

Newsletter Monday April 1, 2019

Posted:

Arab leaders to seek UN Security Council resolution on Golan

Opinions

Yochai Dimri | Settlements are a bridge to socio-economic peace

Once Israel learns to view settlements in Judea and Samaria as an asset and not a liability, it will discover that they are not an obstacle to peace, but rather a bridge to economic and social peace.

Gideon Sa'ar | The triumph of Begin's legacy

Israel must shape its future with the understanding that the struggle for peace and security is far from over. We'll keep that in mind when we head to the polls next week.

Ariel Kahana | Blue and White wants to win with lies

Moshe Ya'alon accused Israel Hayom of "being Netanyahu's paper" only days after using the paper to attack Netanyahu. Such accusations suggest Ya'alon himself could be lying about the submarine affair.

Newsletter Monday April 1, 2019

Israel Hayom Monday Apr 1, 2019

Arab leaders to seek UN Security Council resolution on Golan

Arab League secretary general: Iran, Turkey have "worsened some crises and created new problems" • U.N. Secretary General Guterres, EU foreign policy chief Mogherini reiterate need to adhere to two-state solution, respect Syrian territorial integrity.

News Agencies and Israel Hayom Staff // published on 01/04/2019

Arab leaders said on Sunday they would seek a U.N. Security Council resolution against the U.S. decision to recognize Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights and promised to support Palestinians in their bid for statehood.

Long divided by regional rivalries, they leaders also ended their annual summit in Tunisia calling for cooperation with non-Arab Iran based on non-interference in each other's affairs.

"We, the leaders of the Arab countries gathered in Tunisia ... express our rejection and condemnation of the United States decision to recognize Israel's sovereignty over the Golan," Arab League Secretary General Ahmed Aboul Gheit said.

He said Arab countries would present a draft resolution to the U.N. Security Council and seek a legal opinion from the International Court of Justice on the U.S. decision. It warned other countries away from following Washington's lead.

Trump signed a proclamation last week recognizing the Golan Heights as part of Israel, which annexed the area in 1981 after capturing it from Syria in the 1967 Six-Day War.

Saudi Arabia's King Salman told the Arab leaders his country "absolutely rejects" any measures affecting Syria's sovereignty over the Golan Heights.

AP

Saudi Arabia's King Salman, left, speaks with Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi in Tunis, Sunday,

Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi said Arab nations needed to ensure the international community understood the centrality of the Palestinian cause to Arab nations.

In Syria, small protests against Trump's Golan move were held and state media criticized the Arab summit. "The Golan is not awaiting support from the Arabs, and not a statement to condemn what Trump has done," the Thawra newspaper said in an editorial that accused Arab leaders of taking their orders from the U.S. and Israel.

The United Arab Emirates reopened its embassy in Damascus last year, and other Arab states have voiced support for restoring relations. But Saudi Arabia and Qatar have actively supported the rebels trying to overthrow Assad, and other states view his government as an Iranian proxy that should continue to be shunned.

In their final communique, Arab states renewed support for an Arab peace initiative that offers Israel peace in exchange for withdrawal from all lands occupied in the 1967 war and said they would seek to revive peace talks with the Jewish state.

U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres, who also addressed the meeting in Tunis, said any resolution to the Syrian conflict must guarantee the territorial integrity of Syria "including the occupied Golan Heights."

Guterres reiterated international support for an Israeli and a Palestinian state "living side by side in peace within secure and recognized borders, and with Jerusalem as capital of both states."

"There is no Plan B: without two states, there is no solution," he said

Taliah Oz | Israel Hayom

Tunisian protesters burn a mock Israeli flag at a demonstration against the Arab Summit, in downtown Tunis, Sunday

European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said ignoring U.N. Security Council resolutions on the Golan Heights was "not a solution."

Mogherini also said a two state solution for Israel and Palestine was "the only viable and realistic solution ... We have a responsibility to prevent the two state solution from being irreversibly dismantled," she told the summit.

"Any future plan will have to recognize the internationally agreed parameters including on the 1967 lines with mutually agreed swaps, and the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of the two states."

AP

Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani in Tunis, Sunday,
The Tunis summit brought together the rulers of Saudi Arabia and Qatar for the first time at the same gathering since 2017 when Riyadh and its allies imposed a political and economic boycott on Doha.

In a rare sign of easing tensions, King Salman and Qatar's emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, sat at the same sprawling table at Sunday's opening session. It was the first time the two leaders have appeared in the same room since Saudi Arabia led the boycott of Qatar nearly two years ago over Doha's ties to Iran and its support for regional Islamist groups.

But Qatar's emir left the summit hall shortly after Arab League Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul Gheit praised the way Saudi Arabia handled its rotating Arab League presidency last year, live television footage showed.

Qatar's state news agency did not say why the Qatari emir left, but Tunisia's state news agency TAP said the rest of Qatar's delegation stayed.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt accuse **Qatar** of supporting terrorism and say it has been **cozying up to Iran**, a charge Doha denies.

The row has defied mediation efforts by Kuwait and the United States, which called on Gulf **Arab states** to unite in **opposition to Iranian** influence in the region.

Arab League Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul-Gheit said Iran and Turkey have "worsened some crises and created new problems," calling on Arab leaders to "unite as one force under one umbrella against the regional interventions."

"There is no room for any regional power to have pockets within our countries, namely for example 'safe zones,'" Aboul-Gheit said. He was apparently referring to Turkey's

proposal to create a no-fly zone in northern Syria to protect Syrian opposition forces from Assad's air force.

The final communique said Arab states called for ties with Iran to "be based on good neighborliness, non-interference in internal affairs, the non-use of force or threats, and refraining from practices and actions that would undermine confidence and stability in the region."

Arab states remain divided over other issues, including how to deal with pro-democracy protests that have erupted in the region since 2011. The presidents of Sudan and Algeria, two nations roiled by anti-government protests, did not attend the summit.

