian property owners.

The resolution comes on the heels of other votes by Protestant denominations to criticize the barrier and consider divestment from Israel.

WORLD

Fence-mending in France

Ariel Sharon and Jacques Chirac resolved to improve ties between Israel and France.

Aides to the Israeli prime minister and the French president described their three hours of talks Wednesday as a meeting of minds that effectively put more than three decades of bilateral tensions in the past.

Chirac agreed to Sharon's request that Paris press Iran to curb its nuclear program, and said he would ask Lebanon, a former French protectorate, to comply with U.N. Security Council resolutions order-

ing it to disarm Hezbollah. The French president also was quoted as describing Syria as a major threat to Middle East stability.

Israeli named to U.N. post

An Israeli was named deputy chairman of the U.N. Disarmament Commission.

The Foreign Ministry's Meir Itzhaki will hold the post, the Jerusalem Post reported.

The commission is a subcommittee of the U.N. General Assembly that serves as an advisory body to the assembly on nuclear and conventional arms.

MIDDLE EAST

Salvo in Sderot

Palestinian terrorists fired three rockets from the Gaza Strip at an Israeli border town.

There were no casualties or damages from Thursday's salvo on Sderot.

Israel blamed Hamas, but the terrorist group had no immediate comment.

Yediot Achronot reported that Israel plans to equip the coastal city of Ashkelon with a rocket-alert system currently installed in Sderot, signaling that Israel fears Hamas could extend its range after Israeli soldiers and settlers withdraw from Gaza next month.

The Israeli army had no immediate comment on the report.

Shoah protest in Gaza

Residents of a Gaza Strip settlement plan to don Holocaust-style garb in protest at their upcoming evacuation.

Itzik Gabai of the Elei Sinai settlement said he and several other residents had ordered striped pajamas with a yellow Star of David, which they plan to wear in a bid to recall the prison uniform Jews wore in Nazi concentration camps.

"I don't see any difference between us and what happened back then," he told Army Radio. Elei Sinai's mayor condemned the plan, as did Yad Vashem.

"This is grave, disgusting and egregious, as there is no historical basis for it," said Motti Shalev, director of the Holocaust museum's educational center. "With all respect to the pain of the evacuation, they aren't about to be taken to a death camp and the gas chambers."

Anglicans spar on Israel

The Anglican Church's Israel Trust called an Anglican group's criticism of Israel "biased and unjust."

The Anglican Peace and Justice Network recently issued a statement of blistering criticism for Israel over its West Bank security fence and treatment of the Palestinians.

The Jerusalem Post reported Thursday that the trust, based in the Old City of Jerusalem, responded with a statement castigating the network for insufficient knowledge of the Arab-Israeli conflict and for not consulting sufficiently with Israelis before it judged the issue.

The network's "statement loses credibility because it contains very inadequate references to terrorism and its effects and no reference to the need of the Israelis to defend themselves," the trust statement said.

Oracle to cooperate with Israel

The software company Oracle will cooperate with the Israeli government on a technological-support center for Israeli start-ups.

Reuters reported Thursday that the agreement was made with Israel's Office of the Chief Scientist.

The partnership will provide start-ups with easier access to Oracle software and will provide networking opportunities for the firms.