



**B'NAI B'RITH
INTERNATIONAL**

UNITED NATIONS AFFAIRS QUARTERLY

An In-Depth View and Analysis

DECEMBER 2006 / JANUARY 2007

FROM THE CHAIR'S DESK:

A message from Ambassador Joseph E. Harari

By the time you read this, I will have been reappointed as Chair of United Nations Affairs at our 2006 Policy Conference in New Orleans, after having stepped down as Senior Vice President. I would like to thank Joel Kaplan, Dennis Glick, Moishe Smith, Dan Mariaschin, and others who continue to help me in fulfilling this important role. For their contributions in terms of work hours and dedication to U.N. Affairs, I would also like to thank Klaus Netter and his team in Geneva, David Matas in Canada, Witold Zys at UNESCO in Paris, Willy Weisz at the U.N. in Vienna, Seymour Saideman in England, our representatives in Latin America and Europe who have worked hard over the past year to engage their governments, and other brothers and sisters who have contributed their time and efforts.



It is with pride that I reach out to you from my renewed position to introduce our first issue of B'nai B'rith's U.N. Affairs Quarterly, a publication that will provide an in-depth view and analysis of relevant events at the United Nations. I am also proud to introduce my new vice-chair Aaron Etra, who is new to B'nai B'rith International but not to the United Nations. Along with his practice of international law, Aaron works in real estate development and other entrepreneurial affairs, serves with a variety of charities, and is also the vice-chair of the Executive Committee for NGOs and the U.N. Department of Public Information.

Another welcome addition is the growth of U.N. Affairs from two to two and a half staff members. The Legacy Heritage Fellowship Program has paid for Judd Rothstein to work with B'nai B'rith International for a year on both United Nations and Intercommunal Affairs. U.N. Affairs has also welcomed interns Gaddi Goren and Liz Marcus who worked with us during the year and helped increase our capacity. In the same period of time Anne Kapstein was promoted from Administrative Assistant to Program Officer. As most of you already know, we also moved our office in New York to a new location with a larger conference room. The New York B'nai B'rith address is now 801 Second Avenue, 14th Floor, New York, NY 10017.

Over the past year, I have worked closely with Sybil Kessler, our Director of U.N. Affairs. Our office was featured in the spring 2006 edition of "Dor L'Dor, the Planned Giving Newsletter of the B'nai B'rith Foundation." We convened an impressive delegation of more than 60 B'nai B'rith members to the U.N. in May. In June, I spoke about U.N. Affairs to the B'nai B'rith Latin America

Meeting. In September, we met in New York with dignitaries from 31 countries and representatives from the E.U. to discuss our agenda for the 61st Session of the United Nations General Assembly. And, finally just last month, Sybil and I spoke together about Panama and the United Nations in an event co-sponsored by the Center for Human Rights and Public Policy, the Upper Dublin Beth-Masada Lodge of B'nai B'rith, and Temple Sinai Men's Club. And, as an upcoming temporary member of the U.N. Security Council and as my home country with a flourishing Jewish community, Panama is of special interest to us.

This is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of what we can do when we unite as brothers and sisters at B'nai B'rith. On the horizon we have more U.N. events in which I urge you to participate. At the beginning of the year, save the date of Monday, January 29, 2007, so you can attend our panel at the U.N. on Holocaust denial and human rights. This will be in honor of the U.N.'s International Holocaust Commemoration Day. In March, we will prepare our annual delegation to Geneva for the newly Human Rights Council, which replaced the Commission on Human Rights. And then in May, we have our annual delegation to the U.N. in New York.

But we expect our role to be broader than it has been in previous years. As you know, the U.N. is a difficult place, and much of our engagement with it is focused on the defense of our interests rather than the promotion of a positive agenda. However, we refuse to let this define us. Our session at this year's policy conference, "Strengthening Our Jewish Voice at the U.N.," and our ongoing discussion and development of the Council on U.N. Affairs, reflect our commitment to both defending ourselves and furthering a positive Jewish agenda at the U.N. through B'nai B'rith International.

I hope you will find this new U.N. Affairs Quarterly a useful tool in your work with us as we continue in the face of opposition to find our voice as well as strengthen it at the United Nations. Happy secular new year and as we look out on the horizon, may we see only good things to come! ■

Current Trends in the U.N. Affairs

Sybil Kessler,

Director of U.N. Affairs

As we introduce the first of what we hope will be many issues of U.N. Affairs Quarterly, two blocks away from us at the U.N. Headquarters and several thousands of miles away from us in Geneva, the U.N. keeps working and the world spins on.

