

IN THE NEWS

Hamas cited in U.S. strategy

U.S. demands that Hamas abandon terrorism and recognize Israel are part of a new U.S. national security strategy.

"The opportunity for peace and statehood — a consistent goal of this administration — is open if Hamas will abandon its terrorist roots and change its relationship with Israel," says the document, released Thursday by the White House.

The terrorist group was elected by a landslide victory on Jan. 25 but has yet to assume office.

Israeli flags used in 'Gitmo'

U.S. military interrogators wrapped prisoners at Guantanamo in Israeli flags, according to the FBI.

The revelation came during congressional testimony this week on tension between the FBI and the military over investigation tactics at the U.S.-held territory in Cuba, where detainees from U.S. operations in the Middle East are held.

In newly declassified documents, the FBI sharply criticizes the military for "aggressive" tactics that it says were ineffective.

Gen. Bantz Craddock, the chief of Southern Command, said the FBI reports did not amount to more than "allegations."

Study: Palestinians could face depression

Palestinian areas will be thrown into an economic depression if Israel withholds tax revenues and other countries withhold aid, a new World Bank study says.

The Palestinian economy would shrink by 27 percent in 2006 and unemployment would double to nearly 40 percent, according to the study, which was obtained by The New York Times.

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WORLD REPORT

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Its role more vital than ever, can UNRWA stay out of politics?

By MICHAEL J. JORDAN

NEW YORK (JTA) — As Washington and the West weigh a cutoff of aid to a Hamas-led Palestinian Authority, the U.N. Relief and Works Agency could become a crucial lifeline to millions of Palestinian refugees who depend on it for vital services.

But the recent Palestinian parliamentary elections have revived a long-standing Israeli concern: that some of UNRWA's staff are members of Hamas, or at least sympathize with the terrorist group's anti-Israel cause.

Israeli concerns were not eased by the fact that nine UNRWA staffers resigned to run for office in the Jan. 25 elections that Hamas swept. Furthermore, they had to be firmly reminded, in a letter from the agency's commissioner-general, that participating in Palestinian politics is incompatible with UNRWA's ideal of neutrality.

To many supporters of Israel, however, UNRWA's efforts in the region have rarely been impartial.

During the Palestinian intifada, the agency routinely blamed Israel for bloodshed, eliding the Palestinian contribution to the "cycle of violence." Its one-sided criticism played a significant role in shaping international opinion against the Jewish state — helping to prolong the war, critics charge, by emboldening Palestinians to attack.

UNRWA camps, including the infamous West Bank refugee camp that is part of Jenin, became engines of the intifada, with terrorists using them as bases from which to plan and carry out attacks — sheltering themselves, all the while, under the U.N.'s vaunted neutrality.

Tensions between UNRWA and Israel have lessened in the past year as the number of



Brian Hendler

A Palestinian man walks past graffiti in the Dehaisheh refugee camp in the West Bank.

terrorist attacks, and concomitant Israeli reprisals, dropped significantly.

But with many observers warning of an imminent resumption of the intifada, this time centered on the West Bank, whether UNRWA camps are again allowed to become incubators of terrorism may go a long way toward determining if peace will come to the Middle East. It could also help determine if

UNRWA's Palestinian charges can become citizens of their own independent state, ending their decades-long status as refugees.

At this critical juncture in the region, JTA takes a close look at the U.N. agency that for 56

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**UNMASKING
UNRWA**

■ Critics say UNRWA has exacerbated the refugee problem rather than help it

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years has helped ensure Palestinian refugees' basic survival — yet also, some say, has helped make the Palestinian refugee issue one of the most intractable and incendiary political problems on Earth.

Following Hamas' electoral victory and the West's threat to choke off financial assistance, UNRWA is poised to play an even more critical role. The majority of Palestinians living in Gaza, and a sizeable portion in the West Bank, are registered refugees and recipients of some form of UNRWA services. Officials in Washington, Brussels and Jerusalem all say they don't want to harm humanitarian aid.

Indeed, in response to a bleak forecast about Gaza and the West Bank, the European Union on Feb. 27 offered \$144 million in aid to the Palestinians, \$76 million of it earmarked for UNRWA.

UNRWA lists 4.3 million Palestinian refugees scattered across the Middle East, including 1.6 million in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, where it operates 27 refugee camps. Not all of the refugees live in the camps, which long ago evolved from tent cities into dilapidated, densely packed urban neighborhoods.

For more than half a century, UNRWA has provided the refugees with food, jobs, shelter, medicine, healthcare and education. The agency runs schools, health clinics and housing, operating as a virtual statelet within the Palestinian Authority.

