



# ISRAEL MATTERS!

Publication of the Israel Affairs Committee of Temple Beth Sholom  
**CONTINUING THE CELEBRATION  
OF ISRAEL @ 60**

Issue Number 16  
July–August 2008

## ISRAEL THREATENS IRAN OVER NUKES

### TZIPI LIVNI MAKES BRITISH HEADLINES

The London-based Sunday Times reported the foreign minister was a Mossad agent in Paris during the 1980s when the Israeli intelligence and special operations institute was involved in assassination attempts of identified Palestinian terrorists in Europe.



According to the report, Livni served in the Mossad at the time of the assassination of senior PLO official,

Mamoun Meraish, in Athens during August, 1983. The Times claimed Livni was not directly involved in the assassination during which Meraish was shot dead by a squad of two motorcycle riders. According to the paper her Mossad activities have remained a mystery.

A short while after the assassination Livni left the Mossad to complete her law degree. The British newspaper published a profile article on her as the leading candidate for Kadima chairmanship and the potential successor to Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

According to the publication, while Livni was based in Paris she participated in pursuing Arab terrorists throughout Europe. "Tzipi was not an office girl," said an acquaintance. "She was a clever woman with an IQ of 150. She blended in well in European capitals, working with male agents, most of them ex-commandos, taking out Arab terrorists."

The profile article noted that the legacy of the Livni family is intertwined with the struggle to establish the State of Israel. Both of her parents were arrested during the 1940s as part of the Jewish underground movements' fight against the ruling British Mandate.

An Israeli attack on Iranian nuclear sites looks "unavoidable" given the apparent failure of sanctions to deny Tehran technology with bomb-making potential, one of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's deputies said recently. "If Iran continues with its program for developing nuclear weapons, we will attack it. The sanctions are ineffective," Transport Minister Shaul Mofaz told the mass-circulation Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper. "Attacking Iran, in order to stop its nuclear plans, will be unavoidable," said the former army chief who has also been defense minister. It was the most explicit threat yet against Iran from a member of Olmert's government, which, like the Bush administration, has preferred to hint at force as a last resort should U.N. Security Council sanctions be deemed a dead end.

Iran has defied Western pressure to abandon its uranium enrichment projects, which it says are for peaceful electricity generation rather than bomb-building. The leadership in Tehran has also threatened to retaliate against Israel -- believed to have the Middle East's only atomic arsenal -- and U.S. targets in the Gulf for any attack on Iran.

Mofaz also said in the interview that Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who has called for Israel to be wiped off the map, "would disappear before Israel does." A spokesman for Prime Minister Ehud Olmert did not address Mofaz's comments directly but said that "all options must remain on the table" and said more could be done to put financial pressure on Tehran.

"Israel believes strongly that while the U.N. sanctions are positive, much more needs to be done to pressure the regime in Tehran to cease its aggressive nuclear program," spokesman Mark Regev said. "We believe the international community should be considering further tangible steps such as embargoing refined petroleum headed for Iran, sanctions against Iranian businessmen traveling abroad, tightening the pressure on Iranian financial institutions and other such steps," he added.

Israeli planes destroyed Iraq's nuclear reactor in 1981. A similar Israeli sortie over Syria last September razed what the U.S. administration said was a nascent nuclear reactor built with North Korean help. Syria denied having any such facility.

## TBS – EXPERIENCES IN ISRAEL

Sharon and I had the pleasure of spending two weeks in Israel recently. We combined a visit with my sister who lives in Jerusalem with a vacation and visits with old friends. One of the highlights of our trip was having dinner in Jerusalem with two young, enthusiastic members of Temple Beth Shalom, David Fain, the son of Lila and Gordon Fain, and Jennifer Greene, daughter of Donna Greene.



David is a recent UCONN graduate who has been serving on the staff of a program called Siach. The program, based in Jerusalem, brings students from around the world to study Jewish texts while experiencing Israel through volunteering, touring, and working on internships. The students receive college credit from Baltimore Hebrew University. The goal of the program is to create well-rounded individuals who will return to the college campus and become the foundations of a strong Jewish community, maintaining a strong connection with Israel, and hopefully returning to

Israel in the future. During this coming summer David will be on the staff of Camp Ramah in Israel.

