

Su 23-Sep Iran blames Israel, US, & Saudis for gunman attack on Iran's military parade

Mo 24-Sep World Bank report: Gaza Strip's economy is in 'free fall', 6% in first quarter of 2018

Tu 25-Sep PM warns Russian delivery of portable S-300 missile system to Syria is irresponsible

We 26-Sep Trump at UN: Iran's terrorist regime must never get nuclear weapons, US not UN puppet

Th 27-Sep At UN Trump endorses 2-state solution to Mideast conflict. Presenting Plan in 2-4 months

Fr 28-Sep At UN, Netanyahu exposes another secret Iranian nuclear warehouse in Tehran

Sa 29-Sep Palestinians ask World Court to order US Embassy out of Jerusalem

Su 30-Sep Netanyahu reveals to UN, Iran & Libya involved in Covert Nuclear activities

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Th 4-Oct Gaza dealing for Prisoner Release in Treaty - Hamas says negotiators have no authority

Newsletter Thursday October 4, 2018

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Hamas leader to Israeli paper: We don't want war with Israel

"War will achieve nothing," Yahya Sinwar, Hamas' military leader, says in rare interview

• Sinwar warns that dire economic situation in the Gaza Strip makes security escalation "inevitable" • **Prisoner exchange is vital to any future deal in Gaza, he says.**

Israel Hayom Staff

Hamas military leader Yahya Sinwar | Photo: Reuters

Hamas military leader **Yahya Sinwar said Wednesday** that an opportunity to change the dire situation in the Gaza Strip can arise from recent **tensions** between the enclave's rulers and Israel.

"A new war with Israel is in neither party's interest. Certainly not ours," he said in an interview with Italian daily La Repubblica that was carried by Israeli daily Yedioth Ahronoth. "Who would want to pit four slingshots against a nuclear power? War will achieve nothing."

Sinwar, who served 22 years in Israeli prison for terrorism offenses and was released as part of the 2011 Schalit deal, stressed that the surprising statement "doesn't mean I'll never fight the occupation [Israel] again. What I'm saying is that I don't want more wars. I want an end to the siege. My first interest is to work for my people. To protect them and protect their right to freedom and independence."

Israel imposed a maritime blockade on the Gaza Strip after Hamas seized control of the coastal enclave in **2007 in a military coup**. Israel maintains the measure is necessary to prevent Hamas, an Islamist terrorist group that calls for Israel's destruction, from smuggling weapons and terrorists into Gaza.

The maritime blockage and strict limitations both Israel and Egypt have imposed on Palestinians' movements between Gaza and their territories over security concerns have plunged Gaza into a dire economic crisis. Unemployment is at 50%, and 80% of Gazans receive humanitarian aid.

Sinwar, for his part, does not believe Hamas is responsible for this situation.

"The responsibility lies with those who closed the borders – not those who try to open them. My responsibility is to cooperate with anyone who can help us end the siege. As things stand, [security] escalation is inevitable," he said.

Over the past few weeks, Egypt has been trying to broker a long-term cease-fire between Israel and Hamas in an effort to prevent recent tensions, fueled by border riots and a Palestinian arson terrorism campaign, from escalating into war.

Israel and Hamas fought three wars over the past decade, in 2008, 2012 and 2014.

Asked what Hamas means when talking about a truce with Israel, Sinwar said, "Total calm – and an end to the siege."

Israel has long maintained that when it comes to its counterterrorism operations in Gaza, "calm will be met with calm," but Sinwar clarified that he means "calm in exchange for calm and an end to the siege. The siege is not calm."

Before the Egyptian-led talks stalled, much was reported in Israeli media about the possibility of an Israel-Hamas agreement including a prisoner exchange deal.

Gaza's rulers are holding the remains of Staff Sgt. Oron Shaul and Lt. Hadar Goldin, killed in the 2014 Gaza conflict, as well as two living Israeli citizens, Ethiopian Israeli Avera Mengistu and Bedouin Israeli Hisham al-Sayed, both suffering from mental health issues, who crossed into Gaza willingly in 2014 and 2015 and were captured by Hamas.

