Review of the Year
UNITED STATES
The New Congress

The new Democratic-controlled Congress, sworn in January 4, 2007, was led by Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D., Calif.), the first woman speaker of the House of Representatives, and Sen. Harry Reid, the first Mormon majority leader of the Senate.

There were a record 13 Jewish senators and 30 Jewish representatives. Of the Senate's 49 Democrats, nine were Jewish, one of them newcomer Ben Cardin from Maryland. There were two Independents in the Senate, both of them Jewish: Joseph Lieberman, who failed to gain the Democratic nomination in Connecticut but won in a landslide on an Independent line, and Bernie Sanders, who handily won his Senate race in Vermont after many years of service in the House. There continued to be two Jewish Republicans, Norman Coleman of Minnesota and Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania. In the House, there were six Jewish freshmen: Steve Cohen (D., Tenn.); Gabrielle Giffords (D., Ariz.); Paul Hodes (D., N.H.); Steve Kagen (D., Wis.); Ron Klein (D., Fla.); and John Yarmuth (D., Ky.). The remaining 24 Jewish House members were all Democrats, except for Eric Cantor of Virginia. Also inaugurated were the first Muslim and first Buddhist members in the history of Congress.

House Democrats ran in 2006 on a pledge to enact a broad array of legislation during the “First 100 Hours.” Votes were held during the early days of the session on many issues, including ethics reform, stem-cell research, homeland security, student-loan rates, minimum wage, and prescription drug prices, but little of it would become law (see below).

On September 17, President Bush nominated New York jurist Michael Mukasey to be attorney general. Upon confirmation, he became the second Jew to hold that post, following Edward Levi, who served under Pres-
ident Gerald Ford. The son of Russian immigrants, Mukasey graduated from the Ramaz School, an Orthodox Jewish day school in Manhattan, which his children would later attend and where his wife, Susan, would teach and serve as headmistress.

Senate Democrats threatened to delay the Mukasey confirmation hearings until they received access to documents regarding the surveillance and detention policies allegedly approved by Mukasey's predecessors Alberto Gonzales and John Ashcroft. When the hearings did begin the Democrats on the Judiciary Committee sought to determine where the nominee stood on controversial positions taken by the administration on civil liberties, presidential power, and the rule of law while fighting the “war on terror.” Mukasey was grilled, for example, on whether he considered it torture to subject terror suspects to “waterboarding,” an interrogation technique that simulates drowning and suffocation. While he avoided explicitly answering a number of politically sensitive questions, his performance was acceptable to Sens. Dianne Feinstein (D. Calif.) and Charles Schumer (D., N.Y.), two prominent majority members of the Judiciary Committee, and their support, added to that of the Republican members, ensured a positive committee recommendation. Mukasey was confirmed by the full Senate on November 8 by 53-40, the narrowest margin for the confirmation of an attorney general in more than 50 years.

A far lower-profile confirmation of another Orthodox Jewish nominee occurred three months earlier, on August 3, when the Senate unanimously approved Dr. Tevi Troy as deputy secretary of health and human services. Troy had served as White House liaison to the Jewish community during part of President Bush's first term.

In contrast to 2006 (see AJYB 2007, pp. 67–68), there were few battles over judicial nominations in 2007. Among the few exceptions was that of Leslie Southwick, nominated for the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals. Pointing to some decisions by Southwick they considered insensitive to lesbians and African Americans, the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), People for the American Way, the Human Rights Campaign, and the Congressional Black Caucus announced their opposition. However Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D., Calif.) gave Senate Judiciary Committee Republicans the tenth vote they needed to report the nomination favorably out of committee, and Southwick was confirmed by the full Senate 59-38.
Presidential Politics

A national election loomed in 2008. For the first time in 80 years, there was no incumbent president or vice president running for either presidential nomination. The war in Iraq was increasingly unpopular among Americans—and even more so among American Jews. President George W. Bush's troop "surge" in Iraq was intended to secure some semblance of victory. Democrats, who controlled both houses of Congress, advocated a range of proposals, both foreign and domestic, to make pre-election political points, although many of these were assured presidential vetoes that could not be overridden. Both parties demonstrated strong support for Israel. Polls showed that although Jews made up a small percentage of the total electorate, they could play a pivotal role in the 2008 contest because of their disproportionate concentration in such key swing states such as Florida, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.

The candidates for president were off and running earlier than any time in memory, hoping to get their parties to coalesce quickly around them. States competed with each other to advance their primary and caucus dates even against party rules: Florida and Michigan jumped the line to enhance their status and influence as early campaign stops. The rough and tumble of presidential politics in 2007 demonstrated that little could be considered inevitable. As the incumbent Republican president languished in national polls, his party searched for a candidate who might maintain the formidable coalition of business and religious conservatives that had brought the party success in five of the past seven presidential contests. Democrats, meanwhile, found that despite large-scale popular antagonism toward the incumbent, it would be no cakewalk for them to get to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

Although Senator Hillary Clinton of New York led the Democratic field throughout the year, her campaign was far from the juggernaut many had predicted from the former first lady. Clinton had a strong base of support in her home state, including a Jewish community that had overwhelmingly backed her in two Senate races. One poll found that she was also the favorite of Jews nationwide, and on May 31 the JTA reported that Clinton led the presidential pack in funds raised from Jews. Democratic consultant Steve Rabinowitz said the "overwhelming amount of establishment money is with Hillary," due to her ties to the Jewish community and those of her husband.

Clinton's "Jewish team" included Ann Lewis, a former staffer in Bill Clinton's administration and sister of Rep. Barney Frank of Massachu-
setts; Steve Grossman, the former head of the national Democratic Party and past chair of AIPAC; and Lionel "Lonnie" Kaplan, also a former AIPAC chair. She was also backed by a large group of Jewish elected officials, including her fellow senator from New York, Charles Schumer; Reps. Jerrold Nadler and Nita Lowey of New York and Debbie Wasserman Schultz of Florida; and Gov. Ed Rendell of Pennsylvania. Clinton drew praise from the Jewish community for sponsoring a resolution that called for the release of kidnapped Israeli soldiers. But her vote for allowing U.S. troops to be sent to Iraq in 2003 created problems for her with a Democratic base that had long grown weary of the war.

Clinton received a strong challenge from her Senate colleague from Illinois, Barack Obama. Many had though that Clinton's fund-raising machine would prove insurmountable, but at each federal election filing observers remarked at the fund-raising prowess of the Obama camp, which consistently matched or outpaced Clinton. His fund-raising chair was Penny Pritzker, a Chicago businesswoman, hotel heiress, and major donor to Jewish causes. Other prominent Jews backing Obama were fundraiser Alan Solomont and several members of Congress: Steve Rothman of New Jersey, Adam Schiff of California, Janet Shackowsky of Illinois, and Robert Wexler of Florida.

Obama had a more difficult time with grassroots Jews, his Jewish poll numbers lagging behind those for the population at large. It was unclear to what extent this was due to an extensive e-mail campaign suggesting that Obama was a Muslim educated in radical Islamic schools, who was sworn into office on a Koran, and refused to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Each charge was proven false, but the smears continued unabated, despite attempts from CNN, the Associated Press, and the Obama campaign itself to dispute them.

John Edwards, the former senator from North Carolina who had been the party's 2004 vice-presidential nominee, had an uphill battle all year, consistently running third in most polls. Edwards was supported by Marc Stanley, who was vice chair of the National Jewish Democratic Council (NJDC). Despite what was considered a pro-Israel track record during his Senate tenure and the 2004 campaign, Edwards faced criticism from pro-Israel quarters after naming as his campaign manager former Michigan congressman David Bonior, a strong critic of Israel. Sen. Joseph Biden of Delaware was supported for the nomination by Michael Adler, the NJDC chair. Governor Bill Richardson of New Mexico, despite close ties to the pro-Israel community, fumbled when he suggested that,
if elected, he might tap former secretary of state James Baker—perceived as hostile to Israel—as a Mideast peace envoy. Sen. Christopher Dodd of Connecticut, another stalwart friend of the Jewish community, failed to break from the large pack of presidential hopefuls.

On the Republican side, former New York mayor Rudy Giuliani led the early stages of the race in both name recognition and Jewish backing—he enjoyed a 75-percent approval rating among Jewish Republicans. Giuliani’s celebrity status had been cemented in the early hours of September 11, 2001, as the nation watched him take charge after the attacks. Giuliani, however, was plagued by some of his associations. On November 7, he was endorsed by televangelist Rev. Pat Robertson. While that would presumably shore up support among Christian conservatives wary of Giuliani’s liberal stance on gay rights and abortion, it raised eyebrows among moderates. The very next day, New York’s former police commissioner, Bernard Kerik, was indicted for a range of alleged business and personal misdeeds. In 2004 Giuliani had enthusiastically backed Kerik for the position of U.S. secretary of homeland security (revelations that Kerik had hired an illegal nanny torpedoed his chances). The indictment had a caustic affect on Giuliani’s law-and-order reputation. As his poll numbers slipped, Giuliani pinned his candidacy on a strong showing in Florida’s January primary.

