2012: Prioritized Strategies for the Jewish People
Challenges and Opportunities: A Conceptual Framework

Following your invitation, this paper prioritizes challenges and opportunities, and highlights most effective investment strategies of Jewish People resources based on JPPI's Systematic Indicators methodology, our 2011-12 Annual Assessment, and the 2030 Alternative Futures for the Jewish People project.

JPPI’s proposed strategy is aimed at ensuring a thriving Jewish future globally, and is based on the fact that there are two main forces at play: Israel as the core state of the Jews, embodying Jewish People hard power; and the North American organized Jewish community representing the soft power and political influence acquired over the last hundred years. It also draws on and complements an extensive JPPI study on the role of Israel in creating a New Paradigm of Reciprocity with the Diaspora.¹ In this regard, JPPI is engaged in facilitating a global dialogue between the Government of Israel and world Jewry across different fields in which JFNA plays a role. This conceptual framework is undergoing a structuring process that needs to include the main players impacting the Jewish future.

Methodology:
A mapping of crucial Jewish People assets: physical, financial, political, cultural and spiritual, coupled with an evaluation of the major threats and challenges. Following the Dashboard of Indicators methodology developed by JPPI, we focus on six key interconnected areas and their impact on the Jewish People. The table on page 2 describes the inherent links and interactions between the fields and shows specific ways of intervention, which may have an integrated impact.

JPPI has identified the major challenges, and highlighted examples of suitable responses. The action-orientated recommendations in this paper are conceptualized and advanced according to the following criteria: urgency; competitive advantage; compatibility with JFNA’s mission; ventures that are either innovative or which scale up existing programs proven most effective. Ultimately, JPPI attaches the highest priority to ensuring a thriving Jewish future and investing in the young generation.

Areas of Intervention:

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JPPI analysis shows that in most of these areas the situation is improving, largely the result of efforts of a small group of influential Jews. While leadership is not included in the Dashboard because of quantitative measurement difficulties over the short term, JPPI views the trans-generational renewal of top professionals, political leaders, civil servants etc. as a major challenge that demands action.

¹ Arevut, Responsibility and Partnership, a JPPI policy proposal recommending a new Israel-Diaspora paradigm, 2009
I. Assets

At the beginning of the 21st century the Jewish People enjoyed the most thriving epoch in its history due to its unprecedented accumulation of hard and soft power, in the Diaspora and Israel.

**Soft Power:** Contributions of world Jewry – especially in North America – in academia, politics, culture, art, science, media, business and finance, Tikkun Olam, and their active engagement in civil society have built an unprecedented dimension of Jewish People soft power that has also translated into valuable political influence.

**Hard Power:** The IDF, the strong Israeli economy, its diplomatic core and emergency capabilities along with Israeli achievement and excellence in high-tech, biotech, medicine, and renewable energy, and the recently discovered natural gas fields have equipped the Jewish People with significant hard power. This could be better utilized as a source of pride and attraction for Diaspora youth. Israel is no longer the destitute brother in need, and may very well emerge as an investment and planning partner in Jewish identity and identification initiatives throughout the Diaspora.

**Identity and bonds:** The younger generation travels more to Israel, accesses Israeli websites, and is more prone to integrate components of Israeli culture into its own Jewish experience. The easing of travel and communications, and the advent of social networking, seem to be mitigating current distancing trends.
II. Major Challenges

**Leadership**

**Trans-generational Renewal:** In the coming ten years, a significant number of top-level Jewish professional leaders will retire. Highest quality Jewish leadership is critically important. We need to fill top-level leadership positions with individuals who have the capacity and necessary talents to meet the challenges facing the Jewish People, including a deep understanding of changing realities, and new and innovative ideas for coping with them. They should also be able to mobilize the most prominent Jews in this effort. Despite some beginnings, a systematic and coordinated effort to attract and prepare the best and the brightest for top-level leadership positions in the Jewish community, politics, civil service, business, and academia is lacking.

**Geopolitics**

**Iran’s Nuclearization:** The deterioration of Israel’s security – mainly as a result of conflict with Iran and its proxies Hamas and Hezbollah – could have severe consequences for both Israeli citizens and Jewish security worldwide.