Syria's seat at the summit was vacant. Damascus has been suspended from the League since 2011 over its crackdown on protesters at the start of its civil war. The League has said no consensus has yet been reached to allow Syria's reinstatement.

Newsletter Sunday March 31, 2019

Opinions

Dr. Hanan Shai | Hold off in Gaza, for now

To return to the doctrine of decisive victories, the chief of staff must be allowed to restore the IDF to an "effective, lethal and innovative" army.

Micky Aharonson | Russia grabs the reins on Mideast peace

Moscow is assuming a leadership role as the only mediator able to communicate with all Palestinian factions, including Hamas. In this situation, Israel must be wary of being painted as the rejectionist side.

Ari Blaff | Ilhan Omar can declare victory

Now deemed too successful, too white and too powerful, Jews are not part and parcel of the "diversity" progressives have in mind. Jews, or more aptly, those who support Israel, are not welcome.

Newsletter Sunday March 31, 2019

Posted:

China Eastern plans direct flight to Tel Aviv from Shanghai and Beijing

Israel's tourism industry courting visitors from China

With a population of over 1 billion, China is a gold mine when it comes to tourism potential • "Made for China" conference focuses on ways of developing ties between Israel and China • Hainan Airlines launches third direct route to Tel Aviv.

Israel Kasnett // published on 31/03/2019

Tourists from China stroll along the Tel Aviv boardwalk | Photo: Gideon Markowicz

Tourism to Israel is on the rise, and if last year's numbers – 4,120,800, to be exact – are any indication, this year may prove to be even more successful. While for years, many tourists to Israel arrived from Western countries, the numbers are changing. Now, more tourists from countries in the East, especially China, have discovered Israel. If this trend continues, Israel's incoming tourism industry could witness greatly accelerated growth.

With a population of nearly 1.4 billion, China is a gold mine in terms of tourism potential, and Israel has already hopped on the bandwagon. A conference held this week at the Dan Jerusalem Hotel, titled "Made for China," focused on developing ties between the two countries and finding ways to encourage Chinese tourism to Israel.

Peter Phang, from tourism marketing agency BrandStory, said that to the Chinese, China is considered the "middle" of the world, "so to us," he joked, "Israel is a Western country."

He highlighted that some provinces in China have more than 20 million people; thus, the marketing potential Israel has in some of these areas is enormous.

Phang noted that while China is one market and one country, it is also a very big market – as large as Europe. "Some municipalities in China are so large," he said, they have a gross domestic product "equal to that of Australia. This demonstrates the scale of the Chinese market."

Incoming tourists from huge countries like China would be a tremendous boon to Israel. The data is showing signs of improvement, and Israel is fast becoming an extremely popular tourist destination. In fact, at the end of last year, international market research firm EuroMonitor named Jerusalem the fastest-growing tourism destination in the world.

Phang emphasized that there "is no one size fits all when it comes to China. You have to do many things to market Israel to the diverse Chinese population."

Direct flights to Tel Aviv contribute to more visitors

Hainan Airlines, which just launched a new route from Shenzhen, China, to Tel Aviv, also has direct flights to Tel Aviv from Shanghai and Beijing. China Eastern also plans to launch its own direct flight to Tel Aviv, making it the third Chinese airline, including Sichuan Airlines, to offer direct flights to Israel.

This introduction of more flight routes from China to Israel has had a market impact on tourism to Israel and will continue to do so if this trend continues. The Tourism Ministry reported a general 14% increase in incoming tourism over 2017 and a whopping 42% increase over 2016.

The Economic Research Department of the Israel Hotels Association recently published data for February 2019 on hotel stays compared with the same period over the past two years, and the evidence is clear: Incoming tourism to Israel is decidedly on the rise, and Chinese tourists are helping make it happen.

Other speakers also acknowledged the huge potential China holds for Israeli incoming tourism.

Roy Kriezman, the Tourism Ministry attaché in southern China, said "tourism from China to Israel began to rise significantly only in 2016, thanks to new direct flights to Israel that were launched from various regions in China. "The capacity of passengers is huge, and many of the planes still have plenty of room," he said.

Kriezman noted that there are four main categories of Chinese tourists, all of whom want to discover Israel. The first category includes older, leisure tourists. They have already been to the main cities around the world, and they want to find a new, mysterious and exciting place.

The second category is the millions of Chinese Christians who want to come to Israel on pilgrimage. These are huge groups that can easily take over an entire hotel during their visit. The third category represents the many businessmen and women who arrive in Israel, usually for just a few days. The fourth category includes those who arrive as part of an official delegation.

Kriezman concluded by encouraging everyone, on behalf of the Tourism Ministry, to make efforts in the Chinese market.

Phang recommended to Israeli travel agents and tour operators to "be open."

Make the connections, exchange ideas with counterparts in China and discover ways to bring more Chinese individuals and families to Israel, he encouraged. He also said businesses need to "invest" or "engage" in dialogue and relationships with tourism-industry representatives in China so that they can better understand the needs of these groups. This collaboration, he hinted, could lead to great success.

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Newsletter Sunday March 31, 2019

Iran urges Palestinians to resist Trump's pro-Israel moves

Iran's Foreign Ministry says U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, Golan Heights as part of "illegitimate Zionist regime" shows Palestinian resistance, perseverance is the right path • Trump to host Egypt's el-Sissi at White House next week.

Reuters and Israel Hayom Staff // published on 31/03/2019

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif | Photo: AP

Iran's foreign ministry on Friday called on Palestinians to be steadfast in their resistance against U.S. President Donald Trump's moves in support of Israel on Jerusalem and the Golan Heights.

In a statement on the eve of "Land Day," an annual commemoration of the deaths of six Arab Israelis killed by Israeli security forces during demonstrations over government land confiscations in northern Israel in 1976, the foreign ministry said: "The U.S. president's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital ... and the occupied Golan Heights as part of the illegitimate Zionist regime ... shows clearly that Palestinian resistance and perseverance as symbolized by 'Land Day' is the right path."

