Prosor Recites "Hatikva" at the UNSC

April 21, 2015

Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations

[http://embassies.gov.il/un/statements/security\_council/Pages/Prosor-recites-Israel%E2%80%99s-National-Anthem-to-honor-the-fallen-soldiers-at-UNSC.aspx](https://mail.hrvoices.org/OWA/redir.aspx?C=tw_TqpStrEK2xm6xq1pREVh42o0pUNIIBHjJOJNpip_Y2q-biQYUg8Rbq2FByUZMuXKRbXlQSsI.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fembassies.gov.il%2fun%2fstatements%2fsecurity_council%2fPages%2fProsor-recites-Israel%25E2%2580%2599s-National-Anthem-to-honor-the-fallen-soldiers-at-UNSC.aspx)

Mr. President,

Let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his briefing.  I also want to thank the Jordanian Foreign Minister for being here today to preside over this session.

Mr. President,

Earlier this month, Jews throughout the world celebrated Passover which commemorates the liberation of the ancient Jews from enslavement and the birth of the Jewish nation.  The seder begins with the youngest child in the family asking four questions known as the “Ma Nish’tana.”  The child is asking what has changed and why this night is different from all other nights.

We answer the questions by recounting the story of how freedom triumphed over oppression. The lessons are as relevant today as they were 3,000 years ago.  For centuries, the Jewish people longed for, prayed for, and fought for the right to be free.  Israel is the realization of those dreams – and Passover reminds us that we can never take these freedoms for granted.

Since our last debate, the chaos in our region has only grown worse.  Another nation state has been overrun by radical extremists.  First Syria, then Iraq, then Libya, and now Yemen.  The extreme elements in our region have displayed a level of barbarism that is shocking even by Middle Eastern standards.

The situation has become so dire that - in a rare display of unity - the Arab leaders have joined forces. It should come as no surprise that they have lashed out with little regard for the consequences.  The Saudi-led airstrikes in Yemen have hit humanitarian aid convoys, hospitals, schools, and civilian neighborhoods, and left entire families dead.

And yet there have been zero Human Rights Council condemnations and zero calls for a Commission of Inquiry.  If Jane Austen were writing about the United Nations today, her book could be called Pride and Prejudice, but a more fitting title would be Hypocrisy and Double Standard.

You would think that some of the Arab nations would demand justice.  After all, the Saudi ambassador was quick to stand at the side of the Palestinian representative during last summer’s Gaza conflict and preach about civilian life.

The truth of the matter is that when Israel is at the heart of a crisis, the Arabs don’t miss a beat.  But when fingers can’t be pointed at Israel, some Arab nations are downright heartless.

On Passover we ask what has changed.  Today, I am here to tell you that unless this Council stops singling out Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East, and starts focusing on the real threats in our region - nothing will ever change.

Mr. President,

Just as we ask four questions on Passover to tell the story of freedom, today I offer four questions to explain why freedom and peace remain a distant dream in the Middle East.

The First Question: What has changed when it comes to Iran?

The answer is that Iran is more dangerous today than ever before.  Make no mistake: Iran is not only a threat to Israel and it is not only a threat to the Middle East; it is a threat to the entire world.

Iran is the engine of aggression behind the chaos in our region.  It has armed Hezbollah, which today has over 100,000 missiles hidden in civilian neighborhoods. Hezbollah is playing a dangerous game of Russian roulette.  Instead of betting on red or black, they’re now gambling everything on the Blue Line.

Iranian-sponsored terrorist groups surround Israel. There is Hezbollah in the Syrian Golan and Southern Lebanon, and Hamas in Gaza.  The Iranian doctrine is apparent from Baghdad to Beirut and from Damascus to Sanaa; terrorists committing a double war crime - hiding behind civilians, while targeting civilians.

As Iranian influence spreads, so does tyranny, subjugation, and terrorism.  In the last four years alone, it has committed or ordered attacks in 25 countries on five continents.  I’m sure the representative from Bahrain hasn’t forgotten the last time Iran meddled in his country’s internal affairs.  Much as I suspect the Saudi ambassador in Washington still remembers the bitter cup of coffee he had at Cafe Milano.