UNRWA was the main source of sustenance during the intifada in Gaza, where three-quarters of the coastal strip's 1.3

million residents are registered as refugees and a half-million live in eight cramped, sprawling UNRWA camps. Others live in the immediate environs.

At the same time, UNRWA has done nothing to help resolve the Palestinian refugee problem. In contrast to the U.N. High Commission for Refugees, or UNHCR, the agency responsible for the world's 19.2 million other refugees, UNRWA is not tasked with helping to resettle Palestinian refugees, but merely with providing services.

Critics say UNRWA has served to exacerbate the problem by taking sides in a highly politicized conflict, and by allowing its camps to become bastions of militarism.

Nothing illustrates how UNRWA's approach impacts both Israel and the agency's own clientele better than the events in the Jenin refugee camp during spring 2002, a particularly bloody period of the intifada.

Some Palestinians had nicknamed the place "the suicide bomber's capital," and Palestinians and Israelis alike knew the Jenin camp as a major hub for terrorists to recruit, plan and launch attacks against Israel.

Everyone knew except for UNRWA — or at least, the agency said little publicly about the terrorist activity in its midst.

On March 27, 2002, a Palestinian suicide bomber detonated himself in the dining room of Netanya's Park Hotel, killing 29 Israelis at a Passover seder.

Israel responded with one of its largest anti-terror operations of the intifada, including a two-week assault on the Jenin refugee camp that leveled its center. Twenty-three Israeli soldiers were killed in the fierce, close-range battle, Israel's largest military death toll during the intifada.

The Palestinians, their supporters and much of the world media branded the battle a "massacre," claiming that some 500 Palestinians had been killed.

Peter Hansen, UNRWA's head at the time, helped stoke the flames.

First he urged Israel to "end this pitiless assault on civilian refugee camps." After the smoke had cleared, Hansen proclaimed, in an UNRWA news release widely quoted

by the media, "I had hoped the horror stories of Jenin were exaggerated and influenced by the emotions engaged, but I am afraid these were not exaggerated and that Jenin camp residents lived through a human catastrophe that has few parallels in recent history."

Hansen never recanted, yet his comments were quickly exposed as a wild distortion: A U.N. probe determined that 52 Palestinians were killed — corroborating Israel's estimate — and that "up to half may have been civilians."

That wording downplayed the flipside: The other half were armed combatants whose presence represented a breach of U.N. resolutions and international law. Indeed, the media widely ignored the U.N. report's fine print: "According to both Israeli and Palestinian sources, there were 200 armed men in the camp at the time."

The battle of Jenin showed not only how UNRWA helps heap international calumny on Israel, but also how the agency's laxity toward the militancy in its camps helps bring catastrophe upon the very population UNRWA is duty-bound to assist.

"UNRWA has not been ambivalent about the manner in which the refugee camps, and the civilian population within them, have been cynically and callously used in the intifada," said Harry Reicher, an international law professor at the University of Pennsylvania and the former U.N. representative for Agudath Israel World Organization.

"UNRWA has actively become complicit," Reicher said, by allowing "conversion of civilians into human shields, protecting terrorists and arms. They're protected by UNRWA, knowing full well that no condemnation will come from them, and that if Israel takes strong steps, it is Israel that will be condemned, by UNRWA as well as others."

In defending itself, UNRWA tends to take responsibility only for what occurs within its facilities, such as its schools, health clinics and food-distribution centers.

UNRWA notes that its mandate for what goes on in its camps is limited.

"The agency has never been given

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UNRWA head Peter Hansen helped stoke the flames following an IDF operation in the Jenin refugee camp, distorting the number of Palestinian casualties.

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any mandate to administer, supervise or police the refugee camps or to have any jurisdiction or legislative power over the refugees or the areas where they lived," the agency's Web site says. "The agency has no police force, no intelligence service and no mandate to report on political and military activities. This responsibility has always remained with the host countries and Israel, who maintained law and order, including within refugee camps."

The U.N. General Assembly — dominated by Arab and Muslim states, and long hostile to Israel — has never done anything to sharpen UNRWA's role.

Yet regardless of its stated mandate, UNRWA has moral authority and international legitimacy — assets

it doesn't hesitate to use to condemn Israeli military actions, and which it could use to condemn terrorism in its midst as well.

UNRWA says it criticizes Israel often because of concerns about refugee welfare. But critics wonder why that same logic doesn't compel UNRWA to speak up when, for example, rockets fired from refugee camps bring Israeli reprisals that end up hurting UNRWA's charges.

"Among our staff, they certainly understand that as long as Kassams are going out, there's going to be something coming in," said Karen Koning AbuZayd, UNRWA's current commissioner-general. But, she said, "there's always an excuse given for it. Whenever they do it, they say it's because of this or that. There's always this tit for tat, and it's not always clear who started it."

