

Congress Identifies With Israel in Aftermath of Har Nof Massacre

SANDY ELLER

Emotions ran high at a bi-partisan "Tribute to the U.S.-Israel Security Alliance" at the Russell Senate Office Building, co-chaired by Elliot Gibber, Stanley G. Tate, Simcha Lyons and Jason Lyons, and organized by The Friedlander Group in honor of the U.S.-Israel relationship and special appreciation for Iron Dome funding.

Several speakers made reference to the recent bloody massacre, noting that it highlighted the significance of the special bond between the two countries, and brought out passionate identification with the state of Israel in the aftermath of the brutal murder in the Yerushalayim synagogue.

Tehillim in memory of the four *Kedoshim* were recited by Rabbi Sheftel Neuberger of Ner Yisroel, Baltimore.

"You have this kind of random murder and you see Hamas celebrating and people dancing in the streets of Gaza," said New York Congressman Jerry Nadler. "How can you trust any kind of agreement with people like this?"

Master of Ceremonies Jason Lyons introduced Senator Ted Cruz by acknowledging the recent event where Senator Cruz walked off the stage after being booed for supporting Israel. Lyons told the senator, "This much I can guarantee: You will not be booed off the stage here." Indeed, the crowd gave Cruz a minute-long standing ovation and applauded enthusiastically throughout the speech.

For Texas Senator Ted Cruz, the tragedy hit even closer to home.

"A good friend of mine studied under one of the Rabbis who were murdered this week," said Cruz. "And to see in the aftermath Hamas and Fatah celebrating, and justifying that murder, communicated with crystal clarity to anyone that was paying attention."

Cruz noted that the need for strong ties between the United States and Israel is greater than ever before, despite tensions between the two countries.

Cruz remarked that he has been to Israel three times in the last two years and on one trip he visited Raphael Industries (the company that manufactures the Iron Dome), where he joked with them that "naming a company after me, Raphael [Cruz's first name] Ted Cruz, was a bit much."

New York Senator Chuck Schumer took *The New York Times* and other media outlets to task for their coverage of the Har Nof bloodbath, pointing to coverage that reported Palestinian loss of life without saying that the dead Palestinians were the perpetrators of the brutal attack.

Maryland Senator Barbara Mikulski, chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, spoke powerfully about allowing Israel to stand up for itself in the face of terror.



Dov Lenchevsky, Shmuel Lenchevsky

L-R: Rabbi Sheftel Neuberger, president, Ner Israel Rabbinical College; Ezra Friedlander, CEO, The Friedlander Group; Simcha Lyons, event co-chair; Senator Ted Cruz (speaking); Jason Lyons, master of ceremonies (not pictured).

"Israel must always be able to defend itself, whether it is against horrific attacks in a synagogue or at a bus stop," said Senator Mikulski. "Whether it is missiles coming over, attacking communities like Ashkelon, or preventing Iran from getting a nuclear weapon ... there is no right to nuclear weapons to annihilate a treasured ally."

Taking on those who have proposed cutting funding to Israel, Senator Johnny Isakson of Georgia noted that money sent to Israel is a sound investment.

"We give Israel \$3.5 billion a year," said Isakson. "Two billion of it comes back in purchases of U.S. military equipment and the rest of it is security we couldn't buy for 10 times as much in that neighborhood."

The United States' support of Iron Dome was mentioned frequently throughout the tribute.

Event co-chair Simcha Lyons, who categorized the Iron Dome as "a miracle," observed that he felt it was crucial to thank Congress for the defense system that saved an untold number of lives during recent missile attacks.

"We know that Iron Dome works," said Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida. "America is safer when Israel is safer. Israel is safer when America is safer. Those bonds can never be broken."

The tribute was intended to thank Congress for its support of Israel, and a feeling of gratitude was evident throughout the room.

