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ENDOWMENT FOR MIDDLE EAST TRUTH (EMET)

UNRWA: PART OF THE SOLUTION OR PART OF THE PROBLEM?

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SARAH STERN: .

First of all, I want to thank Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and the committee for inviting us here to present today. We entitled our presentation “UNRWA: Part of the Solution, or Part of the Problem?”

And if you’d like to follow along, I’m going to do a brief overview, and then if you have questions, hopefully I can answer them. And Asaf Romirowsky, who is really the preeminent expert here on UNRWA, will probably be able to handle your questions much more thoroughly than I will.

I would like to start with the quote: “Peace does not exist in signed documents and charters alone, but in the hearts and minds of people,” by John F. Kennedy. This is particularly relevant to us when discussing UNRWA because the teachers of UNRWA are all paid by UNRWA salaries. Several years ago, the executive committee of the teachers union had voted to use the Islamic resistance, which is basically Hamas, as their guides to set their curriculum, which I’ll go into a little bit later.

The establishment of UNRWA – UNRWA, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees, was established by U.N. General Assembly Resolution 301 of December 8th, 1949, quote, “To carry out direct relief and works programs for Palestinian refugees.” It was a humanitarian mandate.

A history – UNRWA began its operations on May 1st, 1950. It was then envisioned as being a temporary agency that would dissolve when the Palestinian refugee problem was resolved.

Just eight months after UNRWA began, on December 14th, 1950, United Nations General Assembly established the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees.

The mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is, quote, “To lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide.” It strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another state, with the option of returning home voluntarily, integrate locally or resettle in a third country.” This is directly from the website of the High Commission of Refugees.

UNRWA was not folded into the UNHCR largely because of political pressure coming from the Arab nations. On the UNHCR website, that agency site, quote, “Fear that the nonpolitical character of the work envisioned by the UNHCR was not compatible with the highly politicized nature of the Palestinian question was the reason given for the fact that the Palestinian refugee problem was not folded into UNHCR.”

There is a PLO document that was found from the PLO Department of Refugee Affairs from Ramallah in 2000, that says, “In order to keep the refugee issue alive and prevent Israel from evading responsible for their plight, Arab countries, with the exception of Jordan, had usually sought to preserve a Palestinian identity by maintaining the Palestinian status of

refugees.”

Facts – just some basic, basic facts: UNRWA operates in Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Jerusalem, maintaining a total of 59 camps. And I believe Asaf Romirowsky is going to show us a map of where these camps are, later.

These camps have evolved into a permanent fixture in the Middle East with considerable bureaucracy and major infrastructure – (inaudible).

UNRWA’s mandate requires renewal on a three-year basis because it was designed as temporary. The present mandate runs until June 30th, 2011. UNRWA reports directly to the General Assembly; however, according to a U.N. representative that I spoke to, quote, “Since the agency is governmental in nature, the renewal is perfunctory.”

The budgetary facts – UNRWA’s budget is roughly a little over \$1 billion a year; it’s \$1.2 billion for this fiscal year. The United States is the largest single donor nation, providing over one-third of its annual budget. The EU is the second-largest donor. Canada is the third, or was the third. This year, Canada withdrew all of its funding because of, quote, “The general lack of accountability and transparency.”

Now, according to UNRWA – (inaudible) – according to UNRWA’s commissioner general, Karen AbuZayd, there are five reasons for UNRWA. The first is education. Second is health care. The third is social services. The fourth is microfinancing of small businesses. And the fifth is a program for housing.

Okay, education. The UNRWA’s teachers union voted in 2009 to allow Hamas to control the curriculum and textbooks of both Gaza and the West Bank. Now, this is only for Gaza and the West Bank. UNRWA schools in Jordan, Syria and Lebanese camps use the same textbooks as the local school system.

Now, this is a problem in and of itself, aside from the Palestinian problem within the West Bank and Gaza, because these textbooks reflect a consistent demonization of Jews and a denial of Israel’s historic right to exist or its claim to the land.

Okay, now, there is a wonderful organization called IMPACT, which is – if anybody wants any further information, they were established as a result of the Wye accords. They have both Palestinians monitoring Israeli textbooks and Israelis monitoring Palestinian textbooks.

And if anybody wants the information of Impact, you can come to me. I can give you their e-mail address, or I could give it to you right now. It’s info@impact – I-M-P-A-C-T – SE.org. And impact-se stands for Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education.

And according to a review that is just about to come out, they have reviewed the textbooks, and they said that it is replete with de-legitimization of Israeli and the Jewish other, demonization of the Jews and Israeli by portraying them as nefarious and cynical creatures such

as snakes, octopuses, and presenting a highly biased, one-sided narrative, and stressing constantly the ideal of martyrdom and arms struggle, praising the virtues of being a shahid or a martyr.

UNRWA accountability – UNRWA is responsible for the education of youngsters, not only within Gaza, but throughout its host government. They have promised 10 years ago that they are going to do an audit of the textbooks. We're still awaiting that audit.

And I noticed that UNRWA was misspelled there. Sorry. (Chuckles.)

Now, during times of conflict – Natan Sharansky has actually spoken about this – bomb making, indoctrination, recruitment, using UNRWA hospitals and schools to store and launch weapons and suicide bombers occur in Southern Lebanon, Gaza and Jenin, as well as centered in the UNRWA camps, and has been constantly documented over and over again by the Israeli government. And I can get you all the sources.

Now, during Operation Cast Lead, key UNRWA spokesman Christopher Gunness on a radio interview in the middle of Operation Cast Lead justified Hamas' rocket attacks onto – (inaudible) – southern Israel and said, quote, “The root of the rockets and people in Gaza tell you this, they will tell you that the occupation is being resisted. That's the reason for the rockets.”

Now, all of this is extremely troubling to us as taxpayers and certainly, you know, the Israeli government as well. The Israeli government's position is that they have no problem with UNRWA maintaining itself as a humanitarian organization, but they're extremely upset about the politicizing of their position. And that is totally inappropriate for a humanitarian organization.

Now, it has been requested that members of a Hamas terrorist organization being dismissed from the roles. And Mustafa Sawaf, editor-in-chief of the Hamas daily Felesteen newspaper, on April 16th, '09 in a letter to John Ging of UNRWA, who is the director of operations, said, “Laying off from the agency employees because of their political affiliation means laying off all of the employees of the agency, meaning UNRWA, because they are all members of the resistance in various forms, i.e., terrorist organizations.”