That only bolsters those who say the agency should be more balanced.

"So infiltrated does the U.N. agency in Gaza appear to be with Hamas operatives that it would probably be dangerous for any UNRWA official to speak out against terrorist attacks planned or launched from UNRWA facilities," said Harris Schoenberg, a U.N. reform advocate.

Israeli officials take the threat of violence seriously, and some suggest that UNRWA camps could again serve as bases to plan and launch terrorist attacks if the intifada is renewed under a Hamas-led government.

AbuZayd defends her agency's record.

"UNRWA has publicly condemned violence on both sides on many occasions,"

she told JTA.

She declined to give examples, but a review of UNRWA public comments in recent years yields only rare and brief references to Palestinian violence.

Critics suggest several factors behind UNRWA's unwillingness to regularly denounce this violence: built-in bias at the United Nations; a de facto "don't ask, don't tell" policy about UNRWA staff members' and clients' activities; and intimidation by various Palestinian groups.

There also is the perceived tilt of UNRWA itself: Virtually all of the agency's 25,000-plus staff members are Palestinian, with most of them refugees themselves. Staff members must

sign a pledge of neutrality, but critics say that hardly inures them to their society's pervasive anti-Israel animus.

The blurred line between serving the refugees and advocating for them was illustrated by the recent P.A. elections. Nine UNRWA staffers were forced to resign their jobs in order to run for Parliament, including one who won office on the Hamas ticket, the agency said. Six have since applied for reinstatement, and their actions and statements during the campaign are being reviewed.

UNRWA declined JTA requests for more information on the subject, citing the agency's privacy policy. It remained unclear how many more staffers might have been interested in running for office but were unwilling to relinquish jobs considered lucrative and desirable.

UNRWA cited the same privacy policy to U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.), a member of the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee. Kirk has since announced that he will author a bill requiring regular audits of UNRWA. Other U.S. politicians have called for the group's activities to be scaled down.

While the United States, Canada and Europe provide the lion's share of UNRWA's annual budget of some \$500 million, Arab governments combined contribute only 2

percent. Other groups, such as the "Syrian Arab Popular Committee for the Support of the Intifada and Resistance to the Zionist Enterprise" — referred to in UNRWA materials as the "Syrian Arab Popular Committee" — have given the agency hundreds of thousands of dollars over the years, mainly to rebuild suspected terrorists' homes that Israel has destroyed.

Others call for UNRWA to be folded into UNHCR. AbuZayd, however, defends the existence of two separate U.N. refugee agencies: "Palestine refugees' unique political context requires a unique agency."

That leaves Israel and its supporters urging UNRWA to avoid politics and just stick to its humanitarian role. Despite the calls for reform, however, observers don't expect progress on any of the proposals.

First, UNRWA remains low on the U.S. agenda for overall U.N. reform. Second, with the Palestinian Authority's ineptitude on display in the months since the Gaza withdrawal and now with Hamas' ascension, some critics in Israel and Washington view UNRWA as a rare point of stability in a lawless region.

Finally, the U.N. General Assembly remains the greatest obstacle to any meaningful change. Altering UNRWA's mandate would require two-thirds approval of the 191-member body, but the Arab-Muslim bloc's automatic majority makes that almost impossible.

"I don't think dramatic reform is realistic because for years it's been a bargaining chip for the Arabs," said one former Israeli diplomat, who requested anonymity.

"UNRWA is not the problem; it's the manifestation of the problem. The problem is the Palestinian and Arab leadership that has maintained the position of using the refugee issue as a political tool against Israel."

Despite pledges of neutrality, nine UNRWA staffers resigned in order to run in recent Palestinian elections.



Stephanie Hollyman

Children living in UNRWA's Acqba Jaber camp in the West Bank, just outside of Jericho, in 2003.

Jewish schools flourish in Eastern Europe

By DINAH A. SPRITZER

WARSAW (JTA) — The first thing one notices about the only Jewish school in Warsaw is the art.

There are seven depictions of the star of David on one stairwell, and six renderings of Shabbat candles on another. Purim is coming, so life-size cardboard cutouts

of Queen Esther charm visitors on all five floors, but there are also fluttering trees of life with paper leaves that wind their way through the middle of corridors, menorahs in every conceivable color and size and cheerful illustrated salutes to Israel.

About one-third of the 250 children in the school are non-Jews, but they are as enthusiastic in their tributes to the cycles of the Jewish calendar as are their Jewish classmates, the school's administrators are quick to say. What began in 1993 in an apartment with 18 children whose parents thought it would be nice if their kids knew what it meant to be Jewish has grown into a well-equipped yet homey kindergarten, elementary and middle school.

