



# 2010 STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY CONCERNS

The Jewish community values the support of the New York congressional delegation and the many initiatives sponsored by our representatives and senators. These measures reflect a deep and abiding commitment to issues of concern to the Jewish community. As we take stock of our mutual concerns and priorities, we ask Congress to take note of the following issues, supported by a broad consensus in the Jewish community and considered to be high on our agenda.

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## INTERNATIONAL

### THE DEVASTATION IN HAITI

The devastation in Haiti is unimaginable and our hearts and prayers go out to the people of that impoverished nation. The generous reaction of the President, Congress and the American people mirrors the best of our values. So too, does the disproportionate response of the people of Israel, a far-away country. The miraculous rescue of two, young children by a team of New York City's

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## DOMESTIC

### HOMELAND SECURITY AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS/RESPONSE

New York City remains the most symbolic and substantive target for many terrorists, many of whom share a singular focus on the Jewish community. The JCRC-NY continues to strongly advocate that all homeland security allocations formulae be "risk-based" rather than equally divided among jurisdictions.

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## HUMAN SERVICES

### RESPONDING TO THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

UJA-Federation of New York is deeply gratified to the Administration and to our Members of Congress for their efforts to address the economic downturn and spur the creation of jobs. The recession is providing dramatic challenges for the Jewish social service system as well as the broader non-profit sector in which we participate.

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“Bravest and Finest” from the wreckage who were rushed to an Israeli field hospital for medical care, gave us hope and made us proud of their deeds and those of Israeli search-and-rescue teams, trauma specialists and police.

The American Jewish community’s efforts reflect our traditions of generosity, compassion and concern. Jewish Coalition for Disaster Relief — an alliance of 45 U.S. national and foreign Jewish agencies led by the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) — leads the communal efforts, and other Jewish communal organizations are deeply involved. Those, and other Jewish communal contributions, are supporting Israeli initiatives and other emergency relief efforts meeting the immediate needs of survivors, and planning is underway for intermediate and long term projects to help rebuild Haiti’s infrastructure.

## IRAN

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s reelection as President of Iran in June 2009 was greeted by an avalanche of allegations of electoral fraud and the protests of tens of thousands of Iranian students and other demonstrators in the streets. That “Green Revolution” was greeted by the brutality of the Revolutionary Guards. The image of Neda Agha Soltan, a young girl brutally gunned down by the state’s Basij militia, remains frozen in the memories of Iranians and concerned foreigners alike.

The regime in Tehran, distinguished by its cruelty, its utter disregard for human rights (for example, gays and adulterers are executed by the state), the imprisonment of journalists and the horrific treatment of peaceful dissidents, continues. And, that same regime demands that the world believe that its nuclear enrichment program is purely for peaceful purposes, despite the 2006 United Nations Security Council requirement to suspend its nuclear-enrichment program and the International Atomic Energy Agency 2009 resolution condemning Iran for violations of its Security Council obligations — with particular emphasis on a hidden nuclear facility in the holy city of Qom.

Speaking about the failure of diplomatic initiatives at a recent meeting with her counterpart at the European Union, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton observed: “Regrettably Iran has not responded to that engagement even as the international community’s concern about the intent of Iran’s nuclear program has increased. We will continue our close consultation on next steps in keeping with our dual-track approach. But let me be clear: we will not be waited-out and we will not back down.”

### Missile development.

Iran’s increasingly sophisticated missiles and nuclear potential together transform President Ahmadinejad’s ongoing calls for the destruction of Israel from rhetoric into a looming, actionable threat. In February 2009 Iran launched its first satellite into orbit, the latest development in a pattern of Iranian activity to build a nuclear weapon and the means to deliver it. The regime has tested numerous missiles, in defiance of American and international efforts to explore diplomatic options. Iran launched a missile in May — before its own elections and just after President Obama set a timeline for negotiations with Iran; a second launch in September — on the eve of Yom Kippur and just days after its secret nuclear facilities in Qom were exposed to widespread international condemnation; and most recently in December, when a missile with the range to hit Israeli and American targets in the Middle East was tested.

### Nuclear program.

The International Atomic Energy Agency reported in August that Iran has more than 8,000 centrifuges at its plant in Natanz alone, and has successfully produced over 3,300 pounds of low-enriched uranium. The recent exposure of a secret nuclear facility in Qom, with capacity for 3000 more centrifuges, drew international condemnation. A nuclear-armed Iran would pose an existential threat to the entire Middle East, Europe, the United States and the world.

### Sanctions.

Iran’s neighbors understand the existential threat posed by a nuclearized Iran. A recent poll indicates that 57%

of Saudis support tougher sanctions on Iran and a third support an American military strike if Iran doesn't halt its nuclear weapons production. Two-of-five Egyptians support tougher sanctions. Moderate Arab states are visibly uncomfortable with the rise of a dangerous nuclear power in their region and look to America for leadership.

Currently, internationally-imposed sanctions seriously hamper Iran's ability to conduct business abroad and to attract needed investment for its energy sector. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates recently said that unless Iran begins to comply with the steps agreed upon in October, he anticipates "significant" new sanctions on Iran imposed by the international community.

