US Ambassador to the UN Comes Out Swinging on Israel Bias

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In her first press briefing, US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley came out swinging.

After sharing with reporters impressions from her first Security Council meeting on Middle East issues (“it was a bit strange”), Haley vowed that the US would no longer turn a blind eye to the UN’s outrageous bias against the Jewish state.

“We will not repeat the mistake of [Security Council] Resolution 2334 [which castigated Israel for settlement building], instead we will push for action on the real threats in the Middle East.”

Haley mentioned Hezbollah’s illegal buildup of rockets in Lebanon, the money and weapons Iran provides to terrorists, strategies for defeating ISIS, and holding Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad accountable for the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of civilians.

None of these issues was raised at the meeting, Haley noted, yet the council did find the time to castigate Israel.

Throughout her short comment, the former governor of South Carolina articulated her criticisms respectfully, never once deviating from polite Southern etiquette.

Many of us in Israel gave up hope for change at the UN long ago. A lot of water has passed down the Jordan River since the UN voted in 1947 in favor of the creation of a Jewish state and an Arab state.

Under Soviet influence and with the help of dozens of autocratic regimes in Africa, South America and the Middle East that are eligible to vote, the UN passed the 1975 “Zionism is Racism” resolution. It is the venue for the ludicrously named Human Rights Council, a body that gives special honors to moral luminaries such as Cuba, Pakistan, Russia and Syria while issuing more condemnations against Israel than against all other countries in the world combined.

The UNHRC’s agenda item 7 dictates that Israel’s purported human rights violations must be raised and discussed every single time the UNHRC convenes.

In 2016 the General Assembly adopted 18 resolutions against Israel and the Security Council adopted 12 Israel- specific resolutions, “more than those focused on Syria, North Korea, Iran and South Sudan put together,” as Samantha Power, Haley’s predecessor, noted in her speech in defense of the US’s inexplicable abstention on resolution 2334.

Now with the rise of what The New York Sun referred to in an editorial as “Haley’s Comet,” there is new-found optimism that an institution thought to be irredeemably and incorrigibly slanted against Israel can be salvaged for the benefit of all mankind.

It will not be easy.

Haley related how the US sought unsuccessfully to get the Security Council to condemn a Palestinian terrorist attack in which a terrorist driver attempted to run over innocent Israelis and stab them. She said the council’s decision to block a statement of condemnation was “shameful.”

But Haley has no intention of giving up, and her indefatigable optimism that change is possible could be contagious. Maybe the UN really will abandon its obsession with Israel and begin living up to its true calling of mitigating conflicts and championing human rights. Before Haley’s arrival there was little reason for hope.

Attitudes toward Israel are changing with or without the UN. The Jewish state has succeeded in fostering new diplomatic relations, including with Muslim countries in Africa and Asia. And Iran’s increasingly bellicose behavior has brought Israeli interests in line with those of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States. As Haley noted, Israel is recognized as a beacon of stability in a region overcome with turmoil. Its technological innovations and entrepreneurial spirit have made Israel a world leader in fields such as cyber security and water security.

Haley’s courage and moral vision come to the UN at a time when Israel’s standing in the world is changing. We are confident her first press conference is the opening salvo in a winning battle to end the UN’s bias against Israel.