**Middle East and the Stagnation of the Peace Process:** Political Islam has registered major victories in every election campaign in which it has taken part as a result of the Arab Spring. It is difficult to predict whether the fruit of these victories will eventually resemble the Turkish model or develop in an altogether different direction. The current stalemate in the Peace Process continues to threaten the security and Jewish-democratic character of Israel and exacerbates regional tensions.

**De-legitimization:** The ongoing assault on the legitimacy of Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish People, mainly in the Israeli-Palestinian context, could pose a threat to the Jewish People as a whole. There is a dangerous dynamic in the West of criticism-turned-de-legitimization. After a long period of neglect, numerous initiatives have been established to fight de-legitimization, but they lack professional coordination and are sometimes contradictory.

**Jerusalem-Washington-US Jewry Triangle:** This critical strategic resource for Israel and the Jewish People may be weakened by a potential widening of certain gaps between the two countries’ positions, and by increasingly heard voices of Americans who believe that the price of friendship with Israel is too high. The danger that the Middle East will become a partisan wedge issue in domestic US politics is also a factor.

**Identity**

**Identity in an Era of Choice:** The most daunting challenge currently facing Diaspora Jewry is the difficulty of preserving, developing and extending a unique Jewish identity in an open and universally minded global environment.

**Education:** The high cost and insufficient competitiveness of Jewish education continue to prevent non-Orthodox Jews from enrolling in Jewish day schools. We need to find ways to make the Jewish schooling system affordable and more appealing to non-Orthodox students, including upgrading math and science programs. **Jewish “Social Capital” of “Identity Impoverished” Families:** There is an urgent need to formulate programs that can engage low "Jewish social capital" families. The two most critical points of intervention are the teenage years and the period of emerging adulthood.
Bonds within and between communities

Ties between Israel and the largest Diaspora communities of North America, Europe, Latin America and Australia remain strong but are changing. Uneasiness about and criticism of Israel are growing. The younger generation is exposed to negative views about Israel while simultaneously distancing from key formative events (Shoah, Israel’s birth, Six Day War, etc.), which once served as sources of unity and solidarity. This adds to existing inherent gaps deriving from differences of wealth, education, culture, religious attitudes, and perceptions of burden sharing.

De-legitimization: The de-legitimization phenomenon already contributes to the weakening of Jewish identity, encourages distancing from Israel, and even threatens some Jewish ritual practices in Europe.

Resources

The cost of Jewish living in the Diaspora poses a barrier to many Jews who wish to belong but cannot afford to do so. While general charitable giving rose in the US about 4% in 2010, it is estimated that less than 25% of Jewish giving is directed toward Jewish causes.

Israel’s resources are increasing significantly but are challenged by growing security needs and the middle-class protest movement of summer 2011 that called attention to fundamental gaps in the distribution of wealth and burden sharing among Israelis.

Demography

Demography remains an ongoing challenge for the Jewish People worldwide. Despite a significant positive trend in Israel, world Jewish population has increased little since 1970, compared to an increase of over 73% in the general global population. In Diaspora communities, ongoing family and cultural challenges blur Jewish identification boundaries and raise complexities and dilemmas in defining the Jewish collective. The world’s 13.5 million Jews are intimately connected to several more million people. It is essential to craft demographic policies to encourage non-Jewish members of Jewish families to join the Jewish collective, and increase birth rates.

III. Recommended Action

Leadership

1. A Trans-Generational Leadership Project In the community:
   a) Mapping the senior positions to be filled in the next 3-5 years;
   b) A mid-term career development program should assist in locating the most suitable candidates for the identified positions;
   c) Provide training and support for career progression.

2. Encourage entrance of the young generation into politics and civil service while calling upon the best and most inspiring mentors, in various fields, to participate in the process.

Geopolitics

1. Global Crisis Management System:
a) Improve global and community-based crisis management systems to direct, coordinate and oversee preparedness for potential crises, supervise crisis management activities, and work towards restoring normal daily life as soon as possible (see JPPI’s training manual).  

b) An action plan to best prepare against a public opinion backlash in case of a war with Iran should be designed.

2. Support Israeli citizens under attack:
   a) American communities should join Israeli experts to prepare concrete plans to support Israeli citizens in case of a protracted military confrontation including "life as usual" traditional and e-learning programs for Israeli children during war.
   b) While physical security is the GOI’s responsibility, communities should focus on upgrading equipment and digital connectivity in shelters.