We know that our ongoing challenge to promote a positive Jewish agenda at the U.N. remains a perpetual source of frustration because of the obstacles we encounter when every instinct at the U.N. seems counter to what we believe. It is hard to think proactively when much of the time we are reacting to a horrible reality with which we would rather not be confronted.

In trying to do so, we continue to ask ourselves, is the U.N. an echo chamber of the worst voices in the world or can it, as its Charter states, serve to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war," "reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights," "establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained," and "promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom?"

The answer might be both, for the Charter's first words that precede these goals says, "We the peoples of the United

Nations," and after all the worst violations and biases of the world rest unfortunately on individual people somewhere down the line. In his remarks to B'nai B'rith's annual delegation to the U.N. on May 22, Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated that, "The United Nations is, I hope and believe, what it always should be -- a place where Jews and the State of Israel can feel at home." Yet, we know that as reflective of the world, the



U.N. is unfortunately a broken home - one we must perpetually seek to repair. That is why B'nai B'rith remains the only Jewish organization with an office that is exclusively focused on the United Nations.

We have created this new quarterly review of U.N. Affairs to help us find our voice and promote it. The need to react to crises in Israel as exacerbated through various condemnatory U.N. processes necessitates that we engage strategically in long-term thinking and planning. As Ambassador Harari states in his message, we hope that this publication will provide an in-depth view and analysis of relevant events at the United Nations. Unfortunately, we can not cover every occurrence at the U.N. In this issue we've elected to cover the most prescient issues at hand - Lebanon, the General Assembly and Human Rights Council sessions, and positive exchanges between Israel and the U.N. As the Quarterly progresses, you can expect to see changes in format, style, and content in accordance with current trends in U.N. Affairs, both at B'nai B'rith and in the broader U.N. community. We look forward to your feedback and contributions. ■



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THE FUTURE OF LEBANON: Security Council Resolutions 1701 and 1559

Anne Kapstein, Program Officer



The kidnapping on July 12th of Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev initiated a month long war between Israel and Hezbollah in Southern Lebanon, after six years of moderate calm. Despite Israel's efforts to respond and rescue the soldiers and the adoption of a cease-fire resolution in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) instability and terrorism in Lebanon remain a looming threat to Israel's peace and security. The closer Lebanon turns toward civil war, the more Israel's northern border is in peril. In order to recommend what the international community should now do, we must first consider how Lebanon has arrived at this point, the affects of the conflict between Hezbollah and Israel this past July, and the role the international community has already played in adopting and implementing Resolutions 1701 and 1559. At the heart of this article will be the question of whether Israel can trust the U.N. in its implementation of 1701 to command the political will necessary to help Lebanon regain its sovereignty, stop Hezbollah, and secure its southern border.

Introduction:

On July 12th, the terrorist Shi'a Muslim group Hezbollah crossed the Northern Israeli border, killed eight Israeli Defense Forces (I.D.F) soldiers, and kidnapped two others. Israel retaliated with air and ground strikes and for an entire month northern Israel and southern Lebanon were under constant attack. Hezbollah launched into Israel almost 4,000 rockets that bear the markings of being made in or transported through Syria from another nation. The result of this rocketing caused the deaths of 43 Israeli civilians and 100 soldiers, and displaced 500,000 people; in addition Israel suffered severe economic losses. Lebanon suffered greater physical damage but it was widely recognized by the Lebanese, other Arab states, and the international community in general that Hezbollah was responsible for starting the war.

Background:

In 1976, the Lebanese Christians, who were at war with their Palestine Liberation Organization (P.L.O.) counterparts, welcomed Syrian troops to Lebanon as peacekeepers, until Syria became an aggressive obstacle to Lebanese self-governance. Despite attempts by the Lebanese Christians to oust it, Syria has remained firmly entrenched in Lebanese politics, first openly supporting the P.L.O. and then Hezbollah. Syria used the excuse of protecting the country from Israeli occupation in the South as a means to maintain its power.

In 1982, to defend itself against P.L.O. terrorist attacks, Israel invaded Lebanon up to Beirut and eventually stationed itself along the border of Southern Lebanon and in the Shebaa Farms area to secure its northern border.

