

Israeli looks to U.S. for Middle East peace

By Pat Murphy
staff writer

The United States will undoubtedly play a critical role in the peace efforts between Israel and the Palestinians, according to Moshe Fox, the Israeli consul from Chicago.

The Palestinians and the Israelis are the principal players, of course. But the United States is the only superpower capable of bringing both parties to the peace table, said Fox, who was in Oakland County recently.

The U.S. has diplomatic ties with both groups, he said, and has shown a willingness to help the peace process even to the extent of suggesting it would provide economic and political incentives.

Fox talked with a reporter from the Observer & Eccentric News-
papers recently the same as he said he meets with religious or civic organizations to publicize his country's peace efforts.

He flew from Chicago specifically to talk with the newspaper and is willing to do the same for most other groups or organizations interested in the Middle East.

"THE ISSUES are so important," Fox said. "That we routinely go out into the 11-state area to discuss them. We talk with anyone interested in our perspective."

While Israel wants peace with all of its neighbors, it is especially concerned with occupied territories on the West Bank where for nearly two years Palestinian residents have been rebelling against Israeli policies.

Israeli policies on the West Bank have come under fire at home and internationally, prompting the government to initiate a peace initiative last May, calling for elections and holding open the possibility of some self autonomy for Palestinians.

The peace initiative prompted mixed reaction, Fox acknowledged, including criticism from some countries objecting to, among other things, Israel's refusal to include any member of the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) in any peace negotiations.

But it (Israel's peace initiative) is the only game in town," Fox said. "It is the only peace proposal set forth by any of the parties involved."

Equally important, Israel's initiative was not completely rejected, Fox said. Egyptian President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak, for example, issued a 10-point response to the initiative, Fox said, with eight points focusing on the mechanics of the elections.

Fox, who was born in Israel, has a master's degree in history, specializing in the American Jewish community. He said he is convinced his country's peace initiative will succeed. "Everyone sees the need for a political resolution to the conflict."

Not just a political resolution, Fox said, "But THIS political resolution," meaning the one initiated by Israel in May.

FOX SHRUGGED OFF a question, admittedly theoretical, about why another political solution could not succeed, say one initiated by the Palestinians.

"There are forces at work including increased Muslim fundamentalism that make the Israeli peace initiative the only workable solution," he said.

While its ultimate success is inevitable, according to Fox, the next important step is an upcoming meeting in Washington, D.C., between Israel and the Palestinians with the United

States as an encouraging third party and Secretary of State James Baker as an important player.

The U.S. played a similar role in the historic Camp David Accord that ultimately led to peaceful relations between Egypt and Israel.

The date of the meeting has not been set. But it is expected to be held in February. It has not been determined who will represent the Palestinians.

Fox reiterated his government's refusal to include the PLO in any peace talks.

"We will talk with Palestinians who are sympathetic to the PLO," Fox said. "But the PLO is dedicated to the destruction of the State of Israel."



Moshe Fox
Israeli consul

Red Cross asks county residents to give blood

January is a crucial month for our community's blood supply, according to American Red Cross officials. That's because many patients delay elective surgeries until after the holiday season.

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• Monday, Jan. 29, 2 p.m. to 8 p.m., First Presbyterian Church, 1669 W. Maple, Birmingham. For information, call Mary Skutik, 644-2040.

• Wednesday, Jan. 31, 7 a.m. to 1 p.m., William Beaumont Hospital, 44201 Dequindre, Troy. For information, call Ann Poplawski, 853-8985.

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