Jennifer spent the year after graduating from high school on the U.S.Y-sponsored Nativ College Leadership Program. She studied at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem during the fall semester and then worked on Kibbutz Ein Tzurim. Jenn described her experience as "the most amazing and eye-opening of her life." She has volunteered at an old age home, studied Hebrew at an ulpan, and traveled everywhere from Eilat in the south to the Golan in the north. She says that she has learned so much about Israel and where she stands in the Conservative movement. Sharon and I were incredibly impressed with the enthusiasm and dedication of Jenn and David and so proud of their accomplishments. All of us at T.B.S. can share in the "nachas." – Henry Cohen

### “HOOPOE” IS ISRAEL’S NEW NATIONAL BIRD

Thousands of Israelis participated in electing the country's first national bird. After months of voting, President Peres announced the Hoopoe raked in 35% and won the voting. The election was held by the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel. Approximately 155,000 people voted in the nationwide election. Last December, more than 1,000 bird lovers participated in a seminar held at Tel Aviv University, during which they selected 50 nominees for the title out of a long list of candidates. That list was narrowed down to the bulbul, the red falcon, the goldfinch, the biblical vulture, the spur-winged plover, the honey-sucker, the warbler, the white-chested kingfisher, and the white barn owl. Peres commended the election, saying that "more than ever we need green scenery, fresh air, and the beautiful, multi-colored birds that flock here." The president noted that 500 million birds pass through Israel's skies annually. "For such a small country, that's a world record." He lamented that many birds once common in Israel have become rare or disappeared completely.



Asked his personal opinion, Peres remarked that it was a pity the dove had not been nominated. "The dove is equipped with a homing system, which can lead it home from anywhere it may be despite limitations and long distances. It is a true Zionist."

### ISRAEL SENDS HUMANITARIAN AID TO EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS IN CHINA

On May 25th, an Israeli plane took off for the city of Chengdu with humanitarian aid for victims of the earthquake that struck southwestern China. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs collected more than one and a half million dollars through the United Israel Appeal. The plane carried about 90 tons of medicines and medical equipment, water purification kits, generators, tents, sleeping bags, and clothing. The aid was in addition to money transferred by the Israeli embassy in Beijing to the Chinese Red Cross to be used for evacuations and a shipment of sleeping bags and blankets that had been sent previously.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Tzipi Livni opened a special ceremony at Ben Gurion International Airport during which the aid shipment was symbolically presented to the Chinese ambassador to Israel. Livni said, "What Israel is doing is the minimum that we can do to express the warm relations between Israel and China. As soon as the disaster occurred, we turned to the Chinese and asked what we could do. In coordination with them, we are sending a plane with aid. We concentrated on items essential to evacuation and rescue operations. Israel's willingness to help out wherever a disaster occurs is an expression of the humanitarian side of Israel's relations with the rest of the states in the world."

Chinese Ambassador Zhao warmly thanked Minister Livni and said that the aid shipment included not only packages but also the sincere feelings of the Israeli people.

## TBS CELEBRATES ISRAEL'S 60TH BIRTHDAY

During the weekend of May 16<sup>th</sup> through 18<sup>th</sup>, Temple Beth Sholom held its own celebration in honor of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. Throughout the weekend, a series of events and activities with an Israeli theme were offered. The first, was during the Friday Shabbat evening services when congregants heard a moving presentation by Daniel Fain, son of Gordon and Lila Fain, as he spoke of his experiences in Israel and recounted what Israel meant to him and his fellow Jewish youth. The flowers on the bimah were roses flown in from the Negev region of Israel and were the gift of Dr. Cindy Miller. The Oneg Shabbat was sponsored by Ed & Randy Berns in honor of the TBS Israel Affairs Committee and Israel's 60th birthday.



Consul Sharon Regev

During Shabbat services on the 17th, the Temple's new flags of Israel and the U.S. were

dedicated in a ceremony that featured a presentation by Dr. Martin Laskin who spoke on the significance and symbolism of flags and parallels between the flags of the U.S. and Israel. An Israeli-themed kiddush featuring homemade Israeli and domestic treats followed the service. The Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven provided support for Saturday's events.



Dr. Ruthie Eitan and Sharon Regev (Photo: G. Drucker)

By all accounts, the highlight of the weekend took place on Sunday, the 18th. Starting with an "Israeli" meal hosted by the TBS Men's Club and catered by Abel's, it included Israeli salads, falafel, hummus, tehina, pita, couscous, babaganousch, olives, cheese, fruit salad, mini-bagels, spreads, and soufganiot.



Gail Raucher leads Hebrew school children singing Israeli songs

After breakfast, featured speaker Sharon Regev, Consul for Public Affairs of the Consulate General of Israel in New York, spoke of the numerous accomplishments of Israel during its brief 60 years of existence. She urged everyone to buy Israeli products, to revel in Israel's accomplishments, and most of all to visit Israel. Accompanying Consul Regev was Dr. Ruthie Eitan, an educator from Sapir College in the Negev, located less than three miles from the Gaza strip. Dr. Eitan offered a powerful message as she described the difficulties of trying to lead a normal college existence while rocket attacks are a daily occurrence.



The love for Israel was evident



Students participate in Israeli birthday cake candle-lighting

The conclusion of the day's events were songs, projects, and workshops about Israel provided by the Hebrew School children. The grand finale was a candle-lighting ceremony performed by the students on a "Happy 60th Birthday Israel" cake and then all joined in the singing of Hatikva.

The events of the weekend were sponsored by the generous support of temple member, Robert Weiss, in honor of the Bat Mitzvah ceremony of his granddaughter, Samantha Cohen.