In 2009, Congress took important steps in the effort to contain Iran. In October, it overwhelmingly passed the *Iran Sanctions Enabling Act*, authorizing state and local governments to divest from companies investing in Iran's energy sector.

*The Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act* (IRPSA) is another important step towards showing Iran that there are consequences to its increasingly belligerent foreign policy. Passed on December 15th by a nearly unanimous vote in the House of Representatives, IRPSA reinforces American diplomatic efforts with the threat of tougher sanctions, should Iran continue to defy the international community. The legislation limits Iran's ability to import and produce refined petroleum products by requiring the President to impose sanctions on companies helping Iran in these areas.

The *Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability and Divestment Act of 2009* unanimously passed in the Senate. It incorporates aspects of the *Iran Sanctions Enabling Act* and the *Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act*. This legislation contains similar provisions to IRPSA.

The JCRC-NY worked closely with New York State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli and then New York City Comptroller William Thompson to explore the available leverage that they can

bring to bear on Iran. Both took concrete steps on this issue and current NYC Comptroller John Liu vows to continue such policies. Other states, counties and municipalities across the country took steps to divest pension funds from companies in Iran's energy or defense or nuclear sectors. The JCRC-NY strongly commends the House of Representatives for passing these important pieces of legislation and strongly urges the Senate to follow suit. We particularly encourage any sanction that specifically targets the Iran Revolutionary Guards Corps.

Unilateral U.S. steps will have limited effect. The U.S. should pursue a path to a strongly worded new U.N. Security Council resolution on Iran, which denies nuclear weapons ambitions.

### **Sponsoring terror.**

Iran continues to be the world's leading state sponsor of terror. It undermines Lebanese hopes for peace by arming and aiding the terrorist group Hezbollah. It subverts the hopes for peace in other parts of the region by funding terrorist groups like Hamas and the Palestine Islamic Jihad. It sends arms to the Taliban in Afghanistan and Shia militants in Iraq.

Iran is making allies in Latin America to counter Washington's traditional influence in the region and could use them to undermine U.S. security. Venezuela, Cuba, Nicaragua and Bolivia have all become allies of Iran in recent years and other countries in Latin America have diplomatic ties with the Islamic republic. Additionally, in forming an alliance with countries in the Western Hemisphere and in working with drug trafficking organizations in Mexico, Iran has developed a relatively easy access to our nation's border. We support President Obama in his efforts to convey to Brazil and other Latin American partners the urgency of working to prevent a nuclear Iran.

We encourage President Obama and his entire administration to follow through on their commitment to ensure that Iran does not achieve nuclear weapons capability.

## THE U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

President Barack Obama's "On a New Beginning" speech in Cairo last June eloquently identified the ongoing continuity of the relationship: "America's strong bonds with Israel are well known. This bond is unbreakable." His Administration tangibly demonstrated its commitment to Israel through its efforts to restart the peace process, the boycott of the Durban II Conference, and its condemnation of the Goldstone Report.

### Public opinion.

Multiple public opinion polls report that a majority of American voters continue to show strong support for the Jewish State, reflecting Israel's special status as a fellow democracy and America's closest ally in the Middle East.

### Strategic cooperation.

Both American and Israeli interests are enhanced and protected through strategic cooperation. This past October's "Juniper Cobra" defense exercise was the largest ever joint military exercise in missile defense held by the two nations.

The work of U.S. Lt. General Keith Dayton has helped the Palestinian Security Forces to drastically reduce the presence of terror attacks and violence in the West Bank, leading to unprecedented economic growth. We applaud this effort, as well as the American funding and training for this security force.

We appreciate the passage of the *Department of Defense Appropriations Act*, which includes \$202.8 million for Israel's Arrow-2, Arrow-3 and the short-range missile defense program "David's Sling."

## FOREIGN AID

Totalling little more than one percent of the federal budget, foreign aid is an essential, cost-effective tool for promoting American interests abroad. Challenges ranging from the potential of a nuclear-armed Iran, to the expanding military capabilities of the terrorist groups Hamas and Hezbollah, make it increasingly difficult and expensive for Israel to support its defense spending without foreign aid.

We recognize Congress' continued and unwavering support in Congress for the Jewish state, including the passage in December of the annual foreign aid bill for fiscal year 2010, including \$2.22 billion in security assistance to Israel. When combined with \$555 million of aid in a previous bill, the legislation brings the total amount of aid to Israel this fiscal year to \$2.775 billion. Finally, we applaud the House for the passage of the fiscal year *2010 Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act*, which includes \$2 million in funding for the U.S.-Israel Energy Cooperation Act.