Consequently, the grassroots movement that eventually evolved into Hezbollah started with the goal of forcing Israel from the country. Adopted in 1985, Hezbollah's charter calls explicitly for Israel's destruction. This genocidal sentiment is shared by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran, who has repeatedly called for Israel's destruction and openly supports the goals of Hezbollah.

In 2000, however, resistance against Israel's presence was no longer a politically viable excuse for terrorism, because the U.N. declared that Israel had implemented Security Council Resolution 425 by withdrawing from the area south of the Litani River, behind what was called the "blue line." In 1978, resolution 425 established a United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in order to secure peace in Lebanon. UNIFIL's mandate, however, was limited to observer status. It neither held Hezbollah in check nor did it stop the terrorist threat against Israel. In fact, after the Israeli Defense Forces (I.D.F.) withdrew in 2000 and placed the responsibility of guarding its northern border in the hands of the U.N., Hezbollah experienced a resurgence in power.

In September 2004, at the initiative of the French who feared Syrian involvement in changing the Lebanese constitution to maintain their power; the Security Council adopted resolution 1559, which demanded the Syrians full withdrawal and the return of sovereignty to the Lebanese government. In addition, it called for the "disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias." Unfortunately because no one took the authority to do this, the resolution was never properly implemented. UNIFIL's role was so passive that it actually witnessed and videotaped the abduction by Hezbollah terrorists of three Israeli soldiers, Benny Avraham, Omar Swaid, and Adi Avitan, on October 7, 2000.

Yet it took almost two years before it provided Israel the tapes for viewing, thus denying Israel critical intelligence about the soldiers' fate.

Lebanon was further weakened by the assassination of ex-Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri on March 14, 2005, which was believed to have been carried out by Syrian agents. This triggered the Cedar Revolution, a series of protests against the Syrians who finally left Lebanon entirely in April 2005, which in turn was followed by the June 2005 election of fourteen members of Hezbollah to the Lebanese parliament and the appointment to Hezbollah of two ministerial positions.

The terrorist group became politically stronger, empowered by its control of the southern half of Lebanon, the following of a great number of citizens, and a small but well-armed army. The election of Hezbollah members to both the parliament and by appointment to the cabinet, and Israel's withdrawal, coupled with the U.N.'s complacency, enabled Hezbollah to act as a state within a state. Additionally Syria and Iran, which continue to deny any tangible connection other than supporting its cause, have covertly bolstered Hezbollah by providing intelligence, military, and financial support.

Security Council Resolution 1701 and UNIFIL II:

The implementation of resolution 1701, which implements a cease-fire between Israel and Hezbollah, and the establishment of a more robust UNIFIL, which assists Lebanon in securing the border, are foremost in the mind of those concerned for Israel's security. The call for adopting a resolution arose within a couple of weeks after the conflict started. However, it took a long time to be adopted because of debate surrounding its content. If it did not change the status quo it would surely perpetuate the conflict, for had resolution 1559 been fully implemented by a stronger UNIFIL, the conflict itself could have been avoided. Unlike its predecessors,

this resolution needed to provide a foundation for sustainable peace in the future. Addressing the core problem of Hezbollah initiated terrorism against Israel, as sponsored by Iran and Syria, was essential. However, the resistance by member states to recognize the role of Iran and Syria was an obstacle as was the refusal to be responsible for disarming Hezbollah.

As adopted, resolution 1701 has three main goals. The first is to call for an immediate cease-fire and to ensure the means to prevent a resumption of hostilities through the creation of a hybrid force made up of a strengthened UNIFIL (dubbed UNIFIL II) and the Lebanese Armed Forces (L.A.F.) Second, to implement an arms embargo; this asks that states like Syria and Iran commit to the call for disarmament of all armed militias and individuals not authorized by the Lebanese Government. And third, the resolution stresses that the release of the kidnapped Israeli soldiers, Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev should be unconditional. The resolution names Hezbollah twice; once in reference to its attack on Israel on July 12th and a second time in its call for a full cessation of hostilities.