In remarks carried by state television, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said accused the U.S. of "breaking international law on a daily basis ... and recently in regards to the Golan Heights." He said, "We should resist this and, God willing, we will come out victorious."

U.S. President Donald Trump on Monday signed a decree recognizing Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights, captured from Syria in the 1967 Six-Day War. The decision, which was criticized by Arab states, came as Israel gears up for elections on April 9. The U.N. Security Council has declared the annexation "null and void and without international legal effect."

EPA

Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the Golan decision would help resolve the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians by removing uncertainty. White House advisers

Jared Kushner and Jason Greenblatt have been working on a peace proposal to address the conflict.

Meanwhile, the White House announced that U.S. President Donald Trump will host his Egyptian counterpart Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi at the White House on April 9 for talks on strengthening their strategic partnership and working on shared priorities in the Middle East, the White House announced on Friday.

In a statement, the White House said the two leaders would discuss "building on our robust military, economic and counterterrorism cooperation" as well as regional economic integration and "Egypt's longstanding role as a lynchpin of regional stability."

The visit by el-Sissi comes at a time of renewed tensions between Israel and Palestinian terrorists in Gaza after a rocket fired from the coastal enclave wounded seven Israelis near Tel Aviv.

Israel responded with airstrikes and warnings from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that Israel was prepared to wage a broad military campaign in Gaza if needed.

Newsletter Friday March 29, 2019

Posted:

US energy chief Rick Perry OKs deal to share non-weapon nuke tech with Saudis

Opinions

Steven Emerson | Linda Sarsour's NYU makeover

She warned her audience against forces that seek to divide Jews and Muslims, and Jews and black people. She never mentioned that she was one of those forces.

Dr. Haim Shine | Gantz campaign turning into TV show

Only hubris and recklessness bring people with zero political experience to run for high office. Running on an "anyone but Netanyahu" platform is not enough if you want lead Israel.

Nadav Shragai | We must be worthy of the Golan Heights

In 2007, a movement comprising artists, writers, and even former defense officials was prepared to give up the Golan Heights, not comprehending the nature of the tyrant Bashar Assad, which was to be revealed a few years later.

Newsletter Friday March 29, 2019

US energy chief Perry OKs deal to share nuke tech with Saudis

Lawmakers from both parties are concerned that Saudi Arabia could develop nuclear weapons if the U.S. technology is transferred without proper safeguards • Energy Secretary Rick Perry says he didn't know if approvals were signed before Khashoggi murder.

News Agencies and Israel Hayom Staff // published on 29/03/2019

U.S. Energy Secretary Rick Perry | Photo: Reuters

The Trump administration has approved seven applications for U.S. companies to sell nuclear power technology and assistance to Saudi Arabia, the Energy Department said Thursday.

Energy Secretary Rick Perry told the Senate Armed Services Committee that the Energy Department has approved 37 nuclear applications since January 2017, including nine in the Middle East. Besides the seven to Saudi Arabia, two were approved for Jordan. Perry said in his testimony that six applications were approved to Saudi Arabia, but a spokeswoman later said he misspoke.

Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Virginia, asked Perry whether the applications were approved after Oct. 2, when Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi was killed at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. Khashoggi, a Washington Post columnist, lived in Virginia.

Perry said he did not know the specific date.

"We sign a lot of papers," he said. "I've got a pretty good memory, but to remember every date that I sign a piece of paper might be above my ability to recall."

Lawmakers from both parties have expressed concerns that Saudi Arabia could develop nuclear weapons if the U.S. technology is transferred without proper safeguards.

Congress is increasingly uneasy with the close relationship between the Trump administration and Saudi Arabia. U.S. President Donald Trump has made the kingdom a centerpiece of his foreign policy in the Middle East as he tries to further isolate Iran, a regional rival to the Saudi regime and Israel. In the process, Trump has brushed off criticism over the killing of Khashoggi and the Saudis' role in the war in Yemen.

The nuclear approvals, known as Part 810 authorizations, allow companies to do preliminary work on nuclear power ahead of any deal to build a nuclear plant. They do

not allow transfer of nuclear material, equipment or components. The authorizations were first reported by The Daily Beast before Perry confirmed them in public testimony.

Perry disputed media accounts describing the authorizations as secret, saying, "These U.S. companies that are going to be doing this work want to keep that proprietary information from being out in the public domain."

But Democrats said nuclear authorizations are normally made public. They accused the Trump administration of trying to conceal its negotiations with Saudi Arabia.

"It appears to me that this is an end run around the law in an effort to achieve a policy," Rep. Brad Sherman, D-California, told Secretary of State Mike Pompeo at a House Foreign Affairs Committee on Wednesday.

Pompeo said U.S. officials were "working to ensure that the nuclear power that [the Saudis] get is something we understand and doesn't present that risk" of allowing them to make nuclear weapons.

Sherman called the U.S. response to Khashoggi's murder inadequate and said officials must do everything in their power to prevent Saudi Arabia from getting a nuclear weapon.

"If you cannot trust a regime with a bone saw, you should not trust them with nuclear weapons," Sherman said, referring to reports from the Turkish government that Saudi agents used a bone saw to dismember Khashoggi after he was killed last year.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Massachusetts, a member of the Armed Services Committee, told Perry it was "a bad idea to even consider passing on nuclear technology to the Saudi government," given the possible role of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Khashoggi's murder.

"The last thing we should be doing is giving the Saudi government the tools to produce nuclear weapons," said Warren, a Democratic candidate for president.

The announcement of the nuclear approvals came as Republican and Democratic senators requested that the Government Accountability Office review the Trump administration's negotiations with Saudi Arabia.

Sens. Marco Rubio, R-Florida, and Bob Menendez, D-New Jersey, asked the GAO to investigate reports that some negotiations have been conducted without oversight required under the federal Atomic Energy Act. The senators, who both serve on the Foreign Relations Committee, said it was unusual that the Energy Department apparently was leading the negotiations, rather than the State Department.