## THE PEACE PROCESS

The Jewish community is encouraged that the knowledgeable and talented foreign affairs team assembled by President Obama will continue to play a constructive role in the peace process. Israel's desire for peace is clear and it is critical that Israel and the U.S. work together to identify a credible partner that is willing and able to make peace. We thank Secretary Clinton as well as Special Envoy George Mitchell for their continued efforts at finding a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Hamas' current negotiating stance echoes the infamous "Three Nos" of Khartoum, 1967 (no peace, no negotiation and no recognition of Israel). The split of control between Hamas in Gaza and Fatah in the West Bank complicates the situation. Hamas must continue to be isolated by the U.S. and the international community, unless they: 1) renounce violence; 2) recognize Israel; and 3) accept previous agreements.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, for his part, has implemented a moratorium on settlement building that Secretary Clinton accurately described as "unprecedented." We urge the United States to pressure the government of Mahmoud Abbas to make similar commitments to the peace process and to return to the negotiating table.

## HAMAS

In June, 2007, the terrorist group Hamas - funded and

trained by Iran - violently seized control of Gaza from the Palestinian Authority and launched thousands of rockets and mortar shells into Israeli territory. Though these rocket attacks have largely subsided in the wake of Operation Cast Lead, they are still a present threat. Continued smuggling of arms through tunnels from Egypt is a threat to the security of Israelis, Gazans, and the stability of the region. Many of these weapons have been used recently on Palestinians themselves, especially Fatah supporters. Others are used to terrorize residents of southern Israel who are within rocket range of Gaza.

The Egyptian government is today constructing a wall on its border with Gaza in order to effectively reduce this weapons smuggling. We support this and any effort to cut down on weapons smuggling by terrorists bent on the destruction of Israel.

Hamas' charter is full of anti-Semitic incitement, including exhortations to kill Jews and quotes from the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, an early 20th century anti-Jewish hoax. It is thus completely unreasonable to view them presently as a possible partner in negotiations. As President Obama stated in June 2008, "We must isolate Hamas unless and until they renounce terrorism, recognize Israel's right to exist and abide by past agreements."

## ISRAEL'S NORTHERN BORDER & HEZBOLLAH

Terrorists associated with Hezbollah have killed more Americans than any terrorist group other than al-Qaeda and have launched dozens of attacks against Israel since they withdrew from southern Lebanon in 2000. Today, Hezbollah, a proxy of Iran, wields a veto over the Lebanese government with 13 seats in parliament and two seats in the cabinet. Hezbollah has rebuilt, reinforced and redistributed its militia and arsenal, despite the U.N. Resolution 1701 requirement to disarm. UNFIL is virtually powerless and Hezbollah now aims more than 42,000 short- and long-range rockets at Israel from southern and central Lebanon. At the end of its patience, Israel did respond with artillery fire to the

fourth and fifth in a series of rocket attacks from Lebanon in 2009. The discovery of an arms and ammunition depot in a building under the control of Hezbollah is another example of Hezbollah's violations of Resolution 1701, which endanger Lebanese and Israeli civilians.

The recent vote in Lebanese Parliament allowing Hezbollah to keep its weapons is both disheartening and a direct violation of Resolution 1701. The JCRC-NY urges Congress to put more pressure on the UN in order to keep the peace in Southern Lebanon, and to isolate Hezbollah.

## JERUSALEM

Under Israeli sovereignty, Jerusalem is open to followers of all faiths, with access to all holy places. Jerusalem is the eternal, undivided capital of Israel, having been the historical and spiritual center of the Jewish people for more than 3,000 years. The JCRC-NY thanks Congress for its efforts to ensure that Jerusalem, including the Temple Mount, remains united as the capital of the Jewish State. The JCRC-NY reaffirms its endorsement of the *Jerusalem Embassy Relocation Act of 1995*.

## ISRAELI MIAS & POWS

When Hezbollah finally transferred the remains of IDF Soldier Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev, President Shimon Peres said, "In Israel, the nation is in tears. Today, all of us are the Goldwasser and Regev families." The other victim of the 2006 brutal, cross-border kidnappings, Israeli Cpl. Gilad Shalit, remains in captivity in Gaza. In September 2009 Hamas released a video of Gilad, but he remains under Hamas control and is denied visits by the International Committee of the Red Cross, in violation of international law.

For a painfully long time, other Israeli soldiers have remained missing, with no information as to their whereabouts: Zachary Baumel (a U.S. citizen); Yehudah Katz and Zvi Feldman, who were captured in 1982 during the battle of Sultan Yaqub; Ron Arad, captured in 1986; Guy Chever, who disappeared in 1997; and Majdy Halabi, a Druse soldier who has been missing since May 24, 2005. The Administration

and Congress should continue the State Department mandate to raise the plight of these missing soldiers in all relevant Middle East discussions and report the findings to Congress. More aggressive action needs to be taken to broadcast the message that these acts of brutality will not be tolerated. Please visit [www.freethesoldiers.org](http://www.freethesoldiers.org).

## GLOBAL JEWRY & THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY

### UNITED NATIONS

While the United Nations played a crucial role in the creation of Israel, U.N. history has been marked by persistent antagonism toward the Jewish state. In a world too full of egregious human rights violators and genocide perpetrators, the U.N. has passed more resolutions aimed at isolating Israel than resolutions condemning genocide, warfare and human rights violations throughout the world combined. While Israel recently made strides in gaining acceptance in certain U.N. fora, the overall culture and structure of the organization remain deeply hostile to the Jewish state.

