
Be'chol Lashon (In Every Tongue)

**We are different cultures, languages and colors,
yet we share Israel, Hebrew and Torah**

A Program of the Institute for Jewish & Community www.JewishResearch.org

Be'chol Lashon Update 11/18/04

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Profile: Condoleezza Rice

5th Annual Bay Area Be'chol Lashon Chanukah Celebration

Sunday, December 12 12:30-4:30pm

The Golden Gate Club, The Presidio, San Francisco

RSVP – 415.386.2604

No charge

Join the Institute for Jewish & Community Research for the 5th Annual Bay Area Be'chol Lashon Chanukah Celebration for racially, ethnically and culturally diverse Jews in the Bay Area for candlelighting, music, dance and conversation. Chanukah recalls the victory in 166 B.C.E. - more than 2100 years ago - of a militarily weak but spiritually strong Jewish people. Lighting the Chanukah Menorah symbolizes the triumph of freedom over oppression, of spirit over matter, of light over darkness - a timely and reassuring message. The name Chanukah means "dedication." Sharing the same root as the Hebrew word for education (chinuch), it denotes the opportunity to dedicate oneself to Judaism through study and knowledge. Our friends and spiritual leaders, Rabbi Capers Funnye, Dr. Miri Hunter Haruach, Dr. Alex Karp, Rabbi Gershom Sizomu and others, will lead thought provoking discussions with adults, as well as educational crafts and games for children.

An Ethiopian Jewish Chanukah Party

Sunday, December 12 7 - 9 pm

The JCC Manhattan

334 Amsterdam Ave. at 76th St.

\$10 members/\$12 nonmembers

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Our African Jewish Chanukah party last winter was a smashing success. Join us this year as we commemorate the 20th anniversary of Operation Moses, when Ethiopian Jews were first airlifted to Israel, and voice our support for those Ethiopian Jews who await their chance for aliyah. Celebrate the beauty and uniqueness of Ethiopian Jewish culture through music, crafts, food and films. *Co-sponsored by BINA, National Association of Ethiopian Jews, Ayecha Resource Organization, Jewish Multicultural Network, SWIRL, Inc., and Kulanu.*

Sounds Better in Amharic

Thursday, December 16, 2004

7:30 PM / \$12 per ticket

Makor/Steinhardt Center of the 92nd Street Y. New York City

Makor is proud to present Sounds Better in Amharic Experience a Jewish story you have never heard before. Israel's Nephesh Theatre presents the inspiring account of a family's 700 kilometer journey by foot from Ethiopia to a refugee camp in Sudan and then on to Israel. Actor Yossi Vassa mixes nostalgia for Ethiopia with the humor, pain, and joy of adjusting to Israeli life. Written by Shai Ben Attar and Yossi Vassa. Translated by Howard Rypp. Directed by Shai Ben Attar. Tickets and Information: www.makor.org / 212.601.1000. Please contact for more information at 212.413.8842 or sarnoff@92Y.org.

IsraelExperts - Free Trip to Israel with Birthright Israel

The IsraelExperts Team

Bill Frankel, Program Director

1-800-772-2452

www.israelexperts.com

If you are 18-26, Jewish and have never been on a peer program to Israel, you may well be eligible for an AMAZING GIFT of a free 10 day trip to Israel! This winter, seats are at a premium due to the limited allocations by birthright israel. I am writing to let you know that we have just confirmed a **new departure from LA leaving Jan 9**. If you, your friends or as a group from an organization would like to come on our trip, WE HAVE SPACES NOW! If you know someone who may be interested, please pass this email on to them. The spaces are allocated on a first come, first served basis so you need to move quickly! We hope to see you soon in Israel!

New Book: Brief Lives of Secret Jews & Other Heretics

Richard L. Kagan and Abigail Dyer

<http://www.jhu.edu/~jhumag/1104web/crimes.html>

A new book co-edited by Johns Hopkins historian Richard Kagan offers a rare glimpse

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into the lives of six prisoners — non-conformists of their time — who got caught in the prosecutorial web of the Spanish Inquisition. The Spanish Inquisition is not an institution customarily associated with autobiography. . . . Rather, the Holy Office, as the Inquisition is also known, evokes the darker side of life — arbitrary justice, racial hatred, and religious persecution, along with images of dreary prisons, torture, and human suffering. — *Richard L. Kagan and Abigail Dyer, Inquisitorial Inquiries: Brief Lives of Secret Jews & Other Heretics*

The current (November) issue of Johns Hopkins Magazine relates that Hopkins professor Richard Kagan is translating old Inquisition records. Two interesting examples: A Jewess, forced to convert to Catholicism in Spain, moved to Mexico and served as a rabbi there. (Amazing, a female rabbi yet.) Another forced convert, Dona Blanca Mendez de Rivera, also migrated to Mexico city and became the center of a small Jewish converso community. Outed by a spy who joined the community, Blanca and her 5 daughters were hauled before the Inquisition. Convicted, she was sentenced to a public flogging and exile from Mexico. Three of her 5 daughters died in prison. --Amichai Heppner

Update: "Shavei Israel" (Formerly known as Amishav)

Michael Freund

Heichal Shlomo, 58 King George Street, Jerusalem, Israel

T: 972-2-625-6230 F: 972-2-625-6233 www.shavei.org

Please note that, effective immediately, the name of the organization that I run has changed, and it will now be known as "Shavei Israel" (Hebrew for "Those who return to Israel"). In all other respects, our work to facilitate the return of "lost Jews" continues:

In India

* We currently have two educational centers operating in northeastern India, where over 850 Bnei Menashe students are studying Hebrew and Judaism in preparation for life in Israel. We are hoping to open a third center in the coming months.

* Three months ago, I traveled to India together with two *dayanim* (rabbinical court judges) appointed by Israel's Sephardic Chief Rabbi to study the Bnei Menashe community and assess its background, history and commitment to Judaism. In the coming weeks, we will be meeting with the Chief Rabbi to discuss the visit and the *dayanim's* findings, and we are hopeful that we might be on the verge of a historic breakthrough regarding official recognition for the Bnei Menashe.