Other speakers included Missouri Senator Roy Blunt, Illinois Senator Mark Kirk, Utah Senator Mike Lee, and Michigan Senator Carl Levin, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

"It's not an overstatement to say that we, the Jewish People, live in a *'malchus shel chesed'*," said Ezra Friedlander, CEO of The Friedlander Group. "To observe the identification with the Jewish People by so many members of Congress is a testament to that and we have to be grateful, which is why the tribute to the Congress for its security alliance was so important."

Expressions of Solidarity At Ponevez Annual Dinner



Harav Eliezer Kahaneman speaking at the Ponevez Annual Dinner.

Following the horrific tragedy in Har Nof, the annual Ponevez Yeshiva-Batay Avot Dinner at the Ateres Chaya Hall in Brooklyn became an occasion to express solidarity with *Acheinu Bnei Yisrael* in *Eretz Hakodesh*.

Dinner Chairman Reb Moshe Krausz recalled the words of the Ponevezer Rav in 1962 (when there were great tensions on the borders with Egypt and Syria) that it was the sacred duty of every *bachur* to redouble his commitment to learning Torah. Now too we must rededicate ourselves to *limud haTorah*.

Reb Moshe also extended the appreciation of all to the *Rosh Yeshivah* and *Nasi*, Harav Eliezer Kahaneman, *shlita*, for shouldering the burden of maintaining the yeshivah, the *kollel*, the Batay Avot and all the other Ponevez institutions in *Eretz Yisrael*. Harav Kahaneman surely has a *chelek* in each of the millions of *blatt Gemara* that are learned in Ponevez every year.

Expansion at Ponevez

Harav Kahaneman opened his remarks with a hearty *mazal tov* to Reb Chaim Mordechai Hertz on his engagement to Nechama Karelitz of Lakewood. He thanked Reb Chaim Mordechai for his outstanding role in the successes of Ponevez.

Harav Kahaneman described the yeshivah's need for expansion. An entire nearby building has been rented for extra dorms. The study halls for *shiurim* have been enlarged in response to increased demand for space to attend the *shiurim* of the Ponevez *Gedolei Torah*. Bais Yaakov of Ashdod, established for girls from needy families, is also growing.

The *Rosh Yeshivah* made presentations to five special friends of Yeshivas Ponevez: Rabbi and Mrs. Alexander Adler, Rabbi and Mrs. Avrohom

Navon, Mr. David Novick, Mr. Daniel Platovsky, and Rabbi and Mrs. Yehuda Weissler.

Kesser Torah Award

Reb Meir Gelley, dinner co-chairman, introduced Harav Gavriel Knopfler, *Rosh Yeshivah* of Shaarei Torah in Manchester, a former *talmid* of Ponevez for many years, and a *talmid muvhak* of Harav Shmuel Rozowsky, *zt"l*. Reb Gavriel reviewed the common denominator of all assembled — Rabbanim, *talmidei chachamim*, teachers, professionals and businessmen — all scions of the greater Ponevez family. They all know the aroma of *Gan Eden* from the sweetness and excitement of learning in the Ponevez *beis medrash* and *kollel*.

Parents of the Year Award

Rabbi Moshe Kreisman was introduced by Reb Gelley to accept the Parents of the Year Award on his and his wife's behalf. Reb Moshe spoke about his attachment to the yeshivah and its Rabbanim. He said that he feels an immense *hakaras hatov* to them and especially to Harav Michel Yehuda Lefkowitz, *zt"l*, who, at the age of 95, asked the current *Rosh Yeshivah*, Harav Eliezer Kahaneman, to relieve him of his duty of giving the daily *shiur* in the Yeshiva Ketana l'Tzeirim Metzuyananim which he did faithfully for almost 60 years after being appointed by the Ponevezer Rav. He concluded that the *bren* and *hasmadah* of Ponevez has not abated: the new generation emulates the old.

The famous *maggid* to the *Gedolei Hador* from *Eretz Yisrael* Harav Yisroel Meir Shushan gave a stirring speech peppered with various memories and made a strong appeal for support for the mother yeshivah of *Eretz Yisrael*, the Citadel of Torah — Ponevez.