Here's another quote from Dr. Masalm Abu Hala (ph) of Jerusalem Open University and the Balata refugee camp a – (inaudible) – UNRWA camp, saying, “It may well be when we have programs like the Jerusalem Open University and development programs, they might have an adverse effect on the refugees' demand for return. Such programs might be too gradual an unconscious refugee integration and resettlement, which is essentially what everybody who has been connected with UNRWA has been working against.

Now, the right of return is praised and extolled throughout the textbooks, throughout the refugee camps. You see murals of all of Israel. There's never a name of a Jewish city in Israel. They're all Palestinian cities. You see murals of the shahid and – (inaudible) – and martyrs, extolling virtues of martyrdom.

And Ralph Galloway, a former UNRWA director, said, “The Arab states do not want to

solve the refugee problem. They want to keep it as an open sore and as a weapon against Israel. Arab leaders don't give a damn whether the refugees live or die." That was former director of UNRWA, who felt very much that the Arab nations have been very responsible for the plight of the refugees.

Now, I think what sums this all up is a poem that is in a textbook. And there are so many of these, I just went through with a friend of mine, who speaks Arabic fluently – I don't – some of the textbooks that are in the UNRWA camps. This was from "Our Beautiful Language," it's a fifth grade textbook for Arabic. And this was translated in 2009.

And the poem is "We Shall Return":

"We shall return to the homes, to the mountains under the flag of glory
She had (a struggle ?) with blood, sacrifice, fraternity and loyalty."

In sum, it's extremely important, particularly today as we're about to enter peace talks again that we examine the root cause of the problem. And the root cause of the problem does not exist in issues such as the size or shape of the map of Israel, but it is in the hearts and minds of the people. And as long as children are being taught that one day they will return to their parents', grandparents' and their great-grandparents' homes, vineyards and orchards in Haifa, then the problem will exist for generations.

And as American taxpayers, we are paying for this education that they're getting. And this education is keeping the conflict alive. Thank you.

ASAF ROMIROWSKY: So first of all I too would like to thank Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen her committee and Sarah for inviting me to present today. I've worked with Sarah now for the past few months focusing UNRWA I've spent the most part of the past 15 years studying UNRWA .

I served on the IDF as a liaison officer and dealt with international organizations in the West Bank and have witnessed UNRWA's work on the ground, which led to my academic career my research deals with UNRWA and why there is an organization that really is an anomaly-at-large in the scope of refugee relief.

The report that James Lindsay for the Washington Institute and the Galloway quote that Sarah highlighted in her presentation will serve as the two bookends to the larger problem that we're facing today.

What's unique about those two individuals is the fact that they were two employees of UNRWA. You do not find many employees of UNRWA who will go against this organization. Furthermore, you will also not find hardly any Palestinians who would argue that UNRWA is wrong or is insufficient or is problematic.

The reasons for that is of course because UNRWA is the largest educational system that most Palestinians are educated by. Most Palestinians are alums of the UNRWA school system. And to find somebody who will say that we do not support UNRWA is hard to come by. There are a few Palestinians you will find today, namely individuals like Bassem Eid, who was involved with Sharansky and has his own kind of human rights organization in the eastern part of Jerusalem these days, and the talks about the fact that UNRWA is problematic in the sense that it has abused the refugee status.

But other than people like Eid, you will not find other individuals like that.

One needs to understand, when you look at this larger context of UNRWA, is the fact that UNRWA's raison d'être is the Palestinian right of return. As long as there's a claim for a Palestinian right of return, U.N. Resolution 194, UNRWA will continue and UNRWA continues to exist as an organization that basically maintains that status.

The acronym UNRWA itself, the w stands for works. In the 1950s, UNRWA attempted to try to rehabilitate Palestinian refugees. They tried to create job rehabilitation. That was not successful. As a result of that, the major job and the major function of UNRWA today has become education. And what you see today are larger symptoms of a larger problem, that is education and incitement to hate.

The problem with that is such. If you look at the general kind of pool of refugees worldwide, UNRWA today counts, in the most liberal count, between 5.1 (million) to 5.5 million refugees worldwide. And the question is, you know, where did all these 5.5 million refugees come from?

The important part in the aspect of looking at definitions – and I'd like to show you here, I have one visual I think that is pertinent to show. This is really the key issue as it relates to who the refugees are and where they come from and why you have so many refugees around the world when it comes to Palestinians.

UNHCR, which is the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, deals with refugees worldwide. Their basic assumption of a refugee is the fact that a refugee can only be a refugee for one year at max and that's it. Since World War II, we're talking about about 150 million refugees worldwide. All have been assimilated with the exception of one population, that is the Palestinians.

And the reason for that is because UNRWA, if you look at a definition, basically defines a refugee, anybody who lived in the mandatory area of Palestine between '46 and '48, two years prior to the establishment of the state of Israel. So when you understand the implication of who a refugee is, based on UNRWA, it has to do with the fact that even Arab Israelis, who are citizens of the state of Israel today, according to UNRWA's population study are still defined as refugees.

So when UNRWA calls for a full right of return, it also includes Arab Israelis. Furthermore, it also includes their descendants, something that we don't see anywhere else around the world or in any other refugee relief organization namely the UNHCR.

Again, the irony is, of course, that one can be born into a status of a refugee, so you have generations and generations of kids who are led to believe that they are, you know, going back to Jaffa, Haifa, whatnot, you know, the images that, if any of you have seen, of kids carrying around the keys and the deeds to homes. They're led to believe that this is where their home is truly at.

The two largest communities in the U.S. post Israel's war of independence at the end of '49 are Dearborn, Michigan and Jacksonville, Florida. And separating apart from, you know, what comes out of those Palestinian populations, when you interview those populations, you – (inaudible) – that they are first and foremost Palestinian rather than American. And they still cry for a right of return, even though they, you know, their lifestyle does not, you know, mean, does not indicate or have any kind of indication that they are refugees. But they believe that the refugee status is what will allow eventually a return back to a Palestinian entity, the full Palestine, the greater Palestine envisioned by Yasser Arafat and other Palestinian leaders over the years.

But it's key to understanding where UNRWA's definition of a refugee comes from, the fact that you can actually inherit the status of a refugee, which no other country, which no other agency does. In contrast, to the UNHCR, which is the larger provider of refugees relief worldwide which has no such practice.