* On January 1, we will re-launch a program to train young Bnei Menashe women in Israel to work as nurses' assistants in Israeli health-care institutions. The program will be under the auspices of Herzog Hospital, and will be run in conjunction with the Matan Institute. At the end of six months of study, the students will receive certification from the Israeli Ministry of Health, and will then be able to work in the field, thereby supporting themselves and their families while making an important contribution to Israeli society.

* We are providing scholarships to several young Bnei Menashe men studying at

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yeshivot in Jerusalem. Each of them has been chosen because of their demonstrated leadership potential. Our goal is to cultivate spiritual leadership from within the community, so that the Bnei Menashe will have their own rabbis and scholars to serve as role models for the youth.

In Spain and Portugal:

* Our three rabbinical emissaries in Spain (Palma de Majorca) and Portugal (Lisbon and Oporto) are each conducting classes and doing outreach work among the Bnei Anousim (i.e. "Marranos") in their local communities. We are currently exploring the possibility of opening centers for the Bnei Anousim in Majorca and Oporto.

* In the coming months, we will hopefully be sending a Spanish-speaking teacher to Murcia, in southeastern Spain, to work with the local Bnei Anousim and educate them about Judaism.

* In September, we traveled to Lisbon together with Israel's Sephardic Chief Rabbi, Rabbi Shlomo Amar, and introduced him to the Bnei Anousim communities in both Lisbon and Oporto. In the wake of the visit, the Chief Rabbi agreed to establish a committee within the Chief Rabbinate to find a halachic solution that will address the desire of the Bnei Anousim for return and conversion.

In Brazil:

* After receiving a request for assistance from the Federation of Jewish Communities of Brazil, we recently dispatched a young rabbi and his family to the city of Recife, in northeastern Brazil, where he now serves as rabbi of the Jewish community and will also do outreach work among the large Bnei Anousim population there.

In Peru:

* We continue to work with the emerging Jewish community of Trujillo, in Peru's northwest. The Israeli Chief Rabbinate plans to send a Beit Din (religious court) to Trujillo sometime early next year to perform conversions, and we will be sending a Spanish-speaking teacher there shortly to help the community prepare for their conversion and aliyah to Israel.

* In Israel, we have opened a special class in Machon Miriam, our Spanish-language conversion and return institute, for recent immigrants from the Peruvian community of Iquitos, which is located at the mouth of the Amazon river in the country's northeast. These immigrants are all grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Moroccan Jews who intermingled with the local Peruvian population. They have made aliyah under Israel's Law of Return, and many wish to undergo an Orthodox conversion after their arrival to remove any doubts that may exist about their personal status.

There's More than Just a Canal: Panama's Jews Active, Observant

By Brian Harris

JTA email Edition

October 18, 2004

For a country once colonized by Catholic missionaries, Panama's Jews have managed to produce a remarkably consolidated and Orthodox Jewish community — although the

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nation's never produced a homegrown rabbi. That might soon change. But some of the community's biases — among them the conviction that its sons should go into business — might have to be overcome. As the Sephardi community's grand rabbi, Zion Levy, nears retirement after 53 years of spiritual guidance, the pressure is on to find a replacement, and Levy himself has stated that he would like to see a Panamanian take over for him, if possible.

Already, there is one Panamanian nearing completion of his studies at a yeshiva in Israel and the Sephardi community hosts a kolel, or seminary, that, given the many secular distractions of this lively tropical country, is notably active. "This serves as protection for our people," says 28-year-old Henry Oulfali, one of four Panamanian members of the kolel and an aspiring rabbi. "When people see religious families and their children following the way of the Torah, it is an inspiration." The Jewish population in Panama is about 8,000, concentrated in Panama City. According to the World Jewish Congress, in the last two decades immigration has tripled the number of Jews in the community, which includes more than 1,000 Israelis.

The WJC also notes that Panama is the only country aside from Israel that has had two Jewish Presidents in the 20th century: Max Shalom Delvall, in 1969, and Eric Delvalle Maduro, from 1987-1988. The country's Sephardi community is made up of about 7,000 people — most of whom keep kosher and many of whom observe Shabbat. There is a smaller Ashkenazi community as well. The Sephardi community traces its roots back to the opening of the Panama Canal in the early 20th century, but its ranks include many first- and second-generation families. Its members usually keep within the community as much as possible, helping to avoid assimilation. Most Panamanian Jewish families are quite wealthy by local standards, with many running successful trading companies at the bustling Colon Free Zone, where goods from around the world are sold wholesale for tax-free re-export.

Businesses in the free zone are often highly specialized and commonly the result of multiple generations of effort. Many families expect their sons immediately to go to work in the family business — anything ranging from textiles to industrial products — after completing their studies. Given their general prosperity, few Jewish families want to see their sons forgo the affluence of business to adopt the chaste lifestyle of a rabbi, educators say.

Oulfali says that after he married his parents stopped pressuring him to pursue another profession and that now, after three years in yeshiva in Israel and a stint at a Brazilian kolel, they have been supportive of his dedication to religious studies since his return to his native land in January.

Because of its minority status and relative incongruity with mainstream Panamanian culture, the Jewish community also needs a rabbi with strong leadership skills, a moxie

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that not everyone, no matter how committed to becoming a rabbi, possesses. Any new rabbi would inherit a vital community largely built up by Levy.

Every night, up to 50 members of the 7,000-strong community head to the second-story reading room adjacent to the oldest of the five Sephardi synagogues for discussion groups on everything from Talmud to Jewish philosophy. The Kolel members lead the groups. Other groups meet in the early morning hours. Downstairs from the meeting room, the shul's bookstore does a brisk business selling books in Hebrew and Spanish on a wide range of Jewish issues, from children's books and travel guides to deep philosophical tomes. Some evenings, when attendance is too high, the Kolel moves some groups to tables in the bookshop.

Though the community has yet to produce its own rabbi, religious education in both the Sephardi and smaller Ashkenazi communities still exists. It is believed that, with the exception of those with special needs, virtually all the children of both communities attend one of the two K-12 Jewish schools in the country. There are 1,800 students in the schools, a number that includes non-Jews as well. Their basketball rivalry is lively, and the two schools are also closely linked through community ties and function as compliments to one another, offering religious teachings as well as the state-required core curriculum. Graduation and college placement rates are very high.