The school would be a mere fantasy if it had not been for the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation, whose growing number of schools across the former Eastern Bloc are credited by many with reviving the Jewish life that the Holocaust, followed by four decades of religious persecution under communism, had nearly extinguished. As the school's director, Helise Lieberman, puts it, "Without Lauder, it's possible that there

would be no Jewish education in Poland today, or it would be very limited. We're the missing piece of the puzzle."

As school principals from across Central and Eastern Europe gathered earlier this month for a leadership seminar on the 18th anniversary of the creation of the Lauder Jewish schools, their tales illustrated that the key component of the Lauder

philosophy — flexibility to suit local needs — was the key to their expansion.

Lauder, heir to the Estee Lauder cosmetics fortune and then-U.S. ambassador to Austria, saw the need to help an influx of Jewish children from the former Soviet Union to Vienna, and thus the foundation was born in 1987. The first Lauder school was established a year later.

Following the collapse of communism, the Lauder network has extended to include 10,000 families, 34 schools and kindergartens in 14 countries as well as camps, youth centers and technology training centers. The foundation's budget for 2006 is more than \$10 million.

Lauder took a different approach than many other donors: Parents would create the schools according to their beliefs and needs and in cooperation with existing Jewish structures and government requirements.

This created a mosaic that the religiously fragmented Jewish communities of the region might do well to emulate. Chabad runs the Lauder schools in Slovakia and Austria; the school in Kishinev, Moldova, is a yeshiva; the school in Sofia, Bulgaria, is public, and the foundation funds certain classes and programs for Jewish

children, who make up 30 percent of the student population there.

Some communities, as is the case in Sofia, had to include non-Jewish students because of state regulations.

"The non-Jewish kids who come out of our schools, they are ambassadors for Jews and for Israel in Bulgaria," said Becca Lazárova, principal of the Jewish elementary and high schools in Sofia. "They promote intercultural tolerance in a country where there are only a few thousand of us left," she added.

Other schools like the Lauder Morasha in Warsaw accept non-Jewish students because the parents wanted it that way. Meanwhile, all children at the school are still required to take classes in Judaism.

But at the Lauder Shalom kindergarten and elementary school in Tula, Russia, where Jewish religion classes are optional, non-Jewish children often participate. "They are curi-

ous to learn that Jews don't have horns on their head or make matzah from blood," said the school's director, Inessa Feldman, only half-joking.

Non-Jewish parents often choose to send their children to Lauder schools because they are among the best in their respective cities based on test scores, principals and parents say.

The subsidies provided by the Lauder Foundation usually guarantee higher pay for teachers than is typical in the region, subsidized tuition if the school is private, renovated buildings compared to crumbling, prison-like classrooms of the poorer Eastern European cities and an atmosphere of inclusion that is a rarity in school systems still dominated by rigid, Communist-era teaching methods.

All Lauder schools require students to have intensive training in English and Hebrew, often serving as the only place in a community where the teachers are native speakers.

The Lauder Foundation's CEO, George Ban, is unapologetic about some of the schools' mixed populations: "What is better, to have a school where you can get Jewish education or to have no Jewish school at all?" ■

AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD

What is better, to have a school where you can get Jewish education or to have no Jewish school at all?
George Ban
 CEO, Lauder Foundation



Dinah Spritzer

Robert Czajkowski, administrator of the Lauder Morasha School, stands with principal Helise Lieberman in front of Purim art at the Warsaw school.

Slovak Jews celebrate Maccabee Games

By DINAH A. SPRITZER

BANKSA BYSTRICA, Slovakia (JTA) — A young Chabad volunteer from New York has spent five months in Slovakia teaching the basics of Judaism in Bratislava.

Informed that there's also a Jewish community of some 60 people in Banksa Bystrica, a picturesque hamlet three hours west of the capital, she's puzzled.

"I didn't know anything about other Jewish communities. Are they real Jews?" she asks.

Her question epitomizes the divide between some religious Jews in the West and their neighbors in Eastern Europe, who often are less observant.

Few Jews remained in Eastern Europe after the Holocaust and communism, so Jewish communities in the region today usually welcome anyone with Jewish roots, not just those who are halachically Jewish.

"These young Americans who come here have no idea what it was like to get the knock on your door that meant deportation to the camps, and I can tell you those doing the knocking were not interested in whether you went to a mikvah or if only your father was Jewish," said one member of the Bratislava Jewish community who requested anonymity. "How could we possibly tell someone who survived such an ordeal, or his child, that he is not Jewish?"

At the crux of the divide is how Jews in such countries determine what it means to be Jewish. For Bratislava's rabbi, Baruch Myers, a Chabad Jew from Brooklyn, it means accepting only halachic Jews in the kindergarten he and his wife run, which puts him at odds with the mostly secular Bratislava community.

