



100th Issue!

ISRAEL MATTERS!

Chairman of the Israel Affairs Committee of Temple Beth Shalom
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Israel: Iran's Ballistic Missile Program Must Be Stopped

Editorial: Reflecting on 100 Issues of *Israel Matters!*

As I reflect on this milestone issue of *Israel Matters!*, I'm left to ponder how I got to this point. In short, the journey began with a meeting I had with then TBS president, Stuart Katz, about an idea he and Rabbi Scolnic had been considering: the creation of a new committee dedicated to raising awareness about Israel, the Israel Affairs Committee, which I was asked to chair. I had one condition on acceptance: that I would have the continuing support of the synagogue administration. I am pleased to acknowledge that I could not have been more supported along the way.

At 11 issues per year, readers can do the math how 100 issues of *Israel Matters!* translates into years on the job. To be accurate, there have been more than 100 issues prepared. Some were created to keep the TBS membership apprised of important and rapidly changing events affecting Israel, such as the war in Lebanon, and were put up only on the TBS website, while others never saw the light of day.

When putting together each issue of *Israel Matters!* my intent has been to provide a balance of broad-spectrum geopolitics with examples of the Israeli spirit, such as in the field of technology in which it excels, or by illuminating the ingenuity and resourcefulness of everyday Israelis. Sadly, too many issues have had to focus on distressing events associated with Israel including wars and fighting, terrorism, the interminable Arab-Israeli conflict, nuclear ambi-

(Continued on page 2)

Israel has slammed Iran's recent tests of long-range missiles saying they were a "clear violation" of UN Security Council resolutions and raised questions about the Islamic Republic's commitment to last July's nuclear deal with six western powers. In a statement, the Foreign Ministry said the missiles that were tested could carry a nuclear warhead and were capable of hitting Israel and much of the Middle East. "The missile launches represent a clear violation of Security Council Resolution 2231, which adopted the nuclear deal between Iran and world powers," it said. "The decision bars Iran from firing missiles that have the capability to carry a nuclear warhead — which are precisely the missiles they fired." That Iran is developing missiles that are suited for nuclear warfare "raises a big question about Iran's intentions to comply fully with its part of the nuclear deal," it added.

Israel said Iran was "defying" world powers and urged the international community to act "forcefully and determinedly" to halt Iran's missile activity. "Iran's surface-to-surface missile program must be stopped," the ministry said.

Iran recently test-launched two ballistic missiles emblazoned with the phrase "Israel must be wiped out" in Hebrew, Iranian media reported, in a show of power by the Shiite nation as US Vice President Joe Biden visited Jerusalem. The launches were the latest in a series of tests in recent days aimed at demonstrating that Iran will push ahead with its ballistic program after scaling back its nuclear program under the deal.

At the United Nations, there is likely to be a debate about whether Iran is still required to abide by the ballistic missile test ban under council resolutions. One Security Council diplomat said the tests don't violate the nuclear deal, but "there are obligations on Iran" that stem from the resolution and "they need to abide by those obligations." Another diplomat acknowledged, "We're not mounting an argument that it's a binding obligation." The two diplomats, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak on the tests, said the council still has to consider the reported launches and, if verified, determine whether it is a violation and if so, what action to take.

Iran state TV trumpeted the recent test as officials boasted that it demonstrated the country's might against Israel. Video aired on state TV showed the Qadr H missiles being fired from a crevice between brown peaks identified as being in Iran's eastern Alborz mountain range. The rockets hit targets some 1,400 kilometers (870 miles) away off Iran's

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tions of Iran, the unbalanced, treatment of Israel at the United Nations and, perhaps most disheartening, frustration and disappointment with American administration and policies. Such is life in Israel. Just as it is not easy being Jewish, neither is it easy to be the world's only Jewish nation. Objectivity required presenting the bad with the good.