The establishment of UNIFIL II did not come easily; the French, who were expected to send a majority of troops, refused to participate unless a clear mandate was provided. Even then they did not provide as many troops as expected. The mandate as defined by resolution 1701 determined that the U.N. was not responsible for the disarmament of militias but would assist the L.A.F. in that goal, as requested by Lebanon. Paragraph 12 of resolution 1701 authorizes U.N. troops to: "take all necessary action" to ensure that its operations are not used for "hostile activities"; to resist attempts by forceful means to obstruct its mandate; to protect U.N. personnel and property; and, "without prejudice to the responsibility of the Government of Lebanon, to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence." It was also determined that UNIFIL forces would not patrol the Lebanese-

Syrian border. Syria threatened to close its borders otherwise. Israel on the other hand, has argued for a UNIFIL presence on the border in order to ensure that the Syrians do not continue arming the Hezbollah.

The resolution's adoption was considered a success because the European Union and the United States worked together to shepherd it through and Israel felt its needs were met. Unfortunately, immediately upon its adoption, differences in views over its implementation began to emerge. The first sign of weakness was with regard to the number of troops the Europeans were willing to deploy, particularly France, and how strong a role UNIFIL II should play in disarming Hezbollah. In his most recent report to the Security Council on the implementation of resolution 1701, Secretary General Kofi Annan, stated "that significant progress had been made" and that the cease-fire has largely held. He commented that UNIFIL II took note of "minor incidents and violations in its area of operation between the Litani River and the Blue Line" and that these violations were "related to the fortifying of I.D.F. positions." Of the 15,000 troops that 1701 authorizes, so far UNIFIL II consists of 9,922 military personnel from 21 countries including Bulgaria, China, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, and Turkey. Most recently almost 200 troops arrived from Indonesia. German naval troops have been guarding the harbor which reopened along with the airport. The main task of UNIFIL II has been to aid the L.A.F. to deploy quickly to the areas vacated by the I.D.F. in Southern Lebanon but concerns that Hezbollah is continuing to rearm and that another war is possible remain.

Israel's Right to Self-Defense

Ongoing terrorist attacks against Israel and incessant condemnation of it doled out by various U.N. bodies leave Israel with neither the support it needs nor the confidence required to restore normal relations with Lebanon while

...highly politicized processes in which Arab and Muslim countries frequently create a majority by working with developing countries through a shared anti-western sentiment diminishes the power of the U.N. ...

ensuring that its northern border is free from terrorist threat. Israel's right to self-defense is rarely affirmed and more often de-legitimized through the convening of special sessions of the Human Rights Council (H.R.C) and previously the Commission of Human Rights (C.H.R.), and most recently in the form of a reconvened emergency special session in the General Assembly.

Unfortunately, these highly politicized processes in which Arab and Muslim countries frequently create a majority by working with developing countries through a shared anti-western sentiment diminishes the power of the U.N. as an international institution that is able to be accepted as an honest, objective broker for peace. In this most recent instance, the political bodies of the U.N. were used as an echo chamber to voice bias against Israel in a case where it was not the aggressor; it was attacked by a terrorist group dedicated to its destruction and invoked its sovereign right to self-defense. In addition, Israel faces one-sided scrutiny by human rights NGOs whose analysis is founded on U.N. precedent. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International both published lengthy reports condemning Israel for war crimes and violations of humanitarian law without defining any acceptable actions Israel might take to defend itself. This one-sidedness is perpetuated throughout the U.N. system. The effect of such a dynamic is to leave Israel and her friends skeptical regarding the U.N.'s ability to provide a

place where Israel's concerns can be advocated and whether the U.N. is capable of assisting in the development and implementation of a just and secure peace.

Current Climate in Lebanon

The situation in Lebanon is more precarious than ever as the government is experiencing sectarian fractures and instability. On November 21, Pierre Gemayel, a Christian and pro-Western cabinet minister was assassinated due to his Western alliances and anti-Syrian stance; two days before, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah's Secretary General, called for "peaceful demonstrations to topple [the] illegitimate and unconstitutional government controlled by Washington." Simultaneously, Hezbollah pressed for more seats in the cabinet and five of its members of parliament resigned out of protest. While the domestic front remains chaotic, it is feared that without a stronger Lebanese government that Syria will regain more control over Lebanon through Hezbollah. Another occupation of Lebanon would not only threaten the Lebanese people but would likely move Hezbollah from the margins of government into the center. Hezbollah proved this summer that it is a larger threat to Israel than was previously thought.