Israel remains the only U.N. member without permanent membership status in the regional grouping system, denying it from participation in important U.N. bodies. Israel's membership in the WEOG (Western European and Others Group) is recognized in New York, but not in Geneva, a key U.N. arena. Permanent membership in a regional would enable Israel to contribute its talents and expertise and make its presence felt in a positive way in the world. We welcome Israel's entry to the political coalition of liberal democracies at the United Nations, known as JUSCANZ. Named for the original members – Japan, United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand – the group unites many democracies that are not members of the European Union or of the Latin American or African groups.

The JCRC-NY continues to call for the U.N. to allow Israel all the rights and responsibilities of a member state and for the Human Rights Council to overcome the biases that render it ineffective and undermine its credibility.

### THE GOLDSTONE REPORT

Throughout Operation Cast Lead, the Israel Defense Forces targeted Hamas terrorists and terrorist infrastructure, while Hamas fighters used Palestinian civilians as human shields. During the fighting the Palestinian Center for Human Rights falsely reported that two-thirds of all fatalities in Gaza were civilians. Current IDF figures put the civilian death toll at no higher than a third of the total of all casualties. Former British Army Colonel Richard Kemp (who fought in Afghanistan in 2003) was quoted by the BBC, saying: "There has never been a time in the history of warfare when any army has made more efforts to reduce civilian casualties and death than the IDF is doing today in Gaza." Every life is sacred and we mourn the loss of any innocent, yet cynical, attempts to demonize Israel for its actions during Cast Lead should not be tolerated.

In the aftermath of the war, the United Nations Human Rights Council charged Richard Goldstone with leading a "fact-finding mission" to uncover human rights abuses that allegedly occurred during the Gaza Operation. The controversial final report was released in September, 2009, and accused both Hamas terrorists and the IDF of war crimes and possible crimes against humanity. The report was widely acknowledged as both flawed and biased against Israel, evidenced by numerous identifiable falsehoods, legal errors, methodological flaws and double standards. The report — entering the slippery slope of moral equivalence and requiring a "proportionate response" in times of war — not only challenges Israel's right to defend itself, but undermines the right of any state to mount a defense, particularly in the asymmetric conflicts becoming more common. Throughout the Gaza Operation the IDF maintained a high professional and moral level while facing an enemy that aimed to terrorize Israeli civilians while taking cover amidst uninvolved civilians in the Gaza strip and using them as human shields.

Israel is committed to full compliance with the Law of Armed Conflict, and to investigating every allegation of violations, irrespective of the source of the allegation. Many of the

investigations described in the report were opened by Israel as a result of its own concern, while other investigations are the result of complaints from Palestinian civilians, NGO's, and U.N. and media reports.

To date, the IDF is looking at 150 separate incidents arising from the Gaza Operation. So far, 36 of those 150 incidents have been referred for criminal investigation. Israel's investigative system, like that of many nations, includes a range of checks and balances and multiple layers of review to ensure impartiality and independence. As Human Rights Watch founder Robert Bernstein pointed out in a New York Times op-ed this past October, an open society like Israel with a free press, numerous human rights organizations and an active judiciary, can be trusted to conduct their own investigations. Israel's formal rebuttal to the Goldstone Report, based on investigations conducted by Maj. Gen. Avichai Mandelblit, the Israeli military Advocate General, should shed much light on baseless accusations.

We appreciate the administration's condemnation of the Goldstone Report and we commend the House for overwhelmingly adopting a resolution rejecting it, while expressing solidarity with Israel.

## DURBAN II

The first U.N. World Conference Against Racism that took place in Durban, South Africa in 2001 turned out to be anything but that. The conference was hijacked and became a carnival of hatred and grievance against Israel. It triggered calls for academic boycotts, divestment campaigns and the regularization of inflammatory language, such as comparisons in the media, international bodies and educational institutions of Israel to apartheid. Those who attended still react to the events in shock and anger. During April, 2009 in Geneva, the U.N. hosted a follow-up conference with the declared purpose of evaluating progress on the commitments reached at Durban in 2001. The conference was boycotted by Australia, Canada, Germany, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, and the United States. The Czech Republic discontinued its

attendance on the first day, and 23 other European Union countries sent low-level delegations.

The JCRC-NY is thankful for the international response to the Durban II Conference, as well as the walkout during President Ahmadinejad's hateful, inflammatory speech condemning Israel. The conference itself was used to promote Israel-bashing and laws against blasphemy, which are contrary to the universal principles of free speech.

## UNIVERSAL JURISDICTION

Echoing an emerging trend in Europe, a Spanish judge in 2002 opened a war-crimes investigation into the targeted assassination of a Palestinian terrorist mastermind, Salah Shehadeh, and issued arrest warrants for seven IDF officials.