Sen. John McCain’s bid for the nomination received strong support from some Jewish stalwarts. Fred Zeidman, chair of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, had helped lead Jewish outreach for the Bush campaigns in 2000 and 2004, and would now take on the same task for McCain. In December, McCain was endorsed by Sen. Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut. The nod from the 2000 Democratic nominee for vice president bolstered the Arizona senator’s reputation for working across the political aisle, although it increased the alienation of Lieberman from the Democrats, with whom he still caucused in the Senate despite his self-identification as an Independent.

McCain touched off a controversy when he asserted that the Constitution established America “as a Christian nation” and that he would back a Christian presidential candidate over one who was Muslim. Later, he clarified that he would back a Muslim candidate if he judged that person “best able” to run the nation. Several Jewish organizations called upon McCain to withdraw his assertion about the Christian nature of the Constitution, and AJC held a private meeting with him to clarify his views. McCain defended himself from charges of anti-Semitism by say-
ing he had intended to stress the “Judeo-Christian values” that were im-
biued in the Constitution. According to an AJC survey, McCain was 
viewed favorably by half of Jewish Republicans—second to Giuliani, but 
far outpacing the rest of the Republican field.

Two evangelical Christian candidates also stirred debate in the Jewish 
community. Sen. Sam Brownback of Kansas suggested disbanding the 
Palestinian Authority and joining the Palestinians with Jordan in a con-
federation. Brownback exited the race in October. Former Arkansas gov-
ernor Mike Huckabee held on throughout the year, but was dogged by 
accusations that his campaign was suffused with Christian religious 
themes. AJC criticized his views as “a prescription for theocracy,” while 
the ADL questioned whether Huckabee indeed wanted to be the presi-
dent of all Americans and rebuked him for using Holocaust imagery 
when discussing abortion.

The NJDC attacked another Republican hopeful, former Massachu-
setts governor Mitt Romney, for selecting the Henry Ford Museum in his 
hometown of Detroit, Michigan, to announce his candidacy, citing Ford’s 
strident anti-Semitism. Romney was nonplused and made a strong play 
for Jewish support, extolling his hawkish stance on Iran and strong sup-
port for Israel. The head of the Republican Jewish Coalition (RJC), St. 
Louis businessman Sam Fox, supported Romney (Fox would head to 
Belgium in April to become the U.S. ambassador). Romney did well in 
eyearly polls, led the Republican pack in fund-raising, and won the August 
12 Republican “straw poll” in Iowa. However he had trouble throughout 
the campaign in reconciling ostensibly pro-choice and gay-rights posi-
tions he had taken earlier in his political career with the more conserva-
tive views he was expressing in the presidential race.

The 2008 presidential field was also remarkable for its little-known con-
tenders. Two of them worried pro-Israel voters. In the Republican race, 
Rep. Ron Paul of Texas showed great fund-raising ability, in part because 
his opposition to the Iraq war appealed to many Americans who con-
ected to politics not through rallies and speeches, but via the Internet. 
On the Democratic side, Rep. Dennis Kucinich of Ohio made his second 
run for the highest office in the land. Both these candidates shared a dis-
dain for the current U.S.-Israel relationship. Paul said he would end aid 
to Israel and other American allies, and strongly opposed military inter-
vention to prevent Iran from gaining nuclear weaponry. He had voted 
against the House resolution condemning attacks on Israel during the 
Lebanon war. Kucinich, who opposed Israeli use of force in the Palesti-

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Friends of Sabeel North America, a group known for its scathing criticism of Israel, and in March 2007 Kucinich hired for his campaign a former organizer for the U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation.

**THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA**

**Israel and the Palestinians**

The Gaza Strip during 2007 was both a launching pad for attacks against Israelis and the site of an internecine Palestinian war. Israeli citizens in Sderot and neighboring areas came under attack throughout the year, causing several fatalities and hundreds of injuries. Rockets from Gaza also damaged property, including synagogues, hospitals, schools, homes, public buildings, an electric-power grid, and local factories.

More than 100 Palestinians were killed and another 500 injured by fellow Palestinians during military clashes between Hamas and Fatah during the week of June 7–15 that saw Hamas seize control of the Gaza Strip. The fighting settled a score begun in January 2006, when Hamas won legislative elections. This marked a serious setback for U.S. and Israeli policy, which had sought to isolate and undermine Hamas while bolstering Fatah’s leader, President Mahmoud Abbas.

Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert told members of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations in New York that Israel would extend economic and military support to Abbas’s government so long as it avoided “any compromise and agreements with Hamas.” The new situation in Gaza relegated to the back burner Olmert’s plans for inserting an international force into Gaza. Shortly afterward, northern Israeli towns experienced their first attacks from Lebanon since the end of the 2006 war. Olmert said the violence was the work of the Al Qaeda Palestinian Arab faction in Lebanon.

U.S. secretary of state Condoleezza Rice engaged in a stepped-up round of shuttle diplomacy in the Middle East early in the year. A three-way summit with Olmert and Abbas on February 19 focused on the “political horizon” of renewed peace talks—after six years of stalled negotiations—and prescribed that the Fatah-Hamas unity government must meet international demands on recognition of Israel and rejection of violence. Rice reported that the “three of us affirmed our commitment to a two-state solution [and] agreed that a Palestinian state cannot be born of violence and terror.”
As his administration approached its final year, President Bush called for a Middle East peace summit, the first ever in which all parties would take for granted the inevitability of a Palestinian state. The summit opened on November 27 in Annapolis, Maryland, hosted by Secretary Rice. Among the participants were Olmert, Abbas, and representatives of more than 40 other countries, including Egypt and Jordan, which had relations with Israel, and Saudi Arabia and Syria, which did not. According to President Bush, the conference would “signal international support for the Israelis' and Palestinians' intention to commence negotiations on the establishment of a Palestinian state and the realization of peace between these two peoples.”

Iranian president Ahmadinejad joined Hamas in condemning the summit. Most American Jewish organizations voiced qualified support for the talks. The Conference of Presidents called it “a significant step towards launching meaningful, bilateral negotiations” and an “opportunity to bring change” that might “herald a new era in which Israel will not just be recognized but fully accepted as a Jewish state and neighbor.” The Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) expressed hope that the gathering might mark “the beginning of a renewed process that leads to two states living side by side in security and peace.” Both groups pointed out the need for Palestinians to reform their political and economic institutions.

Some of the more hawkish American Jewish organizations—the National Council of Young Israel, the Rabbinical Council of America, the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, and the Zionist Organization of America—responded to the summit by setting up a new entity, the Coordinating Council on Jerusalem, to oppose Israeli territorial concessions in any part of Jerusalem.

**Foreign Aid and Other Legislation**

In June, the House approved the annual foreign-aid appropriations bill by 241-178. It contained $2.44 billion for Israel, including $2.4 billion in military aid and $40 million in assistance for the resettlement of Soviet, Eastern European, and Ethiopian refugees. The Senate approved a similar package in September. When finally adopted by both houses in December, there was a slight decrease to $2.38 billion in military aid and $39.6 million in resettlement aid. An across-the-board .81 percent funding reduction was necessary to bring the bill into compliance with overall budget numbers, based on a compromise reached by House and Senate lawmakers.
This Israeli aid package marked the final step in a ten-year plan that phased out economic aid in favor of military aid. While Prime Minister Olmert was in the U.S. in June, President Bush announced a plan for the next decade, in which the U.S. would give Israel an average of $3 billion a year for a total of $30 billion, an increase of 25 percent. The increase was explained as a means of balancing a U.S. arms package for Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, estimated to top $20 billion over the next decade, designed to upgrade missile defenses, air force, and naval capabilities. Olmert said that the Israeli government “understands the United States’ need to assist the moderate Arab states, which are standing in one front with the United States and us in the struggle against Iran.”

Aid to Palestinians—$150 million in direct assistance to the Palestinian Authority—was conditioned on the fulfillment of “benchmarks” that included combating terror, denying assistance to organizations connected to or engaged in terrorism, implementing economic and government reforms, and permitting financial oversight. According to AIPAC, the aid package prohibited the PA from using the funds toward government salaries in Hamas-controlled Gaza, and continued the policy of no contact or negotiations with Hamas until it agreed to recognize Israel and meet international standards of conduct. Congress also tied $100 million of U.S. aid to Egypt to that country’s efforts to curtail the smuggling of arms from Sinai into Gaza. The U.S. secretary of state would have to certify adequate compliance before the money could be paid.

A bill titled the United States-Israel Energy Cooperation Act was introduced by Sens. Jeff Bingaman (D., N.M.), Mary Landrieu (D., La.), and Gordon Smith (R., Oreg.) on March 12. A priority of the American Jewish Congress, the bill would have authorized funding through a grant program for joint ventures in alternative and renewable energy research between U.S. and Israeli businesses, nonprofits, universities, and government entities. A new International Energy Advisory Board would advise the government in the grant-making process. The bill had passed the House in the prior Congress, and was now referred to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. No further action was taken in 2007.

Congress adopted numerous resolutions demonstrating support for Israel. On April 26, the House passed one introduced by Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R., Fla.) “expressing deep concern over the use of civilians as ‘human shields’ in violation of international humanitarian law and the law of war during armed conflict, including Hezbollah’s tactic of embedding its forces among civilians to use them as human shields during
the recent conflict between Hezbollah and the State of Israel." On June 5, both houses passed resolutions commemorating the 40th anniversary of the "unprovoked" Six-Day War. It commended Israel for its administration of an undivided Jerusalem over four decades and reiterated Congressional commitment to relocating the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and to a two-state solution to the conflict.

