



# ISRAEL MATTERS!

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## Israel Says Farewell to Regev and Goldwasser

### Mofaz: Iran is "Root of all evil"

Israel's deputy prime minister, Shaul Mofaz, a contender to succeed prime minister Olmert, denounced his native Iran recently as "the root of all evil" and said its nuclear program constituted a threat to world peace. Mofaz was speaking a day after he launched a campaign for a party leadership election next month that will lead to the replacement of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. Opinion polls show that Mofaz, a deputy prime minister and transport minister, is a frontrunner in the contest to lead the centrist Kadima party but trails Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni.

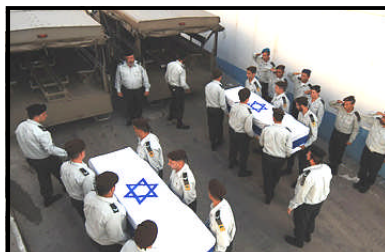
Olmert, dogged by a corruption probe, said recently he would step down once a successor for the party leadership was chosen. Mofaz said Tehran's nuclear program would pose "a threat to Israel's existence." He urged the West to impose stiffer sanctions on Iran to pressure it to stop a nuclear program that Israel believes is intended to produce atomic weapons.

"This has been the Iranian strategy for years, to bide their time and continue with their enrichment," said Mofaz, a former head of the Israeli military who has been one of Israel's most outspoken ministers against Iran. Though he supports diplomacy to resolve the standoff with Tehran, Mofaz said in June an Israeli attack to halt the project may be "unavoidable" unless a deal was reached.

Mofaz also predicted Iran would be able to enrich uranium by next year and would be able to make weapons-grade materials by 2010. "For us, such a situation that Iran will have a nuclear power is... unacceptable."

### Thousands at Burials of Returned Israeli Soldiers

Thousands of mourners turned out for the burials of two Israeli soldiers returned in a prisoner exchange with Hezbollah, laying to rest the young men whose unknown fate had riveted Israel for two years. The pair's 2006 capture in a raid by Hezbollah sparked a month long war. Though officials believed the two soldiers were dead, there was no proof until their bodies were returned in black coffins.



Across the border in Lebanon, the five militants freed as part of the prisoner swap received a heroes' welcome.

Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser's remains were returned by Hezbollah in exchange for five Lebanese prisoners and the remains of some 200 Arab fighters. One of those released, Samir Kantar, had been convicted of a notorious 1979 attack when he killed a father in front of his 4-year-old daughter, and then killed the girl by crushing her skull with a rifle butt. The girl's 2 year old sister was accidentally smothered by her mother who held her hand over the toddler's mouth to stifle her cries while the two hid in a crawl space. An Israeli policeman was also killed.

Soldiers of the elite Givati Brigade carried the casket of Eldad Regev, draped with the Israeli flag, to the military cemetery in Haifa. Regev was 26 when he was captured. Similarly, in Nahariya, mourners buried Goldwasser, who was 31 at the time of his capture.

Israel's Defense Minister Ehud Barak, his voice breaking, reassured soldiers at Goldwasser's funeral that they won't be left behind in battle. "If God forbid any of you fall captive and even if the worst happens to any of you in the fight against terror groups or the envoys of the enemy, the state of Israel ... will make every possible and legitimate effort ... to bring you home," he said.

The lopsided prisoner swap raised questions in Israel about its policy of bringing back its soldiers, dead or alive, at any price. Critics argued that uneven exchanges with militant groups only encourage more kidnappings. The issue is particularly relevant because the Palestinian militant group Hamas, which rules the Gaza Strip, have held another Israeli soldier, Sgt. Gilad Schalit, for the past two years. Schalit is believed to be alive and Hamas is demanding the release of numerous Palestinians in Israeli jails as the price to be paid for his freedom.

