

The Time Is Now to Press for Pollard’s Release

By Farley Weiss

The failure to obtain Jonathan Pollard’s release from his U.S. prison is primarily due to the fundamentally flawed policy of the leaders of Israel, and, no less, that of American Jewish leadership. They together continue to follow a strategy that has failed for twenty-five years — of quietly (if at all) pressing for Pollard’s release, while at the same time withholding the necessary support for public efforts to secure Pollard’s release.

Before the end of President Bush’s tenure, the National Council of Young Israel (regrettably, almost the only Jewish organization that constantly publicly pushes for Pollard’s release) organized a concerted call-in directed at the White House to appeal for Pollard’s release. Moreover, efforts were undertaken to privately contact high-level people, past and present, from the Bush Administration to push for his release.

The National Council even persuaded friends of the president to advocate for his release, a relatively isolated endeavor because the government of Israel itself had no involvement and gave no assistance to these efforts. Simply stated, the failure to make this a case that warranted attention clearly did not help Pollard’s chances to be released.

It is noteworthy that the U.S. activists lobbying for Pollard were not interviewed by Micha Lindenstraus, Israel’s State Comptroller, who just completed an investigation of the Israeli Government’s actions regarding Pollard. Yet it is public knowledge that Defense Minister Ehud Barak (then Prime Minister) pushed for a pardon for fugitive financier Mark Rich at the same time he was supposed to be singularly focused on Pollard’s release. Barak’s push for Rich

gave President Clinton an excuse to say that he acceded to one of Israel’s two requests — when it was known that Clinton had promised to release Pollard at Wye and then reneged on this promise. Known too is the fact that Prime Minister Olmert attempted to prevent Eli Yishai, the head of the Shas Party in Israel, from speaking to President Bush regarding Jonathan Pollard at a dinner in Israel.

We also know that whatever private efforts were carried out by Israeli leaders have failed. Thus, one must wonder why numerous substantial changes of policy were not advocated by Mr. Lindenstraus, even though in other investigations he usually does make such suggestions, and it is obvious that the current policy has been a failure.

I recently attended an event at which I approached one of the top Jewish leaders in the U.S., someone with access to President Obama. I asked him what President Obama’s view was on Pollard. His response was particularly telling. He did not know, indicating that he had not used his access to Obama to address the matter.

In fact, to our knowledge, no Jew or Jewish organization has exploited their access to raise the Pollard issue in the ten months since Obama has been president (the National Council of Young Israel was not invited to the two recent Jewish Leaders meetings with President Obama, probably due to its public and outspoken right-of-center support for greater Israel).

Despite the many meetings between Prime Minister Netanyahu and former Senator George Mitchell, special envoy for Mideast affairs, we have yet to hear that Israel has demanded or received anything in return for concessions the U.S. is exacting.

Quasi support for a Palestinian state and a removal of roadblocks are concessions Israel has already made without obtaining anything from the U.S. in return, and the U.S. continues to demand more concessions from Israel with no apparent *quid pro quo*. One might at a minimum expect some gesture to obtain Pollard’s release.

Years ago, during the discussions that led to the Wye Agreement, it was well known that President Clinton promised then-Prime Minister Netanyahu that he would release Pollard — and then reneged on this promise at the urging of Dennis Ross. Ross is today one of the advisers

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to President Obama, and it appears that he has now switched his position, favoring Pollard’s release. Unfortunately, since returning to office, Prime Minister Netanyahu has yet to mention Pollard in any speech or give any indication that this is an issue of concern for him, even though previously he had made the biggest effort to obtain Pollard’s release and is the only Israeli leader who visited Pollard, albeit when he was not Prime Minister.

Considering the fact that President Obama is a former constitutional law professor, it seems reasonable to expect that we might convince him to support Pollard’s release on the merits of

the case. Furthermore, the argument that American presidents should be called upon to consider the pardon only during the last days of their tenure is misbegotten. It should be noted that the closest Pollard came to being released was during the 1998 Wye negotiations, not during the last days of the Bush Administrations. Thus there is no reason to wait another three years.

The failure by many different people in many different forums to raise the issue with the administration may have led President Bush to believe it is not important. This is not a subjective opinion of mine, but the exact message I personally received from a member of the Bush Administration. He unabashedly asked me why, if this was such an important issue, Jewish leaders are not bringing it up in their meetings with the president and the secretary of state, and unfortunately, as is the case now, with the Obama Administration?

Not relying upon the government of Israel or Jewish leaders in the U.S., I succeeded ten years ago in helping to convince former U.S. Senator Dennis DeConcini (Arizona), then head of the Intelligence Committee, to reverse his position and support Pollard’s release. Moreover, in the last few years I also helped arrange for former CIA Director James Woolsey to go public with his support for Pollard’s release. Both of these people know all of the classified information about Pollard and they believe he should be released.

