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To: "Linda Ben-Tzvi" <lindabz@post.tau.ac.il>  
Subject: People to people  
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Dear Linda:

The people to people contacts sound like a good first step to discussing the Lebanese-Israeli conflict, and the Arab-Israeli conflict in a larger context. A lot of people on our two sides are tired of resistance, occupation, belligerence and confrontations, and would like to find peaceful solutions. I am happy to say that the Lebanese-Israeli conflict is not so difficult to address or even resolve. In my opinion, all Israel has to do is facilitate the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 425 as is, i.e. without attaching any conditions that do not exist in the resolution. You may have a different opinion, which I would gladly listen to.

In any case, I would be --in principle-- happy to participate in your people-to-people fora. Yes, the sessions would have to be carefully arranged, take place in a neutral country, and lead to an ongoing format and fruitful results. I must add however that the facilitator and coordinator would have to be a third party. The Scandinavians are quite respected and well perceived by both Israel and Lebanon. Besides, they have the financial resources to back and facilitate such an effort. (Maybe premature, but I would not mind playing a role in seeking that third party.)

As for others, my contacts are mostly with Lebanese and not Syrians. I know of a huge network of, and key individuals, both inside and outside Lebanon, that I can contact as the details become more apparent. I have tried in the past to put Lebanese and Israeli scholars in touch with each other but failed because people in Lebanon were not willing to interact over the internet. What type of people are you looking for? Do you have a specific program/format in mind? If so, are you searching for a sponsor?

I think I'll stop here as I have some work to do before going to sleep. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your time and efforts. Lehitra'ot.

Walid

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