Schanzer to address ‘Palestinian Politics, Arab Protests and Israeli Security’

By Kathy Carlson

Middle East analyst Jonathan Schanzer speaks both Hebrew and Arabic, has worked as a terrorism finance analyst for the U.S. Treasury Department and has co-authored a book on how policymakers can learn from social media, in particular, Palestinian social media.

He will share his perspective and findings in Nashville on Monday, June 20, when he speaks at the Gordon Jewish Community Center at 7:15 p.m. His visit will initiate the Federation’s Communities Relations Committee’s series, “Increase your Israel IQ – From Argument to Advocacy.” It is funded by a grant from the Jewish Federation of Nashville’s New Initiatives Fund.

Schanzer’s talk, “Palestinian Politics, Arab Protest and Israeli Security,” will inform the community about the latest developments in the Middle East and Israel. “It’s been crisis after crisis in the region for the last six months,” he said in a telephone interview. “You can be a strong supporter of Israel and not get a sense of what’s happening behind the headlines.”

He is uniquely equipped to bring fresh information to audiences. Schanzer is vice president of research for the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (www.defenddemocracy.org), which describes itself as a nonpartisan policy institute dedicated exclusively to promoting pluralism, defending democratic values, and fighting the ideologies that threaten democracy. He earned a B.A. from Emory University, a master’s degree from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and a doctorate from Kings College London. He also studied Arabic at the American University in Cairo in 2001.

With so much going on so quickly in the region, Schanzer doesn’t stick to a formal, prewritten speech these days.

For people trying to stay abreast of developments, Schanzer said, “there are a lot of voices out there. I fervently defend Israel but also feel I try to bring some balance to my analysis.”

But the French proposal also envisaged achieving a full-fledged permanent peace deal within a year and a freeze of any unilateral steps in the interim. For the Palestinians, that would mean not petitioning the United Nations for statehood in September. For Israel, it would mean halting settlement construction in the West Bank.

Juppe invited Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas to an international conference in Paris in July to kick-start the process. Abbas quickly replied in the affirmative. Netanyahu said he would first consult with the Americans.

The package was attractive to the Palestinians because of its clear focus on the 1967 lines and its relatively

Ahead of Palestinian U.N. gambit, Europe is in play

By Leslie Susser

JERUSALEM (JTA) — It was a sign that ties between the Obama and Netanyahu administrations remain strong despite the apparent tensions recently when the two leaders met at the White House.

On June 6, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton shot down a French proposal for renewed Israeli-Palestinian peace talks that had put the Israeli leader in a quandary.

If Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had accepted the French proposal, which included a settlement freeze, his right-leaning coalition partners might have bolted the government. If he refused, it would have made it seem like he was the intransigent party in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations — a perilous position as France and other leading European states consider voting for Palestinian statehood at the United Nations in September.

During a visit to Israel and the West Bank in early June, French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe outlined his plan for restarting the stalled peace process. The goal would be to establish two states for two peoples on the basis of the 1967 lines with land swaps; borders and security would be discussed first, Jerusalem and refugees later. That part of the proposal mirrored Obama’s call for renewed Israeli-Palestinian talks.

But the French proposal also envisaged achieving a full-fledged permanent peace deal within a year and a freeze of any unilateral steps in the interim. For the Palestinians, that would mean not petitioning the United Nations for statehood in September. For Israel, it would mean halting settlement construction in the West Bank.

Juppe invited Netanyahu and
W

Haniyeh and his ilk are now mourning Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood figure. Abdullah Azzam, another prominent Ahmad Yassin, a prominent Palestinian ideological roots Hamas and al Qaeda blood of Muslims and Arabs.” American oppression and shedding of warrior” and the “continuation of the of assassinating a “Muslim and Arabic leader Ismail Haniyeh has condemned unanimously. In the Gaza Strip, Hamas fighters returning from al Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan. That same year, Jordanian security officials confirmed to Time magazine that two Hamas members went on a recruiting mission in Afghanistan hoping to bring al Qaeda fighters back to the Palestinian territories. Arab media also reported in 2001 that Syria-based Hamas chief Khaled Mashaal had met in Yemen with Abdel Majid al-Zindani, whom the U.S. Treasury officially designated as a terrorist in 2004 for his ties to al Qaeda. Zindani has openly boasted of providing funds to Hamas. Thus, over the course of two decades, Hamas has maintained a relationship with al Qaeda network. This explains Haniyeh’s lamentations after hearing of bin Laden’s death, and further explains, in part, why the United States has designated Hamas a terrorist organization. Haniyeh’s sympathies for bin Laden hold a deeper meaning now than [previously]. Last [month], Hamas entered into a unity government with the rival Fatah faction, the ruling party of the Palestinian Authority. The deal immediately raised questions about whether Washington could recognize such a government. If the group’s grisly record of suicide bombings and attacks against civilians since its inception in 1982 were not enough, the aforementioned ties between Hamas and al Qaeda should serve as further warning to Washington about the terror group that now appears to have a controlling stake in the Palestinian Authority.

