

Take the first step

Sir, - Since your publication of my op-ed on Jonathan Pollard ("The case for house arrest," October 6), The Jerusalem Post has published two responses - an op-ed by Esther Pollard (October 9), and a letter to the editor from David Kirshenbaum (October 13). I wish to respond to both.

Both Pollard and Kirshenbaum ignore the fact that, approximately two years from now, the United States will elect a new president. As I noted in my op-ed, it is unlikely that such a first-term president will have the political backbone to pardon a convicted spy whom four predecessors decided not to pardon. To ignore such a fact - as both Pollard and Kirshenbaum do - is to bury one's head in the sand.

Where Pollard, Kirshenbaum and I agree is that the State of Israel has not done nearly enough for Pollard. On that precise issue, I wrote (in the original version of my op-ed piece):

"The Israeli government made the blunder of recruiting an American Jew to spy on the US... The financial burden of solving this problem should be upon the State of Israel."

A good first step would be for Israel to fund an "exploratory committee" of lobbyists to discuss the issue with members of Congress.

We in Israel could pressure our government to fund such lobbying efforts. However, given the rejection of the house-arrest option by at least one major spokeswoman for the Free Pollard Movement, it is likely that the Israeli government would exploit that rejection as excusing it from having to take an active role in exploring the viability of (and, as necessary, funding) the house-arrest option.

As in most lengthy disputes, someone has to make the first move toward resolution. Because it is Jonathan Pollard - not the governments of the US or Israel - who is serving a life imprisonment sentence, the first step needs to be taken by his family and closest supporters.

ERIC S. SHERBY
Ramat Gan

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