Educators at the schools say there is a growing religious fervor among their teenage students, especially boys, but that there are a great deal of pressures that keep students from pursuing rabbinical careers. There have been some false starts for Panama's rabbinical aspirations. Several students in the past have attended yeshivas in Israel and Baltimore, only to return to Panama to incorporate themselves in family businesses. These first steps have coincided with what school administrators say is an upturn in interest among teenagers in religious studies. Some have even lobbied for creation of a yeshiva here. Despite stymied efforts in the past, Levy has high hopes for the current crop of students. "My desire is that Panama produces all its needs for religious guidance," he said, adding that he expects to retire just as soon as a suitable successor is found. "I ask God to give me life to be able to see that."

Rabbis Grapple with Inclusion of Non-Jewish Relatives in Shuls

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

The New York Jewish Week

October 31, 2004

Like every Conservative rabbi, David Lincoln, who is spiritual leader of Manhattan's Park Avenue Synagogue, occasionally finds himself faced with the need to involve a non-Jewish parent in a child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah. He sets strict guidelines for their involvement: non-Jewish parents are allowed to stand on the bimah while the Jewish parent says a Hebrew blessing of thanksgiving. But they are not permitted to open the

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ark holding the Torah scrolls, or to wear a tallit, or take on any of the other roles that they might be allowed in a Reform or Reconstructionist setting. One time, though, an enthusiastic non-Jewish father at Park Avenue Synagogue bought a tallit especially for his child's Bar Mitzvah during a visit to Israel. While he didn't discuss his intention to wear it with the rabbi, someone else in the congregation tipped him off to the man's plan, said Rabbi Lincoln.

"I just let it go," said Rabbi Lincoln. In the delicate, emotion-laden environment of a synagogue at a lifecycle event, rabbis have to pick their battles. "They are touchy issues. It's particularly difficult for Conservative rabbis. We're stuck in the middle, trying to be modern and trying to keep halachah," or Jewish law, said Rabbi Lincoln. His experience is just one of the wide range of ways in which rabbis in each of the liberal Jewish religious movements deal with the reality that all face of non-Jewish family members in their pews. For the first time, 183 Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist rabbis have been surveyed to see what those ways are. The Jewish Outreach Institute conducted its study, "Rabbis and the Intermarried Family in the Jewish Community," over the course of last year.

The institute is a Manhattan-based national research and advocacy organization that promotes the idea that synagogues should be more inclusive of interfaith families, including the non-Jewish members. "Interfaith marriage is a reality. These rabbis are grappling with that reality," said Rabbi Kerry Olitzky, a Reform rabbi and executive director of the institute. "The decisions that rabbis make with regard to interfaith families are dynamic and not static over the course of the family's lifecycle and over the course of their own career." The study lumps together the Reform and Reconstructionist rabbis into one category on questions when the movements' policies are similar.

Findings include that:

- In line with their denomination's policy, most Conservative rabbis want a completed conversion before they will officiate at a wedding. Eighty-six percent said that they will never officiate at an interfaith wedding even if the non-Jew is in the process of converting.
- Just under half of Reform/Reconstructionist rabbis will officiate at an interfaith wedding in at least some circumstances, if the non-Jew commits to raising their children as Jews. Sixteen percent indicated that they would consider officiating where there is no conversion of the non-Jew and the couple intends to raise their children in two faiths.
- Nearly all Conservative rabbis require that an adopted child be formally converted to Judaism, including the traditional requirement of immersion in a ritual bath.
- If a child is raised as a Jew, formal conversion is not required by about 75 percent of Reform rabbis and close to 60 percent of Reconstructionist rabbis.
- A slight majority — 55 percent — of Conservative rabbis apparently see the act of brit milah, the ritual circumcision, being, in and of itself, a form of acceptable conversion for boys, since they said they would take an "active role" at the brit of the son of a non-

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Jewish mother, while 20 percent said they would participate in a girl's baby-naming. Their movement also requires mikvah immersion.

- Almost all Reform and Reconstructionist rabbis, as well as about three-quarters of Conservative rabbis, permit a non-Jewish parent to stand on the bimah at their child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

The Reform and Reconstructionist movements permit their rabbis wide latitude and encourage an actively inclusive approach to dealing with interfaith families — counting as Jewish, for example, the children of non-Jewish mothers and Jewish fathers, a policy called “patrilineal descent.” The Conservative movement hews to the traditional definitions of Jewishness and has stricter policies. Any rabbi officiating at an interfaith wedding can be expelled from the Rabbinical Assembly, for example. But there are many other life-cycle rituals for which a Conservative rabbi's position may be informed by deliberations of the movement's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards but is not shaped by denominational policy. One of those moments is the Bar or Bat Mitzvah. The Jewish Outreach Institute study shows that younger rabbis permit non-Jewish parents more active roles than do their older colleagues in both the Conservative and Reform/Reconstructionist categories.

Forty-one percent of Conservative rabbis ordained since 1980 allow the non-Jewish parent to also say something in English. Just 14 percent of their older colleagues permit that; they are more inclined to allow the non-Jewish parent to stand on the bimah without speaking — 24 percent of those ordained before 1980 compared to 10 percent ordained since — or to recognize them “in the audience” — 29 percent of those ordained before 1980 compared to 18 percent ordained since. Just under one-third of Conservative rabbis allow the non-Jewish parent to say a prayer before the congregation. Slightly more older Reform/Reconstructionist rabbis permit it — 69 percent — than do those ordained since 1980 — 60 percent.

Fewer Reform and Reconstructionist rabbis ordained since 1980 — 31 percent — accept a 13-year-old's “self-identification” as a Jew as sufficient to consider them a member of the Jewish people than do their older colleagues, 52 percent of whom will go with self-identification. These findings might reflect a swing toward more traditional Jewish values in some areas among the Reform and Reconstructionist rabbis. “There has been a growing traditionalism among younger liberal rabbis, and this statistic may reflect that orientation,” said Rabbi David Ellenson, president of the Reform movement's Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, and author of a newly-published book of essays, “After Emancipation: Jewish Religious Responses to Modernity” (HUC Press, 2004).