## **Editorial Comment - How You Can Help Israel:**

The endless stream of anti-Israel ranting of a hard-core group of contributors to the Letters to the Editor and Forum sections of The New Haven Register represents an unrelenting slander to those who support Israel. Each letter pushes their anti-Israel agenda further than the previous. How often have we read their lies and absorbed their hatred? How often have we shaken our collective heads knowing the truth to their assertions? Most frustratingly, how often have we wondered how such actions continue to

Give them their cosm of the New on the world Israel and/or pro-have profession-propaganda game. been more adroit Through the medial page they journalistic soap-for their undis-

ject matter makes does accuracy of content. What is most important to them is that their anti-Israel drum beat continues uninterrupted. Never ones to let the facts get in the way, their manifesto – Stalin-like – is that the bigger the lie and the more frequently it is repeated the greater is the likelihood that it will be eventually believed.

Speaking personally, this year I could stand it no longer. For the first time in my life I responded to a particularly heinous example of anti-Israel/pro-Palestinian slander and wrote back by challenging every assertion made by the writer. To my great surprise, my response was printed. Since then, three more of my letters have been printed on The Register's editorial page (the most recent, published 7/24, is reproduced above).

Send the message that the day is over for the unchallenged anti-Israel propagandists and beat them at their own game. The Letters section is just as available for those who are prepared to stand by Israel as it is for those who would see it cease to exist.

The point is this: *Take back the moral high ground and fight back for Israel by writing back!*

Ed Berns, Co-Chair, Israel Affairs Committee

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Hezbollah-Israel swap makes reality clear

The reality of the Middle East was made brutally clear when Israel swapped with Hezbollah five terrorist prisoners and almost 200 bodies of terrorists in exchange for two soldiers kidnapped in July 2006.

Hezbollah had gloated that it held Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev as pawns for trade. Neither their families nor the government of Israel was told their fate nor the state of their health. It was only when Hezbollah produced two coffins did the country and their parents learn they were dead.

Hamas admits it continues to hold Gilad Shalit, an Israeli soldier it cap-

**Israel has shown time and again it is willing to make the most difficult decisions to bring home its soldiers.**

tured in July 2006. Subscribing to Hezbollah's ethical and moral standards, Hamas brags that it intends to continue to hold him as trade bait.

Israel has shown time and again it is willing to make the most difficult decisions to bring home its soldiers, whether dead or alive. Exemplifying

that resolve is that among the prisoners released to get back Goldwasser and Regev was Samir Kuntar. Kuntar, a terrorist who invaded an Israeli family's home, murdered an unarmed father before the eyes of his 4-year-old daughter and then crushed the girl's skull with the butt of his rifle.

Kuntar is a cold-blooded murderer, yet he is hailed as a hero by Hezbollah, praised by the president of the Palestinian Authority and portrayed as a role model by Hamas. That's the reality of the Middle East.

Edward J. Berns  
North Haven

## **Israel's UN Envoy Blasts Libya in Farewell**

In his farewell speech to the UN, Israel's outgoing envoy, Dan Gillerman, excoriated Libya, the lone Arab member of the Security Council. Gellerman said during an open debate on the Middle East, "We do have a member here whose main aim is to block any reasonable resolution, is to block any mention of terror and to block any condemnation of terror."

When a Libyan UN delegate last April suggested that the situation in the Gaza Strip was "worse" than what happened in Nazi concentration camps, Gillerman retorted, in a clear reference to the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103, "Libya is a very pertinent example of what happens when you let terrorists infiltrate the Security Council."

Gillerman is to be succeeded by law professor Gabriela Shalev, the first Israeli woman to be named to the high-profile post.

## **Israel Receives 'Last Ethiopians'**

Israel says it has carried out its last major airlift of Ethiopian Jews, ending 30-years of immigration that has seen some 100,000 move there. The Jewish Agency, which manages immigration to Israel, said the 65 flown from Addis Ababa were the last eligible under a quota imposed in 2003. The Ethiopians of Jewish descent, known as the Falash Mura, were forced to convert to Christianity in the 19th Century.

Ethiopia's last remaining Jewish community, the Falash Mura trace their roots to the biblical King Solomon. But they are not eligible to enter Israel under the Law of Return, which guarantees a place in the country for every Jew, because they have largely been unable to prove they are Jewish. Ethiopian Jews who kept their faith throughout centuries of adversity were flown to Israel by the thousands in the 1980s and early 1990s. The last mass immigration was in 1991, when Israel organized a dramatic airlift of 15,000 people who had fled fighting at the end of Ethiopia's civil war.