

Role of
The Milwaukee Jewish Council Vis A Vis Israel
(Part I, 1987)

POSITION

It is a tribute to the constantly beleaguered people of Israel - subject as they have been to continuing pressures of war and terrorism, political isolation and economic difficulty - that their nation is one of the very few states created since the end of World War II that has developed into a robust multiparty parliamentary democracy. As is true in any free society subjected to enormous political, social and cultural stress, such strains are reflected in the nation's political life. Thus, extremist political groups have garnered support among certain segments of Israeli society.

Members of Israel's government and Israelis in general have demonstrated increasing recognition of the need for programs to improve relationships between the Jewish and Arab residents of Israel.

The Milwaukee Jewish Council recognizes that people devoted to the State of Israel have expressed widely differing views on the possible solutions to these problems. The Council firmly denounces the use of threats, violence or extremist tactics by any group, and endorses the following as appropriate community responses to such problems:

1. We should speak out forcefully against extremist forces which seek radical alteration of Israel's democratic and pluralistic political structure.
2. We should encourage programs launched by the government and non-government groups in Israel to counter anti-democratic forces which seek to abridge the rights of Israel's Arab citizens.
3. We should continue to stress that ethnic or religious hatred has no place in Jewish tradition or the historic pattern of Jewish communal life and Zionism.

4. We should interpret to the American public efforts being undertaken in Israel to promote tolerance, combat bigotry and maintain the pluralistic, democratic nature of that country.
5. We should interpret to the American Jewish community the dangers posed by extremists.

Position adopted by the Commission on Israel and the Middle East
Adopted by the Board of Directors, June 10, 1987