“At HUC virtually every student wears tallit and tefillin — that would not have happened 30 years ago. But they go on to serve people whose commitment may be very weak,” he told *The Jewish Week*. “The irony is that at the same time you have this return to

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tradition among religious leaders of our community, you have record numbers of people abandoning Jewish identity altogether. Which is why there is this dissonance between rabbis on the one hand and the people they're going to serve on the other." According to the institute study, board members and congregants have more influence over how rabbis ordained since 1980 consider officiating at life-cycle rituals involving a non-Jew than they do on rabbis ordained before 1980.

When asked who has been most influential on these matters over the course of their careers, just 6 percent of Conservative rabbis ordained before 1980 said that it was board members or congregants. That more than tripled, to 19 percent, for Conservative rabbis ordained since 1980. It also rose among Reform and Reconstructionist rabbis — 24 percent of older rabbis cited lay people while 37 percent of those more recently ordained did. At the same time, reliance on "written sources," meaning Torah and its interpretations has plunged among Conservative and Reform/Reconstructionist rabbis. Fifteen percent of Conservative rabbis ordained before 1980 cited written sources as the biggest influence on their views on the topic, while just 3 percent of those ordained since did. There was a similar divide among Reform/Reconstructionist rabbis.

"The questions Conservative rabbis grapple with are 'what are the boundaries here' between 'absolutely no' and saying 'how do I involve this person's non-Jewish mother/father/grandparent, who has committed to raising this child as Jewish?' " said Rabbi Joel Meyers, executive vice president of the movement's Rabbinical Assembly. "They try to deal with a complex situation." He said that Conservative rabbis have to deal more frequently with these issues today — not because intermarriage has increased, but because "There is less stigma attached to intermarriage than years ago. People are more accepting and so more likely to say to their rabbi they want you to help us do something than they were 10 or 15 years ago."

Future of Interfaith: New Program Head Has Firsthand Experience

By Alexandra J. Wall

Reprinted by permission of j. the Jewish news weekly of northern California

Friday October 1, 2004. In the short time that Helena McMahon has been the manager of Interfaith Connection, two incidents have proven that her services are appreciated well beyond San Francisco. While she didn't give specifics because of confidentiality, she told of two couples, both foreigners, who sought her advice: One couple was working here and the other was just on vacation. They both found out about Interfaith Connection at the Jewish Community Center of San Francisco. In both instances, she said, the couples were interfaith and from a country where the only form of Judaism is the traditional one, and therefore such relationships are looked down upon. "It's been amazingly touching to me to see how meaningful that's been for these people to learn that there's a whole world out there where they can be accepted," said McMahon.

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In one case, the non-Jewish partner came in alone, to talk. This person felt quite nervous but left with a great sense of relief. "Just to have that interaction with someone opens up a new path for people," said McMahon. "Maybe they'll bring that back to their communities. It's nice to feel that our reach may be farther than we think." A few months ago, McMahon, 35, replaced longtime director of Interfaith Connection, Rosanne Levitt. McMahon is a native of Queens, N.Y., and the daughter of two cantors; in fact, her mother, Hilda Abrevaya, was the first woman in the world to be hired as a cantor. McMahon is back at the JCCSF now, in Levitt's position, especially ironic since in her former days on the programming staff at the JCCSF, they were both part-timers and shared an office. Back then, "I looked at her position, and thought it was a wonderful thing that she was doing," said McMahon. "It's amazing how things come full circle."

McMahon also has a deeply personal connection to her work as she is married to an Irish Catholic. They are raising their two daughters Jewish. Though McMahon was working at the JCCSF at the time they met, they never attended any of Interfaith Connection's workshops. Since McMahon was already getting a degree in counseling, they talked about the issues a lot. Both of their daughters attend Brandeis Hillel Day School. McMahon has master's degrees in both counseling and cultural diversity. She's been in private practice for three years and continues to see couples, individuals and families.

As the daughter of spiritual leaders, McMahon took in a fairly mainstream view of Judaism and perhaps absorbed a bit too much of synagogue politics. While in Israel, during her junior year of college, she began to better define what being Jewish meant to her. "That philosophy has led me into this work, and I feel the same things for interfaith relationships," she said. "We need to be open enough to allow people to define themselves, rather than applying institutional or religious definitions to what we think people should be." McMahon said she pursued her second master's in cultural diversity because she had always been interested in what brings people together as well as divides them.

She also had worked as a Jewish educator, and began doing diversity training sessions around multiculturalism. She found she was most drawn to hearing people's stories, learning about the personal obstacles that prevented them from being open to others. McMahon began at Interfaith Connection in April, conducting the discussion series and workshops for interfaith couples on various topics, including raising children. She's also trying to do some community-building, to give interfaith couples more opportunities to socialize with each other.

Overall, McMahon said her main goal is "to provide a safe place where people feel really welcome and comfortable, no matter what their religious background, and how involved they are religiously. Because when you accept someone where they're at, chances are they're going to feel much more apt to join the community and be a part of it." Interfaith

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Connection offers discussion groups and workshops on topics from relationships to raising children and celebrating holidays. Information: (415) 292-1252 or www.intfaith.org.

Alexandra J. Wall is a staff writer for j. the Jewish newsweekly of northern California.

New Book: The Israelis: Q & A with Donna Rosenthal

By Mary A. Jacobs

The Dallas Morning News

Wednesday, November 3, 2004

Free Press, \$28

Israel hosts more foreign journalists, per capita, than any other country in the world. Yet despite all the news coverage, few really understand the people of Israel, according to Donna Rosenthal. Rosenthal spent years as a producer at Israel Television and as a reporter for Israel Radio and the Jerusalem Post before writing her book, "The Israelis" (Free Press, \$28). She recently talked with the Dallas Morning News. Here are excerpts.

Q: What led you to write this book about the people of Israel?