Another important factor which is important to understand is the fact that UNRWA is the largest employer of Palestinians. If you compare between the amount of employees, refugees, UNHCR employs for refugees worldwide approximately 6,000 employees. UNRWA employs close to 30,000 employees that are all Palestinian. Ergo, if you are a Palestinian working for UNRWA, why would you have any kind of incentive to de-fund UNRWA to begin with.

The indoctrination to become a true advocate for the Palestinian cause took place basically in the mid '50s. At the beginning of UNRWA's days, they tried to stay true to their mandate. That is, to try to remain neutral, to try to remain balanced, to try to understand both sides of the arena. That did not work out.

What UNRWA realized later on, that if they were to become a true, full-fledged advocate organization for the Palestinian cause, the money will come in. And indeed, UNRWA has claimed financial dire conditions since its inception and always going around basically trying to fund-raise.

The Arab world stipulate contributions to UNRWA only if the agency fully became an advocate for the Palestinian cause. That is why UNRWA in the late '50s became the only organization to really validate the Palestinian right of return and the Palestinian cause and really lost their humanitarian integrity in the process.

Their biggest success, I would argue, took place in 1969, two years after the Six-Day War, that is that the General Assembly were able to change the wording of who a refugee is, and basically redefined to say that Palestinians are no longer refugees, but actually inalienable citizens of the land of Palestine.

So the fact they were able to change the wording in the General Assembly and to define the fact that we are no longer refugees, but we are now citizens of a country that really that doesn't exist, really was making the connection between the land and the people itself, something that has always been debated about, the ownership of the land itself and who has the rightful return to the land itself.

Understanding the language of the right of return is also indicative of the fact that there is going to be a return back to a land that was necessarily theirs. If you actually understand the difference between UNHCR and UNRWA, the major difference is in what creates a refugee, talks a lot about has to do with persecution during times of war and the fact that they have no longer a place to return to, and that's why they have become refugees.

UNRWA and Palestinians don't believe that is the case. They believe they have a place to return to, and that is, of course, Israel today. And of course, all along, they also believe that there is that land belongs to them.

From the Arab/Palestinian narrative, there was always an understanding that the responsibility of the refugees lies not only with the West and, specifically, the U.S., but also Israel, the fact that the West allowed Israel to come to fruition, you know, during the war of independence, it was a problem. And the fact that they allowed that to happen, it's also their responsibility.

That's why no Arab country would ever take responsibility for the refugees. So the refugee camps that were created were not only a symbol, basically a mechanism to create and to also make sure that the issue stays on the front burner. The fact that there are refugee camps in Syria and in Lebanon and, you know, that means that, you know, that it's always an ongoing issue, which is the really the goal of the PLO today, to make the Palestinian the flag ship issue of the Arab world at large.

So Arafat in his day was able to go around and perpetuate the sentiment of 'refugeeness' Until you solve this problem, we are going to continue the revolution, we are going to continue. They have become the constant symbol, the fact that we are a, you know, we have these refugees and, you know, we need to, like, save them, the refugees are living in dire conditions. There is a holocaust happening in the Palestinian areas – all of this as a mechanism to exacerbate and to give the image that all of this is happening within the refugee camps.

Interestingly enough, in my research, I have discovered, of course, that you find that Israel actually in the way Israel has done business agreed to take in already in 1950 the close to 250,000 of the original number of refugees that were created at the end of 1949. Now, the numbers about how many refugees there were at the end of 1949 vary between 10 to 15 percent in the scholarship The accepted number is predominantly about 700,000 refugees that were created as a result of the war itself.

Now, those are, of course, the Palestinians who didn't – the Arab Palestinians who did not stay in the area of the mandatory area of Palestine. All of those who stayed and did not flee became Arab Israelis. All those who fled became refugees because they were told to. And this

is, again, we have the transcripts, we know the intelligence about why the Arabs left Haifa and Jaffa and Lud during the war itself, because they were told basically, once you leave your homes, we will eradicate the Zionist entity, then you will be able to come back and you will live, you know, prosperously. That obviously was not the case, and then we have these refugees.

Israel was told, when all these negotiations were taking place in the early '50s under the Truman administration at the time, people like Abba Eban and Moshe Sharett would agree to take in a symbolic number.

However, the caveat for taking in these 200-and-some-thousand refugees at the time was that they would have to recognize Israel's right to exist, and live in peace. The Palestinians said no, that was not happening.

So the denial and the fact that the inability to accept Israel's right to exist, with the idea that Israel would eventually disappear and they will come back, continues to motivate them.

Now, UNRWA itself took that to their advantage. And when you look at what UNRWA has been able to do over the past 62 years, is basically transform itself into this sole voice of the Palestinian cause.

I mentioned to you the issue of monies. If you look – and I have looked at all of the pension funds that UNRWA employees have, you're talking about billions of dollars that go to UNRWA employees and go to the organization itself, but don't go to the refugees. As long as the Palestinian refugee right of return exists, UNRWA will continue to exist.

What Lindsay documented in his report and which is very, you know, unique about Lindsay is the fact that Lindsay served as the head of the legal department in Gaza. He was the one who investigated all the use of UNRWA vehicles that were used to transport suicide bombers.

Lindsay doesn't acknowledge all of these accounts. I do give James a lot of credit for the fact that he acknowledged a report that I coauthored with Barry Rubin about seven months prior to his report, acknowledging that the documentation we put forth is actually true.

And so, again, the fact that there is an UNRWA employee that will say this is interesting in itself.

But UNRWA has made itself this type of institution. I would argue that over the past 62 years what UNRWA has done so successfully is really become a shadow government for the Palestinian Authority. The fact of the matter is that all the services that UNRWA provides today – education, social services and whatnot should be under the the Palestinian Authority not UNRWA's services. They should be the Palestinian Authority's services, which is the criticism of, you know, the acknowledgment at least that Baseem Eid wages, to say, you know, if you are serious about becoming a state, then take all those responsibilities.

However, when you, when you talk to individuals like Salam Fayyad and specifically

when you talk to people like Mahmoud Abbas, they all still call for the right of return. If they continue to call for the right of return, there is no reason for UNRWA to discontinue its services.

And that's how they've basically acted, that's how they have basically a hold on Palestinian society to say, we are going to control you, we are going to provide all these services.

