The American Jewish Committee has become one of the world’s most influential organizations.

Rupert Murdoch, Chairman and CEO, News Corporation

AJC’s inspired devotion to the defense of human rights represents yet another dimension of its sacred work.

Nobel Peace Laureate Elie Wiesel

AJC does a wonderful job of building bridges of understanding.

Steven Spielberg

AJC focuses on highlighting the stark danger posed by the current Iranian regime…

Stuart Levey, U.S. Treasury Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence

AJC is the most effective, most influential, and most respected of American Jewish organizations.

Nicolas Sarkozy, President of France
From our President and Executive Director

In times like these, we all consider the personal effects of economic downturn. Our families, businesses, and organizations must find ways to adjust. But, of course, a global economic shift can also bring with it perilous effects of a political nature. Pushing back against this possibility is now central to our agenda at AJC.

Yes, even as we pare down wherever possible (including the size of this Annual Report), we are determined to redouble our work in the global arena.

We will ceaselessly champion the tolerance, mutual respect, and human liberty that democracy demands. And we will likewise stand up for Jewish communities everywhere and for the people and State of Israel.

At this moment, our task at AJC includes working to preemptively defeat those hungry to take advantage of crisis. Those yearning to peddle bigotry and hatred. Those eager to blame imaginary enemies—chief among them, Israel and the Jews.

As a leading global Jewish organization, AJC plays a unique and vital role in the battle for public opinion.

In this interconnected age, we get our message out on a global scale. In addition to our headquarters in New York, our twenty-eight U.S. offices, our independent affiliates, and our twenty-eight international partnerships, we maintain full-time offices in the world’s key diplomatic hubs.

Just as our global presence is simply unparalleled, so is the degree of access we enjoy at the highest levels.

Why are doors open for us? What gives us the ability to forge partnerships with leaders like those pictured on these pages?

Above all, it’s the credibility we’ve earned that explains our ability to be heard. It also explains, to be sure, French president Nicolas Sarkozy’s describing us as “the most effective, most influential, and most respected of American Jewish organizations.”

As you read this Annual Report, we hope you’ll keep in mind this concept of credibility—and the trust, shared values, and bonds of friendship it implies. It is the key to the selected accomplishments, among many, you’ll read about in the pages that follow.

And it is the key as well to this organization’s bond with its 175,000 members and supporters. Certainly, that bond, more than anything, is what empowers AJC and makes possible our work across America and around the world.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Sideman, President

David A. Harris, Executive Director
Promoting Democratic Values and Mutual Respect

Democracy is not merely a system of government, but a definite vision of society. And it is a vision with committed opponents and sworn enemies all over the world. On the international, national, state, and local levels, AJC works to promote the human liberty and intergroup respect that set democracy apart. We speak out forcefully, bring people and groups together, and take a strong stand everywhere for the abiding values of humanity.

At both the Republican and Democratic national conventions, political and civic leaders participated in AJC conferences on strengthening intergroup relations.

AJC’s Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights, in New York, and UN Watch, in Geneva, battled to stop Durban II from turning into an anti-Israel hatefest.

Thirty-two Mexican-American leaders from sixteen states gathered for a three-day intergroup workshop conducted by our Latino and Latin American Institute.

Over one hundred political, religious, and civic leaders attended a conference, conducted by our Washington Chapter, exploring Jewish and Lutheran relations and views of Israel.

Impact

U.S.-India Agreement It was an eight-year effort involving many parties. And it ended in an historic agreement between America and India. The 2008 U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Cooperation Act means increased partnership between these two democratic powerhouses—not only on nuclear issues, but also on promoting energy security and combating the terrorist threat. For years, AJC, working with Indian-American allies, played a leadership role in advocating passage of the deal. And we were present in force when it was finally signed. “AJC has done so much to help build friendship between India and America,” declared Anand Sharma, Indian minister of state for external affairs, and a key proponent of the agreement.