External Influences

Meanwhile, backing from Syria and Iran seem to remain unchecked as Hezbollah's disarmament remains dependent on the Lebanese and their willingness to draw on the support of UNIFIL II. In parallel to UNIFIL's deployment, the U.N. has initiated an investigation into the assassination of Rafiq Hariri, which is widely believed to be at the hand of Syria. To prevent corruption, a new tribunal will be convened outside of Lebanon and comprised of both international and Lebanese judges. The agreement between the U.N. and the Lebanese government, announced in November by Secretary-General Annan, creates a tribunal outside Lebanon with a

majority of international judges and an international prosecutor. Annan said that increasing the number of international judges on the tribunal would help ensure its independence. The first U.N. chief investigator, Germany's Detlev Mehlis, said evidence suggests that both Syrian and Lebanese intelligence services play a role in Hariri's assassination. In one report, Mehlis implicated Brigadier General Assaf Shawkat, Syria's military intelligence chief and the brother-in-law of Syrian President Bashar Assad. This has upset the Syrian government, which defiantly denies involvement and claims to have complied with its obligation to implement resolution 1559 by withdrawing its troops from Lebanon.

During a visit by Secretary-General Annan in September, the Syrian government said they would enforce Paragraph Fifteen of resolution 1701, which decides that all states shall take the necessary measures to prevent the sale or supply of arms and the provision of technical training or assistance to any entity or individual in Lebanon which is not authorized by the government. Syria has also committed to:

1) increasing the capacity of border control guards by providing additional guards, training and equipment; 2) establishing liaison mechanisms with the Lebanese Army, border police, and international personnel, and providing technical assistance in order to set up an effective interdiction regime to stop the flow of illegal arms; and, 3) where possible establishing joint border patrols and checkpoints with the Lebanese.

While the U.N. and E.U. were assured by this, the U.S. and Israel remain highly skeptical because of Syria's continued suspected support of Hezbollah. Israel's primary concern with Syria is border security and the prevention of continued arms flow to Hezbollah. As of October 1, Israel had fully withdrawn from Southern Lebanon but continues to monitor the border.

Another outstanding problem for Israel is the nature of Shebaa Farms as it

... it is clear that without continued leverage and political pressure, Hezbollah will not disarm and instability in the region will increase.

relates to Syria, Lebanon, and border control. Israel has agreed to withdraw from Shebaa Farms but only if it is secured by Lebanon so that it does not leave Israel open to terrorist attacks. In order for this to happen, Lebanon's border with Syria must be clarified, which is difficult. The Syrians claim that they will not discuss demarcation with the Lebanese until the I.D.F. pulls out completely, yet Israel can't withdraw until another trustworthy force secures the area.

Iran's role is less obvious than Syria's and potentially more pernicious. While President Ahmadinejad has openly supported Hezbollah's goals, in the face of mounting evidence of transshipments of Iranian arms to Hezbollah he continues to deny providing them military assistance and arms. Despite the shock and protest expressed when Secretary General Annan stated he would go to Iran, the result was disappointing. Although Annan reportedly expressed concern about the kidnapped soldiers, Ahmadinejad's public Holocaust denial, and Iran's development of nuclear weapons, he did not return with any valid assurances or progress. On the contrary, Ahmadinejad reportedly threatened the United States with more violence should it continue to press for sanctions. Annan denied comment on this issue stating that he would lose the confidence of heads of state were he to reveal the details of his private conversations.

Most recently, Annan spoke with Presidents Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran and Bashar Al-Assad of Syria to

request that they work with their neighbors to find peaceful solutions to the Lebanese conflict; he urged for continued dialogue to replace the violence that has ensued.

In Summary:

Resolution 1701 is critical as an outline of steps that Lebanon should follow to regain its sovereignty and help secure the region. How to disarm Hezbollah has unfortunately created the greatest amount of debate but it is clear that without continued leverage and political pressure, Hezbollah will not disarm and instability in the region will increase. The return of the kidnapped soldiers is unfortunately stagnating while the Israeli government and their families continue to seek proof of life, in accordance with humanitarian law. B'nai B'rith International has advocated strongly on behalf of the families behind the scenes at the U.N. The expectations that Israel held at the signing of resolution 1701 have not come to fruition. The only advancement has been the presence of the L.A.F. and UNIFIL II on the border and the "blue line."