The senators said they were "troubled by the administration's lack of consultations with Congress" and concerned that specific proposals presented by Energy officials may not have been fully vetted with other agencies.

The Trump administration had previously opened talks with Riyadh on what's known as a "123 agreement." The name comes from the section of the law that establishes the parameters for major nuclear cooperation between the United States and other countries. Without one, U.S. nuclear energy companies such as Westinghouse would lose out on business opportunities with the Saudis.

The Democratic-led House Oversight Committee, meanwhile, has opened an investigation into claims by several whistleblowers who said they witnessed "abnormal acts" in the White House regarding a proposal to build nuclear reactors in Saudi Arabia.

Newsletter Friday March 29, 2019

'The Arabs have realized Israel cannot be destroyed'

In an interview with Israel Hayom in Doha, Abd Al-Hamid Al-Ansari, one of the most outspoken liberal voices in the Arab world, says Arab nations now lean toward reconciliation with Israel – if Israel commits to respecting the rights of the Palestinians.

Eldad Beck // published on 29/03/2019

Abd Al-Hamid Al-Ansari

"We in the [Persian] Gulf states enjoy innovation thanks to our vast funds. You are inventive. We have not yet succeeded in sowing the seeds of innovation, which are democracy, liberalism and freedom, here," Abd Al-Hamid Al-Ansari, one of the most outspoken liberal voices in the Arab world, says in an interview with Israel Hayom in Doha, Qatar.

In the past, Al-Ansari served as the dean of Islamic Law at Qatar University, where he had no qualms about sharply criticizing the use of terrorism and violence in the name of Islam. Today, Al-Ansari writes opinion pieces and books about the state of the Arab world and the Middle East.

Israel Hayom meets Al-Ansari in the heart of Doha, the Qatari capital, which is bustling with preparations ahead of the 2022 FIFA World Cup soccer tournament the city is set to host, in what will be a first for an Arab state. The decision to allow Qatar to host the World Cup sparked controversy when it was announced. Human rights groups protested the honor being given to Qatar at the same time when hundreds of thousands of foreign workers in the country are being taken advantage of and treated like modern-day slaves.

For the past year and a half, Saudi Arabia and its allies have imposed a land, sea and air blockade on Qatar over its ties with Iran and open support for opposition forces in various Arab countries and terrorist organizations. Nevertheless, construction on eight stadiums in preparation of the games is almost complete.

Sparks of protest

Q: Has the Arab world learned the lessons of the dramatic results of the Arab Spring?

"This was a popular protest movement, the reasons of which were many. The disappointment of the masses was the principal reason for the Arab Spring. The leaders of the officers' revolution in Egypt promised the masses freedom, unity, the liberation of Palestine, a just society. None of these things has been realized over 50 years. But the most important reason was the issue of human dignity. The revolutionaries who came to power wiped out the opposition; their opponents were tortured in prisons. Arab human dignity has been violated in all the important Arab countries. That is the spark that lit the fuse of protest.

"The Muslim Brotherhood tried to attain power in Egypt and other countries. As a successful opposition movement, they succeeded in enlisting the masses. But they didn't have a political-national plan for construction and growth. The Brotherhood wanted to fight secularism and impose themselves on the state and on society. This led to failure, and the failure of the Arab Spring. The situation is now becoming more difficult than it was before the [Arab] spring, as we see in Syria, Libya, Iraq and Yemen. Who today would dare to think of a rebellion against the existing regimes, after having seen these tragic results? Only the smallest minority."

According to Al-Ansari, "The police, for their part, learned a lesson to a certain extent. In Saudi Arabia, large and significant political, social and religious changes have taken place. In the Gulf states, there are the beginnings of political, social and economic openness. One can see much more temperance as far as concerns freedom of speech. In Qatar, freedom of speech is made possible through open social media networks.

"People in the Gulf region feel freer to express their opinions and criticize corruption," he says. "We do not hear about torture in prisons. People demonstrate, as we see today in Sudan and Algeria. In the past, they would have responded to such protests forcefully. Today the regimes are cautious. The international arena has a greater influence on what goes on in Arab states. The regimes are under internal and external scrutiny."

In support of the US alliance

In Al-Ansari's opinion, there is one more important matter to note, and that is that throughout this difficult period, in a majority of Sunni Arab countries, there were no expressions of hostility toward the Jews outside of the most radical streams – the Salafists or the Houthis in Yemen.

"Also regarding Israel," he emphasizes, "as a state and as a policy, the Arab regimes are today demonstrating more flexibility [on] normalization and political and economic cooperation with it, in particular in the Gulf region. We see this also in the media. On the public level, the situation is different. And yet, I see that Arab nations today tend toward reconciliation with Israel – if Israel commits to respecting the rights of the Palestinians, meaning the establishment of a state with all that entails."

Q: Meaning a state with a military?

"There will be a need to define the character of the Palestinian state. In the past, contact with Israel was considered treason, and today there is no mass opposition to it. And the Arabs have been convinced that Israel exists, that it cannot be destroyed by force and that it is preferable to negotiate with it. For 70 years, the Arabs tried every means of violence against Israel and saw that it only grows more powerful as they grow weaker."

"One more thing," Al-Ansari adds, "Arab states spend vast sums of money on arms, at the expense of the advancement of their societies. Had they invested these billions of dollars on development, the state of the Arab societies would be better. Beyond this, the Arabs discovered that the Palestinians themselves are divided and conflicted between the [Palestinian] Authority and Hamas. If the owners of the problem themselves are fighting one another, others have no problem looking for justification for reconciliation with Israel."

Of course, Al-Ansari notes that "Iran also plays a part in this development: The Arabs realized that Iran, as a result of its actions in the Arab world, constitutes a threat. Iran now controls four Arab capitals – Baghdad, Damascus, Beirut and Sana'a. Today the Arabs understand the slogan of resistance to Israel was used by the Iranians to act against them [the Arabs]."