A resolution was introduced in June by Sens. Dianne Feinstein (D., Calif.) and Richard Lugar (R., Ind.) urging the president to intensify U.S. diplomatic efforts in pursuit of a "true and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, based on the establishment of two states, the State of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security, with recognized borders." The resolution also denounced terrorism and reaffirmed Israel's right to defend herself. In addition to Feinstein and Lugar, the resolution was also cosponsored by, among others, Sens. Carl Levin (D., Mich.), Herb Kohl (D., Wis.), Russ Feingold (D., Wis.), and Ron Wyden (D., Oreg.). It was backed by Churches for Middle East Peace and by dovish Jewish groups such as Americans for Peace Now and B'rit Tzedek v'Shalom. Other national Jewish groups took no position on the measure.

The plight of the three captured Israeli soldiers evoked congressional resolutions and rallies, but did not return Ehud Goldwasser, Eldad Regev, and Gilad Shalit to their families as they entered their second year of captivity at the hands of Hamas and Hezbollah. On March 1, Sens. Hillary Clinton (D., N.Y.) and George Voinovich (R., Ohio) introduced a resolution calling for their immediate and unconditional release. Also signing on were their colleagues Sherrod Brown (D., Ohio), Sam Brownback (R., Kans.), Norman Coleman (R., Minn.), Dianne Feinstein (D., Calif.), Frank Lautenberg (D., N.J.), Joseph Lieberman (I., Conn.), Barbara Mikulski (D., Md.), Bill Nelson (D., Fla.), and Charles Schumer (D., N.Y.). In the House, a similar measure was introduced by Rep. Gary Ackerman (D., N.Y.) and 68 cosponsors.

On July 16, a national rally in New York City and smaller rallies around the country were held to mark the anniversary of their capture. The national gathering was sponsored by the American Zionist Movement, the Conference of Presidents, JCPA, the New York Jewish Community Relations Council, United Jewish Communities (UJC), and UJA-Federation of New York. The same day, Rep. Ron Klein (D., Fla.) spoke on the House floor to call attention to their plight and reiterate the U.S. demand for their return. Klein also introduced into the record similar statements by other members of Congress.
A House resolution calling the Ottoman Turkish killings of more than a million Armenians during World War I "genocide" caused great difficulties for Jewish organizations. Turkey, a key ally of Israel, had long opposed labeling the events of that period genocide, and Jewish groups had studiously avoided the topic even though the massacres of the Armenians marked a precedent that Hitler followed in his treatment of the Jews. The "genocide" resolution was sponsored by Adam Schiff (D., Calif.) and cosponsored by three-fourths of the Jews in Congress.

When the large Armenian community in the Boston area dropped its participation in A World of Difference, the Anti-Defamation League's signature multicultural education program, to show its displeasure with the Jewish group's silence on the measure, the regional ADL endorsed the House resolution. National ADL and other Jewish groups did not do so, although ADL national director Abraham Foxman went so far as to declare what happened to the Armenians "tantamount to genocide." The House Foreign Affairs Committee approved the resolution on October 11, prompting the prime minister of Turkey to recall its ambassador "for consultations" and to threaten withdrawing permission for supplies to be shipped through Turkey to American-led forces in Iraq.


**AIPAC**

AIPAC, the premier pro-Israel lobby, did not appear weakened by the pending espionage trials of two former veteran staffers, Steven Rosen and Keith Weissman (see AJYB 2007, p. 78), who during the year, filed motions to force the government to present evidence in open court, daring prosecutors to reveal clandestine sources, methods, and other confidential information. More than 6,000 pro-Israel activists attended AIPAC's annual policy conference in March, including 1,200 students. Speakers included Vice President Dick Cheney, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Republican Congressional leaders Mitch McConnell and John Boehner, Christian Zionist Pastor John Hagee (see below), Israeli foreign minister Tzipi Livni, and Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu. Prime Minister Olmert addressed the gathering via satellite.
But AIPAC’s preeminent position and a string of legislative victories—from foreign aid to Iran sanctions—generated a backlash both inside and outside the Jewish community. Following the policy conference came public critiques from New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof (Mar. 18), who decried the lack of “serious public debate” by either party about U.S. policy in the Middle East, and billionaire investor and philanthropist George Soros, who, in the New York Review of Books (Apr. 12), charged that AIPAC had been “remarkably successful” in squelching criticism of U.S. policy by raising the specter of anti-Semitism.

In September, two professors, Stephen Walt of Harvard and John Mearsheimer of the University of Chicago, published The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy, which repeated in greater detail and sophistication accusations made in their controversial 2006 essay (see AJYB 2007, pp. 76–77). Israel, they said, was a “strategic liability” for the U.S., supported only because of the aggressive pro-Israel lobby, which, they wrote, bore responsibility for leading America into war in Iraq and was seeking to provoke another war with Iran. Although the book targeted a broad constellation of pro-Israel groups, including Christian Zionist organizations, the brunt of its disapproval fell on AIPAC.

The reaction from mainstream Jewish leaders to the barrage was swift and furious. In the Jerusalem Post, AJC executive director David Harris charged that Kristof had a “blind spot” and had “sanctimoniously lectured” Israel. As reported in the Forward, New Republic editor Martin Peretz called Soros, a Hungarian-born Holocaust survivor, a “cog in the Hitlerite wheel.” In the pages of the Washington Post, Johns Hopkins professor Eliot Cohen pronounced Walt and Mearsheimer’s work anti-Semitic. In the September 3 issue of the New Yorker, however, David Remnick argued that their book was not anti-Semitic, although it did provide a one-sided narrative that “recounts every lurid report of Israeli cruelty as indisputable fact but leaves out the rise of Fatah and Palestinian terrorism before 1967; the Munich Olympics; Black September; myriad cases of suicide bombings; and other spectaculars.”

Combating Boycotts

Campaigns to single out Israel and companies operating there for boycott, sanction, and divestment continued to capture the imagination of Israel’s detractors, but achieved little.

The main anti-Israel push came from Great Britain. On April 13, the leadership of that country’s 35,000-member National Union of Journal-
ists voted 66-54 to boycott Israeli products. Later, the University and College Union (UCU)—formed by a merger of the two British lecturers' unions, NATFHE and AUT—declared an academic boycott of Israel. And the London Guardian published a call by a fringe group of 130 British doctors to expel the Israel Medical Association (IMA) from the World Medical Association (WMA).

Hadassah, the women's Zionist organization that specialized in providing health services, stated in a press release that it had "confidence that the World Medical Association, proudly led by Chairperson of Council, Israeli physician Yoram Blachar, will stand strong against these baseless accusations and proceed with its valuable work of medical collaboration and cooperation."

The threatened academic boycott drew the most sustained American denunciations. Robert J. Birgeneau, chancellor of the University of California at Berkeley, said that the UCU's "threat to cut off all funding, visits, and joint publishing with Israeli institutions violates the fundamental principles of academic freedom." Columbia University president Lee Bollinger declared that his institution would "embrace Israeli scholars and universities that the UCU is now all too eager to isolate." On May 31, Sen. Christopher Dodd (D., Conn.) sent a letter to the UCU's joint general secretary complaining that the boycott "compromises the principles of objectivity, fairness, and dialogue that are at the foundation of all academia."

The American Jewish Congress released a statement on June 26 signed by two dozen former Rhodes scholars protesting the proposed boycott, which the scholars called "unjustified and an egregious violation of the basic rules of the academic community." On July 11, the House of Representatives adopted a resolution sponsored by Rep. Patrick Murphy (D., Pa.) condemning the academic boycott. Speaking in favor of the measure were Reps. Sheila Jackson-Lee (D., Tex.), Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R., Fla.), Henry Waxman (D., Calif.), Elliot Engel (D., N.Y.), and Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D., Fla.). The sole opposing voice was that of Rep. Ron Paul (R., Tex.), who had declared his candidacy for president. The isolationist Paul questioned whether the "U.S. government should be sticking its nose into a dispute between British and Israeli academics."

The New York Times of August 8 carried an ad placed by AJC listing 300 college and university presidents endorsing Bollinger's denunciation of the academic boycott. Among the signatories were the presidents of Berkeley, Georgetown, Johns Hopkins, New York University, and Princeton. The ad encouraged British academics opposed to the boycott, sev-
eral of whom urged their colleagues not to go along with it. Referring to the AJC ad, Prof. Mark Pepys, head of University of London’s Department of Medicine, said: “The robust position of 300 U.S. institutions in defense of the universally recognized principle of academic freedom cannot be ignored. American academia, with its depth, breadth and scale, has enormous impact in the UK at all levels of academic life.”

The Jewish Labor Committee was successful in its efforts to keep American unions from following the lead of their British counterparts. The JLC organized a statement by the leaders of more than two dozen American unions in opposition to boycotts of Israel. The labor leaders agreed that “[r]ather than divestment from Israel, we believe that investment of time, energy and material aid is the best means to alleviate the ongoing suffering of Palestinians and Israelis.” Signatories included AFL-CIO president John J. Sweeney, as well as the heads of unions representing teamsters, miners, electrical and communications workers, government employees, and others.