Jonathan Schanzer, a former intelligence analyst at the U.S. Treasury, is vice president of research at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, and author of Hamas vs. Fatah: The Struggle for Palestine (Palgrave Macmillan 2008). This article first appeared in The Weekly Standard Online.

Schanzer to address ‘Palestinian Politics, Arab Protests and Israeli Security’

The biggest misconception about the Middle East that Schanzer sees in his audiences is a jaded attitude expressed when people say, “Well, you’re either pro-Israel or pro-Palestinian. Everything you’re going to say is polemic.” That’s incorrect,” he said. “You can be an advocate and support one side or another “but there are certain things you can’t get around being true or false.”

Despite the fact that some people hold rigid opinions, Schanzer said he has been able to open people’s eyes, as, for example, when he talks about what he calls “intersecine conflict between Hamas and Fatah.” They are two different factions with two different ideologies that went to war in 2007 in Gaza and “can’t agree on the color of hummus,” he said. “That creates problems for peace-making.”

“There’s a lack of reform in the Palestinians,” he continued. Hamas and Fatah are “violent in ideologies and at war with one another. We need new and fresh blood to come in.” There was sense that the Arab spring would reach the West Bank and Gaza, but what happened was a “marriage of convenience” between the two factions: “they’re not reforming in any way.” Unless a Palestinian Mahatma Gandhi or Martin Luther King appears, he said, “I think we are running out of place.”

Continued from page 1 or two trusted sources” – an analyst or a news organization – and read what they’re saying once a week or so.

For more advanced news-gatherers or those who are more interested, he suggested looking at what Israelis, Palestinians and others are saying. After a while, readers may notice recurring, consistent themes along with occasional surprises in what each group says. At that point, people may want to check social networks for breaking news. And for a broader frame of reference that includes history and context, he suggested reading books.

In making presentations to groups, Schanzer said he tries his hardest “to not water down what I’m saying but to give people both history and current events.” Those who know the history will have their knowledge reinforced and those who don’t will be better informed.

The Observer's next two issues are:

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By Kathy Carlson

For Bruce Wolf, tikkun olam comes in little orangey-brown plastic pill bottles. The Nashville physician has pioneered an approach to health care that uses medications that otherwise would go to waste, aims to improve medication philanthropies, and most importantly helps people in need get the prescription drugs they need to stay healthy.

Wolf has developed two nonprofits – Dispensary of Hope and Hope Beyond Hope – to implement his vision for delivering selected prescription drugs (no scheduled drugs or controlled substances) to people who cannot afford them. Dispensary of Hope began in Middle Tennessee and now supplies medications at more than 70 locations in 16 states. It has filled more than 250,000 prescriptions in Middle Tennessee alone. Hope Beyond Hope, a newer organization, focuses on advocacy and innovation related to medication philanthropy.

The germ of an idea that became Dispensary of Hope dates to about 1997, when Wolf realized that about 15 percent of the roughly $300,000 in medical samples he received from pharmaceutical representatives that year weren’t used because they had reached their expiration dates on his shelves. Most of his patients were insured and didn’t need help to obtain prescription meds. “Why don’t we just give that medicine on the front end?” he thought.

If, like him, other doctors weren’t using or could spare $30,000 worth of samples each year because of regulatory requirements, companies manufacture excess drugs that end up going to waste. “The beauty of efforts like Dispensary of Hope and Hope Beyond Hope is that they are win-wins,” Wolf said. “For me, for my life and for my Jewish life, it’s about trying to give back to people in need. This is a way for me to do tikkun olam.”

Howard Kirshner installed as president of GJCC

At the GJCC’s Annual Meeting on May 31, a new slate of officers was installed for 2011-2012. They include: Howard Kirshner, president; David Lewis, president-elect; Carla Rosenthal, vice president; and Raymond Jacobs, secretary.

Kirshner spoke about focusing on membership during his tenure and how important it was for all members of Nashville’s Jewish community to support and be involved in the GJCC.