Imagine how much more dangerous the situation will become – in our region and around the world - if Iran is allowed to snap open a nuclear umbrella.

Iran is cunning and it is fanatical.  And yet the international community is willing to allow the regime to keep its thousands of centrifuges, continue developing its long-range ballistic missiles, and conceal the military dimensions of its nuclear program.

What message are you sending when you reward an outlaw regime for violating Security Council resolutions and international law?  Ayatollah Khamenei lies, deceives, and betrays even more than Frank Underwood.  The two of them would get on like a House of Cards on fire.

And what about President Rouhani?  One of his first acts as president was to appoint Mostafa Pourmohammadi known in Iran as the “Minister of Murder” - as his minister of justice.  He has lived up to his name.  Last year, Iran executed 753 people - that’s the highest total recorded in the past 12 years.

Iran is one of the world’s worst human rights offenders, the primary sponsor of global terrorism, and it is behind much of the chaos ravaging the Middle East.  If the international community gives Iran its support by signing a nuclear agreement, the regime will be more dangerous than ever before.

Mr. President,

The Second Question: What has changed when it comes to Hamas?

The answer is nothing.  Hamas continues to abuse its people and wage war against Israel.

Last summer, Hamas proved its utter disregard for the wellbeing of the Palestinian people.  It hid its rockets in schools, fired missiles from hospitals, and used civilians as human shields. Today, Hamas is once again disregarding the needs of its people as it rearms and rebuilds its terror infrastructure.

Earlier this month, Israeli authorities revealed that Hamas is using the Kerem Shalom crossing – the only humanitarian crossing into Gaza - to hide tons of dual-use items inside shipments of humanitarian goods.  The smuggled materials are used to rebuild tunnels, reconstruct training camps, and manufacture rockets.

Since Operation Protective Edge, Hamas has test fired over 150 rockets.  With every test rocket launched into the sea, Hamas propels itself towards another conflict.  Just last week, a senior Hamas leader issued a new call for Palestinians to kidnap Israelis. It may just be my hearing, but I’ve yet to hear a single UN official report any of these inflammatory developments.

Some members of this institution refuse to name Hamas even as the terrorist group ignites tensions in our region and ignites UN offices.  In January, Hamas members looted and set fire to the UNSCO offices in Gaza.

This Council does no favors to the Palestinian people by failing to hold Hamas to account.  I don’t hear any criticisms of Hamas for denying their people freedoms or for failing to hold free elections.  The closest Hamas has gotten to a campaign is the social media campaign it ran earlier this year.

In an effort to improve its image, Hamas encouraged people to ask questions on Twitter using the hashtag ‘AskHamas.’ A number of important questions were posed to the terrorist group.

Questions like: How does Hamas prevent repetitive strain injury from firing dozens of rockets into Israel in a single day? Does Hamas think it’s better to hide its weapons in a hospital’s pediatric or geriatric unit? And is Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal right or left-handed? From the safety of his luxury hotel room in Doha, he seems equally adept at ordering room service with one hand, while ordering terrorist attacks with the other.

It’s time for a change. This Council must see Hamas for what it is and call it what it is - an internationally recognized terrorist organization. Stop giving Hamas a free pass and start giving Israelis and Palestinians a chance for a better future.

The Third Question: What has changed when it comes to the Palestinian leadership?

If nothing has changed with Hamas, why would you expect anything to have changed with President Abbas?

President Abbas claims to support the two-state solution, but apparently that message gets lost in translation because you will never hear him make this claim in Arabic.  He insists that Palestinian refugees be allowed to flood the Jewish state. So in truth he is committed to the creation of two Palestinian states.

President Abbas also claims to oppose terrorism, but his government forged a pact with a terrorist organization, pays salaries to convicted terrorists, and incites violent attacks against Israelis.

Last month, the Palestinian Authority dedicated a monument in Ramallah to the terrorist responsible for the murder of 37 Israeli civilians.  If that weren’t bad enough, the monument is in the shape of what the Palestinian Authority describes as “Palestine” and it includes all of the State of Israel, from the Mediterranean Sea to the Dead Sea.