One notable academic supporter of anti-Israel boycotts, political scientist Norman Finkelstein, was denied tenure at DePaul University. Finkelstein was notorious for attacks on Israel and assertions that Jews exploited the Holocaust for political and financial gain. The case against Finkelstein had been championed by Professor Alan Dershowitz of Harvard Law School.

Iraq

President Bush, on January 10, announced plans for an escalation, or “surge,” of more than 20,000 troops to be sent to Iraq to quell the violence that had, to date, resulted in more than 3,000 American military causalities and many more wounded. Polls continued to show American Jews opposed to the war in large numbers, with more than three-quarters agreeing that it was a mistake. As the war entered its fifth year, Jewish organizations wrestled with the dilemma of whether to speak out publicly against it.

ADL national director Foxman, in an interview with the JTA, suggested that muted Jewish criticism of the war reflected gratitude to President Bush for his support of Israel, especially at a time when action might have to be taken against Iran. But Rabbi David Saperstein, director of the Reform movement’s Religious Action Center (RAC), disagreed. In a February 22 op-ed in the Forward, he urged “the Jewish community to weigh in and determine what insights Jewish values and interests can
offer, not only because our prophetic tradition mandates that we speak out on the great moral issues of the day . . . but also because Israel's interests and security are so clearly at stake.” On March 12, the Union for Reform Judaism’s executive committee adopted a resolution opposing the troop escalation and calling on the president to set a timetable for troop withdrawal. The Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association also issued a call for a “rapid and responsible” troop withdrawal.

Although no national Jewish group had taken a position in favor of the war, some critics—in the spirit of Mearsheimer and Walt—were willing to draw the conclusion. Rep. James Moran (D., Va.) blasted the pro-Israel lobby for allegedly promoting the war. In the September/October issue of *Tikkun* magazine, Moran repeated a charge he had made in 2003 (see AJYB 2004, p. 81), alleging that AIPAC and its “wealthy” and “powerful” members “pushed this war from the beginning.” The National Jewish Democratic Council issued a statement deriding Moran for making a “phony” connection between AIPAC and the war.

In Congress, Democrats were not only unable to follow through on their 2006 election-year promise to end the war, but they also failed to block the surge. The most they could accomplish was pass a resolution in the House condemning the plan. Sen. Carl Levin (D., Mich.), joined by Sen. John Warner (R., Va.), led unsuccessful efforts in the upper house to express disapproval for increasing the number of American fighters. The president and Congress sparred over funding for the war itself, with the White House successfully defeating language that would have called for specific timetables for troop withdrawal.

**Iran**

The Jewish community and Israel took very seriously the continuing threats of Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to “eliminate” the Jewish state. On December 13, 2006, for example, Reuters reported the bombastic leader as professing his desire for “the Zionist regime” to be “wiped out.” Compounding this rhetoric was the Iranian nuclear program, which appeared to progress unabated despite UN resolutions and sanctions against it in 2006. Iran proclaimed its intent was energy production for peaceful purposes, but skeptics abounded and rhetoric soared, especially as American military officials charged Iran with supplying weapons to rebels in Iraq. The UN Security Council expanded its sanctions regime in March 2007 to cast a wider net over financial institutions and transportation of materials that could potentially be used for the pro-
duction of nuclear missiles. On April 9, Iran reported that it had 3,000 centrifuges that could enrich uranium, a necessary precursor for nuclear-weapon production.

On June 20, the House passed a resolution calling for the UN to charge Ahmadinejad with violation of the UN Charter and the 1948 UN Convention on Genocide, for his threats against Israel. On August 30, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reported that the Iranian nuclear program remained intact, but that the agency could not verify some critical data, including those related to advanced centrifuge research. At the end of the year Ahmadinejad intimated that he might seek enriched uranium from another country, such as Switzerland.

The tightrope that Jewish agencies walked in response to the Iranian nuclear program was even trickier than the one involving Iraq: deep concern about the existential threat to the Jewish state had to be weighed against the need to demonstrate that the movement to stop Iran was not solely a Jewish campaign. As policy makers debated the merits of a preemptive effort to destroy Iran's nuclear capacity should negotiations and sanctions fail, fears mounted that the Jewish community would open itself to charges that it was beating the drums for war with Iran. Therefore Jewish leaders framed economic alternatives as an option short of military intervention.

At the JCPA Plenum in February, a last-minute motion to recommend divestment from Iran was referred to a committee for further review, and on March 27 the JCPA board, noting that "the threat of Iran obtaining nuclear weapons is a matter of the gravest concern and utmost urgency," called on political, civic, and religious leaders to "utilize all diplomatic and economic measures necessary to deter Iran from continuing its quest for nuclear weapons, while respecting the humanitarian needs of the Iranian people." The term "economic measures" was defined to include sanctions, targeted divestment, and restrictions on bank transfers. UJC passed a resolution on June 4 instructing its investment committee to divest its endowment and pension funds of holdings directly invested in companies that conducted business, not of a humanitarian nature, with either Sudan or Iran, relying on data provided by the U.S. Department of Energy, the Congressional Research Service, and other government or research agencies. It also directed federation leaders to advance such divestment at the state and local levels.

Steam also gathered elsewhere in support of using American financial markets against Iran and other regimes accused of terror. The Center for Security Policy, led by Frank Gaffney, launched a divestment campaign
aimed at getting states, colleges, pension funds, and other investors to divest from Iran. Several of the largest states embraced "terror-free" investing. On June 8, Florida governor Charles Crist signed a measure directing the state's retirement program to contact companies with business ties to Iran or Sudan to seek their withdrawal from those countries, and to divest 90 days after communication if the ties continued. In June, Illinois governor Rod Blagojevich allowed divestment legislation to come into effect without his signature. On September 25, Texas governor Rick Perry directed the state pension fund to divest from Iran. California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed a bill on October 26 ordering the state's two largest pension funds to divest from companies with business ties to Iran's petroleum, natural gas, nuclear, or defense sectors. And on December 17, the New Jersey State Senate adopted a measure passed in June by the Assembly to prohibit state pension investment in Iran.

The U.S. Congress began work on a legislative initiative to allay concerns that such measures might run afoul of a constitutional prohibition against states engaging in foreign affairs. In May, Sen. Barack Obama (D., Ill.) and Reps. Barney Frank (D., Mass.) and Tom Lantos (D., Calif.) introduced the Iran Sanctions Enabling Act to shield fund managers and state pension programs from shareholder lawsuits if they divested stakes in energy companies that had at least $20 million invested in Iran's energy sector. The measure passed the House on June 30, but the Senate did not take action on it. Sens. Lautenberg (D., N.J.) and Clinton (D., N.Y.) introduced a bill to deter subsidiaries of U.S. companies from doing business in Iran. Known as the Stop Business with Terrorists Act of 2007, this measure would strengthen the sanction provisions that prevented American companies from doing business in countries that sponsored terror.

Public and private protests greeted President Ahmadinejad when he visited New York City for the opening of the UN General Assembly session in September. The Conference of Presidents and the New York JCRC, in cooperation with the JCPA, UJC, and UJA-Federation of New York, sponsored a rally on September 24 to protest Iranian nuclear ambitions and anti-Israel rhetoric. There were additional protests when Ahmadinejad spoke at Columbia University to an audience of 600 faculty, students, and administrators at the university's School of International and Public Affairs.

On October 25, the U.S. government announced a unilateral effort against Iran, making it unlawful for anyone subject to U.S. legal jurisdiction knowingly to provide material support or resources to the Quds division of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps. And at the end of
the year, the administration released a National Intelligence Estimate dated December 3 stating that Iran had actually halted its nuclear-weapons program in 2003 in response to the U.S.-led invasion in Iraq. But while the finding, developed by the nation’s 16 intelligence agencies, expressed “high confidence” about the 2003 suspension, it could only say with “moderate confidence” that the program had not resumed afterwards.

**Jewish Refugees from Arab Lands**

An international campaign led by B’nai B’rith International, Justice for Jews from Arab Countries (JJAC), and Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa (JIMENA), brought new focus to the expulsion and mass departure of more than 800,000 Jews who lived in Arab countries prior to the 1948 Arab-Israeli War—a number larger than the 711,000 Palestinians who left their homes and property at the time of the creation of Israel.

In February, resolutions were introduced in both houses of Congress acknowledging the human rights of all Middle East refugees. They were sponsored in the House by Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D., N.Y.) and in the Senate by Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D., N.J.). The House resolution, adopted April 1, called on the president to ensure that, at international forums attended by the U.S., all references to the Palestinian refugee situation were matched by “a similarly explicit reference to Jewish and other refugee populations.” There were also two House hearings on this issue. The first, on May 8 in the Foreign Affairs Committee’s Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, was chaired by Rep. Ackerman (D., N.Y.), and the second was conducted by the Congressional Human Rights Caucus (CHRC), chaired by Rep. Lantos (D., Calif.).

In November, the JJAC held a conference in New York at which it distributed copies of a memo composed in 1947 by the Arab League calling for measures against Jews living in Arab lands. According to a report on the subject published in the New York Times (Nov. 2), the World Jewish Congress had informed the UN Economic and Social Council in 1948 of the document, with a warning that “all Jews residing in the Near and Middle East face extreme and imminent danger.” The Times further reported that in March 1948, Charles Malik, the Lebanese ambassador then serving as president of the council, used parliamentary tactics to quash consideration of the Arab League memo and that, despite some news coverage at the time, the issue had been almost forgotten. At the confer-
ence, Irwin Cotler, the former Canadian minister of justice, accused the UN of “expunging this experience from the Mideast narrative.”

