

Israeli Official Calls for Negotiated Solution to Current 'Status Quo'

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Yael Dayan, daughter of the late Israeli soldier and statesman Moshe Dayan, told a small local gathering last week that the Jewish state has no alternative but to negotiate with Palestinian leaders -- and that she can't imagine any outcome much worse than the current status quo.

Dayan added that high expectations are needed if the upcoming talks at Annapolis are to have any chance at all of success.

"If we want peace, we have to be ready to pay a very heavy price. We have to look to solutions that have to do with the source of the conflict," said Dayan, a former Labor Party Knesset member who now serves as deputy mayor of Tel Aviv under the left-leaning Meretz Party banner.



Yael Dayan

Dayan, 67, spoke in Center City on Nov. 15 at a hastily organized reception sponsored by the Israeli Consulate and the International Visitor's Council of Philadelphia, a nonprofit organization with ties to the city. Roughly 20 invited guests, including three City Council members, attended the talk at the Dilworth Paxson law offices.

Moshe Dayan, a colorful and oftentimes controversial figure who died in 1981, served as the Israel Defense Force chief of staff, as well as defense minister during the Six-Day War and foreign minister during the peace negotiations with Egypt.

His daughter noted in her recent remarks that the world -- and the Palestinians -- will not stand for "continued occupation," and that Israel must be prepared to make significant territorial compromises. When pressed about the current state of affairs in the Hamas-run Gaza Strip following the August 2005 disengagement by Israel, Dayan replied: "Let's do a wall, but let's do a wall between Palestine and Israel. Let the other entity be separated from us. We've tried everything else."

Dayan, who also happens to be a novelist, was harshly critical of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert for the handling of last year's war with Hezbollah in Lebanon. She further rebuked him for failing to adequately protect the southern town of Sederot against a continued barrage of Palestinian rocket fire.

When asked about other ongoing threats facing Israel -- for example, from Iranian nuclear ambitions and the possibility of Islamic extremists overrunning Pakistan -- she acknowledged that "it's endless. But we can try and do our best with our immediate border, because at least there, there's a solution."