

Talks With PLO Are A 'Mistake,' Haig Tells Israel Bonds Leaders

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Former Secretary of State Alexander Haig Jr. said recently that the U.S. decision to open a dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organizations "was a mistake" that diverts attentions from the real effort to achieve peace in the Middle East.

"It reiterated the PLO's claim to be the only Palestinian address and suggested to Israel that the United States ultimately favors a Palestinian state," Haig said at a luncheon of the International President's Club of the State of Israel Bonds Organization.

Some 400 Israel Bonds leaders from the United States, Canada, Europe, Latin America and Israel were in Washington for a two-day celebration of the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty.

The event included receptions on Capitol Hill and at the Israeli Embassy, as well as a closed-door briefing by Secretary of State James Baker.

Haig said that President Bush has repeatedly asserted U.S. opposition to a Palestinian state. "Washington should make sure that its pronouncements reflect its policies and do not build up misconceptions on either side of the dialogue," he said.

He said that having PLO leader Yasir Arafat in the peace process is like the man who comes to a dinner dressed in a tuxedo and carrying a brown paper bag. "He wants a seat at the peace table, but somehow you suspect he is bringing something that isn't quite kosher," Haig said.

The former secretary called the U.S.-PLO meeting in Carthage, Tunisia, a "dialogue of the deaf."

But at the State Department, spokesman Charles Redman, said the United States is using "the dialogue to determine if the PLO is prepared to commit itself" to a process that will "advance a workable and realistic peace."

The meeting was the second formal dialogue since the U.S. opened talks with the PLO in December. A third meeting is planned, but the date has not yet been announced.

Earlier, Richard Perle, former assistant secretary of defense for international security policy, told the Bonds leaders he saw little worthwhile in a dialogue with the PLO.

Teenage Sun And Fun In Israel



Youngsters in the Zionist Organization of America's Masada Summer program in Israel spend 5 weeks touring the country and just having fun. This year a free Masada Summer in Israel is the prize in a 1,000-word essay contest for high school freshmen and sophomores on "Why I Stand Up for Israel," sponsored by the ZOA's Jacob Goodman Institute. Contest deadline: April 28. Submit essays to Edna Dyme, ZOA, 4 E. 34th St. New York, NY 10016.

Todd Glass, who will be featured at Catch A Rising Star, Bally's Casino Resort, Las Vegas, April 25-May 1, has opened for such artists as Patti LaBelle, Nell Carter, Peter Allen, George Benson, Judy Collins, Jay Leno and George Jones, among others.

But he suggested that if it is to proceed, the United States should demand that the PLO eliminate the section of the Palestine National Covenant calling for Israel's destruction and renounce its demands that Palestine refugees be allowed to return to pre-1967 Israel.

In his remarks, Haig said Israel and Egypt were able to sign a peace treaty because the Camp David approach was rooted in "strategic reality, rather than the quest for perfection."

He said the treaty is not perfect and it still "remains a disappointment" that it has not led to completely normal relations between the two countries. "But in the final analysis, a cold peace is far better than a hot war," he said.

Haig said that now that Israel has a government "speaking with one voice," he believes that Israel will come up with constructive ideas to change the situation in the administered territories. "And I believe that when Israel does so, we should all be prepared to help," he added.

"Peace will come about when we have that

triangle of a strong Israel willing to take risks, of an America that stands by Israel and of an American Jewry rallying to that cause," he said.

At a breakfast session, Elie Wiesel, the Nobel Peace Prize winner and novelist, also urged Jews to unite behind Israel, despite their difference over some of its policies. Many of the Bonds leaders came to Washington directly from Jerusalem, where they participated in the Prime Minister's Conference on Jewish Solidarity With Israel.

Wiesel also expressed surprise that Jews in Israel and abroad have not done more to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the peace treaty.

Bonds leaders told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that the Israel Bonds celebration was held at the insistence of Meir Rosenne, the new president and chief executive officer of Israel Bonds and a former Israeli ambassador to Washington.

Rosenne also was the legal adviser to the Israeli Foreign Ministry during the negotiations for the Camp David accords and the subsequent peace treaty.

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