

Expert looks at Palestine's options after Gaza

Dr. Mitchell Bard, author of 18 books on the conflict in the Middle East, speaks about democratic policies

BY EMILY SMITH
NEWS REPORTER

Dr. Mitchell G. Bard said when he was in Israel in August he didn't walk into the civil war that the media had been portraying.

Bard, author and leading authority on U.S.-Middle East policy, gave a lecture on campus Tuesday evening to more than 70 people about the facts and myths surrounding the dissonance between Palestine and Israel. His most recent book, "1001 Facts Everyone Should Know About Israel," came out last week.

There was no civil war, he said, referring to the disengagement of Gaza as a triumph in democracy. He said he saw the results of democratically elected leaders in Israel making the decision to disengage from the Gaza Strip, a decision that was supported by the majority of the population. He spoke about what the next step might be to bring peace between the two countries.

Now that Israel no longer occupies the Gaza Strip, there is nothing stopping the Palestinians from moving in and creating a state in that area where they could control their

own affairs and institute democratic policies, but "all they've been able to produce is chaos," Bard said.

The level of corruption in the Palestinian government has been a problem, Bard said, especially in the last 10 years. The International Monetary Fund discovered that out of the \$5.5 billion in foreign aid given to Palestine, Yasser Arafat stole \$1 billion, Bard said.

Palestinians can no longer work in Israel because Israel no longer allows them in the country because of concerns about possible terrorist attacks, he said.

Bard continued by saying that women don't have rights in Palestine like they do in Israel, and citizens don't have the same freedoms of speech or assembly.

According to a number of polls taken in Palestine, when asked what country Palestinians admire most, they answer "Israel," Bard said.

"And what can they do?" he asked.

Bard said one option is to destroy Israel, and some Palestinians have made it no secret that that is their goal, but they have recognized that they can't accomplish it. They have tried to get other Arab leaders to do it for them, but they refuse, he said.

Another option is to do nothing, he said. If Palestinians wait instead of compromising and settling "for a crummy piece of land that the Israelis want to offer them in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip" they will get "the whole thing," Bard said.

From Israel's perspective, he said,

Palestine is made up of radical Islamic groups that want to destroy Israel.

The Jewish Student Union in conjunction with Oregon Hillel brought Bard to University as the first part of a series of events focused on ending the conflict plaguing the Middle East. JSU Director Jonathan Rosenberg said his union is honoring Israel's former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin during the month of November. The Nobel Peace Prize winner was assassinated 10 years ago this Friday by a right-wing Israeli.

"We don't want to focus on who's right and who's wrong," Rosenberg said. "We want to bring peace to the Middle East."

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ASUO creates model for student group stipends

The plan aims to regulate monetary compensation for directors and coordinators of campus programs

BY NICHOLAS WILBUR
NEWS REPORTER

The ASUO has created a new stipend model that provides incentive for service in student groups by making higher-paid leadership positions available, but uncertainty expressed by the program leaders themselves may table the vote in tonight's Senate meeting.

The ASUO Executive's attempt to prevent program leaders from working significantly more hours than they're paid for has received criticism from the leaders who are supposed to benefit from the change. The current stipend model is not meant to be an hourly wage, but is instead intended to reimburse the costs of supplies and other expenses incurred by group leaders.

ASUO Finance Coordinator Nick Hudson said the ASUO Executive, when creating the new model, looked at the hours leaders have to put in to make a program or governing body successful.

"The ASUO Executive values what program directors do on an everyday basis ... so we felt it was necessary to solidify that belief that program directors are important," Hudson said.

He also said the Executive realized that it would be "almost impossible" for program leaders to find the time

to work other jobs while holding their current positions.

The new model would not increase membership, but it would increase incentives for students to take on leadership positions, Hudson said.

Programs Finance Committee members said the group leaders themselves hold mixed opinions about the proposed stipend model.