Rallying Against Hate A teen gang in Patchogue, Long Island, decided to “get some Mexicans.” So they senselessly murdered Ecuadorian immigrant Marcello Lucero. Two days later, our Long Island Chapter, along with a Latino group, took action. They put together the first public response: a large rally addressed by twenty elected officials and community leaders. The chapter has been working tirelessly to heal the wounds, unite the community, and promote civil discourse on the subject of immigration. “The rally sent a loud and clear message about mutual respect,” said Galen Kirkland, commissioner of the New York State Division of Human Rights. “AJC is a potent, deeply appreciated voice for human rights on Long Island.”
Anniversary in Berlin  At the tenth anniversary celebration of the opening of AJC’s Berlin Office, German interior minister Wolfgang Schäuble praised AJC’s forward thinking. He cited our decision to open an office in Berlin in 1998, before the federal government moved from Bonn. He also discussed AJC’s Hands Across the Campus prejudice-reduction initiative, now under way at eighteen Berlin and Brandenburg public schools, and the AJC-Adenauer Foundation exchange program that connects Jewish leaders to Germany and German leaders to American Jewry. Another AJC exchange program connects young German military officers to America and American Jewish concerns. “We consider our warm friendship with AJC—including our annual visits to AJC’s New York headquarters—to be immensely important,” said Major General Robert Bergmann, commander of Germany’s Staff and Command College.

Immigration Reform  “What’s called for is comprehensive immigration reform,” wrote AJC Arizona Chapter director Maynard Bell in a recent Arizona Republic op-ed. “Meanwhile, an attitude of ‘us against them’ will never help.” Bell’s views reflect AJC’s. And his chapter’s work on immigration is part of an ongoing national AJC campaign. Our goal: to encourage an approach that protects human dignity, upholds the rule of law, and preserves America’s national security. “I applaud AJC’s balanced thinking—and its extensive advocacy efforts—on the issue of immigration reform,” said Tamar Jacoby, senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute and immigration policy expert.

Preparing Europe’s Police  In the largest gathering of its kind, senior police officers from more than thirty nations recently traveled to London for a series of intensive training sessions. The subject: preventing hate crimes and understanding intergroup dynamics. The fifty-five-member-nation Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) founded the program in 2004. Since then, thousands of senior officers have taken part. Paul Goldenberg, who also serves as AJC consultant on international law enforcement, directs the training. In fact, it was Goldenberg, along with other AJC professionals, who pioneered the idea and helped OSCE launch the effort. “We couldn’t have done it without AJC’s nonstop involvement,” said Jo-Ann Bishop, the OSCE official in charge of the program.

Jewish-Latino Relations  “Pentecostalism may surpass the movie business as Los Angeles’s most influential export,” suggested the Los Angeles Times. Indeed the explosive growth of Pentecostalism—its Latino variety, in particular—caught the attention of our Los Angeles Chapter. An Associated Press article told part of the story: “They [AJC] took a group of Pentecostal Hispanic pastors to Israel, offered a course called ‘The Essence of Judaism’ at Southern California Pentecostal Seminary, and invited Hispanic pastors and their families to Passover Seders and Sukkot harvest celebrations.” “AJC’s course on Judaism and its groundbreaking interreligious outreach to the Latino Evangelical laity in Los Angeles have monumentally impacted relations between our two previously disengaged cultures and religions,” declared Dr. Manuel Tijerino, president of L.A.’s Latin University of Theology, an institution with extensions in Latin America, Europe, and Africa.

Placed where it counts: AJC staff leaders serve in top posts around the world.  Our Director of International Jewish Affairs, Rabbi Andrew Baker, for instance, was appointed Personal Representative for Combating Anti-Semitism of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The head of our Blaustein Institute for Human Rights, Felice Gaer, chairs the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. And our International Director of Interreligious Affairs, Rabbi David Rosen, chairs the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations. (Pictured top to bottom.)
AJC fights on a global scale against the forces of extremism and hatred. Around the world, we’re forging vital partnerships and building effective coalitions.