**Darfur**

February marked the fourth year of the conflict in the Darfur region of Sudan, as proposed ceasefires and tentative truces gave way to continued mayhem and violence directed at the civilian population and humanitarian aid workers. At year’s end the total death toll was estimated at more than 400,000, with an additional two and a half million displaced since 2003.

In February, Academy Award-winning film director Steven Spielberg, along with actress Mia Farrow, urged China, the largest investor in the Sudanese oil industry, to exert political leverage on its government to help end the crisis in Darfur. Spielberg announced that he would not serve as artistic advisor to the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, due to Chinese inaction on the matter.

Save Darfur, a coalition of 180 faith-based organizations, tried to draw attention to the crisis and the need for a strong and coordinated response. Among its members were three dozen Jewish agencies representing a broad spectrum of religious views. On April 29, the coalition sponsored its third “Global Day for Darfur.” The rally, held in Washington’s Lafayette Park, was one of more than 400 such events in 287 cities and 47 states. Speakers included Elie Wiesel; Rev. Richard Cizik (National Association of Evangelicals); Larry Cox (Amnesty International); Mia Farrow (UNICEF goodwill ambassador); Rabbi Steve Gutow (JCPA); Gov. Jon Corzine (D., N.J.); Theodore Cardinal McCarrick (Washington, D.C.); Dr. Richard Land (Southern Baptist Convention); Rabbi David Saperstein (RAC of Reform Judaism); Ruth Messinger (American Jewish World Service); and Paul Rusesabagina, recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, who risked his life to save more than 1,000 people during the genocide in Rwanda.

As noted above in connection with Iran, several Jewish agencies passed targeted divestment resolutions against Sudan. JCPA policy called for the removal of investments in companies that directly or indirectly helping the Sudanese government perpetuate genocide. A campaign focused on Fidelity Investments gained some traction, as the mutual-fund company dramatically reduced its holdings in PetroChina, a company linked to the government in Sudan. However Fidelity denied that it was reacting to the public campaign.
Despite speculation that he would wield his veto pen, President Bush, on the last day of the year, signed the Sudan Accountability and Divestment Act. It authorized state and local governments to divest assets in companies that conducted business operations in Sudan, and put an end to U.S. government contracts with such companies. Some 26 states had already initiated divestment initiatives.

THE DOMESTIC-POLICY ARENA

Homeland Security

The Democratic majorities in both houses of Congress moved swiftly to shore up their bona fides on homeland security, traditionally a province of Republicans. On January 9, during the “First 100 Hours,” the House passed a measure to implement the report of the 9/11 Commission, and the Senate subsequently passed a similar measure. The differences were resolved in conference, and the Improving America’s Security Act was agreed to by the House on July 26 and the Senate the next day.

Included in the bill were provisions to give homeland-security grants on the basis of degree of risk, screen all cargo entering the country, improve cooperation among intelligence agencies, revise visa programs, and experiment with “enhanced drivers licenses.” The bill also set up an Office of International Cooperation within the Department of Homeland Security that would help pair domestic and overseas entities for homeland-security research activities. This provision was touted by AIPAC because it identified Israel as one of five countries that might be potential partners for the program.

The Military Commissions Act of 2006 had removed from federal judicial purview the authority to hear habeas corpus petitions for individuals identified as “enemy combatants,” and as the issue wended its way to the U.S. Supreme Court (see below), Congress debated whether to restore that authority. Legislation to that effect, the Habeas Corpus Restoration Act, was sponsored by Sens. Patrick Leahy (D., Ver.) and Arlen Specter (R., Pa.) in the Senate, and Reps. Jerrold Nadler (D., N.Y.) and Jane Harman (D., Calif.) in the House. A broad array of Jewish groups signaled support for the measure. American Jewish Congress president Richard Gordon said passage would mark “a welcome return to the very first principles upon which our government was founded,” and rejected arguments that the bill would undermine the war on terror by not-
Citing concerns about the capacity of U.S. law enforcement to intercept electronic communications, the president signed into law the Protect America Act of 2007 on August 5. It removed the warrant requirement for surveillance of intelligence targets, including U.S. citizens, if law enforcement “reasonably believe” one of the parties being monitored is outside the U.S. Investigators would have power, under the law, to eavesdrop on telephone and Internet communications between people in the U.S. and people abroad without a court order. The bill replaced the warrant requirement of the Foreign Intelligence Security Act (FISA) with a system of internal controls. Mired in controversy over whether to grant retroactive immunity to telecommunications companies that cooperated with law enforcement, the law was slated to expire in February 2008. The RAC of Reform Judaism complained that the act broke down checks and balances that had been built into the FISA system, and permitted wiretapping with minimal or no judicial oversight. A RAC action alert cited biblical and Talmudic authority that “surveillance of private space was deemed to be a violation of privacy rights.”

The term “waterboarding” entered the national lexicon as news emerged that the Central Intelligence Agency had used such extreme interrogation techniques as pouring water over an immobilized suspect’s head to simulate drowning. Civil-liberties and human-rights agencies expressed outrage at a Department of Justice memorandum permitting this technique and others, such as placing detainees in hypothermic chambers, head slapping, and sleep deprivation. Waterboarding was debated during the Senate hearings to confirm Michael Mukasey as U.S. attorney general (see above).

On December 10, AJC announced its backing for legislation to ban the use of torture by American military, intelligence, and law-enforcement personnel. The bill was being pushed by a coalition of 140 groups—including the Union for Reform Judaism and Rabbis for Human Rights-North America—under the banner of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture. The JCPA also called on its members to support the ban. The American Jewish Congress, in a statement welcoming the appointment of Mukasey as attorney general, called for Congress to declare waterboarding illegal. Most of the mainstream Jewish organizations, however, remained silent. Rabbi Brian Walt, executive director of Rabbis for Human Rights-North America, explained to the Forward that “the reluctance of a large segment of the organized Jewish community
to speak out against harsh interrogation techniques stems partly from the belief that torture may help to prevent terrorist attacks, as well as from concern that heightened scrutiny of American security forces’ methods could draw increased attention to Israel’s own interrogation practices.” Walt called this stance ironic, since the Israeli Supreme Court had banned torture in 1999, and “Israel has a better record than the U.S. on this.”

On December 6, Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D., Calif.), with the support of her colleagues Chuck Hagel (R., Neb.), Sheldon Whitehouse (D., R.I.), and Russ Feingold (D., Wis.), added provisions to the Intelligence Authorization Conference Report that would require all U.S. agencies, including the CIA, to follow the interrogation guidelines laid out in the Army Field Manual. The House passed a similar bill on December 13.

**Immigration**

Despite significant lobbying and media attention, immigration reform did not occur in 2007. Jewish organizations, spearheaded by HIAS, favored so-called Comprehensive Immigration Reform (CIR), which combined disparate proposals such as an earned path to citizenship for those in the U.S. illegally; guest-worker programs; reduction of family reunification backlogs; and increased border security and enforcement of immigration laws. In the end, Congress adopted a proposal heavily weighted to enforcement.

The Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2007—also known as the Secure Borders, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Reform Act—was introduced in May in the Senate, where it was described as a compromise evidencing compassion for those already in the U.S. while simultaneously doing more to prevent further illegal immigration. The bill would have provided a circuitous route to citizenship for approximately 12 million noncitizens, and also included the DREAM Act, a special provision to facilitate legal status and higher education for undocumented immigrant children. The legislation sought to augment border security by funding 300 miles of vehicle barriers, more than 100 camera and radar towers, and a surge of 20,000 border police. It would also have restructured visa criteria for skilled workers. Heated debate swirled around the bill, particularly the citizenship provision, which was derided as an “amnesty” plan.

A Senate filibuster ensued, and on June 8 HIAS president Gideon Aronoff expressed disappointment that “the Senate was unable to overcome politics to produce the kind of solution that this nation deserves.”
He said HIAS was dismayed at the Senate deadlock, and "extremely concerned" about provisions that had worked their way into the bill that would have undermined family reunification. Aronoff called current immigration policy "inconsistent and haphazard," including a "chaotic and wasteful border and interior enforcement scheme that places the United States' security in jeopardy."

In August, HIAS decried an enforcement-only immigration reform proposal issued by the White House. Hopes for the progressive elements of CIR were dashed one last time on October 24, when Senate backers of the DREAM Act legislation failed to get sufficient votes to end a filibuster and permit debate to continue.

Hate Crimes

Proponents of a federal hate-crimes law came closer than ever to seeing enactment of a bill that would expand the definition of such crimes to include acts committed because of animus against the victim's real or perceived gender, gender-identity, sexual orientation, or disability, and would give the Department of Justice greater authority to investigate and prosecute hate crimes. There was a concerted effort this time to mobilize the support of religious individuals and organizations, including the formation of Clergy Against Hate, which set up a Website with resources to advocate for the measure.

