

## 2009/09/09 Chicago Faith Coalition Update #6



### Informing and Advocating on Israeli/Palestinian Issues

#### **Why are you receiving this email?**

You are receiving this Chicago Faith Coalition Update email because you have endorsed a Chicago Faith Coalition on Middle East Policy (CFCMEP) letter, attended (or were invited to) a CFCMEP meeting or have requested being added to this distribution list. The Chicago Faith Coalition will be the sole user of your email. You can unsubscribe at any time.

The [home page](#) of the Chicago Faith Coalition website features and retains these email updates. Every couple of weeks, we will post a new quiz or poll about the Israeli and Palestinian situation.

Please email [Ed Thompson](#) with suggested items for inclusion in these weekly updates or with comments about the update.

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#### **Action Opportunities**

Before October 15, [join](#) the Lutheran Church of the Atonement in Barrington, in collaboration with the Environmental Education Center of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, in an ongoing project entitled "Planting New Olive Trees...Planting New Hope". For \$20 you can make a peace investment that will grow for generations to come. Flyers can be downloaded [here](#).

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#### **U.S. Foreign Policy**

In the past week, the *Wall Street Journal* published three articles that address U.S. foreign policy toward Israel/Palestine. The [first](#) was optimistic about direct talks between Netanyahu and Abbas, the [second](#) reported Israel permitting more settlements before "freezing" them and the [third](#) reported that Israel's decisions about West Bank settlements were straining peace efforts.

The *Jerusalem Post* published an [article](#) about a meeting with a three-person research team from the U.S. State Department. The Ariel (an Israeli West Bank settlement) Mayor told the State Department team "A settlement freeze is "stupid." Shaul Goldstein, head of the Gush Etzion Regional Council told the team "It's [settlement freeze] a major mistake". Almost two

years ago Goldstein was described in an [LA Times article by Richard Boudreaux](#) as "one of the settler movement's more moderate leaders". However, in that article he stated "In my view, Israel from the Mediterranean to the Jordan Valley is a Jewish state....Its lands are earmarked first and foremost for Jewish citizens."

During the August recess, two delegations of the U.S. Congress visited Israel on an AIPAC sponsored trip that included little Palestinian involvement but was characterized as a "fact finding mission." The Council for the National Interest describes these trips [here](#) and the American Association for Palestinian Equal Rights describes the trips [here](#). A popular former and potential future Republican Presidential Candidate, Mike Huckabee on his visit to Israel last month is reported to have commented that the land belongs to the Jewish people and therefore the Palestinian people ought to do the right thing and leave. The comments rationale is destroyed in this [September 1 blog entitled "Marlin Vis has Truth. Listen In."](#)

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### **Must read or must view or must hear**

The founder of Americans for Peace Now has written an [inspiring and enlightening letter](#) about the current Israeli/Palestinian situation.

Sydney Levy's MuzzleWatch article entitled "[Drawing Lessons from the Festival](#)" references attempts to bring together the Jewish community in San Francisco.

Zahi Khouri published a [New York Times op-ed](#) stating emphatically that Netanyahu's attempts to substitute "economic peace" for an independent, viable and sovereign Palestinian state will be an insurmountable obstacle to Middle East peace.

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### **Realities rarely reported in U.S. news media**

A significant protest against the Toronto International Film Festival's decision to spotlight the city of Tel Aviv and the work of 10 Israeli filmmakers was reported in [The Globe and Mail](#). The protest group stated "we object to the use of such an important international festival in staging a propaganda campaign on behalf of...an apartheid regime."

Education Minister Gideon Sa'ar [briefed the cabinet](#) on plans for the start of the school year, and announced that the word "nakba" will be taken out of lesson plans.

Details on the Norwegian Ministry of Finance divestment of Elbit Systems Ltd from their pension portfolio because of its involvement in the Israeli constructed separation barrier in the Palestinian West bank can be found [here](#).

An email from Birzeit University's Right to Educate Campaign references an [R2E Fact Sheet](#):

[Gaza](#) that describes the devastation wrought on the Gazan educational system by the Israeli government.

Even with many internationals present, American media continues to ignore the photos, video and commentary [here](#) that document the frightening night raids and violence against Bil'in citizens who nonviolently protest the separation barrier that prohibits them from access to farm land that they own.

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[www.chicagofaithcoalition.org](http://www.chicagofaithcoalition.org)