

# Statement of Purpose

On May 14 demonstrations will be held outside the offices of NPR affiliate stations from coast to coast to protest NPR's biased coverage of the Middle East.

Individuals and Jewish organizations have met repeatedly with NPR editors and administrators over the course of the last decade, attempting to persuade NPR to cover Israel accurately and fairly. Instead of producing fair and accurate news, NPR has responded by hiring a public relations firm (the DCS Group) to convey to the public the impression that its Middle East coverage is fair and accurate. The public donations squandered on a public relations firm and, this winter, on a national tour during which NPR President Kevin Klose has attempted to persuade Jewish audiences that NPR's demonstrably biased coverage is, in fact, fair, would have better been spent on examining and removing the bias from NPR's news programming. We are not asking for censorship or for a pro-Israel editorial slant, merely for NPR to cover the Middle East without bias. Since meeting with NPR officials has not persuaded them to cover Israel fairly, we believe that friends of Israel are justified in withholding donations from a news network that routinely slants its coverage in ways that defame Israel.

Only 10% of the budget of any NPR affiliated station comes from the government; the remainder is donated by the public, by foundations, and by businesses whose names and products are then announced on air. NPR national does not receive government money directly (except for occasional program-specific grants that constitute less than 2% of its budget.) Over half of the national budget is funded by station dues; the remainder comes in from corporate sponsors and foundation grants.

In Boston, we have already taken well over \$1 million from a \$20 million budget by persuading individuals and businesses to withhold their donations. This is accomplished through our No-Pledge campaign and by a careful effort to persuade businessmen and Jewish institutions to withhold sponsorship until NPR begins to cover Israel fairly. We believe that if donors in other cities withheld a similar proportion of station budgets, NPR would have a significant incentive to reexamine the fairness of its coverage of Israel. Remember that we are discussing voluntary donations now being made by friends of Israel to a news organization that broadcasts reports subtly inimical to the security and continued existence of the Jewish State.

Our immediate goal is to make the public aware that NPR's Middle East coverage is so biased as to be untrustworthy. Too many Jewish listeners react to NPR's coverage by feeling guilty about the way the Jewish State is 'mistreating' the Palestinians. Many others assume that the Middle East is just another situation where both sides are equally at fault. Indeed, it would be difficult for an NPR listener to realize that peace in the Middle East has been blocked by Arab refusal to recognize Israel. In the NPR version of history, it is Israeli "hard-liners" who are the obstacle to peace, not the ongoing Arab refusal to accept Israel's existence. We hope to plant a seed of doubt so that NPR listeners will react to an NPR report by thinking, "Yes, but this station is always biased toward the Palestinian side of the story." We believe that this is both important and achievable.