



ISRAEL MATTERS!

Publication of the Israel Affairs Committee of Temple Beth Shalom

Issue Number 32
January 2010

Knesset Proposal: Peace Talks Must Include Jewish Refugee Demands

Ex-Envoy Indyk Flunks Obama, Mitchell on 'Mideast 101'

Martin Indyk, former U.S. Ambassador to Israel and assistant secretary of state for near east affairs during the Clinton administration, has joined a growing number of people who backed Barack Obama for president and now criticize him. Both President Obama and U.S. Middle East envoy George Mitchell have failed in the Middle East, Indyk said.

In January, Indyk, told the German weekly magazine, *Der Spiegel*, "We have to be less naïve and more humble. I am sure Obama has understood that." Less than a year later, however, Indyk gave a different opinion. "It's clear that things are not going as he planned," Indyk said.

Indyk was reported as saying that President Obama counted on the support of Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah, who rebuffed the overtures for even a minor compromise regarding the 2002 Saudi initiative. The king's proposal was for a "normalization" of relations with Israel in exchange for a total surrender of all land liberated in 1967, including the Temple Mount and the Western Wall, and the immigration of several million foreign Arabs into what would remain of Israel.

Indyk also gave the president and Mitchell a failing grade for focusing on trying to freeze building for Jews in Judea and Samaria, saying that they violated a basic rule in negotiations in the Middle East: don't get bogged down in details.

"George Mitchell didn't hear that sucking sound," Indyk added.

The Knesset has passed an initial reading of a proposal stipulating that negotiations on Arab refugees must include demands for compensation of Jewish refugees from Arab countries. Hundreds of thousands of Jews from Arab countries made Aliyah [immigration] to Israel in its early years after being banished and forced to leave behind property and assets worth billions of dollars.

A legislative proposal on the issue by Knesset Member Nissim Zev (Shas) recently passed its preliminary Knesset reading. The bill stipulates that in any negotiations with the Palestinian Authority on the rights of Arabs who left Israel in 1948, the government of Israel would be required to present its own demands for reparations for the Jews of Arab countries. Zev says his proposal is anchored in both a United Nations resolution and the U.S. Congress. "The Jews from Arab countries are defined as refugees by the United Nations," he emphasized. "It's not something we made up, but rather a U.N. definition. In addition, the American Congress itself resolved, in 2008, that the rights of these Jewish refugees must be recognized in the course of the negotiations."

The resolution, passed by the US House of Representatives in April 2008, recognized Jewish refugees from Arab countries who were forced to flee their homes in the aftermath of the creation of the State of Israel. It requires U.S. officials involved in any Middle East peace negotiations that deal with Arab refugees to "also include a similarly explicit reference to the resolution of the issue of Jewish refugees from Arab countries." One Congressional co-sponsor said at the time that "it's not just the Arabs and Palestinians in the Middle East, but also Jewish people who themselves were dispossessed of their possessions and their homes, and were victims of terrorist acts." Another said there were more Jewish refugees than Palestinian refugees, and "their forced exile from Arab lands must not be omitted from public discussion on the peace process."

MK Zev said that his mother remembers that in 1941, "180 Jews were slaughtered in Baghdad, and the Jews, including my uncles and other relatives, left behind property worth millions. So it has just disappeared? In many countries, their citizenship was revoked, their bank accounts confiscated, and the money used to finance the war against Israel." The proposal has the support of the government.

"It's about time that the Government of Israel, as well, reaches the same conclusion reached by the U.N. and Congress, and demand these reparations," Zev said.

JNF Donates 3,000 Trees to the Palestinian Authority

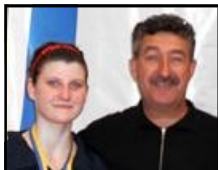
A member of the board of the Jewish National Fund (JNF) said “the system has gone haywire” after learning that the organization donated 3,000 trees to the Palestinian Authority for a new city near Ramallah.