"All those who raise these slogans today – Iran, Hezbollah, Hamas and the masses shouting 'Death to Israel and the U.S. – do this for their own personal needs. All of the anti-Israel slogans were a political tool for attaining power."

Q: What do you think about U.S foreign policy under President Donald Trump?

"I am one of those who support a strong alliance with the U.S., regardless of the identity of the American president. Qatar is a small country that needs an alliance with a power like the U.S. The decision to withdraw from Syria is an American matter. Trump's policy stems from a desire to fulfill his promise to voters to bring the American soldiers home. Trump represents another policy. Today, Trump is not willing to pay with American casualties or money in order to solve others' problems."

Al-Ansari says that "in the Middle East, Arabs from all political strains attacked the U.S. for its involvement in the overthrow of regimes. That was one of the reasons for the

hatred of the U.S., which culminated in the Sept. 11 attacks. These are Arab problems that the Arabs must solve themselves."

Q: And what do you think will happen with Trump's so-called "deal of the century" and Iran?

"There are conflicting reports about what it [the Trump Middle East peace plan] entails. I am convinced that the Arab regimes will not agree to a solution that does not please the Palestinian Authority. Nevertheless, the current American approach is: We help only those who help themselves."

Al-Ansari believes that despite U.S. sanctions on Tehran, "the Iranian regime is not in danger. I don't think there will be a revolution, but there may be changes to the regime. Iran will be obliged to change its foreign policy and stop the transfer of funds to agents in other countries. They will also have less money [to invest] in the arms race and the nuclear programs if they want to remain in power.

He says that the continuation of current U.S. policy on Iran would convince the ayatollah regime there that "economic growth is more important than exporting the revolution and spending money overseas." But that he notes "will require more time."

Newsletter Thursday March 28, 2019

Posted:

Russia urges governments to view Golan Heights as Israeli-occupied territory

Opinions

Alan M. Dershowitz | Jews must not be afraid to use their power

When I hear that Jews are too powerful, my response is, we are not powerful enough. If Jewish power and influence are used in the cause of peace and justice, there is nothing to be ashamed of.

Ruthie Blum | Israel's blessings and curses

Most of the public is aware that Prime Minister Netanyahu is not to blame for the asymmetric warfare imposed on the Jewish state by immoral forces bent on its destruction.

Fiamma Nirenstein | You call that an interview?

Keren Marciano's recent interview of Prime Minister Netanyahu was embarrassing. She screamed, shouted, interrupted, agitated with her hands, made faces – all things a professional journalist doesn't do.

Newsletter Thursday March 28, 2019

US criticized for recognizing Israeli sovereignty over Golan Heights

At U.N. Security Council, speaker after speaker support Syria's sovereignty over Golan Heights and oppose Israel's annexation of strategic plateau • Assad ally Russia urges governments to continue to view Golan Heights as Israeli-occupied territory.

Associated Press and Israel Hayom Staff // published on 28/03/2019

U.N. Security Council in New York City | Photo: AFP

The United States came under sharp criticism from the 14 other members of the U.N. Security Council, Wednesday, for its decision to recognize Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights in violation of council resolutions.

Speaker after speaker at the open meeting supported Syria's sovereignty over the strategic plateau and opposed Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights and U.S. President Donald Trump's proclamation earlier this week.

As South Africa's U.N. Ambassador Jerry Matjila said, "This unilateral action does nothing to assist in finding a long-term peaceful solution to the conflict in the Middle East."

He and others pointed to resolutions calling for Israel to end its occupation of the Golan Heights, including a December 1981 Security Council resolution that called Israel's annexation of the strategic area "null and void and without international legal effect."

Syria's closest ally Russia urged governments to continue to view the Golan Heights as Israeli-occupied territory.

"If anybody feels any temptation to follow this poor example, we would urge them to refrain from this aggressive revision of international law," Russia's Deputy Ambassador Vladimir Safronkov said.

While Syria received support on its sovereignty over the Golan Heights, German Ambassador Christoph Heusgen and Britain's Ambassador Karen Pierce also used the meeting to criticize President Bashar Assad's government for bombing civilians, using chemical weapons and violating human rights violations during the ongoing eight-year civil war.

Israel captured the Golan Heights from Syria in the 1967 Six-Day War and annexed it in 1981. A 1974 cease-fire agreement that officially ended the 1973 Yom Kippur War led to the deployment of the U.N. Disengagement Observer Force on the Golan Heights.

Trump's proclamation that the Golan Heights are part of Israel raised questions about the future of UNDOF once the peacekeeping force's mandate expires on June 30.

U.S. political coordinator Rodney Hunter told the council UNDOF has "a vital role to play in preserving stability between Israel and Syria," an assurance that the Trump administration's recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the strategic plateau won't affect its operation.

He said the force's mandate to ensure that the area of separation between Syria and Israel "is a buffer zone free from any military presence or activities" is of "critical strategic and security importance" to Israel, and "can contribute to the stability of the entire Middle East."

Hunter said U.S. recognition of the Israeli Golan Heights does not affect the 1974 cease-fire agreement, "nor do we believe that it undermines UNDOF's mandate in any way."

He strongly criticized "the daily presence of the Syrian armed forces" in the area of separation, where UNDOF is the only military force allowed, calling their presence a violation of the 1974 cease-fire agreement.

The United States calls on Russia to use its influence with Assad "to compel the Syrian forces to uphold their commitment" to the cease-fire agreement "and immediately withdraw from the area of separation," Hunter said.

U.N. peacekeeping chief Jean-Pierre Lacroix told the council there is "a continued significant threat" to UNDOF personnel from explosive remnants of war, "and from the possible presence of sleeper cells of armed groups including [U.N.-] listed terrorist groups."

Undersecretary General Rosemary DiCarlo expressed hope that "the recent developments will not be used as an excuse by anyone to pursue actions that could undermine the relative stability of the situation on Golan and beyond."