For those who identify as Jewish in Slovakia — whether they're halachically Jewish or not — observance usually is a turnoff.

That sentiment was evident at one of the country's biggest Jewish gatherings last month, a winter sports contest held on a Saturday. The party celebrating the games' conclusion included pork dishes.

"If someone wants to know what kind of Jew skis on a Saturday, my answer is a modern, flexible Jew," said Lucia Belanova, a Jew from Banksa Bystrica who works at a Bratislava bank.

More than 170 Slovak Jews trudged

through deep snow on poorly marked paths in remote central Slovakia to compete in the 70th anniversary of the last Winter Maccabee games before World War II, which took place in Slovakia on the same hill. Several athletes from the Czech Jewish community also joined, as well an Israeli who resides in Prague.

The last Europe-wide Winter

Maccabee games, held in 1936 in Banksa Bystrica, attracted 5,000 participants from around the world. The games were the second-largest sports event in then-Czechoslovakia.

Following a long hiatus as a result of World War II and then communism, the Slovak division of the worldwide Jewish sports organization was relaunched 11 years ago with only a handful of enthusiasts.

Gertrude Stiffelova, who watched the 1936 games as an 8-year-old, returned to watch the 2006 competition.

"It's a wonder to be here," she told the crowd at a ceremony following a day of slalom skiing and snowboarding. She received an award just for showing up.

Belanova and others noted that it would have been difficult for people to attend if the gathering had been held on any day but Saturday.

"We are working and studying and living in different places. Saturday is really the only day that works for those cannot take a day off," she explained.

Belanova estimates that no Jew in Banksa Bystrica can read or speak Hebrew.

"I guess, for us," being Jewish "is a social thing," she said.

Michael Szatmary, an advertising executive and editor of the Jewish-themed newspaper Delet, saw no problem with having a sports event on Shabbat.

"Where does it say you can't ski on Sabbath in the Torah?" he quipped. "Whatever is not forbidden is permitted."

There are approximately 3,000 Jews in Slovakia today. In contrast to the Czech Republic, where the 1990s were a time of rebirth for Jewish communities, Slovak Jews suffered during the 1990s under Vladimir Meciar, whose supporters included openly anti-Semitic nationalists.

Several competitors said they never go to synagogue, but were glad to associate Judaism with something positive like sports, rather than something negative like anti-Semitism.

Slovak government officials are now trying to promote religious and ethnic tolerance, but

a recent survey indicated that every third person in Slovakia would prefer not to live next door to a Jew.

Jana Romanova, 25, a reporter for Slovak television, says she's the only openly Jewish journalist at the station.

"There are a few others there, but they hide it," said the former president of the Slovak Union of Jewish Youth.

Asked to describe her interaction with non-Jews in mostly Catholic Slovakia, she jokes, "When I told someone I was Jewish, she thought we were all dead." ■

AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD

'If someone wants to know what kind of Jew skis on a Saturday, my answer is a modern, flexible Jew.'

Lucia Belanova
Bank worker



Dinah A. Spritzer

Lucia Belanova, left, a Jew from Banksa Bystrica, Slovakia, with her boyfriend, Radovan Strapko, who is on the board of the Bratislava Jewish community.

Witness names suppressed in AIPAC case

By **RON KAMPEAS**
and **MATTHEW E. BERGER**

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Condoleezza Rice, Stephen Hadley, Anthony Zinni: For a few hours, the list of subpoenaed witnesses on the docket in the classified information case against two former staffers of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee read like a Who's Who of U.S. foreign policy.

And that probably was precisely the point for defendants eager to prove that trading inside information with the most senior government officials was par for the lobbyists' course.

Similarly, the suppression of the witnesses' names within hours last Friday was consistent with a prosecution — and a court — that is keeping as much of the case under wraps as possible.

Lawyers for Steve Rosen, AIPAC's former foreign policy director, and Keith Weissman, its former Iran analyst, subpoenaed 10 current and former administration officials ranging from Rice, the current U.S. secretary of state, and Hadley, the national security adviser to the White House, through Lawrence Franklin, the former mid-level Pentagon analyst whose guilty plea is the crux of the government's case against Rosen and Weissman. JTA obtained an original copy of the docket with the names intact.

The court, the defense and the government would not comment about the subpoenas or their subsequent suppression on the docket, but the roll call reflects what sources close to the defense have said will be their case — that interactions of the kind described in the indictment last August were routine and above board.

"I presume it's an attempt to provide some context for the information that was disclosed," said Steven Aftergood, who directs the Secrecy Project at the Federation of American Scientists. "If such information was already in public circulation or widely disseminated, that could arguably mitigate anything the defendants did wrong by communicating it."

The crux of the indictment is that Franklin leaked information on Iran to Rosen and Weissman on several occasions in 2003 and 2004.