On May 3, the House approved the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act by 237-180. Jewish organizations, led by the ADL, hailed the vote. In September, the Senate, by voice vote, added the measure to the Defense Authorization Act, a step taken after a 60-39 vote to invoke cloture ended a filibuster. But in December, the conference committee charged with reconciling the House and Senate versions of the Defense Authorization Act removed the hate-crimes provisions to avert a threatened presidential veto.

Head Start

The Jewish community found itself locked in a painful conflict over reauthorization of Head Start, an early-childhood education program for children from low-income households. An amendment was proposed to exempt religiously affiliated groups that administered Head Start from certain civil rights laws, allowing such operators to hire and fire government-funded employees on the basis of religion. Jewish and other
groups favoring Head Start but opposed to the amendment played a game of brinksmanship, threatening to oppose final passage of the bill unless the exemption language was removed. In the end, the amendment failed both in committee and in a motion to recommit on the House floor.

**Voting Rights**

Several mainstream Jewish organizations lined up with civil rights groups in support of granting voting representation in Congress to residents of the District of Columbia. Although the District already had a delegate with the right to vote in House committee, that delegate had no vote on the House floor, and since the vast majority of D.C. residents were members of racial and ethnic minorities, the civil rights issue was clear. Opponents of the initiative pointed to language in the Constitution reserving full House representation for admitted states.

A compromise bill was offered by Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton (D., D.C.) and Rep. Tom Davis (R., Va.) that would have expanded the number of representatives by two. The District—which was heavily Democratic—would receive a single permanent seat. The second new seat would be awarded to the predominantly Republican state of Utah until the 2010 census, after which it would be distributed through the general reapportionment process. (Utah was widely considered likely to gain a seat after the census.) The House passed the bill, but Senate proponents were unable to muster the 60 votes necessary to stop debate and move to a vote.

**Stem-Cell Research**

As part of its “First 100 Hours” agenda, Congress endeavored to address stem-cell research. Medical researchers held out the hope that embryonic stem cells might hold the key to treating and curing a range of maladies, such as Parkinson's disease, spinal-cord injuries, and certain forms of cancer. The Stem-Cell Research Enhancement Act of 2007 was designed to promote such research by increasing the number of embryonic stem-cell lines that could be used in federally funded research. The bill would ostensibly overturn an executive order issued by the president in August 2001 that limited federal funding to cell lines created before that date. Jewish agencies, including the denominational bodies, supported the research—within ethical parameters—and opposed efforts to restrict or
penalize scientists, clinicians, or patients for participating in stem-cell therapeutic technology.

An attempt to pass similar legislation in 2006 had drawn the first veto of President Bush's administration. The 2007 attempt once again passed both houses, but fell short of the two-thirds margin necessary to override a veto, and so was given up. There was greater success at the state level, though. In New York, Hadassah leaders hailed the State Legislature for providing $100 million to fund stem-cell research and regenerative medicine, with an expectation of a billion dollars over the next ten years.

Holocaust-Related Matters

The second annual observation of International Holocaust Remembrance Day took place at the UN on January 29. Among the speakers were Secretary General Ban Ki-moon (by video), Israeli ambassador to the UN Dan Gillerman, a Jewish survivor, and representatives of other groups persecuted by the Nazis. The UN's New York headquarters also hosted exhibits highlighting different aspects of the Holocaust and their contemporary relevance.

Members of Congress and Jewish community organizations sought greater access to the trove of millions of pages of Holocaust-era documents housed in archives in Bad Arolsen, Germany, that recorded what happened to more than 17 million victims of the Nazis. These were under the control of the International Tracing Service (ITS), which was governed by a multinational board. While a recent agreement made the documents available to family members and researchers, many of the ITS member nations had not yet ratified the agreement. Reps. Alcee Hastings (D, Fla.), Robert Wexler (D, Fla.), and Mark Kirk (R, Ill.) organized letters to the German ambassador and representatives of the European nations whose approval was needed.

Adding a sense of urgency was the fact that the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims (ICHEIC), set up ten years earlier to compensate survivors for unpaid insurance policies, was winding down its work. It was hoped that information from the Bad Arolsen archives might bolster claims against insurers.

In March, Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R, Fla.) introduced a controversial measure, the Holocaust Insurance Claims Accountability Act. This bill would require insurance companies doing business in the U.S.
to disclose information about Holocaust-era insurance policies, and established a federal cause of action for claims arising from these policies. Ros-Lehtinen and the survivors groups supporting her felt that ICHEIC had allowed insurers to drag their feet on producing information, and had allowed inadequate listings and settlements. Mainstream Jewish organizations, however, did not support the bill. According to the Forward, their leaders felt the measure would threaten existing international compensation agreements, which were premised on voluntary monetary payouts in exchange for immunity from further lawsuits. The agreements had yielded payments of more than $300 million to almost 50,000 survivors. One-third of the payments were settlements on policies, and the remainder consisted of $1,000 “humanitarian awards” in cases where existence of the insurance policies could not be definitively proved. The proposed legislation, then, put some survivors groups on a collision course with one another, Jewish organizations, the courts, and the U.S. government.

Health Care

Jewish agencies, conscious of the graying of the general population and the Jewish community in particular, played an active role in the continuing debate over Medicare, Medicaid, and prescription-drug benefits. Legislation was introduced to require the government to negotiate directly with pharmaceutical companies for lower drug prices for people in the Medicare program. The House passed the Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act of 2007 on January 12 by 255-170, but it was not taken up by the Senate. UJC expressed displeasure that the president's budget recommended reducing spending on Medicare and Medicaid by nearly $100 billion, cutting $95.9 billion from entitlement spending over the next five years, $309 billion over ten years.

A health-care program for children took center stage as well: many felt that the battle over the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) had significant implications both for those who might gain or lose health coverage and for members of Congress seeking to maintain their seats. Congress debated reauthorization of the 1997 federal program that funded state programs for families with children. The bill drew fire over funding levels, eligibility for the children of illegal immigrants, state flexibility on eligibility levels and citizenship documentation, incentives for state outreach and enrollment, and expanding SCHIP to include comprehensive coverage for children.

In addition to maintaining coverage for more than six million children
currently covered, the bill would have expanded coverage to an additional three million in households with incomes up to three times the federal poverty level. It would also provide mental health parity and the option of dental coverage, but not extend eligibility to children of illegal immigrants. House Democrats agreed to limit the increase in SCHIP spending to $35 billion, matching the Senate proposal, paid for completely by a 61-cent increase in the tobacco tax.

President Bush vetoed SCHIP twice. The first veto, on October 3, derailed a measure that had passed the Senate by a 67-29 veto-proof majority. In the House, though, it came up 25 votes short of the 290 needed to override a veto. Jewish agencies made a strong effort to garner support. NCJW president Phyllis Snyder, in a JTA op-ed, recalled that the Jewish greeting for a happy and healthy new year had “added meaning this year,” as Congress had the “opportunity to ensure a healthy new year for millions of America’s children.” Efforts to address opposition concerns on income eligibility, undocumented immigrants, and the phase-out timetable for childless adults receiving SCHIP benefits failed to sway enough votes to reach the two-thirds mark, and on October 18, the House fell just 16 votes short of the number needed to override. The second veto came on December 12, after which Congress adopted a long-term reauthorization of the program without the additional coverage. That bill was signed December 21.

Poverty

As part of the “First 100 Hours” agenda, the new Congress moved to increase the minimum wage from $5.15 to $7.25. The bill was introduced January 5 and signed by the president on May 25, as part of legislation providing funds for troops, veterans, and Hurricane Katrina recovery, along with tax breaks for small businesses.

For the first time, the farm bill became a major focus for Jewish agencies, spearheaded by the JCPA. This was so because the food-stamp federal entitlement was technically an agricultural program, and funded in the farm bill. Rabbi Steve Gutow, the JCPA executive director, issued a “Food Stamp Challenge,” pledging to eat over the course of one week only as much food as could be purchased with $21, the average amount ($1/meal) provided to food-stamp recipients. His challenge was designed to call attention to the inadequacy of the food-stamp benefit and to galvanize support for a strong reauthorization of the nutrition title of the farm bill.
The Feeding America’s Family Act, sponsored by Reps. James McGovern (D., Mass.) and Joanne Emerson (R., Mo.), was embraced by anti-hunger advocates. It would have added $20 billion to nutritional programs by increasing the minimum benefit, restoring food stamps to all legal immigrants, and streamlining outreach efforts. In the Senate, advocates pushed for the Food Stamp Fairness and Benefit Restoration Act of 2007, introduced by Sens. Harkin (D., Iowa) and Lugar (R., Ind.) to improve the benefit formula and reverse the trend of decreasing U.S. government donations to community food banks and food pantries.

Rep. Steve King (R., Iowa) offered two amendments, one barring for life anyone who had ever been without status in the U.S.—including refugees and asylum-seekers—from the food-stamp program; and the other mandating that extremely poor legal immigrants count their sponsor’s income when determining eligibility for food stamps, even after the expiration of a five-year window. Several Jewish agencies vigorously opposed these amendments, and they were not included in the final version of the bill.

As Thanksgiving neared, the Senate remained deadlocked. An agreement in December finally enabled the Senate to pass a five-year, $286-billion reauthorization of the farm bill by a vote of 79-14. And at year’s end, conferees were lining up to iron out an agreement on a $5.1-billion disaster fund to assist farmers during droughts, floods, and fires, a provision that was not in the House proposal.