In the negotiations leading up to the adoption of resolution 1701 and after its implementation B'nai B'rith International advocated its agenda tirelessly by meeting with Security Council members and others. While the goal remains for UNIFIL II to succeed in helping Lebanon fully regain sovereignty and thus free itself of terrorist and Syrian occupation, unfortunately violence continues and Lebanon is increasing destabilized. More proactive international and regional cooperation is required to redirect Lebanon and ensure that it is not overtaken by Hezbollah. B'nai B'rith looks to continued active diplomacy among the U.N., Israel, the U.S. and the E.U. and advises that U.N. member states take steps to stop U.N. bodies like the Human Rights Council from continuing to perpetuate a one-sided view of the conflict, thus adding to the obstacles in the way of its resolution. ■

THE SIXTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

U.N. Affairs Staff Article

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) meets in plenary every year between September and December and then on an as-needed basis the rest of the year. Each new session's start is marked by the General Debate when world leaders flock to U.N. headquarters in New York to publicly state their countries' positions and confer with one another behind closed doors.

This year marked the 61st annual UNGA. As in other years, B'nai B'rith International held regular meetings with representatives of over 30 governments, including many heads of state. Fulfilling its historical mandate, B'nai B'rith advocated on behalf of Jewish interests around the globe, focusing this year on issues such as security for Israel, the rogue behavior of Iran, the stagnation of the peace process between Israel and its neighbors, and the genocide in Darfur.

In any given year, the UNGA passes between 18 and 21 anti-Israel resolutions. This year, B'nai B'rith's Office of United Nations Affairs monitored the speeches of the fifty most important countries whose comments are most relevant with regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict. In response to various procedures, B'nai B'rith International issued over a dozen press releases and statements promoting its agenda in defense of the Jewish people and Israel. During the General Debate, BBI assailed Iran for President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's anti-Israel tirade and Venezuela for President Hugo Chavez's outrageous statements against the United States.

One of the issues that BBI raises whenever possible is the imbalance Israel experiences in terms of regional dynamics. In order to consult and

form like-minded opinions, countries often form regional consultative groups at the U.N. One such example is the Asian Group that rejects Israel's membership time and again. Despite its obvious regional affiliation, Israel has long been excluded from such consultations because of group politics. Even though Israel has now gained permanent membership in the Western European and Others Group, commonly known as WEOG, it is only a New York-based membership for the purpose of running in elections onto various U.N. bodies. For example, in 2007 Israel will join the Economic and Social Council and has requested to be considered a candidate for elections onto the Security Council in 2018. However, Israel is still excluded from consulting on a substantive level and subsequently must advocate for inclusion in each U.N. body where there are such consultations.

The "WEOG issue" is exacerbated by the fact that the 22 nations in the Arab League and 56 nations in the Organization of Islamic States often ally with the Non-Aligned Movement, which consists of 118 nations, to advance anti-Israel and anti-Western agendas. In response, BBI seeks to strengthen friendships where they exist and to elaborate on Jewish concerns to states that are open to increasing their understanding of our views. These blocs largely play into political dynamics at the U.N. through various bodies, particularly in the General Assembly in New York and the Human Rights Council in Geneva. The Security Council differs because the United States is one of the five permanent members with the power to veto decisions with which it disagrees and also the only body where U.N. decisions are considered legally binding.

This summer, as the U.N. responded to the Israel-Hezbollah war, B'nai B'rith International met with governments to advocate our concerns in the negotiations that led up to the adoption of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1701, the cease-fire resolution between Israel, Hezbollah, Lebanon, and other actors. Throughout the war and until the time of this writing, BBI has advocated for the release of Corporal Gilad Shalit, Ehud Goldwasser, and Eldad Regev, the three Israeli soldiers kidnapped by Hamas and Hezbollah. Additionally, B'nai B'rith's Israel Emergency Fund worked with victims throughout northern Israel to distribute more than \$200,000.

Taking Back Human Rights:

There are many areas of the U.N. in which BBI has an interest. For example at the time of writing, the Fourth Committee which focuses on special political subjects and serves as a conduit for many anti-Israel resolutions had just drafted nine resolutions to refer for adoption in the UNGA's plenary. However, BBI focuses its main efforts on two particular areas of the UNGA because that is where it is possible to have the most strategic affect. The Third Committee addresses social and humanitarian issues, including human rights, religious intolerance, and racism, and the Human Rights Council in Geneva also addresses human rights and reports back to the UNGA in New York.

Special Rapporteurs are individual experts mandated to address either specific country situations or thematic human rights issues of general concern. Reporting to the Human Rights Council their role is to serve as voices of conscience that are independent from the political agendas of states. Many states dislike the existence of these

rapporteurs since they shine a light on human rights violations through a common human rights advocacy tool known as "naming and shaming."