For us as U.S. taxpayer dollars, actually there is a kind of a – there are duplicate lumps. We give money, not only to UNRWA, we also give money to the Palestinian Authority. The \$900 million allocated by Clinton was given to Salam Fayyad's operating budget. It has nothing to do with the money that UNRWA gets. There are these lines, and Palestinians are able to benefit from both of these monies. So again, a question about, you know, operationally tracking where all these monies are coming from and where they're going, the transparency and accountability is more, you know, ironically, more with the Palestinian Authority these days than it is with UNRWA.

The reason that, you know, to Sarah's point, why Canada, of late, de-funded from UNRWA? And Canada was one of the major donors to UNRWA, because their first secretary-general of UNRWA was Canadian, Major General Howard Kennedy. And Kennedy's point was we need to help the poor refugees. What Canada did of late had to do with the fact that they saw no transparency and accountability with UNRWA, and they said, it's not that we're going to stop giving money to the Palestinian Authority at large, we're not going to give money to UNRWA. We want to give to projects that we can see some kind of accountability and transparency when we're looking to see where that money is. With UNRWA, that is not the case.

When UNRWA goes to ask for money, all they have to say is, we take care of the betterment of Palestinians. And people will say, okay, here is the check and go, you know, go take care of business. That is the biggest problem that we have.

From the Israeli perspective, just to give you a sense of the kind of the Catch-22 with Israel, Israel believes, naively or not, that basically that if UNRWA doesn't take care of the Palestinians it's going to be Israel's responsibility. I disagree with that assessment. There are ways to basically use other U.N. agencies to basically wean off Palestinian society out of UNRWA services. UNRWA has a monopoly. If we were going to go and see giving at other U.N. services, not to leave the Palestinians in dire straits, then there is a better way of tracking where the money is going.

Of late, which is a positive side on the Israeli side and specifically took place post this engagement in 2005, Israel has become a lot more concerned about UNRWA because of the ties UNRWA has had to Hamas. My former colleagues in the IDF, who I've been in touch with over the years, are now more concerned about UNRWA's ties to Hamas which they find to be problematic.

And that's where the modern-day problems take place, vis-à-vis, you know, is our money going directly to fund Hamas activity?

Hamas on its point, you know, it used to be that UNRWA would provide its services for free and giving out kind of their supplies and meals and what not. Today, Hamas is stealing the

supplies and selling them to Palestinians. So Palestinians are basically getting food on both ends, because now they have to pay for the food that was originally free they were being given from UNRWA.

All of this is the larger challenge that we have. But it is critical to understand when you look at this issue on the larger spectrum of the Arab-Israeli conflict, that looking at U.S.-Israeli relations and now that we're trying to, you know, on the heel of all these talks, the one issue that basically fuels the conflict itself is the right of return. Somebody has to say there's an end to a right of return.

If there is no end to the right of return, organizations like UNRWA will continue to thrive. And the problem with that goes back to the ultimate definition, that basically any Palestinian or any individual who has a tie today to a Palestinian national basically has the opportunity for a right of return.

Palestinians themselves, who I've interviewed in the camps, know exactly that there is never going to be a full right of return. No Israeli government, left, right or center, will ever accept the full right of return, because it will basically alter the demographic majority of the state of Israel.

That being said, even if we find that percentage wise, going back to the original numbers of '49, the fact is that what Palestinians know that it will come to play and it will come to translate into monetary funds. So what that means as far as – (inaudible) – practice is, is the fact that Palestinians will leave the Palestinian refugee camps and they will live somewhere else, but still hold onto some kind of shack in the refugee camp. And then when eventually monies will come in to say, you know, you want to prove that you're a refugee, they will show, we are still refugees, we still have the I.D. cards, we still have a home in the camp itself, i.e., we deserve that monetary compensation.

So Palestinians in the back of their minds understand that. However, from a larger kind of an organizational structure, the Palestinian Authority and UNRWA itself will never say no to the right of return, because it's been able to maintain their existence for 62 years. And this is where we are today.

But to end, and I'll open up the floor to as many questions as we might have, and we can tackle them together, I think that the argument for us as U.S. tax-paying, you know, individuals has to be an American issue. It's not necessarily an Israeli issue.

And the work that EMET has done, the work that I've done for EMET and other groups on the Hill, you know, are trying to highlight all of this.

What individuals like Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen and Mark Kirk and Steve Rothman and others who are doing now when it comes to the accountability and transparency when it comes to UNRWA has to do with the fact that the goal is to show that we as American taxpayer dollars are basically funding an organization that has lent its diplomatic immunity to terrorist organizations and has enabled them to thrive by lending that status.

That's why we saw over the past few years and during Operation Cast Lead, for example, the use of the schools and the nurseries and the vehicles to transport, to manufacture, to create suicide attacks. All of this is basically approved and UNRWA is basically in cahoots with organizations like Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and other groups, and even al-Qaida and Lebanon in the – (inaudible) – which has always been a thriving hub for terrorist activity in that refugee camp.

It has to do with the fact that if we're serious about this we have to ask for that transparency and accountability. And I believe that that has to start with the education. As long as Palestinian kids are led to believe that Israel is a (non-existent ?} entity, as long as they are led to believe that we are going to return back to a place that no longer exists, you are going to continue seeing on this perpetual status.

And that's why the textbooks are the first place to start as far as indoctrination and incitement to hate, because UNRWA's mandate is to use what they consider to be the textbooks of the host country. If the host country is Hamas, you're going to see them using a lot of the citations that Sarah showed you before.

So on that note, thank you very much. (Applause.)

Q & A Period

MR. ROMIROWSKY: Yeah. That's a very important point. And I'm glad you raised the question. UNRWA does not do any kind of terrorist vetting. I mean, basically, if you look, for example, at the acknowledgment of the former secretary-general of UNRWA Peter Hansen in 2002, he acknowledged on Canadian Broadcasting Network that basically they hire members of Hamas. There is no vetting.

And how that is done in practice is an interesting dynamic. And I've seen it in practice when I've dealt with UNRWA employees myself. You could be a gardener, a cook, a chef by day, but a member of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad or Hamas by night.

So when UNRWA vets these background checks, they don't look for a terrorist tie, they don't ask in the questionnaire, which is clearly stated in English and in Arabic, were you ever a member of a terrorist organization. The fact that they consider Hamas a, I would say, diversity, I would say the fact that they are a legitimate player, they don't ask those questions. They see it as part of the resistance and the fact that, you know, that that's allowed to happen. But they don't fly by those rules.

