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## Reform head: U.S. Jews must not oppose compromise on Jerusalem

By Shlomo Shamir, Haaretz Correspondent

Rabbi Eric Yoffie, the leader of the U.S. Jewish Reform movement, lashed out at the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations for reaffirming its support for a united Jerusalem, saying the U.S. Jewish community must not oppose Israeli compromise on the capital.

"The Jewish community in the U.S. cannot at this moment make things difficult for Israel and it mustn't tell the Israeli government not to compromise on the issue of Jerusalem," Yoffie said. "If there will be a concession at the end of the day, Israel will receive a tremendous benefit in return."

In an interview with *Haaretz*, Yoffie accused the powerful umbrella group of overwhelmingly reaffirming its support for "a united Jerusalem as Israel's eternal, sovereign capital" last Thursday in order to express criticism of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

"The timing of the vote and the reaffirmation of the organization's known stance regarding Jerusalem at this time is a wrong message whose goal isn't [to show] concern for Jerusalem but to demonstrate dissatisfaction with Prime Minister Olmert," said Yoffie, who voted against the decision.

"I voted against because in my opinion the only reason to hold the vote was [to stage] a declarative show of opposition against Olmert," Yoffie said in an interview with *Haaretz*.

Seymour Reich, a former chairman of the Conference of Presidents who also took part in the vote, echoed Yoffie's sentiments against the move.

"The vote is a negative gesture aimed at Olmert and at the same time harms the conference's credibility," Reich said.

Malcolm Hoenlein, who serves as the executive vice chairman of the conference, said the vote was called to assuage the demands of a number of organizations which comprise the conference.

Hoenlein said the vote was a "symbolic" move meant to reiterate the conference's position on Jerusalem since the Six-Day War.

Yoffie is expected to arrive Sunday in Israel, where he will take part in an academic conference on Reform Judaism at Jerusalem's Van Leer Institute.