The Palestinians want a state without making compromises, making concessions, or making peace.  I want to be clear. Israel is in favor of a Palestinian state that would end the conflict. On three separate occasions, Israel offered the Palestinians a state and on all three occasions, the Palestinians refused the deal or walked away from the table.

The very last thing Israel can afford is another terror state in its backyard. Just imagine what this state would look like.  We got a preview when Israel disengaged from Gaza in 2005.  Hamas took over the Gaza Strip and created a terror stronghold.

Given the chance, Hamas would gladly create a second terror state in Judea and Samaria.  This terror state may as well be called ISIL – which stands for Iran, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon.  It would be sponsored by Iran and as volatile as Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon.

Hamas is terrorizing the people of Gaza and the Palestinian Authority isn’t doing anything about it.  It has ignored its oversight obligations to ensure that construction materials are not channeled into terror activities.  And it has not imposed sanctions on merchants selling cement on the black market. In contrast, Israel has fully cooperated with the trilateral Gaza reconstruction mechanism and overseen the transfer of tens of thousands of tons of construction supplies.

If President Abbas is serious about making peace, he must break his alliance with Hamas, put an end to the incitement, and return to direct negotiations with Israel.

Mr. President,

The Fourth Question: What has changed when it comes to the international community?

Winston Churchill once said, “A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on.”

Month after month, individuals in this Chamber argue that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a territorial dispute that can be resolved by addressing the quote-unquote ‘root causes.’  This lie has circled the world countless times.  The fact of the matter is that our conflict is not about the right place for Israel’s borders. It’s about Israel’s right to exist in the first place.

Israel stands for democracy, for human rights, and for freedom.  Last month, the Jewish state held its 20th national election - that’s 20 more free and fair elections than Qatar and Iran have ever held.  And yet, members of this institution question Israel’s democratic nature and focus disproportionately on our conflict.

This debate is called the Situation in the Middle East, but listening to today’s briefing, one would think that the only thing going on in the Middle East is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.  The world’s unrelenting focus on our conflict is an injustice to tens of millions of victims of tyranny and terrorism in the Middle East.  One has to wonder why the Palestinians deserve more time and attention than the Yemenis, the Syrians and the Libyans put together.

It’s time to focus global attention where it belongs – on terrorists and their sponsors.  The enemies of freedom are trying to drive us back to the Dark Ages.  They deny women their freedom, they censor the media, they dictate how religion must be practiced, and they impose their radical way of life through barbaric acts of violence.

Israel is on the frontline of this fight, but it is not just Israel’s fight.  It is the fight of anyone who believes in progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom.  The Jewish people have fought for these rights for generations.

Israel was one of the first countries in the world to screen people in airports.   For its efforts to protect passengers, Israel was criticized for putting travelers through what was called an invasive ordeal. Three decades later, Israel’s once quote-unquote “insensitive” policies have become the standard procedure in every airport across the globe.

In its short history, Israel has repeatedly confronted the moral dilemmas that go hand-in-hand with combating terrorism long before other democracies have woken up to the threat. Make no mistake; Israel’s battle today will determine how we all live tomorrow.

Mr. President,

Tomorrow, Israel will commemorate Yom Hazikaron and honor the 23,320 individuals who lost their lives to war and terror.  We will remember the brave soldiers who died so that we can have our freedom and mourn the thousands of men, women, and children who were robbed of their lives simply because they were Israeli.

War has never been the choice of the State of Israel. Our choice is and always has been the path of peace. But when war and terror are forced upon us, we will not surrender and we will not back down. For nearly 2,000 years, the Jewish people were stateless and powerless in the face of hatred and indifference. Those days are no more.

On Thursday, Israel will celebrate Yom Haatzmaut, our 67th anniversary as a free and independent Jewish state. With great joy and with heads held high, we will celebrate the realization of the words in our national anthem, Hatikvah:

   עוד לא אבדה תקוותנו​

התקווה בת שנות אלפיים

להיות עם חופשי בארצנו

ארץ ציון וירושלים

Our hope will not be lost,

The hope of two thousand years,

To be a free people in our own land,

The land of Zion and Jerusalem.

Thank you, Mr. President.