A: A producer at CNN told me, "Our viewers are confused. We have footage of Jews who look like Arabs, Arabs who look like Jews. We have black Jews, bearded 16th-century Jews and sexy girls in tight jeans. Who are these people anyway?" I wanted this book to explain. I did it initially as a "bible" for journalists based in Israel and abroad. Israel, with a population of only about 6.8 million people, gets more press coverage than China and India and all of Africa combined. Yet most foreign journalists and their audiences have very little idea who the Israelis are. In the book I had two rules: no politicians, and (all the interviewees) were Israeli citizens. I only have three American-born Israelis in the book. When you watch CNN you get the feeling that all Israelis were born in America, because they speak perfect English. In fact, there are only about 100,000 Israelis who were born in the United States or any English-speaking country. I let Israelis talk in their own words, and let them smash stereotypes.

Q: What are some pervasive stereotypes?

A: People think Israel is entirely Jewish. It's only 80 percent Jewish. The others are Muslim, Christian and Druze. The fastest growing group is Muslim. In fact, the most common name for an Israeli boy is Muhammed. One educated person from Silicon Valley was sitting next to me on a plane, and I asked him what he knew about Israelis. He said, "They're all ultra-Orthodox Jews and they're really poor." In fact, only about 10 percent are Orthodox or ultra-Orthodox. The other day Fox News had a story about Israeli-Americans who were going to vote, which showed these guys in black hats and beards. They're a miniscule percentage of Israelis. So you've got these distorted images. One fact that surprises many people is that Israel is the only country in the Middle East with a growing Christian population. Over 50 percent of the 1 million former Soviets who

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have come to Israel in the last few years are not Jewish. To immigrate to Israel, you need only one Jewish grandparent. If your other three grandparents were Christian, and your husband is Christian, you can come - along with your seven children and 11 grandchildren who are all Christian. In parts of Israel you see more and more churches, and shops that sell pork, and families that have Christmas trees.

Q: Is there religious diversity in the Israeli army?

A: When soldiers are inducted into the army, they hold an M-16 in one hand, and they swear on their holy book. Approximately 80 percent swear on the Hebrew Bible. The second most popular holy book is the Quran. This is mostly for Bedouin Muslims who volunteer. The Bedouin are some of the best soldiers in the Israeli army. The second group of Arabic-speaking soldiers are Druze men. The Druze religion is an 11th-century offshoot of Islam. The Druze communities in Israel showed their loyalty to the state by asking the government to draft their men. When they swear in, they use a plain notebook with nothing inside, because the Druze holy book is so secret nobody is allowed to see it unless you're high up in the religion. The fourth holy book is the Christian Bible.

Q: Having talked with the different religious groups, do you see any signs of hope for the future of Israel?

A: That's a very American question. Americans always like happy endings to their movies. I wrote a lot of the book in downtown Jerusalem on the Street of the Prophets, which is the epicenter for the suicide bombings. Anyone who tries to be a prophet about what's going to happen is a fool. It's a volatile place and anything can happen. But I'd also like to say there is a lot of hope. You've got cooperation going on every single day that you never see on TV. You don't see Haifa University, which is 20 percent Muslim, where there are students living together in the dormitories and going to each other's weddings. There are high-tech companies in Israel where you've got Muslims, Christians and Jews all taking the same aerobics class. In the Israeli parliament, the Knesset, you've got Christians, Muslims and Jews all speaking perfect Hebrew, screaming at each other, and physically you can't tell them apart.

Hispanics Debate Census Plan to Change Racial Grouping

By Rachel L. Swarns

New York Times

October 24, 2004

The music was blaring, the hair dryers humming and the hair stylists laughing in the beauty salon as one of them, Kathia Mendez, loosened her curlers and let her black hair tumble to her shoulders. To many Americans, the vivacious young woman smiling into the gilded mirror might seem easily recognizable as a black woman. But like many Hispanics here, Ms. Mendez views race through a decidedly different lens. In her home country, the Dominican Republic, she is known as "india," or Indian, a term often used for people of mixed race who do not have indigenous roots. If she was asked to describe

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herself in the United States census, she says, she would choose the racial category selected by nearly 15 million Hispanics in 2000: "some other race."

"I'm not black and I'm not white; we don't define ourselves that way," said Ms. Mendez, a 25-year-old hair stylist who has lived in the United States for nine years. "So I would choose 'some other race.'" But now census officials are hoping to eliminate the option from the 2010 questionnaire in an effort to encourage Hispanics to choose one or more of five standard racial categories: white, black, Asian, American Indian or Alaska native, or a category that includes natives of Hawaii and the Pacific Islands.

Over the last three decades, the number of Hispanics choosing "some other race" has surged rapidly, making it the Census Bureau's fastest growing racial category. Census officials say the proposed change, which is expected to remain under consideration until 2006, would improve the accuracy of the nation's racial data because federal agencies typically rely on data from the standard racial groups to make statistical calculations about race. The proposal to eliminate the category, which was used almost exclusively by Hispanics in the 2000 census, has stirred a furious debate among Hispanic advocacy groups, statisticians and officials over how the nation's largest minority group should be defined racially. If approved, it would be the first time since 1940 that officials have eliminated a racial category from the census, Census Bureau officials say.

Critics say the change would ignore the evolving views of race emerging in communities across the country as immigration from Latin America has surged in recent decades. Nearly 40 million Hispanics -- almost half of them immigrants -- live in the United States and many embrace a kaleidoscope of racial identities that transcends traditional notions of black and white. Many Hispanics refer to themselves as *jabao*, *indio*, *trigueño* or *moreno*, depending on their skin color and birthplace, while others think that all Hispanics, regardless of color or national origin, should be viewed as a single race.

In the 2000 census, 48 percent of Hispanics described themselves as white and 2 percent as black. Six percent identified themselves as belonging to two or more of the standard racial categories. And 42 percent chose "some other race," with the vast majority writing in responses like Hispanic, Latino or geographic backgrounds like Mexican, Puerto Rican or Dominican. Carlos Chardon, chairman of the Census Bureau's Hispanic advisory committee and an opponent of the proposed change, said census officials were ignoring America's shifting racial realities by trying to force Latinos to choose from the standard categories. Advocates at the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund have also expressed concerns. "We don't fit into the categories that the Anglos want us to fit in," Mr. Chardon said. "The census is trying to create a reality that doesn't exist."