In July 2004, Franklin joined the FBI in a sting against the two, telling Weissman that Iranian agents planned to kill Israeli and

American agents in northern Iraq. Rosen and Weissman relayed the information — which, according to the indictment, Franklin made clear to Weissman was classified — to an Israeli diplomat, a Washington Post journalist and the executive director of AIPAC, Howard Kohr. No evidence suggests that Kohr knew the information was classified, and the government has said that Kohr and AIPAC are not implicated in any wrongdoing.

Rosen and Weissman have been charged under a never-used 1917 statute that criminalizes the receipt and dissemination of classified information.

AIPAC fired the two men a year ago, saying their actions did not comport with AIPAC practices, but stopping short of accusing the men of anything illegal.

Glenn Kessler, The Washington Post journalist, said he had not been subpoenaed. AIPAC would not comment on whether Kohr or anyone else had been subpoenaed.

Israeli officials have confirmed in the past that they are negotiating the terms of testimony for Naor Gilon, the diplomat who received the information from Weissman and Rosen. Gilon returned to Israel last summer after completing a three-year term as a political officer.

In addition to Rice, Hadley and Franklin, the defense subpoenaed David Satterfield, the current U.S. deputy ambassador to Iraq; William Burns, the current U.S. ambassador to Moscow; Ken Pollack, research director at the Saban Center, a Middle East think tank; Michael Makovsky, another mid-level Pentagon analyst; Elliott Abrams, the deputy national security adviser; Zinni, formerly the top peace envoy to the Middle East; and Richard Armitage, a former deputy secretary of state. Prosecutors and the witnesses themselves may challenge the subpoenas.

While not commenting on the suppression of the names, officials at the U.S. District Court in Alexandria, Va. pointed to court rules, which say that subpoenas to U.S. officials including "any member of the President's Cabinet; any Ambassador or Consul; or any military officer holding

the rank of Admiral or General" must be approved by the court.

That would mean that at least six of the subpoenas needed prior approval. It was not clear whether lawyers for the defendants had sought approval for the subpoenas.

Satterfield and Pollack are significant, because — like Franklin — they appear in the indictment as alleged leakers to Rosen, but neither has been charged.

Pollack discussed Iraq policy with Rosen and Weissman over lunch in 2000, when he was on the Clinton administration's National Security Council.

Pollack told JTA last year that he could not imagine having relayed classified information to them. He told JTA this week that he had yet to receive a subpoena, but would not be surprised if he did.

Satterfield was an assistant secretary of state in 2002 when, according to the indictment, he leaked classified information on Al-Qaida to Rosen.

No one on the list, aside from Pollack and Zinni, returned calls from JTA asking for comment. Zinni, who said he also had yet to receive the subpoena, said he had met Rosen just once.

"I met Mr. Rosen once at a dinner while I was the envoy," the retired Marines general and former head of U.S. Central Command wrote in an e-mail to JTA. "It was a casual event and we discussed the process I was then involved in. The dinner was with four others."

Zinni, who now is a consultant in the private sector, served as an envoy to Israeli-Palestinian talks in 2001-2002.

The court and the government would not comment on the subpoenas, but Aftergood says it's consistent with the secrecy that has enveloped the case. Judge T.S. Ellis III allowed the government to keep from the public and from the defense what apparently is the bulk of the transcripts of years of taps on Rosen and Weissman.

Ellis also has sealed pre-trial motions that principally argue established case law and do not reveal details of the case aside from those appearing in the already published indictment. The documents were eventually unsealed.

"Secrecy seems to be the default here," Aftergood said. "It appears the judge wants to discourage media coverage." ■

**BEHIND
THE
HEADLINES**

'Secrecy seems to
be the default here.'

Steven Aftergood
Director, Secrecy Project

ARTS & CULTURE

Film depicts Passover seder like no other

By TOM TUGEND

LOS ANGELES (JTA) — Just in time for Passover comes the comedy “When Do We Eat?,” presenting your typical Jewish family, the Stuckmans, assembled for a warm seder celebration.

As the program notes put it, “Even though the Stuckmans gather for a Passover seder, this could be any family with any background.”

Here is the portrait of “any” family:

- Father Ira has a hair-trigger temper, a constant stomach problem he insists is heartburn, and makes a nice living manufacturing Christmas ornaments.

- Long-suffering mother Peggy has had a tent built outside the house and roasted a lamb on an outside spit “just like Moses” so that her fervently Orthodox son can eat at the seder.

- Daughter Nikki is a professional sex surrogate who, with dad’s financial backing, is branching out into cybersex devices for the homebound.