Energy and the Environment

Congress debated a broad range of measures to address the sometimes complementary and sometimes conflicting priorities of energy independence and environmental protection. But fault lines formed on whether domestic policy should be weighted toward conservation, development of alternative fuels, or drilling for oil at home, including the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. Compounding the issue was a growing consensus that the earth was warming, in part because of human factors, such as greenhouses gases, and that climate change posed a dire threat to the planet and life on it.

The Energy Independence and Security Act raised the required average fuel economy of cars and light trucks to 35 miles per gallon by the year 2020, the first increase in more than 20 years. Stricken from the measure was a requirement that 15 percent of American energy come from renewable sources by 2020. Congress also inched closer to adopting a pol-
icy on global warming. The House passed a resolution calling for mandatory limits on greenhouse gases. Sen. Lieberman (l., Conn.) teamed up with Sen. Warner (R., Va.) to sponsor the Climate Security Act, an effort to lower greenhouse gas emissions by as much as 19 percent below 2005 levels by the year 2020, and as much as 63 percent by mid-century. Action was expected in 2008.

There was a solid Jewish consensus that dependence on energy produced in often hostile countries had rendered Americans less secure. Seventeen Jewish agencies wrote members of Congress on October 24 to advocate for energy policies that "reduce our dependence on foreign sources, sustain our fragile environment, and build a robust national economy." Public investment in alternative fuels, in continued, would help avoid "pouring billions of dollars into the coffers of some of the world's most despotic and anti-American regimes." The Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life organized a grassroots campaign to send postcards to members of Congress through its campaign, "A Light Among the Nations: How Many Jews Does it Take to Change a Light Bulb?" And AJC offered financial incentives to its employees to purchase fuel-efficient, environmentally friendly vehicles.

Life Insurance

The House of Representatives approved the Life Insurance Fairness for Travelers Act, prohibiting insurers from using locations of past or prospective travel as a basis for decisions on granting life insurance. The insurers had used the State Department's "watch list" as a proxy for risk, and charged higher premiums or denied policies to those intending to travel to countries deemed dangerous, such as Israel. Introducing the bill, Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D., Fla.) cited her own difficulties in obtaining insurance coverage because of her travels. Similar measures on the state level had already passed in California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, and Washington.

Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

Habeas Corpus

In August, a broad range of Jewish groups—including AJC, ADL, JCPA, and the URJ—submitted amicus briefs to the Supreme Court in
support of detainees held at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, who were seeking review of the legality of their detentions in federal court, as well as challenging the constitutionality of the Military Commissions Act of 2006. Oral arguments in the combined case of Boumediene v. Bush and al Odah v. U.S. were held on December 5.

Many other civil-liberties groups also backed the rights of the detainees, including Human Rights First, Human Rights Watch, the Constitution Project, and the Rutherford Institute, as did the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, the Muslim Public Affairs Council, and the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

Gay and Lesbian Rights

The fall 2006 elections had increased the number of political liberals in Congress, raising hopes for passage of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), popularly known as the gay rights bill. Introduced in the House by Reps. Barney Frank (D., Mass.), Christopher Shays (R., Conn.), Tammy Baldwin (D., Wis.), and Deborah Pryce (R., Ohio), it would have prohibited discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. The latter provision, affording civil-rights protection to transgendered individuals, triggered controversy: with a national election coming up in 2008, there was fear of a backlash against the bill’s supporters. Another bone of contention was language inserted in the bill to ease fears of religious groups that they might be forced by it to violate the teachings of their faiths.

In the hope of securing passage, Rep. Frank and others proposed limiting the measure to the less controversial subject of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, leaving the situation of transgendered people for later legislation. The NCJW joined in a letter sent on October 1 to the chair of the House Education and Labor Committee opposing Frank’s strategy. Frank went ahead and introduced the narrower ENDA, with the gender-identity provision stripped away. He also chose to revert to the religious exemption language from prior years. The bill was passed by the House on November 7 by 235 to 184, the first time such a measure had ever passed in either house. No action was taken in the Senate.

Reproductive Rights

On June 7, the National Council of Jewish Women unveiled its “Plan A” campaign to press for reproductive rights and unfettered access to con-
traceptives through education and advocacy initiatives at the community, state, and national levels. NCJW sections in many parts of the country reported considerable activity, including ensuring that local pharmacies stocked emergency contraception, asking school boards to require comprehensive sex-education programs, and advocating for affordable contraception on college campuses.

In a 5-4 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Gonzales v. Carhart*, upheld the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act. Justice Anthony Kennedy's decision said that the ban on the rarely used intact dilation and extraction procedure to end late-term pregnancies did not place an undue burden on the due process rights of women, even in the absence of an exception for the health of the mother.

Several Jewish organizations expressed fear that this ruling could ultimately lead to an end to all abortion rights. The National Council of Jewish Women, in a statement, declared that the Supreme Court had "dealt a devastating blow to *Roe v. Wade* and the right of women to safe and legal abortions." Hadassah president June Walker said: "We are concerned that interference of this kind may place the health of a pregnant woman in jeopardy, something that is considered unacceptable by the Jewish religion, which places the health of the mother above all other considerations." But Rabbi Avi Shafran, director of public affairs for Agudath Israel of America, disagreed sharply, stating that from the perspective of Jewish law, the ban on partial-birth abortion prohibited "little if anything short of murder."

**Genetic Information**

The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2007 was introduced in the House by Reps. Louise Slaughter (D., N.Y.), Judy Biggert (R., Ill.), Anna Eshoo (D., Calif.), and Greg Walden (R., Oreg.). A companion bill was introduced in the Senate by Olympia Snowe (R., Me.), Edward Kennedy (D., Mass.), Mike Enzi (R., Wyo.), and Christopher Dodd (D., Conn.). The legislation would prohibit employers from using genetic information to discriminate in employment decisions, and both employers and insurance companies from using such information to determine eligibility for insurance or to set insurance rates. It had been a key legislative priority of Hadassah and other Jewish organizations for many years. The House passed it by 420-9 on April 25, but Sen. Tom Coburn (R., Okla.)—a physician—put a "hold" on the bill in the Senate, ending its chances for passage in 2007.
Desegregation

The Supreme Court, hearing a pair of school desegregation cases together, ruled 5-4 that two voluntary integration programs were unconstitutional. In *Parents v. Seattle* and *Meredith v. Jefferson County*, Chief Justice Roberts’s decision found that the school systems could not justify using race to remedy past discrimination because, in the Seattle case, the schools had never been legally segregated, and, in Jefferson County, Kentucky, they were no longer segregated. The court further held that while race could be used to achieve diversity, these particular programs failed to use other means to reach this goal.

Jewish organizations generally supported the school systems, the ADL filing its own brief and AJC joining with a number of other agencies.

A Racial Incident

A civil rights rally in Jena, Louisiana, on September 20 drew thousands of activists to protest what they asserted was a racially biased justice system in the small town. After several African American students sat under a tree where white students generally ate lunch, a noose was hung from the tree. Several racially charged incidents followed, and charges of attempted murder were made against six black students. The charges were later reduced. The ADL expressed “deep concern,” and offered to help heal tensions.

Church-State Issues

Faith-Based Initiatives

The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America (UOJCA) welcomed Justice Samuel Alito’s decision in *Hein v. Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF)*, which found that that ordinary citizens having no particular standing, such as a demonstration of injury, had no right to challenge government activities they felt violated the First Amendment’s prohibition on the establishment of religion. The FFRF had objected to conferences held by the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.

Other Jewish organizations, such as AJC, ADL, and the American Jewish Congress, filed amicus briefs in favor of the FFRF, along with the
ACLU, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, the Baptist Joint Committee, People for the American Way Foundation, and American Atheists. After the decision was handed down, the American Jewish Congress called for Congress to pass legislation allowing such suits. “The balance of powers is out of sync, and it needs to be set straight,” it said in a statement.

RELIGIOUS WORKERS

Another year passed without adoption of legislation to protect the rights of religious workers. In the house, the Workplace Religious Freedom Act (WRFA) was introduced by Reps. Carolyn McCarthy (D., N.Y.) and Mark Souder (R., Ind.). It would require employers to make reasonable accommodation for an employee’s religious practice, such as observing the Jewish Sabbath.

An article by Judith Moldover that appeared in the New York Law Journal in October discussed concerns by some supporters of the WRFA that adoption of ENDA, protecting the rights of gays and lesbians in the workplace (see above), could present a conflict for those seeking religious accommodation. According to Moldover, conflict between sexual-orientation discrimination and religious accommodation might occur in three situations: “refusal to service homosexual clients, refusal to participate in diversity programs and training, and supervisory conduct.”

THE MILITARY

Responding to a request by the Military Religious Freedom Foundation—a watchdog group formed by retired Air Force lawyer Michael Weinstein—the Defense Department’s inspector general issued a report in August charging that four generals and three other military officers had violated ethics rules when they participated in a video touting an evangelical Christian group. The ten-minute fund-raising video for Christian Embassy, filmed in 2005, included uniformed officers appearing in the halls of the Pentagon. The inspector general recommended that Army and Air Force leaders take “corrective action” against the men. In addition, a retired Army colonel was rebuked for providing Christian Embassy staff unescorted access to the Pentagon in order to make the video.
INTERFAITH RELATIONS

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict continued to be the major focus of the interfaith encounter.

