



ISRAEL MATTERS!

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Biden: “No Daylight Between Israel and the US”

Israel and Google Partner to Put Dead Sea Scrolls Online

The Dead Sea scrolls, containing some of the oldest-known surviving biblical texts, are to go online as part of a collaboration between Israeli antiquities authorities and Google. The 3.5 million dollar project by the Israeli Antiquities Authority (IAA) and the internet giant aims to use space-age technology to produce the clearest renderings yet of the ancient scrolls and make them available free of charge to the public.

The IAA will use multi-spectral imaging technology developed by NASA to produce high-resolution images of the sometimes-faded texts. The process may also reveal new letters and words. The IAA will partner with Google to place the images online in a searchable database complemented by translation and other scholarly tools.

The 900 biblical and other manuscripts, comprising some 30,000 fragments, were discovered between 1947 and 1956 in the Qumran caves above the Dead Sea. The parchment and papyrus scrolls contain Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic writing, and include several of the earliest-known texts from the Bible, including the oldest surviving copy of the Ten Commandments. The oldest of the documents dates to the third century BC and the most recent to about 70 AD, when Roman troops destroyed the Second Jewish Temple in Jerusalem.

The artifacts are housed at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, where the larger pieces are shown at the dimly lit Shrine of the Book on a rotational basis to minimize damage from exposure. When not on display, they are kept in a dark, climate-controlled storeroom in conditions similar to those in the Qumran caves, where the humidity, temperature and darkness preserved the scrolls for



US Vice President Joe Biden delivered an impassioned speech in support of Israel at the recent Jewish Federations of North America’s General Assembly in New Orleans.

The Vice President reiterated the Obama administration’s deep commitment to Israel’s security and to preventing Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons. “When it comes to Israel’s security there can be no daylight - no

daylight - between Israel and the US,” he said. Biden repeatedly stressed that the Obama White House “represents an unbroken chain in American leaders who have understood this critical strategic relationship” between the two countries. “We will not yield a single inch,” he said.

Referring to Iran, which has defiantly engaged in a nuclear program and threatened Israel’s existence, Biden said, “It is critical to keep the international spot light on the genuine threats to Israel, like the Iranian nuclear program.”

Earlier in the day the Vice President met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (photo), who raised the threat posed by the Islamic Republic. “The only way to ensure that Iran is not armed with nuclear weapons is to create a credible threat of military action against it, unless it stops its race to obtain nuclear weapons,” the Prime Minister told Biden, according to diplomatic officials.

During their meeting, Netanyahu insisted that although economic sanctions have made it difficult for Teheran, there is no sign that they have caused it to halt its nuclear program. “The only time that Iran stopped its nuclear program was in 2003, and that was when they believed that there was a real chance of an American military strike against them,” Netanyahu was reported to have told Biden.

“Paradoxically, only a real military threat against Iran can prevent the need to activate a real military force,” Netanyahu said. According to diplomatic sources, Netanyahu warned Biden, “Iran is attempting to mislead the West and there are worrying signs that the international community is captivated by this mirage.”

Update: Jackets for the IDF



Thanks to the out-pouring of support to the Yom Kippur appeal for contributions to buy winter jackets for

soldiers in the IDF's Golani Division stationed on Mount Hermon, we are pleased to report the funds have been transferred and the jackets ordered. The following is an email from our contact in Israel who facilitated the process:

Shalom Ed and Randy, I wanted to let you know that today we were at the factory and your shul's wonderful donation was hand delivered and the coats were all ordered. After all of your many labors of love, these beloved soldiers will be warm in about one to two weeks at the latest. Hurrah!!!! Mission accomplished from our standpoint. It just takes a few days for the emblems to be sewn on the jackets then away they go to the soldiers. Meir [the group's officer who requested the help for the jacket purchase] asked us if we would like to be with him when he picks up the jackets and then we will ride with him and personally hand deliver the coats to each soldier. Of course we said yes. In your shul's name we will do this. We wish you could be here for that day but because you are not, we will be your ambassadors.

I'll keep you posted when I know when we will be going to the unit with Meir. ALL THE HONOR to your shul. Be well and feel good about all that you have done for these beloved soldiers. We will be forwarding photos and letters etc. in the future for you and the people of the shul and the rabbi.

Thank you, again, to all of the members of TBS who supported this effort.

Ed and Randy Berns, Co-Chairs, TBS Israel Affairs Committee

Footnote: During my recent trip to Israel while on the Golan Heights, I was able to connect with Meir, who drove with his commander to meet me (photo right). They could not have been nicer to me nor more appreciative of TBS's efforts to help their unit. It was evident that the generosity of the TBS members who supported this project will make a real difference for those Golani soldiers facing a difficult winter while protecting Israel's front lines.



Israel Lays Foundation for World's Largest Underground Emergency Hospital

Saturday, October 9, 2010 marked the start of a crucial phase of construction at the Rambam Health Care Campus in Haifa, Israel. More than 70 workers began to pour roughly 7,000 cubic meters of concrete to form the concrete base of Rambam's protected emergency underground hospital – the largest facility of its type in the world. When not in use for emergencies, it will be a parking lot for the facility. For 36 hours cement mixers worked to lay the foundation of the emergency facility, which is designed to withstand conventional, chemical, and biological attacks. To meet its deadline, four Haifa-area concrete plants supplied materials around the clock. For two days following this effort, no concrete was poured in central or northern Israel as all related facilities, tools, and personnel in the region were involved in the huge project.

Rambam was established in 1938 and is the largest medical center in northern Israel. It was named for Rabbi Moshe Ben-Maimon "The Rambam" – known to the English-speaking world as Maimonides (d. 1204) – the greatest Jewish physician-philosopher of ancient times.