As a Jewish organization with a Center for Human Rights and Public Policy, B'nai B'rith supports the existence of special rapporteurs and wants to see their continuation and improvement. Unfortunately, some individuals misuse this position in order to pursue their own political agenda and this must be addressed. In the recent past, B'nai

me dispose of these accusations at the outset? I have a political agenda. I support any political solution that will allow Palestinians to exercise their right to self-determination free from human rights violations.

His oblique reference to "some" may include B'nai B'rith, for on September 29, 2006, B'nai B'rith criticized Dugard and his annual report at the Human Rights Council in Geneva. Jean Ziegler, despite his mandate of the realization of the right to food,

U.N. Reform and the Human Rights Council:

B'nai B'rith International is committed to assisting the U.N. in living up to its own principles as laid out in its Charter. Unfortunately, however, the U.N. has failed to live up to many of its goals. Recognizing its shortcomings, biases, and inefficiencies, member states understand that in order to thrive, the U.N. must face current challenges with updated solutions. Under the leadership of Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the U.N. has embarked upon a journey of reform. Many aspects of U.N. reform concern BBI. In particular, we continue to watch the development of the new Human Rights Council and the discussion of streamlining some of the outdated resolutions in the General Assembly, including those that serve no purpose other than to condemn Israel.

Since its establishment in 1946, the Commission on Human Rights convened only five special sessions, only one of which was on Israel. Yet the new Human Rights Council, which was created to improve on the Commission, has already held three special sessions condemning Israel in its first six months. As genocide consumes Darfur and other countries like Burma suffer severe deprivation, the Council has focused exclusively on Israel. B'nai B'rith in Geneva regularly monitors the Council and makes statements when possible to express our concern and the need to improve upon human rights situations in the world.

These are just a few examples of our current work associated with the recent sessions of the General Assembly and Human Rights Council. The Office of U.N. Affairs at B'nai B'rith continues to closely monitor these activities of the United Nations and promote a positive Jewish agenda at the U.N. ■



2006 Getty Images

B'rith has responded to reports by John Dugard, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, and Jean Ziegler, the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food.

The mandate of John Dugard, which is only to investigate Israeli human rights violations and not those committed by Palestinians or others, epitomizes the institutional bias that sadly dominates issues related to Israel at the United Nations. When Dugard spoke in October at the UNGA, he dismissed criticism against him stating: I know some will accuse me of bias? Let

including the urgent necessity of eradicating hunger, spends much of his time condemning Israel and misusing his mandate for political purposes. As BBI elaborated in its October 25th 2006 press release, Zeigler is infamous for collaborating with Muammar Khaddafi, a notorious human rights violator, to create the Muammar Khaddafi Human Rights Prize-- a prize he then won in 2002. This year Ziegler continued his anti-Israel tirade in the Third Committee by calling Israel's self defense in Lebanon "crimes" and once again BBI responded.

The Positive File

Sybil Kessler, Director of U.N. Affairs

While many of our efforts at the United Nations are focused on defense of the Jewish people and Israel, it's important to take stock of advancements large and small when it comes to Jewish pride at the U.N. Here are some recent examples of Israel's positive involvement in U.N. Affairs beyond our every-day knowledge and experience of the U.N.

U.N. Conference on Combating Desertification at Ben Gurion University

In November, Israel hosted its first U.N. conference in Sde Boker, when over 200 people from 30 countries came to Israel to learn about "Deserts and Desertification: Challenges and Opportunities." The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) stated that:

UNDP is pleased to have collaborated with Israel in a number of ways. Israel's technical prowess and technological innovation are well-known around the globe, and provide us with lessons about how to achieve the potential of the world's drylands. They have not only set standards in production, they have become experts in meeting the standards required by global markets.

Despite opposition from some member states that was politically motivated by anti-Israel animus, last year's 60th Session of the U.N. General Assembly adopted a resolution noting that Israel would be hosting the conference. The conference occurred during the "International Year of Deserts and Desertification."

Young Israeli Leaders Attend U.N. Global Youth Leadership Summit

In October, two Israeli university students represented Israel at a U.N. youth summit to address how to alleviate poverty through the role of sports and culture. B'nai B'rith also met with an Italian minister who was attending the same summit to discuss our ongoing programs.