Maaleh Adumim Mayor, Benny Kashriel, is also a member of the JNF board. He said he will bring up the issue with the JNF, which is considered a symbol of Zionism, particularly in the Diaspora where Jews have donated billions of dollars for planting trees and building the modern Jewish State. Kashriel said the contribution to the PA is a grave step that was taken without any request for approval and without advance notice and reflects a “system that has gone haywire.”

The Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) criticized the action of the JNF and charged it to admit its error and apologize for a misuse of funds it raised. ZOA National President Morton A. Klein said, “We are deeply critical and indeed shocked by the decision of the JNF to donate thousands of trees, grown with money donated by Jews from around the world, to the PA.” He concluded, “It is vital that JNF never repeat this decision.”

Austrians Mute HaTikvah at Fencing Tourney

Young female athletes from Israel's fencing team swept top medals at a 28-nation European tournament held in Mödling, Austria recently. The athletes faced an additional challenge when they stood on the winners' podium to receive their medals: the organizers did not play the Israeli national anthem. Sterlinkov began to sing the anthem along with her teammates and her managers, who soon joined in. Members of the Jewish community who arrived to watch the match also sang along. The Israeli team's staff has no doubt that the incident was intentional.



Israel's Dana Strelnikov (photo, at left), 14, won the gold medal and Alona Kamarov won the bronze at the tournament, which hosted 120 fencers aged to 17.

The Israeli national team's coach, Yaakov Friedman (photo, at right), said that the team faces constant political challenges on the international circuit. At a tournament in Göteborg, Sweden, in January of this year, Israel won the silver medal. When the medalists were on the podium the organizers informed Friedman that they did not have a recording of the Israeli anthem. There, too, the team sang the anthem without the help of the recording.

In the Mödling incident, Friedman said, the organizers approached him when the winners were on the podium and told him that “we do not have a recording of the new Israeli anthem, just the old one.” Friedman informed them that Israel has had only one anthem – HaTikvah – since it was founded. Although the anthem was missing, the Israeli flag hung proudly, he said, because tournament rules specifically require the presence of the national flags.

New Israeli Website for Children With Diabetes

A new website designed for children with diabetes is scheduled to be launched by the Ziv Medical Center in Tzfat (Safed). The Breinin Center for Type 1 Diabetes and Endocrinology at the Ziv Medical Center, and the Kav-Or organization, have collaborated to produce a fun, accessible website on proper nutrition for children with diabetes. The website includes technology designed for distance learning from hospital wards. The intended audience for the new website includes children with Type 1 diabetes from around the country, as well as teachers and parents.

Distance learning technology and methods are the specialties of Kav-Or, a registered charity which provides distance learning and virtual playgrounds for hospitalized children. Founded in 1993, Kav-Or now operates in more than 100 children's wards in 27 hospitals, from Eilat in the south to Nahariya in the north. The new website focuses more on practical issues than on detailed study of the issues raised. Through colorful, user-friendly visual interactive elements, visitors to the website will learn about sugar levels, insulin use, and nutrition.

The team at Ziv Medical Center, responsible for the website's content, collected the questions most frequently asked by children with diabetes about nutritional challenges they face. The answers provided touch on such issues as holiday meals and extracurricular activities (school trips, restaurants, sports activities, etc.), giving the children tools and information to handle the situations that may arise. To calculate the insulin-to-carbohydrate ratio of various meals, the website includes an interactive carbohydrate calculator with visual and textual elements.

The website emphasizes the importance of training children in good eating habits and proper nutrition as a necessary treatment for Type 1 diabetes. The correct diet assists in maintaining a healthy blood-sugar level and prevents long-term complications typical of the disease. To maximize the usefulness of the site, there is also online contact with the staff at Ziv Medical Center's Center for Type 1 Diabetes and Endocrinology.

Ziv Medical Center is a 304-bed general medical facility providing comprehensive services in 37 units, labs and institutes, including a Regional Trauma Unit, Neonate ICU, the Spingold Child Development Center, the Suzy Eban Oncology Unit and the School of Nursing.