Such an effort would contribute to strengthening Israel-Diaspora bonds and the sense of mutual responsibility (Arvut Hadadit) so central to the Jewish tradition.

3. Jerusalem-Washington-US Jewry Triangle: The community should engage in an effort to avoid making Israel a partisan wedge issue in domestic US politics and to rebut the perception that American Jewry is dragging the US into war over Israeli interests.

Identity

1. Lifecycle Vouchers – Expanding the scope of Birthright: Based on defined and studied points of intervention along the Jewish life cycle, this recommendation is a first step toward gradually extending Birthright’s scope and brand by granting each Jewish newborn and his/her parents a portfolio of vouchers redeemable for education/identity building experiences at key lifecycle junctures. JPPI’s research indicates that pre and post Bar/Bat Mitzvah programs are the most effective for identity building. These vouchers would enable:
   a) Enhancing post-Bar/Bat Mitzvah learning, including Israel-related education and subsidized Israel experiences for teenagers, as well as Jewish camping;
   b) Expanding and improving access to preschool and elementary school programs;
   c) Coaching new parents.

The flagship Voucher System should be funded through a supplementary budget based on contributions from Israel and Jewish philanthropy. Participation in this program should not preclude later eligibility for Taglit-Birthright’s program.

2. Making Masa-type Jewish service a normative rite of passage:
   a) Providing Taglit-Birthright graduates with a follow-up inspiring 2-5 month international experience, Jewish organizations should promote programs of service, study and personal growth, bringing together similarly minded young Jews.
   b) Program graduates will be granted a 'Jewish benefits package' engaging them further in community life (such as free JCC memberships, one-year scholarships to Jewish kindergarten, etc).

This project will aim at establishing itself as a Jewish rite of passage that young adults can choose to strengthen and express their commitment to Tikun Olam imperatives.

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Bonds within and between communities

1. Encourage people-to-people programs and strengthen partnerships between communities, professionals, academics, and Jewish politicians around the world.

2. Professional Advocacy Mechanism: Based on a comprehensive global strategy, establish in partnership with Israel and individual groups, a coordinated program to provide networking and support to Jewish organizational efforts to fight de-legitimization and defamation. This mechanism should foster transparency and coordination, support creative ideas and effective initiatives, and encourage endeavors to portray a different complexion of Israel and the Jewish People.

Resources

1. Philanthropic prioritized efforts should be redirected to future-oriented projects. Safeguarding the future should be a higher priority than coping with current needs and funding new memorials. Israeli poverty and the advancement of its minorities is an internal Israeli issue that is the responsibility of the Government of Israel to address.

2. As new Israeli resources become available, and as it considers the Diaspora an asset, GOI should allocate more funds to ensuring the Jewish future globally.

3. Re-Jew-venating Philanthropy: Launch a campaign to encourage Jewish philanthropists to redirect funds to Jewish and Israeli causes.

Demography

The demographic challenge requires a shift of mind-set from research to formulation of Jewish demographic policies:

1. Outreach: Efforts should be multiplied to encourage non-Jewish spouses and the children of inter-marriage to enter and identify with the Jewish fold.

2. Conversion: JFNA, in coordination with other Jewish organizations, should be engaged in the effort to promote a friendlier Israeli approach to conversion and to encourage pluralism in Israel.

3. Networking society: Encourage and invest in frameworks for virtual encounters among young Jewish adults to facilitate chances of interaction and marriage. Attention should be paid to the growing pools of singles (see more recommendations in Jewish Demographic Policies, JPPI 2011).

As Israel becomes the largest and most powerful Jewish community it has to support the initiatives in this paper, emphasizing North American, Latin American, and European Jewish communities. New approaches may foster new ways of attracting the younger generation; the more the younger generation identifies with Israel, the more it will likely increase its Jewish identity, and also look for ways of building bonds between communities. The more bonds between communities, the greater the ability to fight de-legitimization. If Israel and the Jewish world are so interdependent, Israel should make every effort to become more attractive as a focal point; and if reciprocity is important, we need to find ways for the Diaspora to have more of an impact on Israel’s policies that may affect world Jewry. This is not a new problem, but it bears a fresh look.
This conceptual framework was prepared collaboratively by co-chairmen Ambassadors Stuart Eizenstat and Dennis Ross in the US and senior institute staff members in Israel, Avinoam Bar-Yosef, Avi Gil, Mike Herzog and Dov Maimon based on extensive policy and strategic work done at JPPI in recent years.

