

HAMODIA

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EDITORIAL

We Are With You, Jonathan

Languishing behind grim prison walls in Butner, North Carolina, is a shattered soul in precarious physical health. As these words are being written, he waits to learn whether he will be allowed to attend the funeral of his father, which is scheduled to take place this morning in Indiana.

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Is there anyone who can possibly understand the torment he is experiencing right now? Is there anyone who can possibly fathom the pain of a son who was not allowed to bid his father farewell?

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As we noted last week in these pages, and on many other occasions, the tragic story of Yehonasan ben Malka Pollard seems almost too horrific to be true.

Jonathan Pollard never intended to harm the United States. In fact, he was never charged with treason, and pleaded guilty only to "passing classified information to an ally, without intent to harm the United States."

The information passed was material that Israel was legally entitled to, according to a 1983 Memorandum of Understanding between the two countries. Furthermore, the classified information that was given to Israel was crucial to its defense.

Nonetheless, there is no doubt that Mr. Pollard made a terrible error when he passed classified information to Israel more than twenty-five years ago. On numerous occasions, he has expressed his deep remorse.

In a recent letter to President Obama, Pollard wrote: "Let me take this opportunity to ... once again state unequivocally that I am genuinely and sincerely sorry for the offense that I committed in passing classified information to Israel. My actions were wrong, and I deeply regret that I did not find a legal way to act upon my concerns for Israel."

But Pollard is hardly the first to spy on behalf of an American ally.

Consider the case of Samuel Morison, who spied on behalf of Great Britain. Sentenced to two years, he was released after only three months.

Or consider the case of Geneva Jones, who spied for Liberia and was sentenced to

three years and one month.

The most anyone other than Pollard ever got for this type of crime was 14 years, meted out to Steven Lalas, who spied on behalf of Greece. He committed his crime some seven years after Pollard and has already spent the last four years back home in Greece.

Today, the maximum sentence for such a crime is only ten years, the median sentence, two to four years. But Jonathan Pollard received an unprecedented and unparalleled life sentence. He is the only individual in the history of the United States to receive such a punishment for this crime.

Even many of those who spied on behalf of our enemies received far less. Amarylis Santos, Joseph Santos, Carlos Alvarez, and Mariano Faget spied for Communist Cuba. They got between three and a half and five years each.

Brian Horton spied for the Soviet Union. He got only six years.

Even Hassan Abu-Jihaad, a Navy sailor who praised the 2000 terror attack on the USS *Cole*, received only a ten-year sentence for leaking classified information to terrorist sympathizers.

The sharp contrast among the sentences is so striking that it has prompted a long list of former and current government officials — including former secretaries of state and a head of the CIA — to write to President Obama and urge him to grant clemency to Jonathan Pollard.

Kol Yisrael areivim zeh bazeh. Each of us has a sacred duty to do everything we possibly can on Jonathan Pollard's behalf. We are all equally obligated in the *mitzvah of pidyon shevuyim*, and we must make every possible effort, including continuing to reach out to the president and exhorting him to commute Pollard's sentence to time served.

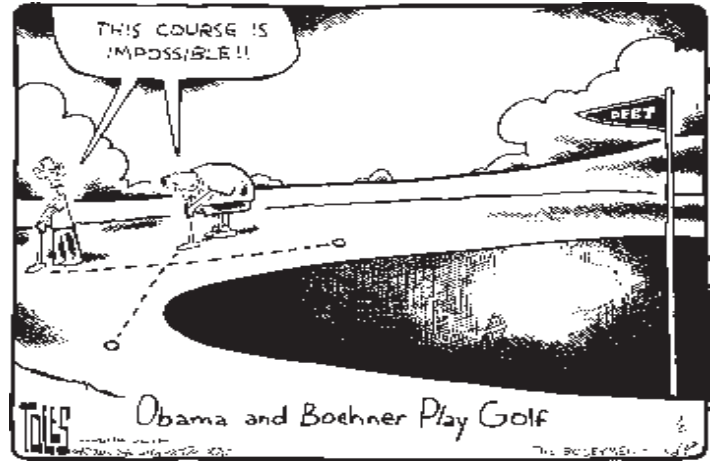
In his time of grief, we must let Pollard know that we, the united Jewish community, stand with him. His name is on our lips and in our hearts as we *daven* and recite *Tehillim*.