Census officials say they will consult with the Office of Management and Budget, Congress and advocacy groups before a final decision is made. But they say change is

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necessary to improve the accuracy of the data in the bureau's Modified Age/Race and Sex, or MARS, file, which many federal agencies rely on. In the MARS file, census officials assign a race to those who select "some other race" to accommodate federal agencies that do not use the ambiguous racial category. The agencies use the MARS estimates to track population and birth and mortality rates, among other things.

Census demographers look for clues to make such determinations, checking to see whether relatives are listed in standard racial categories and checking neighborhood demographics. Census officials say the process is flawed and needs changing, even though they understand that sociologists and advocacy groups want to continue tracking and studying Hispanics who choose the "some other race" category. "The race question and race in the United States is a very emotional issue and people who are interested in it feel very strongly about it," said Preston Jay Waite, associate director for the decennial census.

"But if somebody writes down that their race is Latino, that doesn't give us any information about which of the race categories they're in," Mr. Waite said. "We're making up the race for 15 million people. We would prefer not to do it. It doesn't seem wise to me that we would put at risk the racial statistics of the nation in order to answer an interesting sociological question." Some statisticians question the need for change, however, and warn that eliminating the category would create problems in census files used for political redistricting and enforcement of equal opportunity laws.

Removing the option would increase the number of Hispanics who would include themselves in traditional racial groups and would probably increase the number of those who would identify themselves as white, officials say. But it would also increase the number who would simply refuse to respond to the race question, according to recent tests conducted by the Census Bureau. Officials have to guess the race of individuals who do not respond, and an increase in those numbers could lead to inaccuracies in data files used to monitor voting rights and civil rights enforcement, said Roderick J. Harrison, a demographer at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, a research group in Washington that studies issues of concern to blacks.

He said mistakes in categorizing the race of Hispanics who do not respond to the race question could result in inaccurate tallies of blacks, whites or other racial groups, a major worry for those concerned about redistricting and civil rights issues. "That's a major concern," said Mr. Harrison, who headed the racial statistics unit at the Census Bureau from 1990 to 1997. In a meeting of members of a steering committee that disseminates census data to minority groups, a discussion earlier this year between Mr. Waite and Mr. Harrison on this subject grew so heated that Mr. Harrison was asked to resign from the committee. Hispanic and Native American advocacy groups expressed concern about the resignation, and Representative William Lacy Clay, Democrat of Missouri, said he believed Mr. Harrison was forced out for challenging the Census Bureau's conclusions, a

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charge that Mr. Waite denies.

The dispute highlights the difficulties the Census Bureau has encountered over the decades as it has struggled to find a racial home for Hispanics.

In 1930, the census introduced a racial category called Mexican, which was intended to capture the growing number of Hispanics in Southwestern states. But it was dropped in 1940, and by 1960 census officials were instructing its interviewers to record "Puerto Ricans, Mexicans or other person of Latin American descent as white unless they were definitely of Negro, Indian or other nonwhite race." The "other race" category was made up of mixed-race people who claimed some combination of white, black and Native American descent and some people of Asian heritage when it was first included in 1950. By 1980, it was largely Hispanic, reflecting, in part, the increased immigration from Latin America.

At Arelis Beauty Salon, Ms. Mendez and her colleagues marveled at the differences between the Dominican and American racial palettes as they styled hair and waxed eyebrows and debated whether the census reflected their racial identities. Zunilda Diaz, 48, said she would describe herself as white, though her mother is dark-skinned and would be considered black in the United States. Nelly de la Rosa, who is 33 and has chocolate brown skin, said she would choose "some other race." Without that option, she said, she would be hard pressed to pick a racial category. "We have so much mixture," said Ms. de la Rosa, who said she is described as morena or india at home. "These other census categories just don't reflect who we are."

Chart: "Question of Race"

How Hispanics identified their race in the 2000 census:

White: 47.9

Some other race: 42.2

Two or more races: 6.3%

Black: 2%

American Indian, Alaskan native: 1.2

Asian: 0.3

Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander: 0.1

Dutch Filmmaker Theo Van Gogh Murdered

By Toby Sterling

Associated Press

November 2, 2004

A Dutch filmmaker who had received death threats after releasing a movie criticizing the treatment of women under Islam was slain in Amsterdam on Tuesday, police said. A suspect, a 26-year-old man with dual Dutch-Moroccan nationality, was arrested after a shootout with officers that left him wounded, police said. Filmmaker Theo van Gogh had

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been threatened after the August airing of the movie "Submission," which he made with a right-wing Dutch politician who had renounced the Islamic faith of her birth. Van Gogh had received police protection after its release. Dutch national broadcaster NOS and other media reported that Van Gogh's killer shot and stabbed his victim and left a note on his body. NOS said witnesses described the attacker as having an "Arab appearance."

A witness who lives in the neighborhood heard six shots, and saw the man concealing a gun. She said he walked away slowly, spoke to someone at the edge of the park, and then ran. "He was walking slowly, like he was trying to be cool," she said, describing him as wearing a long beard and Islamic garb. "He was either an Arabic man or someone disguised as a Muslim," she said. Another witness told Dutch Radio 1 the killer arrived by bicycle and shot Van Gogh as he got out of a car. "He fell backward on the bicycle path and just laid there. The shooter stayed next to him and waited. Waited to make sure he was dead."

The slain filmmaker was the great grandson of the brother of famous Dutch painter Vincent van Gogh, who was also named Theo. In a recent radio interview, Van Gogh dismissed the threats and called the movie "the best protection I could have. It's not something I worry about." Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende called on the Dutch people to remain calm. "Nothing is known about the motive," he said in a written statement. "I want to call on everyone not to jump to far-reaching conclusions. The facts must first be carefully weighed so let's allow the investigators to do their jobs."