Bios:

**Stuart Eizenstat** is Co-Chairman of JPPI’s Board and Professional Guiding Council. Ambassador Eizenstat currently heads the international practice of the Covington and Burlington law firm. In the past, he served as US Ambassador to the EU, Under Secretary of State, Under Secretary of Commerce, and Deputy Secretary of Treasury. He has held many positions in the Jewish world including the Chairman of the Weizmann Institute’s Board of Governors. His books include, *Imperfect Justice: Looted Assets, Slave Labor, and the Unfinished Business of World War II* (2003), and most recently *21st Century Global Forces, Their Impact on the Jewish People, Israel and the US* (2012) published by JPPI, were extremely well-received worldwide.

**Dennis Ross** is Co-Chairman of JPPI’s Board and Professional Guiding Council. Ambassador Ross rejoined JPPI after serving as Special Assistant to President Obama and NSC Senior Director for the Central Region, and previously, Special Advisor to Secretary Hillary Clinton, focusing on Iran. Currently he is a counselor at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. For more than 12 years (1988-2000), Ambassador Ross played a leading role in shaping US involvement in the Middle East and was the point man on the peace process in both the Gorge H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton Administrations. From 2002-2008, he was part of the founding group of JPPI and served as its first chairman. He is the author of several influential books on the Middle East and US foreign policy: *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace* (2004); *Statecraft, and How to Restore America’s Standing in the World* (2007) and most recently *Myth, Illusions, and Peace: Finding a New Direction for America in the Middle East*, co-authored with David Makovsky.

**Avinoam Bar-Yosef** is the President and the Founding Director of the Jewish People Policy Institute. He spent most of his career in journalism as chief diplomatic correspondent and commentator, and later US bureau chief for the *Ma'ariv* daily. He has written thousands of articles, weekly columns and analyses, many of them on Jewish People issues and policies. In 1996-1997 he was a visiting fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. From 1999 to 2002 he served as senior advisor to then JAFI chairman Sallai Meridor. At JPPI, he has authored policy papers, and published Op-Eds in both the Israeli and international press, including the *New York Times - International Herald Tribune, Ha'aretz* and *Ma'ariv*.

**Avi Gil** is a Senior Fellow at JPPI, and leads the geopolitical area. Ambassador Gil is a career diplomat. In previous positions he served as Director General of Israel’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Director-General of Israel’s Ministry of Regional Cooperation, the Prime Minister’s Chief of Staff, Media Adviser to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Finance, and Executive Policy Adviser for the Minister of Foreign Affairs. He has been closely involved in Israel’s policy-making and peace efforts, including the negotiations that led to the Oslo Accords and the peace treaty with Jordan. He is also a close adviser to President Shimon Peres.

**Mike Herzog**: Brigadier General (Ret.) Herzog is a Senior Fellow at JPPI and currently heads an extensive project on confronting de-legitimization phenomena. He rose through the military ranks to become head of
the IDF’s Strategic Planning Division and one of Israel’s foremost experts on strategic, military and intelligence matters. Over the last decade General Herzog has held senior positions in the office of Israel’s minister of defense, under four ministers, and was the chief of staff of Minister Ehud Barak. In those positions, he was at the center of Israeli decision-making on all key strategic, defense and political issues. General Herzog is also a military fellow at the Washington Institute, where he has published extensively on Middle Eastern affairs. General Herzog is the son of the late President of Israel, Chaim Herzog.

Dov Maimon is a Senior Fellow at JPPI where he is working on a "Grand Strategy of the Jewish People toward Islam," and leads the Institute's activities on Europe. He earned a B.Sc. from the Technion (Haifa, Israel), an MBA from Insead (Fontainebleau, France). His M.A. is in Religious Anthropology and his Ph.D. in Islamic and Medieval Studies, both from the Sorbonne University. He received the prestigious prize, "Grand Prix du Chancelier des Universites 2005" awarded to the best French PhD work in Literature and Human Sciences. He teaches at the Federman School of Public Policy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and at Tel Aviv University.