This was evident on November 1, when a broad array of religious leaders, under the banner of the National Interreligious Leadership Initiative for Peace in the Middle East, sent a letter to Secretary of State Rice calling for greater U.S. involvement in solving the Middle East conflict, including mediation of a two-state settlement between Israelis and Palestinians and peace between Israel and its northern neighbors, Syria and Lebanon. The group acknowledged that the Saudi-sponsored Arab Peace Initiative "represents an historic positive development in the history of this conflict." Signatories included two Catholic cardinals—Theodore McCarrick of Washington and William Keeler of Baltimore; the leaders of the mainline Congregational, Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, and Presbyterian denominations; the patriarchs of the Greek Orthodox and Armenian churches; the heads of the Reconstructionist, Reform, and Conservative Jewish movements; and top officials of the Islamic Society of North America, the Islamic Circle of North America, and the American Society for Muslim Advancement.

Mainline Protestants and Jews

American mainline churches continued to reevaluate their positions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, adopting somewhat more nuanced policies than they had in the past.

In June, the United Church of Christ (UCC) advanced a resolution calling for a "balanced" approach. The UCC General Synod, held in Hartford, acknowledged that two resolutions adopted in 2005 were focused only on the actions of Israel, and "may have overlooked many aspects of an extremely complicated situation." Those resolutions had condemned Israel's security barrier and endorsed the use of economic leverage, including divestment, as means to advance Israeli-Palestinian peace. The new resolution stated: "We cannot raise our voices only to point out the transgressions of one side," adding that the UCC "has yet to fully address other forces contributing to the ongoing violence, oppression and suffering in the region." And it called for the creation of a task force to "engage in ongoing and balanced study of the causes, history, and context of the conflict" that would report its findings in 2009. Jewish organizations welcomed the resolution.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the largest
Lutheran group in the U.S., became the first mainline Protestant body to rule out divestment as a matter of policy. The ELCA Churchwide Assembly, meeting in August in Chicago, resolved to explore the church's "entire investment activity," but the delegates added an amendment stating that such exploration "would exclude the option of divestiture." Nevertheless, the church left the door open for a possible boycott of goods made in Israeli settlements. The ELCA resolution called for increased awareness, advocacy, and "economic stewardship" to advance peace between Israelis and Palestinians, and, as amended, added that economic initiatives "could include purchasing of products from Palestinian providers and exploration of the feasibility of refusing to buy products produced in Israeli settlements."

Among the low points for the year was a conference held in Boston in October by the American arm of the stridently anti-Zionist Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center. Titled "The Apartheid Paradigm in Palestine-Israel: Issues of Justice and Equality," its keynote speaker was Anglican archbishop and Nobel laureate Desmond Tutu of South Africa. Also on the rostrum was an American Episcopal bishop. Tutu compared the Jewish state to apartheid-era South Africa, and lifted passages from the Hebrew Bible to argue that the God worshiped by Jews would side with the Palestinians. "If you reject your calling," Tutu admonished Israel, "you may survive for a long time, but you will find it is all corrosive inside, and one day you will implode." The archbishop made no mention of Arab hostility toward Jews.

An American Christian group emerged as an independent voice in church policy toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Christians for Fair Witness on the Middle East praised the UCC call for balance (see above) while rebuking views such as that taken by Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP), which accused Israel of provocation for archaeological work near the Temple Mount. Fair Witness called the CMEP reaction "biased and inflammatory." Rev. Dr. Peter Pettit, a Fair Witness leader as well as director of the Institute for Jewish-Christian Understanding at Muhlenberg College, asked, "[s]houldn't our role as Christian peacemakers be to restore calm to the situation by explaining the facts and encouraging a peaceful return to a project intended only to provide safety to visitors to a site holy to all three religions?"

In February, 13 American Christian leaders travelled to Tehran to meet with Iranian religious figures and the president. The trip was organized by the American Friends Service Committee (Quakers) and the Mennonite Central Committee, with the stated intent of fostering dialogue.
Representation came from the United Methodist Church, the Episcopal Church USA, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. A statement released upon their return quoted Ahmadinejad as saying that “the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can only be solved through political, not military means,” a sentiment that the Iranian president never expressed in public. The ADL charged that the trip represented a breach in Christian-Jewish relations.

Evangelicals and Jews

In contrast to mainline coolness toward Israel, the only problem some Jews had with evangelicals was that they seemed somewhat too enthusiastic about the Jewish state. A prime example was Rev. John Hagee. The leader of a mega-church in San Antonio, Texas, Hagee had taken his “Night to Honor Israel” program to more than two dozen communities and raised more than $10 million for social services in Israel, along the way earning acceptance by some Jewish communal leaders. The programs, which originated in Hagee’s backyard, had become routine events not just in the Bible Belt, but in places not known for their evangelical demographic, including Fresno, California; Concord, New Hampshire; Albany, New York; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Madison, Wisconsin. And he now had a national organization, Christians United for Israel, launched in early 2006.

Acceptance of Hagee came, in part, because he had deftly dodged the third rails of the Jewish-evangelical encounter by actively opposing proselytization of Jews and muting his concerns over Israeli disengagement from Gaza in 2005. On March 11, AIPAC granted him a prime-time speaking slot at its annual policy conference in Washington, providing Hagee his largest predominantly Jewish audience to date. In his speech, Hagee described 50 million American Christian Zionists as a “sleeping giant” that had been awakened by the threats posed by Iran and other enemies of Israel. Hagee declared to the cheering crowd, “Israel, you are not alone,” and led the gathering in a chorus of “Israel Lives!”

Hagee was not without prominent and vociferous Jewish critics. One was Rabbi Eric Yoffie, president of the URJ and the most prominent leader of the Reform movement. In an address to the Central Conference of American Rabbis, Yoffie called on Jewish organizations, particularly federations, to reconsider their embrace of Hagee, whom he called “extremist.” Yoffie felt that the views of Hagee and many other Christian Zionists, which encouraged Israel not to compromise on territory, “may
advance their theology but they do so at the expense of Israel's security and well-being.” He also rebuked Hagee for his disparaging comments about Catholics and Muslims. Rabbi James Rudin, senior AJC adviser on interreligious affairs, criticized AIPAC for unduly focusing on Hagee’s tactical support and ignoring his “apocalyptic claims” about an imminent second coming. At its biennial conference, the Reform movement welcomed Pastor Rick Warren, a prominent evangelical minister who generally stayed out of the political crosshairs.

Catholics and Jews

Jewish relations with the Catholic Church remained generally positive throughout the year, with one exception. On July 7, Pope Benedict XVI issued a motu proprio, a letter signed personally by the pope, solely on his authority, titled Summorum Pontificum, which allowed greater freedom to use the Tridentine liturgy, more commonly known as the Latin Mass. Previously, a congregation required permission from the local bishop to use the ancient service, dating to 1570. Its Good Friday liturgy had long been offensive to Jews. Although the reference to “faithless” or “perfidious” Jews was removed in 1959, still included in the “intercessions” was a “Prayer for the Conversion of the Jews” asking God to take “the veil from their hearts” so that they might recognize the divinity of Jesus, and that God’s mercy be given “even to the Jews.”

Most observers did not believe that the pope was even thinking about Jews when he authorized use of this mass; rather, he was trying to reach out to Traditionalist Catholics, who had long rejected modifications made to the mass and the substitution of vernacular languages for Latin. The dissident movement had gained some notoriety in recent years with the swirl of publicity around filmmaker Mel Gibson and his father, both of whom were considered followers.

The day before the pope officially released his letter, ADL national director Abraham Foxman issued a statement calling it “a theological setback in the religious life of Catholics and a body blow to Catholic-Jewish relations.” Foxman later backtracked somewhat, saying, “the Vatican is not an enemy of the Jewish people, nor is Pope Benedict XVI,” but he warned that wider use of the Latin Mass could jeopardize the progress made since Vatican II and encourage “retrograde forces” within the Church.

AJC took a contrary stance, expressing concern but calling the motu proprio “nothing new.” AJC welcomed a confirmation by Pope Benedict
XVI that the changes in policy regarding the mass would in no way affect the positive changes of Vatican II.

The papal decision about the mass, in fact, would have virtually no practical impact. Almost all Catholics around the world would continue to participate in masses in their local languages, using the liturgy set forth in 1970 in which the so-called conversion prayer had been revised and a positive statement recognizing an "eternal" Jewish covenant with God was included.

**Muslims and Jews**

Jewish organizations maintained a policy of avoiding contact with most Muslim organizations, especially the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), which was suspected of backing terrorism.

Rabbi Eric Yoffie, president of the Union for Reform Judaism, generated considerably controversy by accepting an invitation to address the Islamic Society of North American (ISNA)—considered to be relatively moderate—on August 31. Yoffie told the audience that Americans were generally ignorant of Islam, largely because both the media and Christian fundamentalists focused on the most extreme expressions of the religion. As a result, he said, there was pervasive discrimination against Muslim Americans, often justified in the name of homeland security.

On December 16, ISNA president Ingrid Mattson returned the visit and addressed the biennial URJ conference. She spoke of a diverse and transformed Muslim American community that was ready for meaningful dialogue with Jews.

*Ethan Felson*