- Son Ethan, a former high-tech entrepreneur who went bust, recently became Chasidic. The glowingly spiritual young man splits his time between talking about the Rebbe and God and dealing with old sexual tensions with his second cousin Vanessa.

- Jennifer, Ira’s daughter from a previous marriage, is a lesbian who brings along her African-American companion Grace.

- Teenage son Zeke is a stoner, and has just picked up a tab of Ecstasy cut with LSD, called “touch-of-God X.”

Early on, Zeke senses the impending storm, and slips his Ecstasy into his father’s antacid. Ira starts seeing biblical visions, including a cantorial trio and a cameo appearance by Moses.

Up to the beginning of these hallucinations, the film is hard to beat as an exercise in unabashed vulgarity.

One redeeming feature of the enterprise is the setting of the seder table, drawn from the illustrations of Artur Szyk’s well-known Haggadah. ■

Broadway stars do Purim show

By CHANAN TIGAY

NEW YORK (JTA) — Jews are prime consumers of Metamucil, can never order directly off a menu and — enough already! — too many of them become Buddhists.

These were some of the lessons of an irreverent, self-deprecating, high-octane version of the Purim story, as told by a host of Broadway stars who spent their shows’ night off Monday celebrating this holiday of Jewish redemption.

The Second Annual “Broadway Purim Shpiel,” sponsored by the two-year-old National Entertainment Fund for the Cultural Arts, drew

a sold-out crowd of 700 to Manhattan’s Hudson Theater for two hours of songs and scenes from some of Broadway’s hottest shows.

Performers had appeared on the Great White Way in shows including “Rent,” “Wicked,” “Mamma Mia,” “Kiss of the Spider Woman,” “The Light in the Piazza” and “The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee.”

Their performances were all preceded by a traditional Megillah reading.

“The Megillah’s opening up for me,” said Jackie Hoffman, who created three roles in the hit musical “Hairspray,” and performed an original song about Jewish Buddhists.

“Even though you think you’re a Buddhist, you’re still Jewish,” she sang. “You’ve traded the Talmud for the Tao/join a shul and stop this now.” ■

The event raised \$100,000 for birth-right Israel, a program that so far has sent close to 100,000 young people from around the world on free trips to Israel.

It was the second event sponsored by NEFCA, which aims to produce events in the mainstream arts to raise money for the Jewish community.

Last year, said Scott Kluge, the group’s executive director, the event was held at a 250-seat theater and took in about \$25,000, which covered the cost of the show. In just a year, attendance nearly tripled and funds raised quadrupled.

The songs were interspersed with narration by the evening’s host, Seth Rudetsky, who, with the aid of a children’s

version of the Megillah he’d printed off the Internet — and a barrage of amusing asides — told the Purim story, making a yeoman’s effort to link it thematically to the songs that the actors had chosen to sing.

After reading a passage from the children’s Megillah that said “even the Jews” were invited to a banquet hosted by King Ahasuerus, Rudetsky — who has played piano in the pits of 15 Broadway shows — shook his head.

“Even the Jews? It’s like, ‘I guess you can come,’ ” he said. “Why do they have to make us feel bad? It’s like high school all over again — I was not popular in high school.”

About half of the performers were not Jewish, and none of them was paid for appearing.

“In our community we back everybody up,” said Brandi Chavonne Massey, who performed a song from the musical “Wicked,” in which she currently is appearing. “I’m sure if there were an NAACP event, they’d get my back.”

Massey, an African American, wasn’t an outsider at the event: She grew up in Cincinnati attending a Hebrew Pentecostal church, a Christian denomination that observes some Jewish holidays — though Purim isn’t one of them. ■

The evening was co-chaired by philanthropists Michael Steinhardt, Charles Bronfman and Lynn Schusterman.

Asked if cultural events were an effective way of drawing Jews to Judaism, Steinhardt, shmoozing in the theater lobby with some of the young people who had arrived for the event, said, “Where else have you seen so many happy Jews?”

Among the happy Jews was Elana Gordon.

A modern Orthodox Jew, Gordon said she decided to forgo a traditional synagogue service in favor of the shpiel/Megillah reading because, “It looked cool.”

“It’s different,” she said. “It’s a little spin on the usual going to synagogue.”

Kluge said NEFCA is planning a third shpiel for next year, and also has plans for additional theater shows and expanding into film. ■

A ‘little spin on the usual going to a synagogue.’

NEWS IN BRIEF

NORTH AMERICA

Congress urges religious freedom in Russia

The U.S. House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed a resolution urging Russia to protect religious minorities.

The sense of Congress resolution passed 411-1 on Wednesday.

It is aimed particularly at protecting "unregistered" religions, particular non-Eastern Orthodox Christian groups, but cites attacks on all minority religions.

Judaism is a registered religion, but Jewish targets have also been subject to attacks in recent years.