The project is slated for completion by May 2012, at which time the three-floor parking lot will provide much needed parking space for some 1,500 Rambam workers and visitors. In times of emergency, the lot can be transformed at short notice into a 2,000-bed hospital that is not only underground but will also sit 8 meters below sea level.

Designed to be self-sufficient, the hospital will be able to generate its own power and can store enough oxygen, drinking water and medical supplies for up to three days. Due to its special location, the facility's construction has demanded unusual measures. Pumps will operate throughout construction 24 hours a day, moving millions of cubic meters of brackish groundwater to the sea, enabling the workers to carry out their mission.

The next major step in the Rambam complex construction – the concrete pouring for the foundation of the Ruth Rapaport Children's Hospital – was scheduled to begin on October 30, 2010. After that, work will begin on the new oncology and cardiology hospitals.

"Work is proceeding in a very ordered and professional manner," said Ariye Berkoviz, Rambam's head of Engineering, and construction is proceeding according to plan. Due to the project's enormous scope and special nature, it has been making headlines. The recent cement pouring received coverage on all major Israeli radio stations, TV channels, and in the printed and online media.

More information about the Rambam Health Care Campus, including ways to offer support, can be found at: <http://www.rambam.org.il/Home+Page>

Joint Bike Ride for Wounded American and Israeli Soldiers

Recently, nine American war veterans who were wounded while serving in Iraq and Afghanistan traveled to Israel and joined IDF wounded veterans on a cycling trip across the country. The 11-day cycling mission to Israel was a joint project of the Wounded Warrior Project (WWP) and Friends of the IDF (FIDF). The WWP organization provides wounded American veterans with physical and emotional support during their healing process. The trip came about after four years of successful collaboration between the two organizations and many American-Israeli bike rides in the U.S.



Four years ago, WWP reached out to the FIDF and invited wounded soldiers from the IDF to join the New York Tri-State Soldier Ride, taking place every summer. The WWP

Soldier Ride provides cycling opportunities across the U.S. for wounded American warriors. All participants suffering from a disability are provided with the adaptive equipment they need to cycle. The Soldier Ride program raises awareness for issues and hardships American wounded veterans face on a daily basis.

Since that summer, IDF soldiers have traveled to New York every year for a ride, which has come to symbolize the profound friendship and solidarity shared by the soldiers. Although they fight in different arenas, soldiers from both countries feel that they are fighting for a similar cause and face similar dangers, and that everything they have experienced during and after the injury brings them closer together.

This year, the WWP organization decided to take its Soldier Ride program overseas for the first time. Since the bond with the IDF soldiers and FIDF had become so strong, WWP chose Israel as its first international destination for the Soldier Ride. WWP wanted to give the American soldiers the opportunity to ride with their Israeli friends in the latter's home country. For the Americans, it was their first visit to Israel and a chance to connect with Israeli soldiers and citizens.

The ride started in Caesaria, continued to the Lebanese border, and then around the Sea of Galilee. From there, the soldiers rode through the Judean Hills, visited the Dead Sea, climbed Masada, and toured Jerusalem. In between, the American veterans were hosted by James Cunningham, the U.S. Ambassador to Israel, and by officers and soldiers at three IDF bases. "We are truly honored and moved to see our American heroes riding alongside veterans of another nation's armed forces and welcomed so warmly in Israel," said Steve Nardizzi, WWP executive director.

IDF Intelligence Chief's Warnings of War Taken Seriously

Outgoing Major General Amos Yadlin, head of IDF Military Intelligence, gave a stark report in his final briefing to the Knesset before leaving his post. He warned of new, state-of-the-art Russian-made Syrian weaponry and two new Iranian nuclear sites. National Security Council chief Uzi Dayan filled out the picture by warning that missiles from Gaza could hit Tel Aviv and that terrorists in Lebanon are digging further into and behind civilian populations.

"In the next war," Dayan said, "we have to be more concerned with our potential civilian casualties than military casualties." He added, "Yadlin's assessment means that uncertainty has returned to our region" and that "Iran continues to build nuclear weapons, Turkey has returned to the axis of evil, and the terrorist organizations continue to dig in."

"The incoming IDF Chief of Staff, Gen. Yoav Galant, will have to deal with many challenges, beyond the issue of terrorism and Iran," Dayan said. "We will have to prepare for an eastern front against us. The Jordan Valley is one of our most critical areas. Between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean there are only 64 kilometers (40 miles); this is our entire strategic depth, and we must not give it up. We must have defensible borders. This position must be presented in the negotiations with the Palestinian Authority."

The dangers in Gaza and southern Lebanon must be neutralized, Dayan said, and this is done by capturing territory. "Gaza is in danger of becoming an Iranian stronghold, in terms of missiles directed at Tel Aviv. We must conquer enemy territory [in Gaza] and demilitarize it; the same in southern Lebanon. The terrorists today take cover amidst civilian populaces, assuming that we will not capture that territory. We must uproot that type of thinking."

Dayan expressed his belief that it is dangerous to plan wars by worrying about military casualties at the expense of civilian casualties. "I want to remind us that the function of the army is to protect the citizens. We can't have a situation where the public discourse about battles centers around the threats to the soldiers. The job of the army is to protect the citizenry, and if we have to count potential casualties, it has to be those of civilians and not soldiers.

Yadlin summarized his retirement from service by saying, "All the compliments you have given me belong to my people, who work 365 days a year to gather information the enemy won't give us, which has to be brought from very difficult places, in order for me to present the intelligence estimate to my consumers." According to Yadlin, a Military Intelligence chief "must serve for exactly five years – not less – in order to move forward strategic procedures, and not more than five years because he might develop cautious mechanisms which could hurt his abilities."