In England, similar warrants had existed since 2005. Travel plans to Great Britain by Israeli officials, including Avi Dichter, Minister of Public Security and former head of the Shin Bet internal security agency, retired Israeli General Doron Almog, ex-Israeli Chief of Staff Moshe Ya'alon, Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak and former Foreign Minister and leader of the Israeli opposition Tzipi Livni, have been interrupted.

That so many important figures of Israel's political leadership find themselves the victims of this attempt at "political morality," while the likes of Kim Jong Il or Mahmoud Ahmadinejad continue to perpetrate crimes against their people, threaten the world with nuclear ambitions, and travel the world with impunity, highlights the ludicrous double standard at play.

We appreciate British Foreign Secretary David Miliband's candor in addressing the issue. The British government has distanced itself from the attempts by some British citizens to demonize Israel by using Britain's liberal prosecution laws, which is very encouraging. More, however, must be done to prevent the abuse of Universal Jurisdiction from becoming a frequent tool of Israel-bashers abroad.

## ANTI-SEMITISM

At the first London Conference for Combating Anti-Semitism, Irwin Cotler, former Canadian Minister of Justice and Attorney General, compared the new anti-Semitism to classical anti-Semitism, saying, "While the goal of the old anti-Semitism was to rid the world of Jews, now it was to rid the world of the State of Israel." It is in that vein that the ADL describes 2009 as, "probably the worst year of global anti-Semitism since the Second World War."

During 2009, there were many incidents, some particularly egregious, and others that seemed to coalesce in thematic trends, including:

### Operation Cast Lead and Anti-Semitism

The war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza led to unprecedented waves of vilification and defamation against Israel around the world, with parallel upsurges of anti-Semitic, sometimes violent, attacks. Jews in France endured 113 incidents during that period, including the horrible specter of a burning car ramming into a synagogue in Toulouse. In the United Kingdom, the 220 anti-Semitic incidents during those three weeks represented an eightfold increase over the previous year. Demonstrators chanted "Jews to the gas chambers" at anti-Israel demonstrations in Europe and similar calls for death to Jews have been heard across the Arab and Muslim world. Newspapers in the Arab world and in Latin America published pieces making blatant comparisons between Israel and the Nazis' perpetration of the Holocaust. Caricatures that depict Israelis as Nazis are appearing daily in the Arab press, in Latin American and even in some mainstream European newspapers. Similar incidents occurred in many countries.

### Holocaust.

Committing the worst anti-Semitic attack of 2009, James Wencker Von Brunn, an 89-year-old neo-Nazi, entered the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. and murdered a security guard. Our hearts go out to the family of Stephen T. Johns, not a Jew himself, who died a victim of the vicious racism and anti-Semitism that still pervades

the extreme far-right and far-left of America. This murder reinforces the danger of white supremacist and Christian Identity movements in America.

In a deeply symbolic act, thieves stole the "*Arbeit Macht Frei*" sign from Auschwitz, a living testament to Nazi atrocities. The thieves were caught largely due to their own incompetence. There were similar, though less symbolic acts elsewhere, such as painting the chilling Nazi slogan "*Juden raus*" on a Holocaust memorial site in Lithuania.

### Menorahs.

Menorahs were desecrated in Austria and in 12 places in the United States, including multiple incidents on Long Island. A public ceremony in Fairfield, CT was interrupted by three men unfurling a flag with a swastika, iron cross and a SS symbol and shouting anti-Semitic slogans as they fled.

The most egregious incident occurred in Moldova, where an Orthodox Church Priest and a crowd toppled a Hanukkah menorah on a main public square in Moldova's capital, Chisinau, and replaced it with an Orthodox cross. Media reports indicated the police present did not act.

### Public health.

In a resounding echo of classic blood libels, *Aftonbladet*, a Swedish publication, ran a story asserting that Israel stole organs from Palestinians during Cast Lead. That charge has taken on a life of its own in anti-Semitic circles and was revived to disparage Israel's exemplary humanitarian actions in Haiti.

Swine flu was blamed on Israel and Jews in major newspapers in Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and the Palestinian territories.

### Yemen.

The few remaining Jews in Yemen are in constant danger. Members of the Jewish community, only a few hundred strong, have been the victims of threats and verbal and stone-throwing assaults since the Israeli



invasion of Gaza began. We commend the U.S. Department of State - especially the U.S. Embassy in Sana'a which was instrumental in expediting documents and arranging escorts to protect families leaving Yemen - and the Department of Homeland Security for their laudable action in relocating some of Yemen's Jewish community to our area and the UJA-Federation beneficiaries assisting in their resettlement.

### **Greece.**

Two recent arsons of the Etz-Hayyim Synagogue in Hania, on the Greek island of Crete, are especially worrisome. In response, Greek Prime Minister George A. Papandreou wrote to the Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece stating that the incidents, "not only constitute an attack on one of the remaining Jewish monuments in the island of Crete, but also an attack against the history and the cultural heritage of our homeland, Greece."

He continued, saying that, "the entire Greek nation condemns this abominable act in the strongest possible terms. We have already taken immediate steps to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice."