Furthermore, when you look at the databases, which is even more interesting to look at itself, all the years that Israel was governing the Palestinian areas, there were – the Israeli side had censuses that we knew exactly the names. We could cross-match the information as far as, was an individual involved in terrorist activity, and we could say no to an UNRWA employee and say, you can't hire this guy because he has such and so, you know, on his record. That no longer exists.

I mean, UNRWA has been phenomenal about not only double counting, but resurrecting the dead. And when you have, you know, this, you know, again, the fact that we're refugees for life, they really mean that. And so the problem is, you know, there is a problem of actually finding out the background. And UNRWA has no intention of doing that.

I mean, again, the fact that they employ – the majority of their employees are Palestinian, there is no way of making that happen.

Furthermore, what has legitimized it – and to Sarah's point, and I'll explain to you how that works exactly – is the teachers unions. Teachers unions for years have become basically the foundation for a political bloc. And what has happened is that, you know, if you are a graduate of an UNRWA school and then you become a teacher or a superintendent in that school area, and then you vote for a teachers union, but that school union is funded by Hamas, you are going to support Hamas' agenda.

We knew in the old days, in the '80s and '90s, there were all these code names for different parties that were basically conduits for Hamas. Now we don't even need to know that. We know exactly where they stand on those matters. And again, the fact that they are considered to be a legitimate part of the Palestinian Legislative Council, again, doesn't prohibit them from acting within Hamas activities.

Moreover, even when you have internationals coming in, and the majority of Palestinians of the employees of UNRWA are not international, if you do not take the party line, you'll be basically kicked back to Norway, Geneva or where you came from. And what happened, as you know, you know, you might come with a different ideology about what refugee relief is all about when you're in Europe, but once you get to the camps, you'll get a different image.

Lindsay is very different. I mean, Lindsay is the only employee that I know who has ever done that. The quote, you know, just to go back to the quote that, you know, was given to the – (inaudible) – citing Galloway, there is a larger story to Galloway. You know, Galloway made that quote in 1953. And there was a testimony in Congress about refugee about what are we going to do with that.

He left UNRWA. He was only in UNRWA – he was an UNRWA – he was the head of the Amman office in Jordan. And what happened there was basically he was able to see that they were – they tried to indoctrinate him. And Galloway was actually – his full name is actually Sir Alexander Galloway. And Galloway was a former British general, who was able to say that he did not toe the line, because he served within the British troops and he knew exactly, you know,

he was enraptured with the Arabs. And once he got to Amman and he saw the type of indoctrination that took place there, he basically quit after a year.

That's why he made that testimony. And actually, he wrote that article in a paper in London in *The Daily Telegraph* talking about the fact that what the problems were. But that's a larger issue also, though.

MR. ROMIROWSKY: And nobody's checking anybody's Facebook to see what they're putting on it. (Laughter.)

MS. STERN: Josh.

Q: A sort of general question then, sort of following on the example of Canada. On the presumption that between now and the end of the (or the cutting off ?) the peace talks that are about to start, and presumably, you know, there will be peace by the end of the month, but –

MR. ROMIROWSKY: Tomorrow.

Q: Right, tomorrow. But sort of following the Canadian example, assuming that the United States isn't going to go whole hog and say, you know, forget it, because 71 percent of the budget, if we pulled out, that's it, they shut their doors, what about a hybrid sort of approach whereby all the camps that are in the West Bank and Gaza are shuttered, since there is a Palestinian Authority which the United States is already funding and has purportedly greater accountability, why not have all of them folded into the Palestinian Authority? UNRWA would still exist outside of that area, we, you know, the Palestinian Authority would then control the education for the future generations of these people – granted, that's a problem of its own which (UNRWA ?) and EMET and others focus on – but theoretically, the United States has some way of maintaining some control and accountability, transparency and so forth.

Based on your research, based on your interaction with the players, what do you think there is the likelihood of this sort of hybrid approach whereby you're not attacking the integrity of UNRWA, even though obviously that's an issue, but (no one now ?), the Europeans don't have to sign onto it, the U.N. doesn't have to sign onto it, they don't have to shutter their doors at that level, but Palestinians who reside in the West Bank and Gaza, who are the primary source of problems, security level, for the Israelis, they will be sort of taken from that institution and entrusted to the Palestinian Authority?

MR. ROMIROWSKY: Well, it's an interesting question. Because actually, that's the same question that actually the former Israeli secretary of State Silvan Shalom asked after disengagement. And he went to then Secretary-General Karen AbuZayd and said, okay, well, okay, there is no Palestinians, now what's the problem? And AbuZayd's response, you know, as ridiculous as it may sound, basically said, we need to help the Palestinians mobilize themselves in the southern part of Gaza and the northern part of Gaza. And said, you know, we have no

interest in leaving.

UNRWA's claim is basically, only when there is a full resolution for all Palestinians, wherever they may be, only then will they cease to exist.

It's interesting, you know, when I interviewed Lindsay and, you know, and I asked him when he was hired, you know, what was your interview process, you know, when you were asked? And actually, Lindsay was told that actually, you know, very bluntly, don't get too comfortable, because it was, you know, he was hired, you know, at the beginning of Camp David II, you know, Barak was coming to Washington, there's peace around the door. You know, and once there is peace, you know, we're basically shutting our doors down and, you know, don't get too comfortable.

And basically, that was the impetus for Lindsay to write the report to begin with, because he basically that, you know, even though he was told that officially on paper, UNRWA, you know, was created, you know, in 1949 and, you know, here we are, you know, 60-plus years later and UNRWA has no incentive of leaving.

And believe me, when you look at the pension funds of UNRWA's employees, I mean, there is no reason for them to leave. I mean, they have a wonderful 401(k) program, and there is no reason for them to say, you know, we don't want to, you know, receive the benefit of working for UNRWA.

And the fact of the matter is that, yes, make no mistake, there is poverty, there is, you know, they're living in dire (groups ?) in the camps. The ultimate question has to be not, is there poverty, because it does exist. The question is, is why does it exist, and who is able to manufacture that?

I mean, I would even go further. I mean, you're talking – I mean, you know, Sarah mentioned in one of her bullet points here the issue of housing and homes. In 1970, you know, it was Levi Eshkol who was the prime minister, you know, right after, you know, the Six-Day War. The civil administration was established and, you know, the whole government that allowed, you know, Israel got involved with governing Palestinians, offered the Palestinians homes.