Scott Lu, a member of the PFC, which allocates student fees to programs, said none of the current program leaders he has met with was satisfied with the model.

The PFC as a whole remains uncertain regarding whether it should endorse the model or create an alternative one, said Jared Axelrod, PFC Chairman and Student Senate ombudsman.

Axelrod said he will take the concerns expressed during the PFC meeting Tuesday night and advise Senators tonight to allow more time for program leaders' feedback, await majority approval from group leaders, and consider a different model.

"I think that most people want something different; I think that's what most of the programs want and I have a feeling that's what most (PFC members) want," Axelrod said at Tuesday night's PFC meeting.

"We could recommend that the

Senate not approve the stipend model ... because a lot of programs have problems with it," Axelrod said.

PFC has until Nov. 9 to submit its annual percent increase over last year's budget, so there is still time to reconfigure the numbers and classes before submitting a different proposal to the Senate for approval, he said.

Hudson said certain groups that provide vital services need these new stipends "in order to fully function and in order to provide the service that they do to students."

ASUO President Adam Walsh added that "the reason we have student groups is to enhance the physical and cultural development of students.

"A lack of student groups is detrimental to that cause," he said.

The Executive took suggestions

and concerns expressed during two stipend working groups and implemented changes to the model based on those concerns, Hudson said.

The new model, Walsh said, also takes into account University President Dave Frohnmayer's concern last year that incidental fee-funded programs have no regulated funding pattern for paid positions.

"Currently there is no rhyme or reason why some groups get one director and others get more," Walsh said. The new model will fix that problem, he said.

The new model gives groups that receive \$15,000 or more in student money funding for one director and three program coordinators. Groups that receive between \$7,500 and \$14,999 get one director and two coordinators. Those that receive between \$1,000 and \$7,499 get one

director and one coordinator. Those that get \$999 or less receive no funded positions.

Walsh said the original PFC budget increase was estimated at \$60,000, \$500 less than last year's benchmark.

With the new model, the benchmark increase over last year's PFC budget would be either \$34,725 or \$29,625, depending on whether the EMU Board of Directors and Student Senate decide to make KWVA, the University's student-run radio station, an EMU-funded program instead of a PFC program.

Senate will vote to approve or deny the Executive's proposed stipend model tonight at 7:30 p.m. in the EMU Board Room.

Contact the campus and federal politics reporter at nwillbur@dailyemerald.com

IN BRIEF

Hospital settles class-action claim by uninsured

PORTLAND — A settlement considered the first of its kind nationally was reached Tuesday in a class-action lawsuit against a major nonprofit hospital by uninsured patients who say they were overcharged.

The agreement with Providence Hospital System will affect tens of thousands of low-income Oregonians, attorneys say.

"This is a historic agreement and it will stick," said Brian Campf, an attorney representing uninsured patients.

Greg Van Pelt, senior vice president for Providence Health System, said the hospital disagrees with many of the allegations while sharing the concerns of low-income patients.

But it was cheaper to settle for all concerned, he said.

"Quite frankly the cost of litigation is so great it was in the patients' best interest and the hospital's to get this resolved, and this seemed the best way

to do that," Van Pelt said.

The lawsuit is part of a national campaign headed by Richard Scruggs, a Mississippi attorney who helped win multibillion-dollar settlements with the tobacco industry in the 1990s to pay states for smoking-related health care costs.

Similar lawsuits have been filed against hundreds of hospitals in at least 27 states, alleging that tax-exempt nonprofit hospitals charge higher prices to uninsured patients than the discounts given to insured patients.

"Other hospitals around the country should take a hard look at this" settlement, said Sid Backstrom, spokesman for the Scruggs law firm.

Van Pelt said it would help Providence patients but the larger national problem of caring for the poor still must be addressed.

The complaint filed in Oregon alleges that Providence contradicted its stated mission of providing universal access to health care, especially the poor, by charging uninsured patients much higher rates for the same services than other patients.

—The Associated Press

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