### **Attitudes and trends.**

A new ADL survey of seven countries across Europe shows that millions continue to believe the classical anti-Semitic canards that have persistently pursued Jews through the centuries. Nearly half of the Europeans surveyed believe Jews are not loyal to their country and more than one-third believe they have "too much power" in business and finance. The research found that 31% of the respondents across Europe blame Jews in the financial industry for the current global economic crisis.

Overall, 40% of Europeans in the countries polled believe that Jews have too much power in the business world, with more than half of Hungarian, Spanish and Polish respondents agreeing with that statement.

Here in America there is better news. Research indicates that anti-Semitic attitudes are equal to the lowest level in all the years of polling American attitudes toward Jews, with

12% of Americans holding anti-Semitic views, a decline from 15% in 2007 and matching lowest figure ever recorded by ADL, in 1998.

However, Jews nationwide continue to be victims of hate crimes, both nationally and here in New York. The FBI reports that there were 7,783 incidents in 2008 (the latest year with available data), of which 1,013 (13%) were considered anti-Jewish. Here in New York City, the NYPD reports that in 2009 in New York City, there were 272 reported hate crimes, an increase of 19% compared to 2008. Of those incidents, 132 (49%) were labeled as anti-Semitic.

### **Necessary responses.**

Over the years we have learned that official governmental voices and community leaders - speaking with moral clarity - can counteract the stridency of the haters. Hate crimes must be expeditiously and thoroughly investigated and those responsible must be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

Today's anti-Semitism is not new. It continues, embodying both new levels and new types of cooperation between the racist right, radical left and Jihadist Muslims. Regrettably, six decades after the Holocaust, society's response must also continue.

## **COMPENSATION FOR HOLOCAUST VICTIMS**

The Holocaust Era Assets Conference in Prague in June 2009 was an important forum to raise the issue of looted art, Judaica and Jewish cultural property, the importance of the restitution of Jewish private and communal property and to discuss strategies for strengthening Holocaust education and research around the world. JCRC-NY appreciates the contributions of the U.S. Department of State and the entire delegation. We hope that the Administration and Congress will continue to speak out on all these issues.

## RIGHTS OF JEWISH REFUGEES FROM ARAB COUNTRIES

Since 1948, more than 850,000 Arab Jews have been uprooted from Arab countries. Most immigrated to Israel, where they now comprise over half the population. Nearly all were forced to leave their possessions behind as they fled and the governments generally confiscated their property. Yet, the international community has historically and disproportionately focused on Palestinian refugees, denying justice to displaced Jews who suffered mass violation of human rights in Arab lands since the founding of Israel.

The JCRC-NY applauds the recent adoption of a House resolution recognizing the plight and flight of the Jewish refugees from Arab countries. It recognizes and defends the rights of Jewish and other refugees alongside those of Palestinian refugees. No peace can be reached in the Middle East without a parallel recognition and redress of the uprooting of centuries-old Jewish communities in Arab lands.

## RELATIONS WITH THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

NCSJ — the lead organizational advocate on behalf of Jews in Russia, Ukraine, the Baltic States & Eurasia — proposes that Congress and the Administration pursue policies towards the region based on principles that:

- promote a constructive, positive and institutionally robust long-term relationship with the countries of the former Soviet Union (FSU), despite leadership changes and the persistence of contentious or outstanding issues;
- expand efforts to oppose biased anti-Israel resolutions in the United Nations by working with FSU countries, including moderate Muslim governments with full diplomatic relations with Israel;
- work with Kazakhstan, the 2010 Chair of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), to utilize all available resources of the OSCE

to combat anti-Semitism, extremism and xenophobia in the region, expand monitoring of hate crimes, and share appropriate best practices; and

- encourage Russia and other independent states to develop new strategies to support human rights and oppose anti-Semitism, extremism and xenophobia; to enforce existing laws targeting extremists and perpetrators of violent acts; and to expand local law enforcement training, restitution of property, grassroots civil society development, improve local healthcare and create cultural and educational opportunities for minorities.

## JEWISH CEMETERIES ABROAD

Cemeteries are traditionally maintained in perpetuity. Jewish history, religion and culture mandate the protection of Jewish cemeteries against desecration. In many places, this is not the case. Delicate negotiations are now underway in Greece, Spain and the former Soviet Union. Construction crews in these countries have unearthed tombstones and human skeletal remains from time-honored Jewish cemeteries. The JCRC-NY supports efforts to protect these sacred sites from development or any other activity or use which desecrates them.

## SUDAN

The scale and frequency of violence — in South Sudan in particular — continues to be alarming, despite the recent finding that 80 percent of the 300,000 deaths in the western Darfur region since 2003 were the result of disease. The fragile ceasefire, ongoing talks between the government and rebels under the aegis of the African Union and the U.N., and scheduled elections are potentially positive signs in a volatile situation. The lack of democracy building measures and the murder and expulsion of foreign humanitarian workers bode ill for a solution. The U.N., African Union, European Union and the U.S. must all work together toward democratic solutions to this complex and potentially violent situation.