U.S. bill would fund Israeli security research

Israel is named as an ally in the war on terror in a U.S. congressional bill that would fund international cooperation for homeland security.

The U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security unanimously referred the bill on Wednesday to the full House, almost certainly guaranteeing its passage.

The funding for international cooperation would be at least 2.5 percent of the total U.S. research and development budget.

"Foreign partners shall include Israel, the UK, Canada, Australia, Singapore, and other allies in the global war on terror," says the bill, strongly backed by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

Chabad leadership wins court case

The leadership of Chabad-Lubavitch won a court case against Messianist opponents within its movement.

The Supreme Court of New York ruled Monday that Chabad's leadership has the right to affix a plaque outside the movement's main Brooklyn synagogue that refers to their late rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson, as "of blessed memory."

Similar plaques installed the past few years have been vandalized, presumably by Lubavitchers who believe that Schneerson is the messiah, and that identifying him as deceased is blasphemy.

The plaintiffs, Agudas Chassidei Chabad and Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch, were also granted a permanent injunction against the defendant, Congregation Lubavitch, barring it from interfering with the building.

Justice Ira Harkavy specified that his ruling "shall in no way be construed as favoring one side or the other in the Messianic debate."

MIDDLE EAST

U.S.: We won't oppose China deal

The United States does not object to Israel's resumption of arms sales to China.

"We don't expect Israel to be selling dangerous things to China," Peter Rodman, an assistant U.S. secretary of defense, said at a hearing of the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission on Thursday.

The United States suspended its strategic dialogue with Israel for three years because of Israel's arms sales to China.

It resumed late last year after Israel pledged to submit all its sales to U.S. review.

Israel announced the resumption of sales to China this month, about a year after it suspended them.

Israeli soldier killed

An Israeli soldier, St.-Sgt. Ido Shapira, was killed in a clash with Palestinian terrorists in the West Bank.

The soldier was shot Thursday as Israeli forces flushed out five fugitives from their hideout in Jenin. The Palestinians, most of them

Al-Aksa Brigade members, surrendered after the gunfight. Outside Nablus, two Israelis were wounded in a Palestinian shooting.

Detainee denies assassination charge

A top Palestinian terrorist seized at a West Bank prison denied involvement in the assassination of an Israeli minister.

"I reject the accusations," an attorney for Ahmed Sa'adat, leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, who was captured by Israeli commandos this week, quoted him as saying Thursday.

Sa'adat, four fellow PFLP members and a Palestinian Authority official believed to have masterminded a 2002 attempt to ship arms to the Gaza Strip were taken into Israeli custody after Hamas officials vowed to release them from a prison in Jericho.

They were placed in the jail after the late Yasser Arafat, under international pressure, tried them for the assassination of Israeli Tourism Minister Rehavam Ze'evi in 2001.

Israel has vowed to prosecute Sa'adat in its courts, but the PFLP leader said he did not recognize the Jewish state's jurisdiction.

Report: Saddam feared Israel attack

Saddam Hussein feared Israel would attack if it knew Iraq did not have chemical weapons, a new report said.

The newly declassified military report contains information about a meeting between Ba'ath Party leaders and Ali Hassan al-Majid, who was in charge of Iraq's weapons development, according to Ha'aretz, which received access to an excerpt to be printed in Foreign Affairs Magazine.

Black Hebrew singer to represent Israel

A member of the Black Hebrew community will represent Israel at this year's Eurovision song contest.

Eddie Butler's solo "Ze Hazman," or "This is the Time," was selected in a televised competition Wednesday night as the Israeli submission for the summer songfest.

Butler, 34, was born to black Americans who immigrated to the Jewish state as part of the Black Hebrews, a community that considers itself descended from the ancient Israelites, although their story is rejected by Bible scholars.

WORLD

Illegal SS march in Latvia

Police in Riga, Latvia, stopped an unauthorized procession honoring Latvian soldiers who fought for the Nazis.

At least seven people were arrested during Thursday's march for the Latvian veterans of the Waffen SS, which city officials banned earlier this week. About 300 people took part in the gathering.

Argentina to be plaintiff in AMIA case

The Argentine government said it would be a plaintiff in the case investigating irregularities in the case of a Jewish center bombing.

The announcement came at a meeting held Wednesday involving Argentine President Nestor Kirchner and relatives of victims of the deadly July 1994 bombing at the AMIA Jewish center in Buenos Aires. The bombing killing 85 people.

Politicians, legislators, judges, prosecutors and lawyers are being investigated for allegedly derailing the probe, which left the case unsolved. The government announcement comes in the week of the 14th commemoration of a bombing at the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires.

The March 17 attack, which killed 29 people, is also still unresolved.