The GJCC welcomed new board members: Hillary Kaplan, Roger Shepard and Rachel Johnson. Kim Lapidus, Laurie Luecke and Patti Stein are completing their board terms this year.

Outgoing President Dina M. Bioman was thanked for her work by Eric Goldstein, GJCC executive director, on behalf of the GJCC Executive Committee and board.
Battle over circumcision is shaping up in California

By Sue Fishkoff

SAN FRANCISCO (JTA) — In November, San Franciscans will vote on a ballot measure that would outlaw circumcisions on boys under the age of 18.

Although experts say it is highly unlikely the measure will pass — very few state propositions pass, much less one this controversial — the mere fact that it reached the ballot, and in such a major city, has caused much concern for Jews and their allies.

Opponents of the bill see it as a violation of the Constitution’s protection of religious rights and an infringement on physicians’ ability to practice medicine. More than that, however, the measure is being seen as a frontal attack on a central tenet of Judaism.

“The stakes are very high,” said Nathan Diament, director of the Orthodox Union’s Institute for Public Affairs. “Circumcision is a fundamental aspect of Jewish ritual practice and Jewish identity. While we certainly hope the prospect of its being enacted is remote, the precedent it would set and the message it would send would be terrible, not just in the United States but around the world.

“We don’t just want it defeated,” he said, “we want it defeated resoundingly.”

Anti-circumcision activists have been around for decades, particularly on the West Coast. They range from the Bay Area Intactivists, a loosely organized group that opposes outside medical conferences in and around San Francisco, to MGM Bill, which has prepared anti-circumcision legislation for 46 states. MGM has managed to find a legislative sponsor in only one state: Massachusetts, last year. The bill didn’t even make it out of committee.

Matthew Hess, who founded MGM Bill in 2003 and spearheads its legislative efforts, says he is trying to protect boys from what he considers a barbaric mutilation of their bodies. He became an activist in his mid-20s, he says, when he decided that his own circumcision as an infant resulted in diminished sexual sensitivity.

“I’m a backer of medical science, and I don’t believe in any medical procedure that is performed without benefit to the patient,” Hess said in a phone interview. “I don’t believe in any medical procedure that is not evidence-based. I have no problem with following evidence-based science.

“Unfortunately we are a country where a very conservative legislature has been in power. It’s one of the few states that has not banned circumcision of male infants, and it’s been used there in an attempt to eradicate the procedure.”

Hess’s group in California came about as a result of a case brought in Florida by the American Medical Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics, he said. It would be a mistake to believe that if the San Francisco measure fails, it will be the end of the matter, he said.

“This is an issue that will not go away,” he said. “We continue to be active in the state.”

...Continued on page 6

Who says kids get to have all the summer fun? Certainly not the GJCC. This summer, there is a wealth of programs for adults to do by themselves or with their families starting with:

Canoeing the Harpeth River: July 10 — Leave the GJCC at 10:15 a.m. sharp after picking up a picnic lunch, which is provided, and head towards Tip-A-Conee on Highway 70 to float down the Harpeth River! There is a charge for the rental and lunch.

Or you can have these five camps which feature coffee from 9 – 9:30 a.m. followed by a program from 9:30 to 11:15 and topped off with lunch from 11:30 – noon.

Mah Jong Camp: June 15, 22, 29, and July 6 — Lee Becker and Rhoda Cohen will teach you all about Mah Jongg. The fee includes all materials, lunches and treats.

Yoga and Meditation Camp: June 20 — Spend a morning relaxing and trying new yoga moves. The fee includes all materials, lunch and treats plus instruction by yogi Robin Haynes.

GJCC Community Garden is taking root

Thanks to the planning of Tara Biller at Green Proof Your Home, GJCC Camp Director Claire Bernstein and Gardens of Babylon, the GJCC Community Garden is under way.

Located at the top of the hill by the Holocaust Memorial on the GJCC campus, the community garden is comprised of four plots: two vegetable, one flower and one herb. The gardeners hope these gardens will be shared by all in the community and that the fruits of their labor will be used for community events as well as be shared with a local food bank. They see this as a way to bring multi-generations of the community together from preschoolers to seniors.

The garden still needs volunteers, supplies and donations. Contact Claire Bernstein at claire@nashvillejcc.org for more information.

Aaron Deter-Wolf...Tattoos! June 14 — Aaron Deter-Wolf, prehistoric archaeologist, will spend the morning sharing the story of prehistoric tattooing and how it has helped us discover our roots. The fee includes all materials, lunch and treats.