## UGANDA

The hateful *Anti-Homosexuality Bill of 2009*, introduced in October in the Ugandan parliament is a clear violation of human rights, imposing both a death sentence for homosexual behavior and forbidding the “promotion of homosexuality” - including publishing information or providing funds, premises for activities, or other resources. The JCRC-NY supports the U.S. government’s demand for Uganda to drop the proposed law.

## SPREADING VIOLENT JIHAD

There are those who believe that Arab leaders have contaminated the purity of Islam by embracing the Western concepts of democracy, secularization and political corruption. While most religious Muslims believe that every aspect of life should be under the sovereignty of Shari’ah, some use this principle to justify violent jihad and religious martyrdom. Osama Bin Laden describes the world in the

terms of, “Two adversaries, the Islamic Nation on one hand and the United States and its allies on the other. It is either victory and glory or defeat and humiliation.”

The terror attacks in Mumbai followed Madrid, London, Chechnya and NYC as manifestations of this ideological battle which is the driving force behind conflicts in Somalia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Gaza, the Philippines and Malaysia. The recent attempted bombing of Northwest Airlines Flight 253 is a reminder that we in America are still not safe from the threat of violent Islamic extremists. The Islamic Republic of Iran is among violent Jihad’s foremost proponents and exports terrorism throughout the region and beyond in its name.

Many Arab governments recognize this movement as an existential challenge. The Jewish community urges the U.S. government to support initiatives to foster moderation.

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## DOMESTIC

A lesson on the vulnerability of soft targets, especially Jewish institutions, was demonstrated by the Riverdale bomb plot, with the aspiring terrorists placing what they thought were explosives outside two synagogues.

That plot and the perceived increase in “homegrown” terror serve to remind us of our exposure and the need for additional security, preparedness and vigilance. The JCRC-NY and UJA-Federation are grateful to Congress and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for the current round of grants to high-risk nonprofits and support the continuation of nonprofit-focused programs and more established lines of communication and program integration at DHS.

The nonprofit sector plays a critical role in disaster preparedness, response and recovery. The JCRC-NY partners with the FBI, DHS, NYPD, NYC OEM, the Red Cross and other agencies to proactively offer cutting-edge security and preparedness training to a broad spectrum of

New Yorkers. The JCRC-NY will continue to work to deliver “culturally appropriate” disaster preparedness outreach to diverse communities and to advocate improving disaster resiliency for nonprofit organizations.

## ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

While lower energy prices are a boon to consumers, there is a tremendous secondary benefit. The precipitous drop in the price of oil puts new economic pressure on producers, such as Iran, Venezuela and Russia and creates openings to escalate that pressure.

Unfortunately, national trends are not good. When President Nixon was in office the U.S. imported 36% of our oil — now the figure is close to two-thirds. Our nation’s reliance on non-renewable energy sources undermines our: economy, competitiveness, national security, environmental quality and public health.

The administration is committed to developing alternative

cleaner and sustainable energy sources and a revolution in science and technology is necessary if the world is to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels and curb the emissions of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases linked to global warming. Hopefully, government will act as a catalyst for the necessary advances.

We commend UJA-Federation and American Jewish Committee for “Going Green” and urge other Jewish organizations to follow. Renewable and alternative energy technologies are fundamental elements in the efforts to increase America’s energy security and address the long-term challenge of global climate change. The *US-Israel Energy Cooperation Act* capitalizes on Israel’s leadership in developing renewable and alternative energy sources by funding joint cooperative ventures between American and Israeli businesses. The JCRC-NY supports policies that encourage sustainability, greenhouse emission reduction, the effective management of the strategic petroleum reserve, energy diversification and alternative fuel sources.

## COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

Jewish teachings mandate that the stranger be welcomed and treated with respect. The Jewish community has long supported a fair and generous immigration policy consistent with our American and Jewish values. By welcoming immigrants, we stoke the engine of New York’s growth and remain true to our core values of pluralism, freedom and opportunity.

The JCRC-NY and UJA-Federation are committed to a fair and generous immigration policy based on humanitarian rescue, family reunification and strengthening the United States economy. While remaining true to those general principles, America must assure the security of our nation’s borders in this age of terrorism and effectively preserve the basic civil liberties and due process embodied in our Constitution.

The comprehensive reform of the immigration system is too important to be a political football. Our leaders should

ensure that the ensuing policies are humane, realistic and practical; addressing economic and security concerns while providing a timely, clear pathway for the undocumented, as appropriate, to participate in our society and to eventually obtain full citizenship.

## RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

The *Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act* (RLUIPA) is an important tool used by synagogues and other houses of worship to allow the zoning and construction of new facilities. We will continue to work to ensure that the law is observed by reluctant and often recalcitrant localities. At the same time it is our responsibility to ensure that this salutary piece of legislation is not abused by some and treated as if it freed religious organizations from the most elementary responsibilities of citizenship and “good neighborhood” — abuses that could give credence to those wishing to eliminate or hobble RLUIPA.