Balkenende praised Van Gogh as a proponent of free speech who had "outspoken opinions." "It would be unacceptable if a difference of opinion led to this brutal murder," he said. Police spokesman Eric Vermeulen said the attacker fled to the nearby East Park, and was arrested after exchanging gunfire with police. Both the suspect and a policeman suffered minor injuries. "They were conscious" when taken to hospital, Vermeulen said. Van Gogh's killing immediately rekindled memories of the 2002 assassination of Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn who polarized the nation with his anti-immigration views and was shot to death days before national elections.

In addition to his film, van Gogh also wrote columns about Islam that were published on his Web site, www.thevangogh.nl, and Dutch newspaper Metro. The short television film "Submission" aired on Dutch television in August, enraged the Muslim community in the Netherlands. It told the fictional story of a Muslim woman forced into a violent marriage, raped by a relative and brutally punished for adultery. The English-language film was scripted by a right-wing politician who years ago renounced the Islamic faith of her birth and now refers to herself as an "ex-Muslim."

Somali-born Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a member of the Dutch parliament, has repeatedly outraged fellow Muslims by criticizing Islamic customs and the failure of Muslim families to adopt

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Dutch ways. The place of Muslim immigrants in Dutch society has long been a contentious issue in the Netherlands, where many right-wing politicians have pushed for tougher immigration laws and say Muslims already settled in the country must make a greater effort to assimilate. Theo van Gogh, 47, has often come under criticism for his controversial movies. In December, his next movie "06-05," about the May 6, 2002 assassination of Pim Fortuyn, is scheduled to debut on the Internet.

Arab Liberals Petition the U.N. to Establish an International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Terrorists

MEMRI

Special Dispatch - Reform Project

No. 812 November 8, 2004

http://www.memri.org/bin/opener_latest.cgi?ID=SD81204

On October 24, 2004, the liberal Arab websites www.elaph.com and www.mettransparent.com published a manifesto written by Arab liberals, in which they petition the U.N. to establish an international tribunal which would prosecute terrorists, as well as people and institutions, primarily religious clerics, that incite terrorism.(1) The idea to petition the U.N. with this request was raised by the Jordanian writer and researcher Dr. Shaker Al-Nabulsi in early September 2004, in response to the fatwa issued by Sheikh Yousef Al-Qaradhawi - one of the leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood movement and one of the most important religious authorities in Islamist circles - which called for the abduction and killing of U.S. citizens in Iraq.(2) The idea was developed and written up by Al-Nabulsi, Tunisian intellectual Al-'Afif Al-Akhdhar, and former Iraqi Minister of Planning Dr. Jawad Hashem. During the first 24 hours since the manifesto was published on the Internet, it was signed by approximately 2,000 people worldwide, including intellectuals, authors, poets, and journalists. The authors of the manifesto hope that within a week the number of signatures will reach 10,000, at which point it will be presented to the U.N.(3) The following are excerpts from the original English translation of the manifesto, as published by the authors:

Fatwas Are a Primary Cause of Terrorism

"Their Excellencies President and members of the UN-Security Council - His Excellency, The Secretary-General of the U.N.:

"On October 8, 2004, the UNSC unanimously adopted Resolution 1566 (2004) condemning all terrorist acts 'as one of the most serious threats to peace and international stability.' In reaffirming its Resolutions 1267 of October 15, 1999; and 1373 of September 28, 2001; as well as its other resolutions concerning threats to international peace and security caused by terrorism; and in recalling its Resolution 1540 (2004) of April 28, 2004; Resolution 1566 decides:

"...To establish a working group consisted of all members of the Security Council to

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consider and submit recommendations to the Council on practical measures to be imposed upon individuals, groups, or entities involved in or associated with terrorist activities ... including more effective procedures considered to be appropriate for bringing them to justice through prosecution or extradition, freezing of their financial assets, preventing their movement through the territories of Member States, preventing supply to them of all types of arms and related material, and on the procedures for implementing these measures.

"As you are deliberating to recommend practical measures to be imposed on individuals, groups, or entities involved in or associated with terrorist activities pursuant to Resolution 1566, we, the signatories of this letter, a group of Arab and Muslim liberals, would like to draw your attention to an extremely dangerous source of terrorism. This source is the purported religious pronouncements fatwas issued by some psychotic members of dogmatic Muslims encouraging the commission of terrorist acts in the name of and under the banner of Islam.

"It is not enough for the Security Council to adopt resolutions 'condemning' terrorism. What will be more effective is the establishment of an International Tribunal affiliated to the UN organization for the prosecution of individuals, groups, or entities involved, directly or indirectly, with terrorist activities including, but not limited to, fatwas issued by religious clerics in the name of Islam calling upon Muslims to commit terrorist acts.

"By these fatwas all terrorists have died, or will die, fully convinced that they will immediately enter Paradise. Of course, we are not excluding other causes for committing terrorist acts, such as the ticking-bomb of population explosion with its resultant illiteracy, poverty, unemployment, backwardness in education systems, reactionary religious teaching, and, above all, living under dictatorial systems of governments in almost all Arab countries. But despite the above causes, certain religious fatwas remain the pivotal cause of terrorist acts - fatwas which clothe such terrorist acts with legitimacy as being one of the sacred tenets of Muslim faith."

Examples of Fatwas

"We can provide you with an exhaustive lists of fatwas which incite terrorist acts, but the following few may suffice:

- "When the presiding judge of the Egyptian Court asked Sheikh Mohamed Al-Ghazali (a leader in the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood movement) to opine about the murder of Faraj Foda (an Egyptian secular intellectual) in 1992, Sheikh Al-Ghazali's opinion was, 'The killing of Faraj Foda was in fact the implementation of the punishment against an apostate which the imam (the state) has failed to implement (undertake).' When the defendant heard Al-Ghazali's opinion he shouted, 'Now I will die with a clear conscience (for murdering Mr. Foda).'

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* "On February 13, 2002, the London-based Al-Hayat newspapers published a fatwa issued by the Saudi Sheikh Ali Bin Khodair Al-Khodhari approving and condoning

- Al-Qa'ida's 9/11 terrorist acts in New York and Washington. In his fatwa, the Sheikh said, 'It is astonishing to mourn the [American] victims as being innocents. Those victims may be classified as infidel Americans which do not deserve being mourned, because each American, as to his relation to American government, is a warrior, or supporter, in money or opinion. It is legitimate to kill all of them as combatant; or non-combatant, such as the old, the blind, or non-Muslims...'

