



Welcome to our first New Mexico-Israel Action Network Newsletter

By Todd Goldblum, MD

By way of background, I should explain that I'm an unlikely activist: I'm a middle-aged ophthalmologist who grew up in Albuquerque with a sense of pride for Israel, but not any particular passion.

However, as I grew older I noticed something was changing.

While I was aware that virulent anti-Israel groups existed in the United States and the rest of the world, it wasn't until my forties that I took notice of how Israel was portrayed by local publications like the Daily Lobo, Albuquerque Alibi and on Public Radio and Cable Access Television: more often than not as an Apartheid state, the worst abuser of human rights in the world, as an illegal occupier and illegitimate entity.

Such gross inaccuracies started to boil my blood.

Then things got worse.

In recent years, the campaign to delegitimize and demonize Israel has intensified globally and in New Mexico. This campaign -- known as Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) -- distorts the history and national aspirations of the Jewish people to live in peace in a homeland to which they have been connected continuously and profoundly for more than three millennia.

The legitimate right of Israel to defend itself from terror often is ignored. Israeli policy and actions are not beyond criticism; but we have witnessed a continuing flow of inaccurate charges of human rights violations and outrageous comparisons of Israel to apartheid South Africa and even to Nazi Germany.

In short, BDS is part of a grand design to destroy Israel and her credibility in the world.

At first, knowing about BDS and seeing how this movement was promoted locally made me angry. Then, I learned that I could do more than just rant: I could educate myself and others, and actually make a difference in getting the truth out there. I learned I could also fight back by doing things like:

- Confronting boycott campaigns with campaigns to purchase Israeli goods or partner with Israeli organizations, with the aim of ensuring that every boycott campaign is a net failure;
- Responding swiftly to false or distorted media statements about Israel;
- Investing in programs that promote peace and reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians.

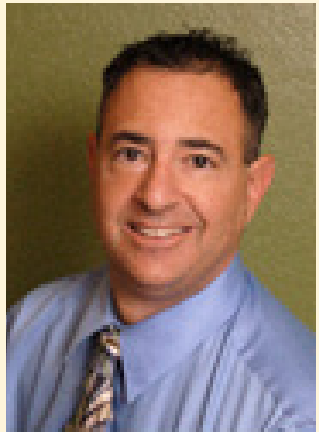
When I got my first letter to the editor published, I felt energized and encouraged. Today, I'm proud to be the New Mexico Chair of The Israel Action Network, a national initiative to help our community more effectively combat efforts to delegitimize the Jewish State.

The network will monitor the delegitimization movement in New Mexico and counter it wherever it crops up.

This monthly newsletter intends to offer timely updates and tools for action that will effectively educate and mobilize Israel advocacy in New Mexico. We'll also share materials from the national Israel Action Network that will arm you key background information, talking points and suggested reading material to grasp situations as they evolve.

If you feel as passionate about Israel as I do, I'm hoping you'll volunteer as well. You could help us monitor the media, write letters, or communicate with elected officials, faith leaders and other opinion makers to provide a more accurate picture of the challenges Israel faces, as well as the remarkable gifts the Jewish State offers the world.

I hope that you'll find this useful and interesting. Please join efforts to support tolerance, peace, and the security of Israel. To help, please contact Sam Sokolove, Executive Director of the Jewish Federation of New Mexico at sam@jewishnewmexico.org.



One with Israel



One with ISRAEL

Sunday, September 25, 2011 1:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m.

In the coming weeks, Israel is facing yet another major challenge to her legitimacy as the Palestinian Authority seeks a unilateral declaration in the United Nations — the goal to further isolate the Jewish State within the international community.

The One With Israel gathering, coordinated with the Consul General of Israel to the Southwest, Jewish organizations, churches and synagogues of the southwest United States, will offer support to Israel in prayer and action, as well as educate advocates on how they can personally make a difference for Israel at this time.

Please join us at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Albuquerque
5520 Wyoming Blvd NE Albuquerque, NM 87109
and visit www.onewithisraelnw.org

Consulate General of Israel to the Southwest | BRIDGES FOR PEACE | ADL Anti-Defamation League | YAD B'YAD | JEWISH FEDERATION OF NEW MEXICO New Mexico's Center for Jewish Philanthropy

Will You Demonstrate?

By Sherwin Pomerantz – Director of ATID E.D.I. Ltd and New Mexico's Contractor for the NM-Middle East Trade Office based in Jerusalem

The clock is ticking before the opening of the UN General Assembly in New York and the vote a day or two after that on Palestinian statehood.

One of my readers has raised the question of whether or not there are demonstrations planned for New York during the period of the General Assembly against the drive for statehood by the Palestinian Arab leadership? A search of the web turned up nothing although I hope that will not really be the case as the date draws closer.

Do you remember December 6, 1987? That was the Sunday when over 250,000 people descended on Washington from all parts of the United States to demonstrate on behalf of Soviet Jewry. It was, at the time, the largest outpouring of support for that movement and was timed to occur a day before Gorbachev and Reagan were scheduled to meet in the nation's capital. The organizers never expected that more than 150,000 people would participate in the middle of winter, yet representatives of over 300 community groups in the US braved the cold and made their voices known, insuring that the issue of human rights in the Soviet Union would be placed on Reagan's "front burner."