While religious discrimination complaints to the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission have increased over the last 15 years, protections proposed in the bipartisan *Workplace Religious Freedom Act* (WRFA) are denied to religious workers facing such discrimination. We support the bill’s balancing test designed to respect: the right-to religious expression of religious workers, the legitimate needs of business and the rights of co-workers and other third parties. It would require an employer to reasonably accommodate an employee’s religious practices unless doing so would cause undue hardship to the employer. We strongly support the legislation.

## HATE CRIMES PREVENTION ACT OF 2009

After a 10 year struggle, the Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009 was signed by President Obama in October. The legislation added federal protections against hate crimes based on gender, disability, gender identity, or sexual orientation to the longstanding protections relating to hate crimes based on race, religion and national origin. We celebrate its passage.

## HUMAN SERVICES

The profound needs for social services from those who are losing their jobs, homes, healthcare and food security are expanding dramatically. At the same time, philanthropic and state government funding streams have been reduced sharply.

Similar to faith, charitable and public institutions across the country, our social service network is stretched thin by the massive influx of needy families and individuals in economic crises. The forecast remains troubling. UJA-Federation has reached into its endowment to provide in excess of \$6 million to fund services and assistance to those impacted by the severe recession we are enduring.

Further economic recovery should provide new state fiscal relief, non-profit infrastructure projects, charitable tax incentives, job retraining funds, and an expansion in the Earned Income Tax Credit.

## PROTECTING MEDICAID AND THE HEALTH CARE SAFETY NET

We believe it is imperative that Congress continue the temporary increased funding for the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) that was included in last year's *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)*. That state fiscal relief benefited each state immediately and was exceptionally helpful in averting some of the most painful job losses, budget cuts and tax increases resulting from state deficits. We also strongly support improving the quality and delivery of Medicare and Medicaid, while ensuring these programs remain fiscally and programmatically sound. UJA-Federation supports enhanced access to health care for the uninsured, and stresses that New York State, with our relatively high costs and challenges, not bear an excessive financial burden in doing so.

## ALLEVIATING POVERTY

UJA-Federation believes it is critical that this nation continue to serve the poor and near poor during these difficult times. We continue our work with all levels of government to ensure that New York's social service network has the resources necessary to meet the needs of the most vulnerable at times of economic hardship.

We are hopeful that funding for vital programs such as the Community Development Block Grant, the Community Services Block Grant and the Social Services Block Grant will be increased to meet these challenges.

## AGING AND LONG TERM CARE

It is our strong belief that the rapidly growing older adult population is best served by aging policies that align with the trends toward aging in place. We strongly support the development and appropriate funding of programs that promote community based health and human services that assist older Americans to maintain their independence and quality of life as they age. Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) supportive programs encourage a more responsive system of long term care that promotes the creation of supportive communities to assist older adults to maintain their independence, improve their quality of life and preserve their dignity.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The frail elderly population is in particularly great need of housing assistance. The Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly program has been well recognized as one of our government's most successful housing programs and its funding and viability should be maintained.

We are also greatly concerned that despite the burgeoning need for Section 8 housing vouchers, only one quarter of eligible households receive Section 8 due to funding constraints. Congress must support efforts to devise

a rational plan to implement regulatory and legislative changes in the Section 8 program that restores the program's credibility and stability with the intent of paving the way for future growth.

## CHARITABLE GIVING

UJA-Federation urges Congress to adopt new charitable tax incentives that maximize philanthropic giving and believes expenditures in this arena are one more step that will help grow the economy out of the recession. We favor expanding the current IRA charitable rollover; allowing unlimited gifts to qualified charities including donor advised funds; increasing or eliminating the adjusted gross income limitation on gifts to qualified charities; extending the carryover period for charitable deductions; and providing an above-the-line deduction for charitable gifts for individuals who do not itemize.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

*Workforce Investment Act* (WIA) programs need to be revitalized to permit our institutions of higher education and workforce system to better prepare for the challenges of this economic climate. In recent years WIA programs

have been the target of declining resources and a lack of coherent strategy which has resulted in a workforce system that is woefully underfunded and ill prepared for the challenges of our global economy. Education is the ultimate form of economic development – funding must be allocated to develop and sustain a skilled workforce.

## SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AND/OR MENTAL ILLNESS

UJA-Federation supports full funding of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, affordable and accessible supportive housing units and other home and community based services, respite care and job training for individuals with disabilities.

## FULLY FUND COMBATING AUTISM ACT PROGRAMS

Significant progress has been made in recent years to increase the funding for autism research and support at the federal level. Much more must be done to confront the challenges endured by an overwhelming number of American families.

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**31ST ANNUAL CONGRESSIONAL BREAKFAST  
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2010**

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Members, JCRC-NY Board of Directors

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**WELCOME**

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President, UJA-Federation of New York

**GREETINGS FROM THE  
GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL**

**H.E. ASAF SHARIV**

Consul General of Israel in New York

**CONGRESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS:**

Hon. Gary Ackerman    Hon. Carolyn Maloney    Hon. Edolphus Towns

Hon. Eliot Engel    Hon. Jerrold Nadler    Hon. Nydia Velázquez

Hon. Nita Lowey    Hon. Charles Rangel    Hon. Anthony Weiner

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