Newsletter Thursday March 28, 2019

Syrian army says Israeli strikes hit northern city of Aleppo

Airstrikes reportedly hit ammunition depot, logistics hub belonging to Iranian-backed militias, vicinity of military airport used by Iranian troops • Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reports seven members of Iran's forces in country killed in attack.

News Agencies and Israel Hayom Staff // published on 28/03/2019

An Israeli airstrike in Syria | Illustration: AP

The Syrian military said Israel on Wednesday launched raids on an industrial zone in the northern city of Aleppo, causing only material damage, while opposition sources said the strikes hit Iranian ammunition stores and a military airport used by Tehran's forces.

"The Israeli aggression targeted some positions in Sheikh Najjar industrial zone and a number of enemy missiles were brought down," an army statement said.

According to the U.K.-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, seven members of Iran's forces in the country were killed in the attack.

There was no immediate comment from Israel.

The blasts caused an electrical blackout in Aleppo, the country's second largest city and a major industrial hub that bore the brunt of years of fighting and heavy Russian and Syrian aerial bombardment on its former rebel-held areas.

Military experts say Aleppo is one of the main areas where Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards have a strong military presence supporting local militias that have for years been fighting against insurgents alongside the Syrian army.

Two opposition sources familiar with Tehran's military presence in the area said a large ammunition depot and a logistics hub belonging to Iranian-backed militias inside the industrial zone took direct hits.

Other strikes hit the vicinity of Nairab military airport on the outskirts of Aleppo in the second such strike on the installation used by Iranian troops in less than a year, they added.

Iranian-backed Shiite militias have expanded their control over mainly Sunni areas around Damascus, southern and eastern Syria that bore the brunt of the heaviest bombardment and led to mass displacement or emigration to neighboring countries.

Iran's growing influence in Syria, where it has struck economic and trade deals, has raised the prospect of a military confrontation with its archenemy Israel

Israel, which considers Iran its biggest threat, has repeatedly attacked Iranian targets in Syria and those of allied militia, including Lebanon's Hezbollah.

Earlier this year Israeli military said they had attacked Iranian targets that included munitions stores in Damascus International Airport.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said Israel had carried out "hundreds" of attacks over the past few years of Syria's war to curtail Iran and its ally Hezbollah.

Israel has said it was crucial to block growing Iranian military influence in Syria and has vowed it would push its troops out of the country.

Iran has warned Israel it would respond if it continued attacking targets in Syria and repeatedly said its military presence in Syria is at the invitation of the Assad government and that it has no immediate plans to withdraw.

The strike coincided with an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council that was held at Syria's request over U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to recognize Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights.

Newsletter Wednesday March 27, 2019

Posted:

Israel is poised to increase responses to rocket attacks from the Gaza

Opinions

Amnon Lord | Another cease-fire round

Netanyahu has managed the latest escalation well; even hawkish pundits agree he has hit Hamas harder than before. His immediate goal is to keep the pressure on Hamas so the planned Friday riots are contained.

Yoav Limor | Ready for a fight

If a diplomatic formula can't be found, developments on the ground will do the talking and the sides will require nerves of steel and a lot of luck to avoid a rapid descent into all-out violence.

Isi Leibler | The national interest in the upcoming election

This election is not about policy but is over one choice: whether to re-elect a diplomatically skilled leader of international standing and superior intellect or to gamble on an inexperienced leader.

Newsletter Wednesday March 27, 2019

Israel Hayom Monday Apr 1, 2019

Netanyahu to AIPAC: 'We are prepared to do more' in Gaza

"The IDF destroyed major Hamas installations on a scale not seen since the end of the military operation in Gaza four years ago," PM says via satellite • Netanyahu hits back against allegations that Israel buys U.S. support: It's not about the Benjamins.

JNS, Reuters and Israel Hayom Staff // published on 27/03/2019

A monitor transitions from a still image to a video satellite feed from Israel of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressing AIPAC in Washington, Tuesday | Photo: Reuters

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that Israel is ready to increase its response to rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip.

"I can tell you we are prepared to do a lot more. We will do what is necessary to defend our people and to defend our state," said Netanyahu via satellite to the 18,000 attendees of the 2019 AIPAC Policy Conference in Washington, D.C.

Netanyahu, who was originally supposed to address the AIPAC conference in person and dine with U.S. President Donald Trump at the White House, cut short his visit after a rocket fired from the Gaza Strip destroyed a house on Moshav Mishmeret in central Israel early Monday.

Netanyahu noted that Israel has "responded with great force" to the latest Hamas rocket attacks.

"In the last 24 hours, the IDF destroyed major Hamas terrorist installations on a scale not seen since the end of the military operation in Gaza four years ago," he said.

Netanyahu arrived back in Israel on Tuesday to meet with security officials at the Defense Ministry about the Gaza situation. Israeli officials said that they have not agreed to a cease-fire with Hamas and that they are prepared to continue airstrikes.

While still in the U.S. on Monday, Netanyahu authorized dozens of airstrikes on Hamas targets in Gaza.

Netanyahu also said that "it's not about the Benjamins" as he hit back against any suggestion that U.S. politicians are paid to support Israel.

"Some people will just never get it. They'll never understand why the vast majority of Americans – Jews and non-Jews alike – support Israel."

"Take it from this Benjamin: It's not about the Benjamins," Netanyahu said. "The reason the people of America support Israel is not because they want our money, it's because they share our values."

A few hours later, Omar responded on Twitter: "This from a man facing indictments for bribery and other crimes in three separate public corruption affairs. Next!"

Newsletter Wednesday March 27, 2019

US envoy hints at peace deal with Israeli security control in W. Bank

At AIPAC conference in Washington, U.S. Ambassador to Israel David Friedman suggests it is in Israel's best interests to engage now on the Trump administration's peace plan, while the U.S. has a president sympathetic to its security concerns.