We work to win friends for Israel and to ensure the security and well-being of Jewish communities everywhere.

At AJC, we’re striving to build the kind of safe and secure world that we all hope to see—for ourselves, for our children, and for the generations to come.

Solidarity Mission While Israel battled Hamas, an AJC solidarity mission visited towns within rocket range of Gaza. The group met with Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and senior defense officials, among others. “Imagine being a parent constantly in fear for your children’s safety. For some Israeli children, it’s the only life they’ve ever known,” said AJC Executive Director David A. Harris in a CBS radio message. The commentary was recorded during the mission and heard by tens of millions of Americans. While the group was in Ashkelon, a code red alert sounded as a missile struck a house nearby. At Ashkelon’s Barzilai Hospital, the group visited the injured, both Israeli and Palestinian. AJC granted $25,000 to the hospital for emergency room equipment. AJC also granted $25,000 to the Sha’ar Hanegev Regional Council for transporting the elderly and disabled to bomb shelters. AJC previously equipped Sha’ar Hanegev, near the Gaza border, with a secure communications center.

Impact

AJC delegations traveled around the world to advance our views, meeting with, among many other officials, the heads of state of Argentina, Egypt, Germany, Mexico, and Ukraine.

Our Paris office played a major role in ensuring French sanctions against Iran and advocating French efforts to encourage expanded EU measures.

After the Mumbai terror attacks, we cosponsored a trip to India by a team of Israeli trauma experts and advised Chabad on strengthening its international security.

Our Promoting Tolerance program, for the sixteenth year, hosted leaders from Central and Eastern Europe for a nine-day educational journey through America.

AJC members visit a wounded Israeli soldier during an AJC Solidarity Mission to Israel. Buzz Warren, Executive Committee Member of our New Jersey Chapter, extends his hand as Maxim Behar, a leader of the Bulgarian Jewish community and an AJC partner, looks on.
Iran’s Nuclear Threat  Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad calls for Israelis destruction and sponsors terrorist groups. Now he wants a nuclear arsenal. AJC has mobilized all our resources to help ensure he doesn’t get one. Nonstop global outreach, a relentless media campaign, testimony before Congress, and publications exposing Iran’s intentions are all part of our effort. Who does Ahmadinejad fear most? Perhaps it’s Stuart Levey, under secretary for terrorism and financial intelligence at the U.S. Treasury Department. His international campaign for sanctions on Iran’s banking and finance industries has hit the country hard. Says Levey: “I am grateful for AJC’s focus on highlighting the stark danger posed by the current Iranian regime’s support for terrorism and pursuit of a nuclear and missile program.”

Technologies Park in Beersheva  Ben-Gurion University, the city of Beersheva, and KUD International, a leading California-based construction company, recently came to an agreement on the development of a $250 million technologies park. The project is expected to transform Israel’s struggling Negev region. How did it happen? Quite simply, Robert Peckar, a New Jersey construction attorney and board member of AJC’s Project Interchange, reached out to his friend. He invited KUD CEO Marvin Suomi to take part in a Project Interchange trip to Israel for construction executives. “There’s no question that the trip is the link—the only link—to what we’ve initiated in Beersheva,” said Suomi.

A Marathon of Diplomacy  Every year, during the fall session of the UN General Assembly, AJC conducts a “diplomatic marathon” in New York. This year, Iran’s nuclear ambitions topped our agenda. Asusual, however, we addressed a range of issues at the separate meetings with leaders from more than seventy nations. Swiss foreign minister Micheline Calmy-Rey, for instance, assured us her country would make every effort to see that the 2009 UN Durban Review Conference, to be held in Geneva, remained a dignified event. And Senegal’s president, Abdoulaye Wade, responded positively to our request that he break new ground. We asked that he seek Jewish participation at a major interreligious gathering to be held in Dakar, Senegal’s capital city. At one of several subsequent meetings with President Wade, who heads the Organization of the Islamic Conference, he invited our Africa Institute to assist in organizing the upcoming event.