And basically, they said, if you don't want us to build the homes for you, we'll allocate the land. Go build the homes for yourself. And there was a, you know, it was a staggering response by then Yasser Arafat who said, no way in hell am I going to make that happen. Because in '68, you know, Fatah and the PLO came together. He was trying to recruit for the PLO at the time. If the Palestinians had a better lifestyle to look forward to when they were not living in the camps, which allowed them to basically have that control on them, why would they support the revolution?

So Arafat flatly refused that. I mean, we're not going to take anything from the occupier, from Israel, to allow us to building homes. And that's why I'm saying that, historically speaking, Palestinians know this. And the Palestinian masses, that's why they keep a (shock ?) in the refugee camp, and that's why they live outside the camp, to say, you know, it may not be a full

right of return, but I'm going to get money for this. And why shouldn't I be getting money for this?

And the people who are going to fund this process are going to be our taxpayer dollars. I guarantee that. And so even if you're looking, you know, historically at the Barak proposal about the percentages and who is going to come back, it comes down to money.

And so my argument has been, you know, if the Palestinian right of return is less ideological and more financial, you know, we could, you know, there's something that we can do about this. But the fact of the matter is that there is no incentive to make this happen.

You know, the fact that no official Palestinian spokesman will ever acknowledge that the right of return is, you know, null and void, and that's going to continue on. I mean, that's, you know, that's what exacerbates and motivates it continuing. If they're not going to acknowledge it, UNRWA's never going to acknowledge it, and they're always going to continue on.

That's why they never want to bring that to the final status negotiations, because they can always claim it's never going to be enough. And that's, you know, the cycle that continues on and on.

MS. STERN: Right. And Josh, I'd like to also take a stab at your very good question and very nice suggestion.

According to IMPACT-SE that monitors the textbooks and schoolbooks, they feel very, very strongly that if these UNRWA accounts are going to exist in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, their educating generations towards return in Israel as well. And they feel that we as taxpayers and policy wonks have the key. UNRWA's always talking about that symbolic iconic key to return to their grandfathers' homes in Tel Aviv and Haifa. We hold the key in terms of what's being taught in the schools, and we should put some conditionality, and we should vet the textbooks.

Now, the textbooks in Syria and Lebanon and Jordan are the textbooks of the host countries. But in the UNRWA's camps, since we are paying for UNRWA, we should be vetting what's being taught in those camps.

Q: First of all, I want to commend you guys for being here, because I think this is an issue that really doesn't get heard much on the Hill – (inaudible) – important to hear.

And I just want to make two quick points. One is – (inaudible) – vetting. As someone who worked at the State Department, saw names passed through State channels for vetting purposes, I just wanted to make clear, when names are vetted by some agencies, it's more of let's see what we have versus let's see what we can find. That's a huge distinction.

So the State Department will look to see in its own databases what it may have on a person, but it doesn't look beyond that. And you have to, depending on the particular issue, you need to look beyond that. You need to call other agencies and see what they have. The State Department just looks to see what they have, they don't look to see what they can find on

somebody. And there's a large difference there.

The second comment I wanted to make was, there was a really good piece by the BBC, I think it was recently, last week, about they interviewed Palestinian refugees in Syria. And a few of them, most of them, said, you know, I have some Palestinian identity, but I'm a student. You know, I live here, I want to be accepted here, I want to work. You know, they aspired to be a part of the society where they were living. And if you have a moment, I encourage you all to Google that article by the BBC on Palestinians in Syria.

And my question was for Sarah. You put a slide up there that I don't – maybe it was the Galloway quote, I can't remember – about this gentleman in UNRWA saying, well, everybody has a political identity, everybody is part of the resistance.

And I think the point that he's getting at, you know, political identification in the Palestinian society is very important. It's a key to jobs, it's a key to money, it's a key to status. It's not like we belong to Democrat or Republican here because we get things from them. I think he was getting to that point. And he was saying, well, how do I fire everybody, because everybody has a political identification?

MS. STERN: Right.

Q: So the question for you that I have is, how do you get around it? I mean, do you say, okay, no one, if you're a member of Hamas, then, no, you're out; if Fatah, if you're a member of Fatah, you can be an UNRWA employee?

MS. STERN: Well, again, America is the largest donor to UNRWA. And the United States State Department has Hamas on their terrorist list. And I think that we should at least vet members of Hamas from teaching the children in the camps. That's very fundamental.

And what we're basically doing is, we are contravening our own policy by having this hands-off approach to who they hire and what goes on within the camps. And we do have a very definite policy towards peace, you know. And if we are, you know, creating this kind of paradoxical equation where it will never be resolved so long as we have Hamas teachers in charge of the curriculum, and we should be vetting them.

MS. ROMIROWSKY: Just to add to that point, it's a very interesting dynamic. I mean, when you ask, you know, when Cast Lead took place, and there was that whole – also a few years before that, there was an incident where an assigned teacher, who was the head of a prep school in Rafah was a member of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. And it was like everybody was shocked by that. You know, we don't hire terrorists.

They will tell you, I mean, when UNRWA leaves, the day when they close the doors of the school, we're not responsible for what happens in the schools after we leave. And when you go around the schools, they'll tell you, you know, why do you have pictures of shahids and martyrs, you know, and Hamas members? It's that, you know, we're afraid if we don't have those, then, you know, that will be harmful to us. You know, but once we close our doors, we

don't care what happens with the facility. And that's kind of how they toed the line of saying, well, you know, it's Kosher, but not Kosher enough, you know, if they use our facilities.

But to say that, you know, I think there's even a better chance today, especially, you know, because of the – (inaudible) – between Fatah and Hamas and the fact that there is a better chance of it because it was very clear that when Israel went into Gaza that people, you know, on Abbas' side of the aisle were actually supporting the Israeli operation because of how much Hamas is a threat to them.

If you can make the case that, you know, Hamas is detrimental to Palestinian society and then that we need to support that, then there's a better chance, you know, then they see also Hamas as a threat to their way of life, and that will also motivate them to make those kind of, you know, kind of clear-cut, you know, clearance background checks and whatnot.

But you know, again, it's a problem. And you know, but the way it enforces – again, if it uses a foreign terrorist group, then that's where the line is. And the money is not going to go there.

