



ISRAEL MATTERS!

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Netanyahu to UN: 44 Seconds of Silence

California Seeks Israel's Guidance to Solve Water Problems

Los Angeles County is teaming up with Israel to help address Southern California's water crisis. In September, the two parties signed a deal to bring Israeli expertise and technology to the water-deprived state. "I'm very pleased that the county will exchange ideas and strategies with Israel on ways we can more effectively conserve, manage and recycle our precious water resources," said Los Angeles County Supervisor Sheila Kuehl.

Together, representatives from both parties will brainstorm and implement the best approaches to conserve water to mitigate one of Southern California's most severe droughts on record. "The technology Israel has developed and employed to stretch its meager water resources is truly impressive," said Kuehl. "I look forward to working together on ways that Los Angeles County can benefit from their work on technology and research concerning point of reuse, recycling and groundwater recharge."

This is not the first time California sought out Israel's expertise with water resources. In a March 2014 pact with California Gov. Jerry Brown, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu agreed to export Israeli desalination and other water technologies to the West Coast state. "California and Israel will build on their respective strengths in research and technology to confront critical problems we both face, such as water scarcity, cybersecurity and climate change," said Brown following the agreement. [AIPAC.org]



For 40 minutes at the United Nations General Assembly in early October, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu eloquently articulated the challenges posed to Israel and to the international community by Iran and by Islamist fanaticism. He warned of the growing danger that Iran, "unleashed

and unmuzzled," will constitute in the wake of its nuclear deal. And he castigated the Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas for "libeling" Israel, from the same podium 24 hours earlier, by falsely asserting that Israel was seeking to harm religious freedom on the Temple Mount, when it was Islamic extremists who were desecrating the site by "smuggling explosives" into the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

But most dramatically, he rebuked the membership of the very institution where he was speaking — the United Nations — for tolerating Iran's relentless threats to destroy the Jewish state and "rushing to embrace" the regime. "Seventy years after the murder of six million Jews, Iran's rulers promise to destroy my country, murder my people. And the response from this body, the response from nearly every one of the governments represented here," he charged furiously, "has been absolutely nothing. Utter silence. Deafening silence."

And then Netanyahu paused, staring defiantly, reproachfully out into the hall, head nodding slightly. For 44 very long seconds. In silent rebuke. And in apparent mourning for international morality.

Like a biblical prophet, Netanyahu had come to warn, to chastise, and to indict. Missing, however, during the Prime Minister's speech were the US Ambassador to the UN, Samantha Power, and Secretary of State John Kerry.

As so often in recent years, he also used the occasion to deride the notion that Iran, under this regime, will abandon terrorism, rein in its rapacious regional intervention, or scale back its inter-continental ballistic missile programs. Well-intentioned though it might have been, the nuclear deal will leave the Iranians "weeks" from a nuclear arsenal when its sunset clauses expire, he said bitterly. In the meantime, he asked, could anybody seriously believe that sanctions relief would "turn this rapacious tiger into a kitten?"

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(Continued from page 1)

As in years past, too, he determinedly asserted his desire for a permanent peace with a demilitarized Palestinian state that recognizes the Jewish state. By announcing that the Palestinians no longer regard themselves as bound by the Oslo accords and other agreements with Israel, Abbas, this year, had made it a little easier for Netanyahu to assert that Israel was sinned against rather than sinning when it comes to the peace deadlock.

Again in common with previous appearances, he took pains to highlight the vital centrality of Israel's ties to the United States. Where President Barack Obama had previously and notably refrained from so much as mentioning Israel in his address, Netanyahu highlighted the bilateral relationship as "the most important that Israel has" and, however implausibly, asserted that both he and Obama consider their disagreements to be "within the family."

What was most strikingly different this year was the prominence and weight he gave to his assault on the international community's failed outlook, self-defeatingly skewed priorities, and mistreatment of Israel. He urged the world to at least hold Iran to the terms of the nuclear deal, deeply flawed though they may be. He encouraged the UN to help advance peace with the Palestinians — not via biased resolutions but by backing direct, bilateral talks. He pleaded for the UN to end its decades of "obsessive" Israel bashing. He sounded like a man of convictions; he did not sound like a man expecting to be heeded.

Bolstered by supporters in the gallery, Netanyahu found himself applauded for his sentiments with unusual frequency at this venue. But for all the ferocious anguish of his presentation, he will know that it will leave unmoved the overwhelming majority of global statespeople with whom he, and indeed much of Israel, are at odds. The Obama administration will not be recalibrating the nuclear accord. The French and the Germans will not be canceling their trade trips to Tehran. The international community will not start making demands of the Palestinians. The numerous UN forums devoted to critiquing Israel will not henceforth reassess, and devote more proportionate attention to Syria or any other crisis spot.

After a year in which the Iran deal was concluded over all his loud objections, the Syrian civil war rages bloodily on, Islamic State continues its campaign of killing, and the Middle East remains predictable only in its chronic instability, Netanyahu is only too aware of how isolated he is. It is unlikely anybody will even have seriously registered his pledge that "Israel will not allow Iran to break in, sneak in, or walk in to the nuclear weapons club," and that "[n]o one should question Israel's determination to defend ourselves against those who would seek our destruction." [TimesofIsrael - OpEd]

US Jewish Leaders to Obama: Cut Funding to Abbas If He Won't Curb Terrorism

American Jewish leaders have urged the US government to cut funding to the Palestinian Authority and isolate its president, Mahmoud Abbas, unless he acts "decisively" to curb Palestinian violence against Israelis. In a statement issued after a series of terror attacks in Israel and the West Bank and numerous clashes, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations demanded that the PA and Abbas be "held to account."

The Conference, the umbrella organization representing dozens of US Jewish groups, called on the Obama administration, "which provides hundreds of millions of dollars of funding each year to the Palestinian Authority, to demand that Palestinian officials act decisively to curb the violence. We know that President Abbas can impact the 'Palestinian street' when he wants to. His failure to do so should bring a cut in funding and the isolation of Abbas until he takes concrete steps," said Stephen Greenberg (chairman) and Malcolm Hoenlein (executive vice chairman/CEO) in a statement.

The organization condemned what it described as "[t]he increasing number of violent and potentially lethal attacks against Israeli civilians as well as security personnel. It said "no society would or should have to tolerate such acts against woman, children, and men attacked while driving, visiting malls, attending religious services, or going about their daily lives."

The Jewish leaders said the government of Israel "must do everything possible to apprehend those responsible and to prevent further incidents." It also said "the media tends to minimize the nature of these assaults by describing 'stone-throwing youths'. In fact, these are deadly boulders that have killed and maimed many. In addition, weapons taken from soldiers and knives have been used in recent attacks that took lives and wounded many. At the same time, Israel's restrained response is often described in exaggerated terms, with the media equating those trying to uphold law and order with those engaged in terror and violence."

Abbas and the PA "must be held to account for their direct and indirect roles in inciting the populace, especially the frequent references to Al-Aqsa being 'under siege' when they know that not to be the case," the statement continued. "In fact, Israel restricts Jewish worshipers while allowing far greater freedom to Palestinians to pray at this holy site. When Abbas declares that the Temple Mount is 'ours' and says the same of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, he denies the existence of the two Temples and all the Judeo-Christian ties and heritage. Urging Palestinians to rise up to protect the Al-Aqsa Mosque leads to the inevitable consequence of confrontation and violence." [TimesofIsrael]