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This profile does not reflect developments since 12 February 2008.

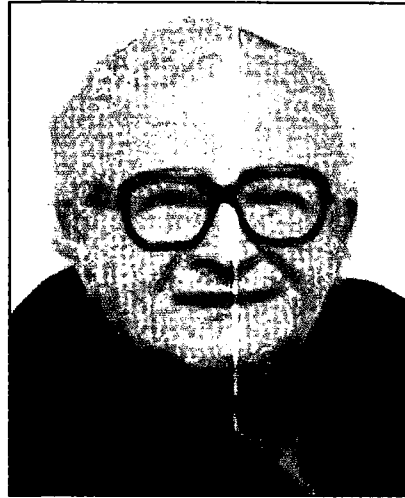
## Rafael EITAN

(Phonetic: ay-TUHN)

ISRAEL

*Minister for Pensioner Affairs (since 2006)*

*Addressed as: Mr. Minister (U)*



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Eitan's GIL (Pensioners) party, which had been established in the runup to the election in 2006, scored a surprise that same year by winning seven of 120 Knesset seats. A frequent adviser to past Israeli leaders and a longtime friend of former Prime Minister (2001-06) Ariel Sharon, Eitan is best known as the man who handled US intelligence officer Jonathan Pollard.

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Eitan has an excellent memory and is a quick thinker.

### Shifted His Focus to Security Issues

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Eitan campaigned for the Knesset on a pledge to improve the lives of Israelis over the age of 65, but since the election he has devoted more time to Israel's strategic security issues with the Palestinians. Eitan in 2006 said that he would act to expand medical support for the elderly, secure a pension for every person, and increase the allowances for needy older citizens; however, his attempts to increase social welfare funding to pensioners have failed. In late 2007, Eitan was unable to increase payments to Holocaust survivors—a group that forms approximately one third of pensioners in Israel. Eitan caused controversy when he suggested paying for this by reopening the reparations agreement Israel signed with Germany in the 1950s. He later backtracked, but one Israeli pundit characterized the incident as a publicity stunt to improve GIL's image.

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Eitan

described himself as pragmatic and realistic on diplomatic and security issues, but by early 2007 he appeared more hawkish.

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In late 2007, Eitan supported a bill that limited Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's ability to negotiate with the Palestinians on Jerusalem and Israel had not promised to halt settlement construction within the municipal borders of Jerusalem.

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### Scoring a Surprise Victory

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Eitan in 2006 stunned Israeli political commentators when GIL won seven Knesset seats in the national election.

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By focusing on social issues, Eitan demonstrated that GIL could ignore diplomatic and security issues and still succeed.

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### Engaging in Risky Business

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Eitan's private business activities at times have attracted public criticism, especially in the case of his controversial business ties to Cuba. His dealings in that country's agricultural sector made him wealthy but brought him unflattering publicity for

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working with Havana against competing Israeli businesses. In 1997, Eitan told an interviewer that a colleague and a Cuban official prevailed on him to invest in Cuba's citrus industry. Eitan visited Cuba in 1992 and helped form the BM Group to develop the country's agricultural infrastructure. Eitan received an award from Cuban President Fidel Castro for his contributions to the country's citrus industry. Eitan maintained close relations with Castro until Eitan became a minister and cut off his business activities in Cuba.

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#### A Legendary Career

Eitan achieved media acclaim and notoriety as a result of his career with Israeli intelligence. He joined the Shin Bet domestic security service in 1950 after completing his military service, turning away from a prospective career in farming at the urging of then Shin Bet chief Isser Harel.

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Eitan later joined Mossad, and in 1960 he commanded and participated in the operation that captured Adolf Eichmann.

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Eitan left Mossad in 1972 after realizing that he would not achieve his goal of heading the organization.

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Eitan's retirement in 1972 was brief, and his close ties to Sharon paved the way for his appointment to a series of government posts. In 1974, Sharon—then Prime Minister (1974-77) Yitzhak Rabin's security adviser—made Eitan his assistant and in 1978 recommended that then Prime Minister (1977-83) Menachem Begin appoint Eitan as his counterterrorism adviser. In this position, Eitan angered many Israelis with his statement to the Knesset that Israel could expect 100 years of terrorism. In 1981, Sharon appointed Eitan to head the Bureau of Scientific Liaison (LAKAM), a former unit of the Defense Ministry devoted to

scientific and technological espionage. From LAKAM, Eitan handled Pollard, saying in March 2006 that the unit had received such high-quality information that Eitan was reluctant to end the operation. In late 2006 he told an interviewer in the Israeli press that he regretted having Pollard spy on the United States because Israel could have obtained the same information through legal means. Once implicated in the Pollard affair, Eitan in 1986 was named chairman of the board of directors of the state-owned Israel Chemicals with Sharon's backing, a posting described as a reward for Eitan's espionage in the United States. He returned to private business five years later after quarreling with Sharon over the management of the company.

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#### Personal Data (U)

Eitan was born in the British Mandate of Palestine in Kibbutz Eyn Herod in 1926, but he later moved with his parents to Ramat Hasharon. At the age of 12, Eitan joined the Haganah, a forerunner to the modern Israeli army, and entered the elite Palmach commando unit on completion of high school in 1944. While in the Palmach, he engaged in clandestine operations to assist the illegal immigration of Jewish refugees who were fleeing Nazism from Europe into Palestine. During this time, Eitan earned the nickname "Stinking Rafi" after falling into a cesspit during an operation. He holds a degree in economics from the University of London.

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Eitan is a talented sculptor, and he frequently exhibits his work in Israeli galleries. He and his wife, Miriam, have three children and several grandchildren.

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Eitan has trouble walking and poor vision, and he wears hearing aids in both ears.

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