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Although he made light of his work with terrorism – even describing his wife finding him in bed with mascara and eye shadow on his eyes after an undercover stint as a woman – he also clearly stated the impact of the continuous terrorist presence in the world.

“I’ve spent my whole life struggling against terror,” he said. “If anybody had told me when I was 22 that terror would still be a challenge today, especially on a global scale, I would not have believed it.”

Many pillars of the American way of life must be altered in light of recent events, he added, and a certain penetration of privacy is needed to draw out all the cells of terrorists.

“There will be difficulties, but we must ask the question where to go from here,” Barak said.

He listed a series of countries whose terrorist forces must be brought down, including Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Iran. However, he added, the current world situation also creates opportunities for closer relations with countries such as Russia and China.

In addition, Barak also touched on his country’s struggles with Yassir Arafat.

The Palestinian leader, who has been known to use terrorism in the past and is “not an easy player,” requires “very careful” consideration, according to Barak.

“At Camp David, there was an offer on the table. I was ready to talk, but Arafat walked out,” Barak said, speaking of the recent peace talks hosted by former President Bill Clinton. “It is said that he has never missed an opportunity to miss an opportunity.”

Barak declared that he is ready for an end to the problems between Israelis and Palestinians. He said that if Israel continues to be a nation with its own laws and customs that do not apply to Palestinians, the country could be likened to an apartheid system.

“It is time to have two states for two nations,” he said. “It is imperative to separate ourselves.”

Not all Americans agree with the treatment of Palestinians or the United States’ alliance with Israel. As Barak spoke about conquering terrorism and solving Israel’s own



Tim Rosner / Photographer
North Carolina Senator, John Edwards introduced the former prime minister of Israel at the ceremony.

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problems, a coalition of peace groups stood outside on a street corner in support of Palestinians.

Led by Burlington resident Martin Shoffner, the coalition was begun to call for an end of the occupation of Palestine.

“We want to get people to take a deeper look,” Shoffner said. “The U.S. supports Israel but I saw firsthand the damage and destruction caused to the Palestinians.”

Shoffner stressed that the gathering was not a protest, but a peace vigil.

Barak, too, highlighted the importance of peace as he concluded his speech.

“We must search for a new sense of community, of nations that truly care about each other and act in a concerted way to uplift each other and educate each other to gradually close the gaps in the condition of life,” he said. “Nothing should derail us from our determination against terrorism...but we must put our sights on the longer task of winning over political and social injustice.”

Activists protest during Barak speech

Stephen Dignan
Reporter

As a crowd of people made their way from Elon’s Jordan Center parking lot to Koury Center’s Alumni Gym on Jan. 16, heads turned and necks craned as pedestrians tried to identify the source of an unusual sound that ebbed through the air.

Inside Koury Center, students, faculty and university guests took their seats and awaited the address of former Israel Prime Minister Ehud Barak.

Outside, the mysterious sound grew louder and louder as more and more voices joined in the singing and chanting on the corner of N Williamson Avenue and W Haggard Avenue.

The protest was officially underway.

“The reason I’m here is I’m protesting the occupation of Palestine by the Israelis,” said protester Sami Haleby, bearing a sign that read, “Peace and Justice to the People of Palestine.”

“The Israeli occupation of West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem must end in order for Israel to have security and peace,” said Mary-lou Seiser Smith, coordinator for the Coalition for Peace and Justice. “There will not be peace until everyone is treated with equal rights and dignity.”



Winston Ford / Photographer

Nearly 30 protestors gathered for a peace vigil during the address.

Protestor Max Bargas said the Israelis were in violation of international law by their occupation, and signs of fellow protestors struck passers-by with messages like “occupation = violence,” and “stop all violence.”

The protestors also voiced their opinions that Ehud Barak’s efforts to resolve the violent conflict between Israelis and Palestinians were less generous than they seemed.

“It’s very highly distorted,” said Haleby. “It presents the fact that he

made a generous offer to give 95 percent of the territory back, but it’s still in violation of what the United Nations resolutions are. It’s a sham.”

“There exist 77 U.N. resolutions that Israel has not complied with,” Smith said. “One specific form is that Israel should be out of Jerusalem, Gaza and the West Bank. If they leave Jerusalem, then there won’t be violence.”

Around 30 community members and visitors joined in the peace vigil and rally during the evening.

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Who conquered,
not with sword, but through
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