

“Criticism of city undeserved” published August 14, 2013

In response to Robert Gutman (“Singling out Israel,” August 12), I grant the wording of the first paragraph of the City Council’s [policy statement on international police exchanges](#) that references Israel lends itself to different interpretations. Does the phrase “such exchanges” denote “any kind of exchange” or, in the context of the issue being addressed, does it implicitly denote “military-style training exchanges?” While the interpretation of this ambiguous sentence could be debated, what is important is how the policy statement as a whole translates into operational practice. And Mayor Schewel makes that clear when he says “No” to the precise question I posed to him: “If you and the city council sit down in the future to consider international exchanges for Durham officers, and you consider which countries might be candidates for training, will Israel be considered in any way differently than any other country in which Durham officers might receive military-style training?” Why, Dr. Gutman, cannot you accept the Mayor at his word? Instead you persist in your interpretation of the wording of an ambiguous sentence that the Mayor has essentially disambiguated. I believe the Mayor has addressed your grievance with what amounts to the wording of a sentence. You say the statement is “a hit on the human relations with the mainstream Jewish Community.” In my opinion the Council and the Mayor do not deserve your reproach.