* "On February 13, 2002, the London-based Al-Hayat newspaper also published another fatwa issued by the Saudi Sheikh Safar Bin Abdulrahman Al-Hawali

- in which he described the 9/11 attacks as an equivalent given in return for President Clinton missile attack on Al-Qa'ida's training camps after the terrorists attack on the American Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya. He went on to condone the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon describing them as centers for money laundering, devil's nest, spying cell, and a mafia retreat.

* "The fatwa issued by Sheikh Yousef Al-Qaradhawi permitting the killing of 'fetuses' (unborn) Jews, because (according to him) when Jews are born and grown-up they will join the Israeli army. Furthermore, on September 3, 2004, (at the Egyptian Journalist Union)

- Al-Qardhawi issued a fatwa to kill all American civilians working in Iraq.

* "And on July 3, 2004, he issued another fatwa (published in Al-Ahram Al-Arabi) permitting the killing of Muslim intellectuals as being apostates, claiming that Islam justify the killing of such apostates. The fatwa issued by Rashid

- Al-Ghannoushi (Tunisian) according to which he permits killing all civilians in Israel, because (according to his fatwa) "these are no civilians in Israel. The population - males, females, and children - is the army reserve soldiers, thus could be killed."

'Fatwas Issued by the Extremist Muslims Clerics Encourage the Commission of Terrorist Acts'

"As it is difficult, if not impossible, to prosecute these extremists in their native Arab or Islamic countries, they continue to issue and publish their fatwas inciting acts of terror under the false umbrella of Islam. As the fatwas issued by the extremist Muslims clerics encourage the commission of terrorist acts to provoke a state of terror, and, due to the

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importance of combating terrorism as a matter of urgency, we, the signatories of this letter, respectfully submit to your excellencies and to the Working Group Constituted pursuant to Article-9 of Resolution 1566 to create an International Tribunal to prosecute all terrorists, whether individuals, groups, or entities, including individuals who incite terrorism through the issuance of fatwas in the name of religion."

Endnotes:

(1) <http://www.elaph.com/elaphweb/Politics/2004/10/17789.htm> , October 24, 2004.

http://www.mettransparent.com/texts/arab_liberals_appeal_to_un_for_int_court_against_terror_fatwas.htm , October 24, 2004.

(2) See MEMRI Special Dispatch No.794, October 6, 2004, "Reactions to Sheikh Al-Qaradhawi's Fatwa Calling for the Abduction and Killing of American Civilians in Iraq,"

<http://www.memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=subjects&Area= Jihad&ID=SP79404> .

(3) <http://www.elaph.com/elaphweb/ElaphWriter/2004/10/18190.htm> , October 24, 2004.

The Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) is an independent, non-profit organization that translates and analyzes the media of the Middle East. Copies of articles and documents cited, as well as background information, are available on request.

Profile: Condoleezza Rice

Condoleezza Rice is the First Black Female to be Appointed as US Secretary of State

BBC News

Tuesday, 16 November, 2004

She was also the first to occupy the key post of national security adviser. She is the most academic member of the Bush foreign affairs team and - because of her gender, background and youth - one of the most distinctive. Personally close to Mr Bush, she spends almost every weekend with the president and his wife Laura at Camp David.

She has been one of his key supporters during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and in the continuing war against terror. Despite a somewhat stern demeanour, which has earned her the nickname "warrior princess", Ms Rice has consistently been one of the most popular members of the Bush administration and a proven ally for a president who came to office with little experience of foreign affairs.

Against all odds

Ms Rice was born in 1954 and grew up in Birmingham, Alabama under the shadow of

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segregation. Racism was so ingrained in her childhood that she says she hardly noticed it. When she was just eight years old, Ms Rice was standing inside her father's church when she felt the floor shake. A Ku Klux Klan bomb had exploded at a Baptist Church two blocks away, killing four young black girls, one of them her classmate since kindergarten. She has often said that to get ahead, she had to be "twice as good", and her childhood chiselled her strong determination and self-respect. Ms Rice's mother was a music teacher who taught her to play the piano. Her father was a pastor and college principal, who shared his enthusiasm for sport with his daughter.

Change of heart

In an interview with Newsweek magazine, Ms Rice said that despite growing up with racial segregation, personal expectations were high. "My parents had me absolutely convinced that, well, you may not be able to have a hamburger at Woolworth's but you can be president of the United States," she said. Her parents taught her that education was the best armour against segregation and prejudice. Regarded as one of America's brightest and best, Ms Rice went to the University of Denver at 15 and graduated with a degree in political science at the still tender age of 19. A concert level pianist, she had originally enrolled as a music student, with the intention of becoming a classical pianist. But while at Denver she came under the influence of Josef Korbel, a Czech refugee and father to the US' first woman secretary of state, Madeleine Albright. Under his guidance, she became interested in international relations and the study of the Soviet Union and switched courses.

Testing times

A masters and doctorate followed and, at the age of 26, Ms Rice became a fellow at Stanford University's Centre for International Security and Arms Control. After serving as the Soviet affairs adviser on Bush senior's National Security Council, Condoleezza Rice returned to Stanford in 1991 and, in 1993, became the youngest, the first female and first non-white provost. When the Bush administration came to power, her influence over early foreign policy strategy was considerable.

She led the tricky negotiations with Russia over missile defence, and is thought to have spearheaded the unilateralist tone of the first months of the Bush presidency. But it was in the wake of the 11 September 2001 attacks in Washington and New York that she really proved her strength, standing staunchly by the president during the difficult days ahead and the subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. She is thought to be one of the most significant creators of the controversial Bush doctrine of pre-emptive action against states thought to be a threat against the US.

"The United States has always reserved the right to try and diminish or to try to eliminate a threat before it is attacked," she stated firmly in an interview shortly before the war in Iraq. But controversial as this view may be it has done nothing to diminish her popularity, both inside and outside the White House. In fact, her steely determination in these times

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of conflict may serve her well as she prepares to take up the post of secretary of state.