Fresh Summer Cooking...What’s for Dinner? June 24 — Shop the Farmer’s Market and then cook with Kevin Alexandroni, owner of Sova Catering.

Spanish Summer Nights...The Flavors of Barcelona! August 1 — This is actually an “evening camp” from 6:30 – 9. Join Kevin Alexandroni at his demonstration kitchen after he returns from Spain. Cook, sip wine and learn about the flavors of Espana.

In the fall, Amish, Hippies, Wine & Dinners is planned for Sept. 14 and 15. Tour Amish Country in Ethingr, Tenn.; “The Farm” in Summertown, Tenn.; lunch at David Crockett State Park; also lunch at the famous Santa Fe Diner in Santa Fe, Tenn.; dine in Lawrenceburg, Tenn.; and taste wines at the Amber Falls Winery & Cellars.

For information about these programs and their fees and to sign up, contact Meryl Kraft at meryl@nashvillejcc.org.

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GJCC: Camp’s not just for kids anymore

GJCC Community Garden is taking root

Located at the top of the hill by the Holocaust Memorial on the GJCC campus, the community garden is comprised of four plots: two vegetable, one flower and one herb. The gardeners
Battle over circumcision is shaping up

Continued from page 4

Last fall, MGM Bill changed its tactics, deciding to bypass the U.S. Congress and go straight to voters. The group gathered more than 12,000 signatures in San Francisco, enough to have the measure placed on the Nov. 8 ballot. If it passes, anyone who circumcises a boy under the age of 18 within city limits faces a $1,000 fine and up to one year in jail. The only exception would be for “compelling and immediate medical need.”

A similar effort is under way in Santa Monica, Calif., for that city’s November 2012 election. Hess says no other cities are being targeted — for now.

The Jewish community responded immediately and loudly to the San Francisco ballot initiative, with denunciations from across the nation. The American Jewish Committee called it a “direct assault on Jewish religious practice” that was “unprecedented in American Jewish life.” The Orthodox Union said the measure is “likely illegal” and is “patently Jewish life.” The Orthodox Union said the American Jewish Committee called it a

In an effort to counter that boycott and support Israel, many Jewish communities and organizations have urged Americans to buy Israeli products. The Community Relations Committee of the Jewish Federation of Nashville and The Observer want to make it easier for Jewish Federation of Nashville and The Observer want to make it easier for

By publishing a list of the products and the stores that carry them, email that information to judy@jewishnashville.org, Food, clothing, jewelry, wine, etc., whatever you see the updated list, below and send your additions to judy@jewishnashville.org or call 354-1637.

Buy Israeli!

Throughout the United States and in many parts of the world, there is a concerted effort to delegitimize the State of Israel. One of the tactics being used is a boycott of Israeli products. This action has been seen in several locations in our country. In an effort to counter that boycott and support Israel, many Jewish communities and organizations have urged Americans to buy Israeli products. The Community Relations Committee of the Jewish Federation of Nashville and The Observer want to make it easier for Nashvillians to find Israeli-made goods by publishing a list of the products and where to find them, locally.

We need your help. If you know of available products and the stores that carry them, email that information to judy@jewishnashville.org. Food, clothing, jewelry, wine, etc., whatever you have found, please share it with our community.

See the updated list, below and send your additions to judy@jewishnashville.org or call 354-1637.

Israeli silver jewelry - area T/Maxx stores

Monday, June 13
7:9 p.m. – Federation Campaign Cabinet WRAP Meeting

Tuesday, June 14
7:30-9:30 p.m. – Gordon Jewish Community Center Board Meeting

Wednesday, June 15
7:9 p.m. – Federation Grants Committee Meeting

Thursday, June 16
5:7 p.m. – Federation Board Meeting
7:9 p.m. – Federation Grants Committee Meeting

Monday, June 20
7:15-9 p.m. – Jonathan Scharner speaking on “Palestinian Politics, Arab Protests and Israeli Security,” open to community

Monday, June 21
7-8:30 p.m. – Temple Board Meeting
7-10 p.m. – West End Synagogue Board Meeting

Wednesday, June 22
7-9 p.m. - Congregation Mickah Board of Trustees Meeting

Thursday, June 23
7:30-9 p.m. – Jewish Family Service Annual Meeting

Tuesday, June 28
7:15-9 p.m. – Federation Board Meeting
Friday, July 1
6-10 p.m. – West End Synagogue Pray & Learn
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Ahead of Palestinian U.N. gambit for statehood, Europe is in play

Continued from page 1

short timetable. The sweetener for Israel was the explicit reference to “two states for two peoples,” implying that Israel would be, as Netanyahu insists, recognized as the state of the Jewish people.