AJC and Energy Security  “What would happen if you put together T. Boone Pickens, the green billionaire Texas oilman now obsessed with wind power, and Shai Agassi, the Jewish Henry Ford now obsessed with making Israel the world’s leader in electric cars?” asked New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman. His answer: “You’d have the start of an energy revolution.” But how to move forward? Agassi recently explained: “While we in private enterprise are able to bring one element to the table, we rely on public advocacy to put the right policies in place.” Declared Agassi: “AJC has been a pioneering and dynamic force in energy advocacy.” In 2008, AJC pressed ahead with our decades-long energy security campaign. We were named a “Green Power Leader” by the Environmental Protection Agency and an “Energy Hero” by the Set America Free Coalition. In addition, we launched Project New Car, an AJC initiative promoting high-mileage, flex-fuel, and plug-in cars.

Bringing young Jews into the world of Jewish public affairs—that’s the mission of ACCESS: AJC’s New Generation Program. ACCESS members engage U.S. policy-makers and opinion leaders around the world and participate in a range of programs connected to the AJC agenda. We maintain ACCESS chapters in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Colorado, Los Angeles, Miami, New York City, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C.
Every day, AJC enters into the white-hot battle for public opinion. Our efforts involve diplomatic outreach across America and around the world. They also include publications, op-eds, letters to the editor, websites, advocacy ads, and video and radio commentaries.

In fact, our weekly radio commentaries, by AJC executive director David A. Harris, reach more than 35 million listeners on the CBS radio network. In addition, Harris’s hard-hitting blog at the Jerusalem Post reaches an extensive international audience.

“A Dear Friend of Israel” In the Trenches, Volume 5 gathers together AJC executive director David A. Harris’s most recent speeches, opinion pieces, and radio messages. The book has won wide praise: Harris is “a dear friend of the State of Israel and the Jewish people,” remarked Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni. He’s “the most thoughtful and intelligent thinker and writer about the Jewish community and its participation in the universal quest for human rights,” declared Mortimer Zuckerman, editor-in-chief and publisher of U.S. News and World Report.

The most serious threats to Jewish identity and existence—this and other vital topics, including the “cultural sensitivities” that give a pass to human rights violators—are examined in the newest edition of In the Trenches.
At our Learned Hand Award Dinner, AJC honored Daniel A. Neff, Co-Chairman of the executive Committee and partner, Wachtell, lipton, Rosen & Katz.

Members of our Chicago Chapter's Campaign Cabinet attended the Chapter's National Leadership Council Bank Luncheon.

Our San Francisco Chapter paid tribute to Richard Blum, Chairman and CEO of Blum Capital Partners, L.P., at its Distinguished Civic Leadership Award Dinner.

At our Wall Street Reception, AJC honored Bennett Goodman, Senior Managing Partner of GSO Capital Partners.

Honoring Civic Concern

“AJC fights with great effectiveness for the values I believe in. I’m talking about international cooperation, intergroup respect, and human dignity for all.”

Michael Gould, Chairman and CEO, Bloomingdale's, and Chairman, AJC Board of Trustees

Leaders from business, law, entertainment, and other fields serve as pillars of support for AJC’s projects and programs. On these pages are photos of some of the extraordinary people whose generosity and involvement have made a difference.

Our Herbert H. Lehman Human Relations Award was presented to Paul S. Levy, Founder and Senior Managing Director, JLL Partners LP. L. to r.: John H. Shapiro, Managing Director and Co-Founder, Chieftain Capital Management, Inc., and AJC At-Large Officer; Paul S. Levy; Michael F. Price, MLP Investors LLC; Alan C. Greenberg, Vice Chairman Emeritus, Bear Stearns, a division of J.P. Morgan.