They know that the average sentence for passing information to an ally is two to four years, that Pollard pleaded guilty and cooperated with the government, that he did not expose U.S. agents, and that he has expressed remorse for his actions. And yet he is still in prison and is now in poor health.

By supporting his release, these officials confirmed that the circular reasoning that Pollard must have done something terrible that we are not aware of to receive such a harsh, unprecedented sentence is simply false. This was confirmed by Lawrence Korb, deputy of former defense secretary Casper Weinberger, when he wrote Pollard’s father that the severity of Pollard’s sentence was due to Weinberger’s visceral hatred for Israel.

A famous aphorism attributed to Albert Einstein seems applicable to the Pollard case: Insanity is continuing to do the same thing and expecting to achieve different results. That is why the current methods of pressing (or not pressing) the case for Pollard’s release must change.

Coordination of efforts among Israeli leaders and lay and organizational leaders involved in the Pollard case needs to start now. Jonathan Pollard has suffered too long. His release from an unjust sentence needs to be pressed by those lobbying the administration, whether Israeli leaders or U.S. Jewish leaders. A twenty-five-year policy of silence has failed; it needs to change.

December is the main month for pardons and commutations of sentences by the President of the United States. So that Pollard will finally be released, we ask you, the readers of this column, to start on December 1 and continue through the month to call the White House to politely register support for the commutation of Pollard’s sentence to time served.

The White House number is 202-456-1111.

Let us do our part, and maybe the American Jewish and Israeli leaders will finally do theirs.

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Why Does Citigroup Fund Groups That Hate Freedom?

By Matthew Vadum

Should Citigroup, a recipient of U.S. government aid, be giving tax dollars to any political group, especially one as notorious as ACORN?

And as evidence continues to pile up showing ACORN’s criminal proclivities, why is Citigroup CEO Vikram Pandit actually considering restoring funding for ACORN?

Pandit said his company is awaiting an ACORN-sponsored inquiry into the group’s corruption that was prompted by the emergence this fall of several hidden-camera videos. The videos show ACORN employees eager to help a couple [planning criminal activities] using government funding.

“We, as a company, would like to see that report,” said Pandit. Asked if he could envi-

sion Citigroup permanently cutting financial ties with ACORN, Pandit said it “completely depends” on the outcome of the report, reports the *Boston Herald*.

Citigroup’s charitable foundation has given ACORN affiliates more than \$1 million since 2003. It’s also funded other left-wing groups including Jesse Jackson’s Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, World Resources Institute, Aspen Institute, Rainforest Alliance, and the Council on Foreign Relations.

Another Citigroup executive, Eric Eve, has indicated through his actions that he has no belief that ACORN has the ability to reform itself. Eve resigned from the ACORN Advisory Council, a phony, allegedly independent panel that is supposed to suggest ways to reform the incorrigible group. (Frontpage Magazine)

Colors of Kislev

By Yosef Goldberg

Passing a city park today, I noticed the fall foliage, red with splashes of yellow and orange, like cherries mixed into apricots and tangerines. In the springtime, on the other hand, the landscape bursts out in a canopy of green. Red and green are opposites: stop and go. It makes me wonder: what is behind Hashem’s “color scheme”?

Chazal tell us there are two principal times for *teshuvah*. In the spring we come to *teshuvah* from love; in the fall, from fear or awe. And most of us have heard that, according to the Arizal, the eighth day of Chanukah, Zos Chanukah, is the last day of the period in which Hashem is especially receptive to our *teshuvah*.

Interior design students

learn that colors are associated with different emotional and even physiological responses. Green is said to elicit undifferentiated, universal love. Red functions as a systemic alarm that provokes immediate action. And yellow is an attention-getter: Hey, look at me!

Perhaps we can understand the mystery of the trees’ wardrobe this way. Rambam teaches the message of the *shofar*: “Wake up, you sleepyheads, and turn to your Creator!” it announces. But what if I didn’t hear it? Hashem, in His mercy, arrives as the Master Decorator. Suddenly the leaves start turning yellow, to get my attention.

If His pastels were too subtle to rouse me from my torpor, Hashem doesn’t give up on me. Out comes His red palette, bold strokes of crimson and scarlet. And as Zos Chanukah nears, the

last of the red flags flutter down before me, carpeting the ground and warning me to “Stop!” and take action — open a *Gemara*, pray with concentration, or encourage a friend, do something to win Hashem’s favor.

Come spring, He spreads vistas of green to reassure me once again that He loves His creation, especially *Klal Yisrael*, to whom He says “Walk!” in the season of spring, may it come upon us for good.

As we rush headlong into the long winter *zman* and its busy work days, may the colors of the season prompt us to “Stop!” and remember our exciting and epic mission, in the spirit of the Chashmona’im, to connect with the Creator of the universe, rejoicing in the light of our Torah and flush with a love of His people.