Nevertheless, Netanyahu found himself in a bind. He already had said no to negotiations structured that way when Obama raised the issue. Netanyahu insists the Palestinians first recognize Israel as a Jewish state as a sign of readiness to end the conflict. In addition, Hamas, the terrorist organization that is now part of the Palestinian leadership following the recent reconciliation with Fatah, must recognize Israel’s right to exist, renounce violence and accept all previous Israeli-Palestinian agreements before a credible peace process can be contemplated.

But perhaps even more important, Netanyahu has serious issues with the 1967 lines plus land swaps formula. He insists on maintaining an Israeli military presence in the Jordan Valley and, besides the large settlement blocks, he wants to retain security areas along the Samarian mountain ridge, as well as sites of historic importance such as Hebron.

This goes well beyond anything that could be construed as being “based on the 1967 lines.”

Were Netanyahu to accept the French proposal, coalition partners like Avigdor Lieberman’s Yisrael Beiteinu party might quit the government, and Likud hard-liners like Benny Begin and Moshe Yaalon might challenge Netanyahu’s authority.

Still, despite these very serious obstacles, the prize for taking up the French offer was tempting: Palestinian deferment of plans to seek U.N. membership this year. There was also a big stick: If Netanyahu rejected the French offer, Juppe intimated that France and several of its European allies would vote for U.N. recognition of Palestine.

With Clinton’s mix, Netanyahu is off the hook.

Meanwhile, the Israeli Foreign Ministry has quit trying to prevent the Palestinians from securing the two-thirds majority they need for recognition in the 192-member U.N. General Assembly. Unlike in the U.N. Security Council, where Obama has promised that the United States will veto any unilateral vote on Palestinian statehood, General Assembly votes do not carry the force of international law.

Yet even in the General Assembly, Israel hopes to secure as many “No” votes as possible from democratic countries.

This, Israeli officials argue, would carry enormous moral weight. Thus the European Union, with its 27 democracies, is crucial. Over the past two months, Netanyahu has traveled to Berlin, Washington and Paris in an effort to convince key European leaders not to back Palestinian U.N. membership. Had he been the one to reject the French offer, his European strategy could collapse.

Netanyahu’s critics say that even if Israel wins this battle, a General Assembly vote favoring statehood will deliver the Palestinians a major diplomatic triumph and possibly trigger a new wave of Arab Spring-style protests in the West Bank.

The Israeli government’s failure to take serious action to pre-empt the Palestinian U.N. move and its consequences has drawn strong domestic criticism in Israel.

The most powerful voice in recent days has been from Meir Dagan, who recently retired from his post at the helm of the Mossad, Israel’s intelligence agency.

Dagan says that Israel should have responded positively to the 2002 Arab peace initiative, come up with an initiative of its own and pressed for a negotiated solution with the Palestinians. He also has expressed deep discomfort with the judgment of Israel’s current political leaders, hinting darkly that they might even contemplate attacking Iran’s nuclear weapons program to divert attention from the United Nations in September.

For now, a Palestinian U.N. move in September is still not a foregone conclusion.

By quashing the French plan, Clinton kept the initiative firmly in Washington, where the Americans are talking to both the Israelis and Palestinians in an attempt to create conditions for a renewal of peace talks that would render the Palestinian U.N. gambit superfluous.

In the next few weeks, in what could be the defining moment of his premiership, Netanyahu will have to decide whether to embrace a last-chance initiative to avert the U.N. imbroglio in September or to stay put and risk the potential diplomatic fallout while keeping his coalition intact.

Battle over circumcision

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It’s the assault on religious freedoms that brings the two together, Biloo said. “The civil rights of Jewish and Muslims are being impacted,” she told JTA. “We don’t agree on all things all the time, but we do find common cause in many areas. An attack on one religion is an attack on all religions.”

A popular local mohel, Rabbi Gil Leeds, director of the Chabad Center of the University of California, Berkeley, says he’s been fielding calls and e-mails from all over the area expressing concern. “Jews from across the spectrum of Jewish observance, as well as many non-Jews, have responded in shock at this attempt to undermine our basic human rights as parents and as Jews,” Leeds said.

Proponents and opponents of a ban on circumcision argue over the health benefits and legal aspects of the practice.