But again, when you go in and say, we want money because we're taking care of Palestinians at large, and that includes Arab Israelis, and basically every Palestinian who goes around claiming the right of return, then why should – and UNRWA will say, well, why should Hamas members who may be or forced to become or coerced to become Hamas members, but they're still Palestinians, don't deserve our services. And that's this tricky dynamic, you know, of, you know, where they toe the line. And they don't. I mean, the (red lines ?) are very flexible.

Q: To broaden this a little bit – and I have a question for you, too – UNRWA seems to be part of almost a welfare problem for Palestinians. And I was wondering, does UNRWA pay more if you have more children? Because what we found in the U.S. is they pay more if they have more children. And in the Palestinian territories, that's going to be a problem, because you have a bunch of children, especially if they eventually grow up, their 20-something-year-old men are the problem, and they have nothing to do, and those tend to be the people who cause problems worldwide. I mean, this is just a fact. When you have a large population of 20-something-year-old men, you have a lot of strife.

So in a way, this is part of the welfare problem. And I guess my major question is, if we did, say, not fund UNRWA ourselves, wouldn't Saudi Arabia just jump in and fund them?

Saudi does fund UNRWA. I mean, you know, again, the Arab world, you know – first of all, the Arab world, you know, as I mentioned in my earlier remarks, they contribute to UNRWA, you know, more than any other Western countries because they don't want it to become their problem. That's their way of saying, we haven't left our poor Palestinian brethren to die on their own, we have UNRWA, and UNRWA is taking care of you. We're funding this agency to make sure that you're going to make it happen.

They're not saying, you know, going back to Jess' remark, you know, what happened of late now happened in Lebanon where there was, you know, an allowance to create, you know, to

create some kind of second-class citizenship and allow it to be integrated into the host country they live in, because, again, there is a fear that if there is going to be, from the Arab world's perspective, a hub that will allow Palestinians to gain citizenship, that is going to become the next Palestine, as happened in Jordan and Lebanon.

And Lebanon is very fearful of that. They don't want to take any. You know, we have enough problems on our own, why do we want the Palestinians? And even if Jordan were to agree to take in Palestinians, we don't want the Gazans.

I mean, there is this kind of trickle-down effect about, you know, the fragmentation within, you know, Palestinian society itself. It's not one cohesive society. But you're right about that.

In the '50s, even early on, the early UNRWA workers and even, you know, what predated UNRWA were the Quakers, actually. And they were going around trying to figure out, you know, who are we giving these rations to? So they would see them, you know, standing in line twice and, you know, and bringing other people. So they already knew there was a problem with the numbers. And first, we've got to get a direct census here.

The original I.D. cards also listed next of kin. So if a father came, then he would show, you know, I have a wife and I have eight kids, so based on that I have to get, you know, X amount of rations.

Then they figured out that was problematic, because even if that kid lived somewhere else, he was still getting the amount of rations, because even if he was living in Lebanon or anywhere else, then they would still get the rations for it. So then everybody had to get their own I.D. card that listed, of course, I'm a refugee, I have my I.D. card.

But that's the issue. You know, it is a welfare system that, you know, has been able to allow this to happen. And there is no vetting. And the fact that, you know, from a demographic perspective, obviously, of course, that there is an issue, of course, that, you know, the birth rate of Palestinians is greater than Jews living in Israel.

That's also, you know, a whole other host of issues, which is why, you know, I would argue that most Palestinians say they're arguing for, not a two-state solution, but a one-state solution, and we can win that democratically if a majority rules. And if majority rules, we're the majority based on our birth rate. And that's, you know, that's a whole other (lecture ?) to begin with. But there is that thought process that exists there.

MS. STERN: Right. I also want to respond to that question a bit. I would like to bring to your attention an article this week in The Wall Street Journal talking about a minor victory that the Palestinians won in Lebanon, where they finally they amended a 1946 law saying that the 400,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon can actually work there. So what the governments have been doing is, perpetuating the problem by not allowing them permits to work, by keeping them in the squalor conditions in refugee camps and keeping the problem alive.

And by feeding them this unrealistic myth that they will return to their grandfathers' homes and orchards and vineyards in Haifa, which is really not helpful. I think, a little reality therapy would go a long way here.

MR. ROMIROWSKY: The caveat for that is, they can't buy homes, again, because of permanent residency.

MS. STERN: Right.

MR. ROMIROWSKY: They're allowed to – (inaudible) – I think there was a question here first.

Q: Do you have further information on the financing and capitalist structure of UNRWA? It was mentioned 70 percent the United States, Islamic countries. Do you have more specific –

MR. ROMIROWSKY: A breakdown of how that works out?

Q: What's the total – what other – what's their bite? Where is coming? From the –

MS. STERN: One point two billion dollars.

MR. ROMIROWSKY: One point two billion (dollars) is the budget. I mean, the U.S. is one-third of their budget, and then the EU, and Canada was number three, and then the majority come from the Arab world. Again, they pay their dues by paying to UNRWA – (inaudible).

MS. STERN: Josh.

Q: I have a follow-up question then. Since there's a sort of a general agreement that there should be, you know, from my perspective, there should be some accountability and there should be some mechanism to vet these things, since there isn't presently, and in fact UNRWA, as, I think, Alan mentioned, totally unwilling to, in any way, change so far its procedures or it doesn't feel the need, it doesn't feel obligated to do so, despite the fact that we contribute one-third of the budget, what makes us think that there will be, any time soon, any sort of mechanism or authority for the United States, as part of, one member, of the United Nations, despite being a big contributor, to have any influence over those mechanisms, that sort of control, to have any statutory requirements in place?

As this money is fungible, as long as we're contributing anything to the United Nations, how do we prevent, you know, the monies that we contribute from going where we don't want them to go?

MS. STERN: Well, Canada has led the way. And the truth of the matter is that if we always shrug our shoulders and helplessly raise our hands up in the air, we'll never effect change. You know, we here are in a position to effect change. And the U.S. Congress controls the purse strings. And we are, as I kept stressing, the largest donor nation. America is not exactly in a fiscal position where we're, you know, flush with cash. We can certainly put some

kinds of stipulations on the money. It's got to start somewhere.

Q: But correct me if I'm wrong. My understanding is, we already have stipulations, for example, about terrorist funding and FTOs, and yet UNRWA makes clear that they have no interest in vetting for FTOs.

MS. STERN: Right, right. But we have got to make it clear in the money that is specifically allotted to UNRWA that there is, you know – we are a 501(c)(3). So I don't want to endorse any particular legislation, but Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen has a wonderful piece of legislation that you could ask Alan about. Mark Kirk and Steve Rothman have a very good piece of legislation, the UNRWA Transparency and Accountability Act.