For twenty-five long, bitter years, Jonathan Pollard has suffered immeasurably. May the King of kings, Who frees captives and liberates the humble, grant freedom to Yehonasan ben Malkah, and console him among the mourners of Tzion and Yerushalayim.

Write to Jonathan Pollard at:

Jonathan Pollard
#09185-016
F.C.I. Butner
POB 1000/Clemson
Butner, N.C. 27509-1000.

Call the White House today at:
(202) 456-1111 and ask for President Obama to commute Jonathan Pollard's sentence to time served.



OPINION

The Budget Fight Is a Skirmish, Not the Real Battle

BY LEE H. HAMILTON

As Washington endures trench warfare over the looming vote to raise the nation's debt ceiling, you may be feeling a sense of *deja vu*. That's because we have, indeed, seen some variation of this all year: one side threatening to withhold its votes unless it sees massive cuts to the federal budget; the other criticizing draconian budget-slashing; and both sides fretting about the other's fiscal irresponsibility.

Yet once the debt ceiling has been dealt with, we'll see some variation of this debate again in the fall. The reason is simple. Our political leaders are arguing about more than staving off a government shutdown or raising the debt ceiling or even cutting government spending. They're really arguing about the size, scope and ambitions of the federal government.

This has been a bone of contention since the nation's founding — remember the debate between Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton over a national bank, federal responsibilities for Revolutionary War debt, and other such matters? Now, of course, the specifics are different, but the basic questions haven't changed all that much: How big should the federal government be? What's the right mix of public vs. private responsibility? Where should power lie on the federal-state-local spectrum? What really is our vision for the country?

I vividly remember sitting in the House chamber the night 15 years ago that President Bill Clinton declared, "The era of big government is over." The line drew explosive applause from both sides of the aisle, highlighting how politically popular the sentiment is. But it proved, in the end, to be wrong.

There are powerful forces that keep government growing: wars, defense, entitlements, the bureaucracy, lobbyists in the private sector pounding the halls of Congress for government favors, and, of course, the American people, who expect a great deal from their government. Democrats, on the whole, tend to see nothing wrong with federal activity and often want to extend its reach. But even many Republicans, while they don't like taxes,

have still pushed for growth in the public sector, whether it's the military or a Medicare drug prescription plan.

And all of this is aided by the usual response to national challenges: a commission of bright, well-meaning individuals who carefully study the matter and then recommend new government spending to combat cancer or rein in flooding on the Mississippi River or do whatever the cause of the moment demands.

The key question is, how does this get turned around? I suspect the answer, despite all the political fireworks we'll see this year and next, lies not in any grand legislative solution that will resolve all our fiscal woes in a single package, but in incremental changes that, over time, can make a difference.

Some will be politically difficult, such as reforms to entitlement programs, cuts to programs that have definite constituencies but may not be central to the national interest, and privatizing services in a way that serves the public's needs and boosts efficiency.

Others are politically simpler, but difficult to implement: reforming the federal government so it is better managed, more technologically adept, more efficient, more transparent and able to do more with less (words every politician loves to use, but has trouble putting into practice).

None of this will be easy. But if you're part of an American public that is growing ever more worried about the federal deficit and the government's debt burden, which would you rather see: An unending series of attention-getting arguments that never seem to get at the basic forces driving the growth of government? Or a profound determination to roll up our sleeves and instill efficiency and competition in all aspects of government, pursue entitlement and tax reform, and make other long-term fixes to the forces driving the size and scope of the federal government?

This may be the less exciting route, but without it, I'd suggest, not much will change.

Lee Hamilton is Director of the Center on Congress at Indiana University. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

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