Fortunately, the negative has been superseded by the positive. *Israel Matters!* has time and again illuminated why Israel is a beacon among nations. For example, the Israel Defense Forces have been amply demonstrated to be among, if not the most, moral army in the world and that morality has been prominently featured in the publication. Some issues have included stories of Israeli responses to natural disasters with aid that far belied its size. I recall a report following the severe earthquake in Haiti when CBS News referred to the Israeli medical team there as the "gold standard" of care. The story was featured prominently in *Israel Matters!*

Chairing the Israel Affairs Committee and putting together *Israel Matters!* each month has not been a one-sided endeavor. While working to increase awareness of Israel, doing so has, in turn, made me a stronger advocate for Israel. In that role, I have had the chance to meet with our local elected representatives to lobby their support of Israel. Candidly, my emotions from doing so have run the gamut from extreme satisfaction to fist-pounding frustration. But such is politics, especially when Israel is the subject.

I have received other benefits, many from encouraging people to visit Israel. I believe that one cannot truly understand Israel without having been there. To that end, I cherish the many calls I have received from congregants asking for itinerary suggestions in preparations for their first trip to Israel or the excited calls on return sharing their amazing experiences. Selfishly, I have especially relished those times when I was asked to address the congregation on Yom Kippur for the annual Israel Appeal. My appreciation goes out to Rabbi Scolnic for allowing me that honor.

Have I had frustrations along the way? Absolutely. Few things hurt me more than hearing reports from people who've never been to Israel of their travels to Eastern Europe or - horrors - Turkey, without adding Israel to their travel plans as long as they were in the neighborhood.

I could not have gotten this far without help from others. My appreciation goes out to Steve Salinger and George Alexander for their ongoing publication assistance. Thanks too, to Al Harary for including topics on Israel into the Adult Education Program agenda. Rabbi Scolnic has been unwavering in his assistance and encouragement. Finally, to my wife and proofreader extraordinaire, Randy, goes my love for her constant support toward making *Israel Matters!* timely, readable, and error-free. It has been my honor and privilege to bring these 100 issues of *Israel Matters!* to you.

Ed Berns

(Continued from page 1)

coast into the Sea of Oman, state media and Iran's semiofficial Fars news agency reported.

The US Navy's 5th Fleet, which patrols that region, declined to comment on the test.

Amir Ali Hajzadeh, the head of the Revolutionary Guard's aerospace division, was quoted as saying the test was aimed at showing Israel that Iran could hit it. Israel is within 1,100 kilometers (660 miles) of Iranian territory. "The 2,000-kilometer (1,240-mile) range of our missiles is to confront the Zionist regime," Hajzadeh said. "Israel is surrounded by Islamic countries and it will not last long in a war. It will collapse even before being hit by these missiles." He stressed that Iran would not fire the missiles in anger or start a war with Israel. "We will not be the ones who start a war, but we will not be taken by surprise, so we put our facilities somewhere that our enemies cannot destroy them so that we could continue in a long war," he said.

Iran has launched a number of missile tests as part of military exercises. Also recently, the Revolutionary Guard said the tests included several missiles with ranges between 300 and 2,000 kilometers (185-1,250 miles), including the Shahab 1 and 2, the Qiam, with a range of 800 kilometers, and the Qadr.

A US State Department spokesman said the US was aware of reports of missile launches and, if the reports were true, would take "appropriate responses" at the UN or elsewhere. Secretary of State John Kerry spoke with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, and "the secretary did raise his concerns today with Foreign Minister Zarif about these reports," State Department spokesman John Kirby told reporters. He did not have additional details about the call.

The Qiam and Qadr, each capable of carrying payloads greater than 500 kilograms, fit the UN definition for missiles capable of carrying a nuclear warhead, said Jeremy Bennie, Middle East and Africa editor for IHS Jane's Defence Weekly. The now-lifted 2010 ban covered missiles with a range of at least 300 kilometers (186 miles) and a payload capacity of at least 500 kilograms (1,102 pounds), under a definition by a UN panel of experts.

The nuclear accord was a victory for Iran's President Hassan Rouhani over hardliners who sharply opposed reining in the nuclear program. Since the deal was reached, hardliners in the military have made several shows of strength. UN experts said the launch used ballistic missile technology banned by the Security Council. In January, the US imposed new sanctions on individuals and entities linked to the missile program.

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