// published on 27/03/2019

U.S. Ambassador to Israel David Friedman | Photo: Oren Ben Hakoon

The Trump administration understands the need for Israel to have "overriding security control" in the West Bank in any future peace deal with the Palestinians, U.S. Ambassador to Israel David Friedman said on Tuesday.

Friedman is part of a White House team spearheading a still-secret Israeli-Palestinian peace plan that Washington has said will be unveiled after Israel's election on April 9.

Palestinians have called any peace proposal by U.S. President Donald Trump a non-starter.

Addressing a convention of the pro-Israel lobby group AIPAC in Washington, Friedman gave no details of the U.S. blueprint. But he appeared to suggest it was in Israel's best interests to engage now on the deal, while the United States has a president sympathetic to its security concerns.

"Can we leave this to an administration that may not understand the existential risk to Israel if Judea and Samaria are overcome by terrorists in the manner that befell the Gaza Strip after the IDF withdrew from this territory?" Friedman said.

Friedman, who used the biblical terms for the West Bank, was referring to the 2005 pullout of Israeli troops and settlers from Gaza, the coastal enclave seized by Hamas

terrorists two years later in a brief yet bloody war with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas' rival Fatah movement.

"Can we leave this to an administration that may not understand the need for Israel to maintain overriding security control of Judea and Samaria and a permanent defense position in the Jordan Valley?" he said.

Israel has long rejected any return to what it has described as indefensible boundaries that existed before the Six-Day War in 1967. It has said it must maintain military control of the West Bank, which it captured in that conflict along with east Jerusalem and Gaza.

Friedman's comments did not say what "overriding" Israeli security control in the West Bank would entail. But his reference to a permanent defense post in its eastern sector, bordering Jordan, seemed to suggest at least a partial troop presence.

The Palestinians demand a full Israeli pullout from the West Bank and a return to the pre-1967 borders.

Trump's Middle East adviser and son-in-law Jared Kushner is spearheading Washington's peace efforts but has not disclosed details.

Unlike his predecessors, Trump has not endorsed the goal of Palestinian statehood. On Monday, he signed a decree recognizing Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights.

Newsletter Tuesday March 26, 2019

Posted:

Hamas leaders in fear warn Gazans who relay information of locations, risk treason

Opinions

Yoav Limor | Israel must end this round with tangible gains

Ending this round without a clear Hamas pledge to prevent rocket fire would ensure that violence returns in the near future. Israel must also implement new measures to prevent access to the border fence.

Meir Indor | Not time for a ground operation

Israel must gradually reinstate the policy of targeted assassinations from the air against terrorist leaders. Our soldiers are not a spear for the Palestinian Authority and PLO.

Eran Ehrlich | The art of tikkun olam: Creating to heal the world
The core Jewish value of tikkun olam stems from the understanding that the world is fractured and must be fixed and elevated. Artists and designers have the profound ability to do this with their creations.

Newsletter Tuesday March 26, 2019

Trump officially recognizes Israeli sovereignty on Golan Heights

U.S. President Trump says move cements Israel's ability to defend itself from regional threats should a broad Arab-Israeli peace deal ever be reached • U.N.: Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights "null and void and without international legal effect."

News Agencies and Israel Hayom Staff // published on 26/03/2019

U.S. President Donald Trump holds up a proclamation recognizing Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights, as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu looks on at the White House, Monday | Photo: AP

U.S. President Donald Trump signed a historic proclamation on Monday recognizing Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights.

Standing alongside Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House, Trump made formal a move he announced in a surprise tweet last week.

The president said it was time for the U.S. to take the step after 52 years of Israeli control of the strategic highlands on the border with Syria. The U.S. is the first country to recognize Israel's sovereignty over the Golan, which the rest of the international community regards as Israeli-occupied.

Syria and neighboring Lebanon denounced the move, and at least two NATO members, Canada and Turkey, said they would not follow suit.

Trump said his decision would cement the Jewish state's ability to defend itself from regional threats should a broad Arab-Israeli peace deal ever be reached. Trump's action also likely gives Netanyahu a political boost ahead of what's expected to be a close Israeli election.

During his 90-minute visit to the White House, reporters and photographers were invited to see Netanyahu at least four times, including his arrival at the South Lawn and in the Oval Office.

Israel has long argued that the strategically important area has, for all practical purposes, been fully integrated into Israel since it was captured from Syria in the 1967 Six-Day War and that control of the strategic plateau is needed as protection from Iran and its allies in Syria.

"Today, aggressive acts by Iran and terrorist groups, including Hezbollah in southern Syria continue to make the Golan Heights a potential launching ground for attacks on Israel," Trump said in the proclamation.

The proclamation noted the "unique circumstances" presented by the Golan, language that appeared to be aimed at countering criticism that the recognition would be used by other countries to justify control of disputed territory, such as Russia's 2014 annexation of Ukraine's Crimea region.

But criticism was speedy and intense.

Syria slammed the U.S. step as "blatant aggression" on its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The foreign ministry said Trump's move represented the "highest level of contempt for international legitimacy" and showed that Washington was "the main enemy" of Arabs.

Lebanon, which Secretary of State Mike Pence visited over the past weekend, said that the Golan Heights is "Syrian Arab" territory and that "no country can falsify history by transferring" land from one country to another.

Saudi Arabia denounced U.S. President Donald Trump's recognition of Israel's 1981 annexation of the Golan Heights, a statement released by the Saudi Press Agency said early on Tuesday.

"Attempts to impose fait accompli do not change the facts," the statement said. It said the Golan Heights was an "occupied Syrian Arab land in accordance with the relevant international resolutions."

"It will have significant negative effects on the peace process in the Middle East and the security and stability of the region," it said.

The Saudi Press Agency report described Monday's declaration as a clear violation of the United Nations Charter and of international law.

Kuwait and Bahrain said they regretted the decision while Qatar called on Israel to end its occupation of the Golan Heights and comply with international resolutions.

Canada also expressed opposition.