Director of Israel's U.N. Department Friend of B'nai B'rith Is U.N. Deputy-Chair

In September, Rony Adam, Director of the Israeli Foreign Ministry's U.N. Department and friend of B'nai B'rith, was elected as the deputy-chair alongside Pakistan to a prestigious General Assembly committee. The committee, which is responsible for program planning and coordination at the U.N., includes representatives of the Bahamas, Belarus, Brazil, Cuba, Ghana, Pakistan, Russia, and South Africa.

UNAIDS Website Features Israeli NGO As Model Program

In October, the Jerusalem AIDS Project was featured on the UNAIDS website (www.unaids.org) as a worldwide role model. The program's organizers have been asked to launch AIDS prevention programs in 27 countries.



Israel Participates in U.N. Peacekeepers' Training

On October 20, Israeli diplomat Ran Gilman told the General Assembly that:

This year, Israeli officers participated for the first time in peacekeeping courses organized by DPKO (Department of Peacekeeping Operations.) For us, this has been another major step in the process of integrating ourselves into the full canopy of U.N. - sponsored operations around the globe. Israel is interested in contributing some of its hard-won military experience and technical proficiency in order to assist peacekeeping activities around the world. Accordingly, we intend to send more representatives to DPKO's courses and seminars in the very near future. Additionally, we hope to expand our contribution to DPKO's operations. That could be in the form of military observers, police training or through putting hi-tech units such as in forensic science, in which – due to our unfortunate geo-political circumstances, we have accumulated unparalleled expertise – at the disposal of the DPKO. It is our hope, that the lessons we have learnt as a result of war and in our fight against terrorism, will be utilized in order to promote and sustain peace. Israel is currently engaged in a process of analyzing the experience of the first few Israeli graduates of peacekeeping courses. We are looking forward to consolidating our cooperation with DPKO in the very near future.



Israel Accepted to the Economic and Social Council and Subsidiary NGO Committee

Starting in January, 2007, Israel will serve as a member of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary committee that accredits U.N. NGOs, like B'nai B'rith with consultative status at the U.N. The Foreign Ministry's Spokesmen's office commented,

This development is a further step in Israel's growing role at the U.N., one that is unrelated to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Israel will serve on the committee alongside Western countries such as Britain, Turkey, and the United States, as well as countries from Asia, Africa, the Far East, and Latin America. At its future meetings the council will be called on to consider recognition requests from two Israeli NGOs: the Women's Lobby and Shatil, which promises civil society and putting democratic principles into practice.

An important development in which BBI played a major role was the adoption of the U.N.'s first resolution to commemorate the Holocaust. B'nai B'rith participants in the U.N.'s first official commemoration on January 27, 2006 included, left to right:

Edward B. O'Donnell, U.S. Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues;
Dr. Sara J. Bloomfield, Director of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum;
Andrew Jacobs, BBI;
Kimberly Mann, U.N. Department of Public Information;
Dr. Yehuda Bauer, Holocaust Scholar;
Sybil Kessler, Director of U.N. Affairs, BBI;
Dan Mariaschin, Executive Vice President, BBI;
Dr. Hans-Jürgen Heimsoeth, Consul-General of Germany;
Joel Kaplan, BBI Honorary President;
Dennis Glick, BBI Chair of the Executive;
Elizabeth Nakian, U.S. Department of State;
 and **Art Yerevin**, BBI.

Last year, B'nai B'rith International convened a side event in conjunction with the official ceremony, hosting a discussion on Holocaust Education. This year's program, on January 29, 2007, will focus on Holocaust Denial and Human Rights. See page 12 for details.



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF COMMEMORATION IN MEMORY OF THE VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST

JANUARY 29, 2007

B'nai B'rith will host a special panel discussion: HOLOCAUST DENIAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Congressman **ALCEE L. HASTINGS** (D-Florida), recently elected Chair of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe and President Emeritus of the OSCE, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe will provide a keynote address.

PANELISTS INCLUDE:

His Excellency **THOMAS MATUSSEK**, Ambassador to the United Nations from Germany
JUAN E. MENDEZ, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General
on the Prevention of Genocide

DAVID MATAS, B'nai B'rith Canada Honorary Counsel, lawyer, and human rights activist

DATE: Monday, January 29, 2007

TIME: 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Dag Hammarskjöld Library, United Nations Headquarters

Refreshments will be served afterward in the Delegates Dining Room.
For questions please contact rsvpun@bnaibrith.org or Tel. 212-557-0019.