The members of the American community who care about values and the respect for the right of those of us living here to live fruitful lives in the national homeland of the Jewish people need to do as much this year as well.

Many of you know that fully 20% of the US Congress will have visited Israel last month. I won't deal here with the propriety of legislators leaving their desks when the country is in so much economic turmoil, as others smarter than me have spoken about this. But they are here nonetheless and last week, at a meeting in Ramallah with Mahmoud Abbas he shared with the visiting legislators his vision of a Palestinian state, and it was not pretty.

His main point was that if he succeeds in creating an independent Palestinian state it will have no Jewish settlements. In his zeal to achieve ethnic cleansing of Jews presently living in Judea and Samaria, he is speaking about the eviction of over 500,000 Jews from everywhere on the "green line" including Jerusalem neighborhoods such as Ramot, Gilo, Ramat Shlomo and, of course, the large settlement blocs of Gush Etzion, Ma'ale Adumim and Ariel. After that he added that if multinational forces were to enforce a future peace, those forces could also not contain any Israelis, whether they lived in Israel or abroad (a bit of moderation over his earlier statement that they could not contain any Jews).

So the message is clear. The simple fact that Jews might live in a Palestinian state is a humiliating thing for the Palestinians. Of course, if the shoe were on the other foot and we said that after a peace treaty no Arabs would be allowed to live in Israel the world would become one ball of fire with anti-Israel demonstrations everywhere. We dare not blind ourselves to the possibility that the real desire of the Palestinian Arab leadership is not to make peace with Israel but to see to our ultimate expulsion from this part of the world.

While I do not believe, and certainly hope, that this will not happen vigilance is critical. So thinking Americans, Jews and non-Jews, should be on the barricades in New York in mid-September to make it clear to the UN and the world that the intransigence of the Palestinian Arab leadership in not being willing to even come to the negotiating table, will not be rewarded by a declaration of statehood one of whose aims is to make the resultant country Judenrein!!

There must be a demonstration that will make Washington in December 1987 look like amateur night.

Edmund Burke was right when he said "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing." We need to internalize that lesson.



JCPA Prepares Community and National Response to Unilateral Palestinian Statehood

Regrets Palestinian Decision to Stay Away From Peace Talks



The Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) expressed regret today at the Palestinian leadership's decision to pursue United Nations recognition of a unilaterally declared Palestinian state, commonly referred to as unilateral declaration of independence (UDI).

"We support the vision of two states living side by side in peace and security, Israel, as the homeland of the Jewish people, and Palestine for the Palestinians," said JCPA President Rabbi Steve Gutow. "We firmly believe, as does President Obama and important segments of the international community, that this vision can only be realized when the parties sit down together, face-to-face, to resolve their differences. A lasting and just resolution of the conflict should not and cannot be imposed from the outside. Therefore, this Palestinian 'end run' around negotiations, not only contradicts previously signed agreements, it also presents a serious obstacle to advancing the peace process."

"Approximately one year ago, when resumption of direct talks was announced, we called on both sides to demonstrate resolve. We regret that the Palestinians instead chose to walk away shortly thereafter," said JCPA Chair Dr. Conrad Giles. "Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu continues to call for direct negotiations without pre-conditions, and we hope, with the ongoing assistance of the United States, this can be achieved soon. UDI is not the solution, and we call on the international community to reject it."

The JCPA is partnering with the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) under the auspices of the Israel Action Network (IAN) to build community and national support for a return to peace talks. Efforts are underway to reach out to foreign diplomats based in North America, as well as to mobilize organizations and individuals to sign a petition initiated by the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York supporting a negotiated two state solution and opposing UDI.

JCPA Background Paper on Palestinian Christians

In our work with the churches, we have observed that criticism of Israel is often linked to appeals regarding the Palestinian Christian population. We are told that Palestinian Christians are in a mass exodus due to Israeli policies. These appeals add both connection and urgency to the narrative. The story is that co-religionists are under siege and on the verge of extinction.

We have done extensive research into the demographics and learned that the data presented are quite often wildly inaccurate. We invite you to read the [JCPA Background Paper on Palestinian Christians](#). It demonstrates how the distortions are made – and presents the actual data.

As an example of the misrepresentation we frequently see - last month, the National Catholic Reporter ran an article by the widely respected journalist John Allen entitled "Christians nearly absent in Holy Land." The article states that Palestinian Christians were 30% of the population in 1948 and are 1.25% today. In reality, Christians were 7.8% of the population in 1948 and are about 2% of the population today.

The Palestinian Christian population has grown since 1967. It is growing in Israel and in the West Bank. It has not thrived as we might hope, but the number of Christians in the West Bank is up about 20% since 1967. The number of Christians in Bethlehem, Beit Jala and Beit Shahrour is up over 50% since 1967.

In the West Bank, Palestinian Christians are a smaller percentage than they were - but there are many factors. The Muslim community has grown quite rapidly. In 1967 the population in the Palestinian territories was 1.5 million. Today it is almost 4 million. Although the overall growth rate in the Palestinian Territories is almost three times the world average, the Palestinian Christian community has a low birth rate, which has been the case for over 100 years. There has also been emigration - but this has also stemmed. Palestinian Authority President Salem Fayyad noted last year that the Christian population grew.

These are all factors that are frequently left out of the story - as are the demographics in many neighboring countries. A fuller and more accurate picture needs to be presented. We hope this [background paper](#) will help to that end