"In accordance with international law, Canada does not recognize permanent Israeli control over the Golan Heights. Canada's long-standing position remains unchanged," the

Canadian foreign ministry said. "Annexation of territory by force is prohibited under international law."

Turkey's foreign minister said that the U.S. had ignored international law and that the decision would further increase tensions in the region.

And, at the United Nations, U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said U.N. chief António Guterres adheres to Security Council resolutions that Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights is "null and void and without international legal effect."

Amnesty International called the decision "irresponsible, reckless and yet another example of the Trump administration violating international law and consensus by condoning Israel's illegal annexation."

Eric Goldstein, deputy Middle East and North Africa director at Human Rights Watch, said Trump seems to want to "drive a wrecking ball" through international law that protects the people who live in "occupied Golan Heights." He said it could embolden other "occupying states to double down on their own land grabs, settlements and plunder of resources."

Netanyahu, even as he was somberly cutting short his visit to Washington to deal with a rocket attack in central Israel, was elated by Trump's move.

"Israel has never had a better friend than you," he told the president.

Netanyahu noted a series of steps Trump has taken since assuming office, including his withdrawal from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and moving the U.S. Embassy there from Tel Aviv.

In addition to signaling U.S. support for Israel's security, the decision appeared to show Trump's support for Netanyahu, who is up for re-election April 9. Netanyahu is facing a tough challenge from a popular former military chief and reeling from a series of corruption allegations. He has repeatedly sought to focus attention on his foreign policy record and strong ties with Trump.

The two leaders met as the Israeli military was striking Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip in response to a rocket that hit a house north of Tel Aviv, injuring seven people.

In a speech to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee earlier Monday, U.S. Vice President Mike Pence said the rocket attack "proves that Hamas is not a partner for peace." Pence told AIPAC that "Hamas is a terrorist organization that seeks the destruction of Israel, and the United States will never negotiate with terrorist Hamas."

Netanyahu arrived in Washington on Sunday for what was to have been a three-day visit but announced early Monday he would leave early to take charge of the response to the rocket.

Newsletter Tuesday March 26, 2019

Hamas leaders head underground in fear of Israeli reprisals

Armed Gazan factions: Cease-fire talks have failed, we are preparing for confrontation with Israel • Hamas warns that Gazans who relay information over internet, telephone about location of its forces and launching pads risk being charged with treason.

Daniel Siryoti // published on 26/03/2019

Smoke and flames are seen during an Israeli airstrike in Gaza City, Monday | Photo: Reuters

Prior to reports of a ceasefire, Monday night, the Hamas terrorist organization threatened to escalate its response to IDF airstrikes on the Gaza Strip. In the late evening hours, the group announced that "the resistance would expand its missile range as long as the Zionist enemy's attacks continued."

Hamas spokesman Mushir al-Masri threatened, "We will respond with force to the criminal Zionist onslaught. Red lines have been crossed, and we will not remain silent."

Ahead of the Israeli strikes on the coastal enclave in response to a rocket launched from Gaza that struck a home in the central Israeli moshav Mishmeret, injuring seven, Islamic Jihad head Ziad al-Nakhla had warned that "an Israeli attack on the Gaza Strip will result in a forceful response."

In a joint statement, Monday, armed Gazan factions said talks aimed at reaching a ceasefire with Egyptian mediators had failed and that they were now preparing for a confrontation.

According to reports coming out of the terrorist enclave, the rocket that struck Israel's central Sharon region was likely launched from the vicinity of Rafah, in southern Gaza. Nevertheless, senior Hamas officials told the Al Arabiya news channel and Al Jazeera network that the rocket's launch had been the result of "human error."

Hamas' national security mechanism, Monday, issued a message according to which "residents of the [Gaza] strip must not relay information over the internet or by telephone of the location of Hamas activists, the launching areas, the movement of forces and activists in the strip." According to the report, Hamas said that "those who violate the emergency regulations are expected to face serious charges, up to and including treason."

The assessment in Gaza is that senior Hamas and Islamic Jihad officials will head underground out of concern of targeted assassinations. It has also been reported that Hamas and the armed factions in Gaza have ordered the evacuation of command centers and bases. In addition, armed Palestinian factions convened in a joint operations room, Monday. Unlike previous instances, no information was given as to where and when the meeting was held.

Newsletter Tuesday March 26, 2019



Israeli spacecraft Beresheet captures sunrise from space

Some four weeks after blasting off from Cape Canaveral and two weeks before its anticipated moon landing, Israel's spaceship continues to send back stunning footage of Earth • One video includes sunrise from unique angle.

JNS and Israel Hayom Staff // published on 26/03/2019

A photo of Earth taken by Beresheet last week, showing South America | Photo: SpaceIL

Fresh images and video were transmitted to Earth from the Israeli spacecraft Beresheet on its way to the moon, SpaceIL and the Israel Aerospace Industries announced on Sunday.

The photos and videos were taken by the spacecraft at different heights and times.

One of the videos includes a sunrise from the spacecraft's viewpoint – the Earth can be seen hiding the sun from the spacecraft and then exiting the same shadow created by the sun's exposure. This process creates a kind of sunrise image.

Beresheet ("In the beginning," the first word of the Torah and the Hebrew name for the Book of Genesis), lifted off from Cape Canaveral on Feb. 22.

If the mission succeeds, Israel will become the fourth country to make a soft landing on the moon, after the Soviet Union, the United States and China.

The Beresheet mission was originally part of the Google Lunar XPrize competition and even made the final cut before the contest ended last year without a winner.

The organizers decided to press ahead on their own, and the project – which cost around 100 million dollars - was financed largely by philanthropists Dr. Miriam and Sheldon Adelson together with SpaceIL President Morris Kahn, as well as other donors from around the world.

The Adelson family owns the company that is the primary shareholder in Israel Hayom. Dr. Miriam Adelson is the publisher of Israel Hayom.

Newsletter Tuesday March 26, 2019