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"PAY CZAR" FEINBERG DEFENDS OBAMA'S MIDDLE EAST AND ECONOMIC POLICIES

Says there are no greater friends of Israel than Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton

Believes US president and treasury secretary have done a good job with financial crisis

Expresses profound concern for the American Jewish future due to assimilation

Fort Lee, NJ -- In an exclusive interview, Kenneth Feinberg, the man who determined TARP compensation for corporate executives and also distributed \$7 billion to victims of the September 11 terrorist attacks, speaks with Shalom TV President Mark S. Golub in praise of the Obama administration's economic and Middle East policies.



"The TARP program, widely criticized by many, was...absolutely the right thing to do," Feinberg states. "I give the president and the secretary of the treasury a lot of credit for what's been done. I understand 'Main Street' frustration--with unemployment as high as it is, and the economy uncertain. But...the administration and those responsible for compensation and treasury policy have done a lot better than 'Main Street' might think."

When asked about Jewish criticism of President Obama, Feinberg the private citizen defends the administration, saying, "I am not at all in agreement with the critics of the president. The president's Mideast policy is designed with the goal of securing a lasting peace and safety for the state of Israel. Much of the criticism (as I hear it) is...entirely unjustified.

"There is not a greater friend of Israel than the president and particularly, former Senator Hillary Clinton, who stands--in terms of credibility with the Israeli community, [and with] the Jewish community in America--as the foremost advocate for Israel's protection.

"I ask the critics all the time, 'What's the alternative here? What's your plan?' I don't see it."

Addressing the future of the American Jewish community, Feinberg is candid about his concerns for its Jewish future, stressing that assimilation "poses a fundamental problem in distancing young American Jews from the State of Israel." And even though his wife, Diane (Dede) Feinberg, is heavily involved in Jewish communal organizations--championing Birthright Israel (which he calls "a fabulous program") and advocating for quality high school education in Israel programs and Jewish day school programs in America--Kenneth Feinberg is pessimistic about preventing

(MORE)

widespread alienation among portions of the American Jewish community. When asked if anything on the Jewish scene today gives him hope, Feinberg answers simply, "No." And despite co-hosting (with his wife) the Jewish Federations of North America 2009 General Assembly in Washington, DC, that attracted thousands of Jewish participants from communities throughout North America, Feinberg reflects upon the many thousands more who were not there.

Kenneth Feinberg's visit with Shalom TV coincided with the tenth anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks, prompting him to share a number of moving stories of working with families to arrange compensation for their tragic losses. Feinberg, who describes his experiences in his book *What Is Life Worth?: The Unprecedented Effort to Compensate the Victims of 9/11*, was especially touched that family members were focused not on money, but on speaking about loved ones taken from them.

"It was rare indeed that anybody came to see me to talk about money," Feinberg recalls. "Almost in all cases, the major thrust of any visit, of any hearing, was an attempt by the family member to validate the memory of a lost loved one" by playing wedding videotapes, showing photos, and presenting other forms of loving memorabilia.

"I would say, 'Now Mr. Jones, I want you to know that [the video] really won't have an impact on my decision about compensation.'

'Mr. Feinberg [came the reply], "I'm not here to talk about compensation. I'm here to show you what those murderers did."

Kenneth Feinberg continues his service to America today as the Special Master in charge of distributing \$20 billion in compensation as a result of the BP Deepwater Horizon oil rig explosion and spill.

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