Our Seattle Chapter presented its Distinguished Leadership Award to Deborah Rosen, former Chapter Board President and a member of AJC’s National Board of Governors. L. to r.: event co-chairs Debrah Jacobs and Yaffa Maritz; Rabbi David Rosen, AJC’s International Director of Interreligious Affairs; Deborah Rosen; event co-chair Ann Ramsay-Jenkins.

At our Learned Hand Award Dinner, AJC honored Daniel A. Neff, Co-Chairman of the Executive Committee and Partner, Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz. L. to r.: Charles “Casy” Cogul, global head of Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP’s Mergers & Acquisitions Group; Roger S. Aaron, Managing Partner, Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom; Bernard W. Nussbaum, Partner, Kirkland & Ellis LLP; Norman J. Ornstein, Resident Scholar, American Enterprise Institute; Jack S. Levin, Partner, Kirkland & Ellis LLP; Ronald Gidwitz, Partner, GCG Partners.

At our Wall Street Reception, AJC honored Bennett Goodman, Senior Managing Partner of GSO Capital Partners.

Fashion industry leaders joined AJC to honor Oscar Fiecktenkreis, Vice Chairman, President and COO, Perry Ellis International, and Jane Ellers, President and CEO, Lord & Taylor. L. to r.: Oscar Fiecktenkreis, Jane Ellers; Michael Gould, Chairman and CEO, Bloomingdale’s, and Chairman, AJC Board of Trustees.

Our San Francisco Chapter paid tribute to Richard Blum, Chairman and CEO of Blum Capital Partners, L.P., at its Distinguished Civic Leadership Award Dinner. L. to r.: AJC President Richard J. Sideman; Richard Blum; former U.S. Secretary of State George P. Shultz.

Fashion industry leaders joined AJC to honor Oscar Fiecktenkreis, Vice Chairman, President and COO, Perry Ellis International, and Jane Ellers, President and CEO, Lord & Taylor. L. to r.: Oscar Fiecktenkreis, Jane Ellers; Michael Gould, Chairman and CEO, Bloomingdale’s, and Chairman, AJC Board of Trustees.
The American Jewish Committee is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, tax ID #13-5563393. For the fiscal year ended June 30, 2008, 11.9% of total public support and other revenue was applied to fundraising expenses. 79.5% of total operating expenses was applied directly to program services.

Based on the percentage of our income used for fundraising versus programming, we are listed among the Chronicle of Philanthropy’s “Philanthropy 400.” This is an impressive distinction when you consider that there are over 800,000 publicly supported nonprofits in America.

The current economic crisis has negatively impacted many nonprofit organizations, including AJC. In an urgent response to this crisis, AJC is taking diligent action to reduce or eliminate nonessential spending, hold open unfilled positions, reduce the workforce, and pursue incremental revenue opportunities.

Please note that the financial information in this report was obtained from our certified annual financial report.

Sincerely,

Lawrence J. Ramer
Treasurer
Generosity, it is said in Psalms, confers honor and life upon those who practice it. Marty, in so many ways, practiced it with all his heart and soul. May his memory be for a blessing.

Indeed, he came to view AJC as a versatile, strategic, highly effective champion of the values he cherished. Before long, Marty made an extraordinary commitment to a range of AJC projects and programs. In doing so, he became the most generous benefactor in AJCs history.

Among other major gifts, in January 2008, he established the Helen and Martin Kimmel Young Leadership Institute, allowing AJC to more energetically engage and train emerging Jewish leadership. Once again, Marty had the future in mind.

He was an AJC Honorary Vice President and, along with his beloved wife, Helen, a member of our National Leadership Council. We were proud to pay tribute to him in 2005 with the Federation of Religious Jewish Youth (FUSY) Chapter Office in Israel.

AJC seeks a secure Jewish future in a more just world, believing that each pursuit depends upon the other.

AJC has 28 U.S. chapters, 8 offices overseas, and 28 official partnerships with communities around the world.

AJC:
• Builds Bridges
• Advances Security
• Promotes Human Rights
• Supports Israel
• Strengthens Jewish Life

ajc.org