And we can certainly make sure that United States policy towards terrorist organizations is still in effect when it goes to UNRWA.

MR. ROMIROWSKY: And not only that, I mean, I was asked, you know – to your point, you know, Josh, I think that, you know, the fact is that even if we don't want to come off as cutting off UNRWA altogether, there is a way to replace UNRWA. I mean, you know, to say, you know, the U.N. has other mechanisms. I mean, at least we can see where their money is going.

MS. STERN: Right.

MR. ROMIROWSKY: I mean, I actually – I made this proposal at the time to John Bolton when he was the U.N. ambassador. And you know, Bolton got involved only when he was involved with Baker, you know, when he was going around trying to figure out, you know, if (Zionism ?) was racism. And everything was happening. And his own – (inaudible) – got, you know, how to turn that over.

And he saw this on the ground. That was the first time he actually had those face-to-face interactions. And he also saw the problems with UNRWA.

And when I proposed to him the idea about weaning off – (inaudible) – mechanism that has a total monopoly on the services, you know, that other U.N. services provide. I mean, you could do this through UNICEF, who, I mean, that have a lot more accountability for the same –

MS. STERN: Or the UNHCR.

MR. ROMIROWSKY: – right, or the UNHCR – than have parallel services. This parallel system that exists within the United Nations is what allows UNRWA to stand out, because they were defined to begin with as unique and separate from any other refugee population around the world. And because there is that double standard within the U.N., if we are to trust – I'm not saying we should – you know, within the U.N. system, there is a way to create some kind of, you know, getting everybody in line with the same accountability.

I mean, you know, interestingly enough, I mean, the only reason that Mark Kirk was motivated to do what he did as far as a reform to UNRWA, because he was a former World Bank

employee. And so we talked about, you know, other kind of global agencies that have a similar accountability. Why is UNRWA exempt from that? And that's kind of, you know, what we're looking for, you know, clear accountability and transparency, as much as we can get.

MR. ROMIROWSKY: To add to Alan's point, and it's a very critical aspect, the reason that Canada made that decision was actually based on an EU report that had to do with textbooks that the EU produced.

So actually, I recently I briefed a few EU members, you know, on a conference call when they were going to about to dealing with funding towards Palestinian money and, how do we use that – (inaudible)?

But the EU report that was produced was produced because of the problems they saw in the textbooks and because of the – (inaudible) – and (incitements ?). So I mean, Europe has to be onboard with this, because all along we've had challenges, to say the least, that the EU does not recognize Hamas and Hezbollah as terrorist organizations, but rather as charity groups. And the fact that they're onboard with the fact that Hamas does, you know, and it does incite towards terror and is a terrorist organization is a positive thing on the (EU ?) front, but you don't see – I mean, it took a long time to get to this point, but that's where it came from.

Q: You spoke a lot to accountability and transparency issues, particularly with, you know, vetting terrorists who are – (inaudible) – focus on education and the textbooks. I was wondering, since its intent, you know, from what I understand and what you said, is to be a humanitarian organization, are there also accountability issues and lack of mechanisms to measure their progress, or lack thereof, in these humanitarian efforts?

Are there reports or measures saying they are helping people out of poverty? Do we not know, because they aren't really measuring it? Where on that front, you know –

MR. ROMIROWSKY: They have citations, I mean, and numbers. I mean, it's a matter of – historically speaking, generally, they try to measure this by how many people they were able to provide job training to. So if somebody was able to get a job, you know – welding was a big idea, and agricultural issues in the mid '50s. And so if you were able to get a job, with the hope at the time and to their credit, UNRWA believed that if you had a job, that would also allow you to leave the camp. But then they realized that it wasn't taking place, and that's where the works of UNRWA turned into education.

And they transformed themselves and said, okay, if you're going to become better educated, then that will create, you know, an incentive to leave the camp itself.

And so they do measure the fact, you know, how many high school grads, how many do we have, you know, that are members of, you know, that have a bachelor's degree or whatnot? I mean, and so that's where they're trying to measure, you know, those issues.

And then there's an issue of kind of sustenance. You know, is your lifestyle improved

based on that or not? And they'll say, no, where are our jobs coming from? Is it solely from UNRWA or not? Or is it solely coming from other sources? And that's where they say they're measuring kind of the improvement level.

But the problem is, you know, when you go back to the educational aspect, that because the teachers unions have become political blocs for UNRWA, then they basically are able to say, no, we're staying with this environment, we're educating to this. And (we retain ?) the status by, though our education might be higher, we're still not shifting the type of education we're doing. And that's where, you know, we can make some kind of (mentors and assistants ?).

I mean, you can see. Socioeconomic conditions after – (inaudible) – improved not being associated with terrorist organizations, actually something that motivates them. And that's another challenge.

MS. STERN: Right. Also, the educational system is the largest employer within UNRWA or for people that are in those populations. So that really is the key, not only to that, but to the changing hearts and minds of the people who live in those camps.

Q: During the Wye accords, IMPACT was established. And I'm wondering whether there will be any points of negotiation on UNRWA during this round of negotiations?

MS. STERN: I don't think – UNRWA is – there are many thorny issues that are on the table. I don't think UNRWA is one of the issues. IMPACT was established to monitor, you know, the textbooks. And at first, it was established, it was called for by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. And the Palestinians said, okay, if you're monitoring our textbooks, we want to monitor yours as well. And so there are Palestinians members of IMPACT. There are actually – (inaudible) – members of IMPACT.

But they came about as a result of the Wye accords. But I think very little attention has been given on the diplomatic front in general, which I think is a huge mistake as to the teaching –

MR. ROMIROWSKY: Well, let me just add one point. I know our time is short. But UNRWA itself is never part of the negotiations. It falls within the rubric of the right of return. And they say, you know, once it's resolved, they will leave the scene. But they're never – because – again, they played both ways. They don't want to be part of the negotiation, because that will say they are partisan to one way or another. They are the agency designated by the United Nations.

And when there is a resolution for the right of return, they will leave the scene. There is no clear understanding when that end will take place. But they don't get involved.

And you will see, you know. The three issues that will come up will be Jerusalem, you know, '67 borders and the right of return. When the right of return comes about, then, you know, there will be mention of UNRWA. But UNRWA itself does not partake in any kind of – (inaudible) – in these negotiations whatsoever.

