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Oct. 14, 2006 21:52 | Updated Oct. 15, 2006 9:39

Israel recalls ambassador to Australia

By HERB KEINON

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Israel's ambassador to Australia, Naftali Tamir, is on his way home to clarify comments in a newspaper interview in which he was quoted as saying that Israel and Australia are "like sisters in Asia," because "we don't have yellow skin and slanted eyes."

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Ilana Ravid said that Tamir, who was on his way back to Canberra after a short vacation in Israel, was called back to Jerusalem for a "further clarification" to determine whether Tamir made the comments attributed to him.

● [Israeli envoy slams Norway's royals \(archive\)](#)

Ravid said the fact that the ministry called Tamir back as he was en route to Australia indicated how seriously it took the matter.

She said Tamir told the ministry his comments were not accurately reported.

Tamir, a veteran diplomat who has served in Australia since 2005, was quoted in *Ha'aretz* as saying, "Israel and Australia are like sisters in Asia. We are in Asia without the characteristics of Asians. We don't have yellow skin and slanted eyes. Asia is basically the yellow race. Australia and Israel are not - we are basically the white race. We are on the western side of Asia and they are on the southeastern side."

The ministry issued a statement on Friday saying that it was conducting an internal clarification to determine whether the quotes were accurate.

If the report was accurate, the statement said, then the remarks were "grave and unacceptable," and the ministry would not be able to carry on with "business as usual."

Tamir, who previously served as ambassador to Finland and also served in various posts in Washington, Tokyo and Strasbourg, is also Israel's non-resident ambassador to New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Fiji.



Naftali Tamir, Israel's ambassador to Australia. Photo: Courtesy

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- 53. Dumbass Ambassador**
Tim - (10/15/2006 20:59)
- 52. to 45**
Irina - TX, USA (10/15/2006 20:56)
- 51. Israeli Ambassador's Offensive Reemarks**
Robin Bather - Mexico (10/15/2006 20:52)

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50. Anne #29: You should be sick of yourselves.
John - USA (10/15/2006 20:05)

49. Insensitive Comment on Asians
Peter Lin - USA (10/15/2006 19:59)

48. Unusual comment
James McCarthy - USA (10/15/2006 19:17)

47. jobs for the boys!
mrs. lincoln - (10/15/2006 18:34)

46. S. Khan's comments
Zak - USA (10/15/2006 18:23)

45. "Gossip is Evil"
David D - USA (10/15/2006 18:12)

44. If it was the other way they'd hang him for Antisemitism
Rachel - USA (10/15/2006 18:10)

43. Encouraging response
Nathaniel - MN, USA (10/15/2006 17:22)

42. Tamir's comments are very revealing of the Israeli mindset
S. Khan - India (10/15/2006 17:14)

41. gossip is evil
irina clopton - TX, USA (10/15/2006 17:07)

40. Israeli Diplomacy
David D - USA (10/15/2006 16:21)

39. Clean hands or dirty hands, brown eyes or blue :)
Long KC - (10/15/2006 15:59)

38. Calm down
Victor - USA (10/15/2006 15:14)

37. To Guran Walker--if Israel were RACIST and ignorant like you!
Louis T. Sigel - USA (10/15/2006 11:08)

36. Haaretz is a mischief maker - remember Alain Finkelkraut
Clara - (10/15/2006 10:37)

35. Israel's very existence depends on the Palestinians Cause
Ned - USA (10/15/2006 10:34)

34. Ignoramus
semsem - USA (10/15/2006 10:31)

33. Any tape recordings?
Efox - United States (10/15/2006 10:30)

32. Ambassador Tamir sad nothing new what we did not know already in Australia
Gershon ben David - Australia (10/15/2006 10:26)

31. TICK, TICK!
abbajojo - Israel (10/15/2006 10:23)

30. outlining physical features in comparison to one's own
Phillip - USA (10/15/2006 09:43)

29. Sick of racism card
Anne - Canada (10/15/2006 09:32)

28. Naftali Tamir
Maureen - Australia (10/15/2006 09:08)

27. australia isn't asia
zayed - malaysia (10/15/2006 07:37)

26. Bennett
Adam - (10/15/2006 07:37)

25. Guran
Lennie - AUSTRALIA (10/15/2006 07:37)

24. I wonder....
AJ - USA (10/15/2006 07:24)

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