Contradicting a previous statement, Sinwar said a prisoner exchange deal is "vital" to any agreement reached between Israel and Hamas.

"It's imperative. This isn't a political question, it's a moral question. I see this as our duty to have every Palestinian prisoner released."

As for the chances of a cease-fire failing, Sinwar noted that "there's no agreement yet. Hamas and the other Palestinian organizations are ready to sign a deal and respect it, so it's up to the occupation.

"It's important that we make one thing clear," he stressed. "If we are attacked we will defend ourselves, as we always do. This will mean another war, but until that happens, all I can do is reiterate that war will achieve nothing."

Also on Wednesday, The Telegraph quoted Sinwar as telling senior Hamas officials that he believes indirect negotiations with Israel could achieve a cease-fire deal as early as in the next few weeks, providing Israel lifts the Gaza blockade.

A Palestinian official who attended the meeting told the British daily that Sinwar pledged that "unless this deal happens, everyone – the Israelis, the Palestinian Authority, the Egyptians – will suffer."

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has recently admitted that Ramallah was actively trying to torpedo Egypt's efforts to broker a truce between Israel and Hamas, saying that the latter lacks the authority to hold any type of negotiations with Israel.

Newsletter Wednesday October 3, 2018

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Russia completes delivery of S-300 defense systems to Syria

Four S-300 launchers, as well as radars and support vehicles, have been delivered to Assad's army, says Russian defense minister • Training Syrian forces on system will take three months, he says • U.S. warns of "serious escalation" over Russian move.

Daniel Siryoti, News Agencies and Israel Hayom Staff

A Russian S-300 air defense system | Photo: AFP

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu announced Tuesday that the delivery of S-300 air defense systems to Syria has been completed.

Shoigu said Russia had delivered four S-300 launchers along with radars and support vehicles to the Syrian military, and said it would take three months to train Syrian personnel in how to operate the system.

The move followed the Sept. 17 incident in which Syrian air defenses trying to counter an Israeli strike downed a Russian reconnaissance plane over Latakia, and has sparked concerns in both Israel and the United States.

Jerusalem and Washington both contend that giving Syria S-300 surface-to-air missiles will embolden Iran and escalate the Syrian civil war.

Shoigu insisted Tuesday that the S-300s would improve the security of Russian military personnel in Syria.

Israel expressed regret at the deaths of 15 Russian crewmen in the incident, but said the Syrian forces' incompetence was at fault and that Israel is compelled to continue taking action against suspected deployments of Iranian-backed forces across its northern border.

The Kremlin has rejected the Israeli Air Force's findings on the incident, saying the Russian plane was shot down because of the presence of Israeli fighter jets in Syrian airspace.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to continue the close security coordination between the IDF and Russian forces in Syria, carried out via a designated deconfliction channel.

In Washington, State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert could not confirm reports that the S-300 missiles had been delivered.

"I cannot confirm that that is accurate. I hope that they did not," she told a press briefing. "That would be, I think, sort of a serious escalation in concerns and issues going on in Syria."

A senior Israeli official said Sunday that Syria's possession of the S-300 posed a "complex challenge" and that Israel was working on ways to prevent this from becoming a major threat to the country's security.

"We are dealing with the [decision] in different ways, not necessarily by preventing shipments of the air defense system," he told local media.

He said he believed that Russian President Vladimir Putin "understands that the Middle East playing field is very large," and indicated that Israel reserves the right to protect itself and that it has the support of the United States.

Also on Tuesday, the U.S. envoy to NATO said Russia must halt its covert development of a banned cruise missile system or the United States would seek to destroy it before it becomes operational.

The United States believes Russia is developing a ground-launched system in breach of a Cold War treaty that could allow Russia to launch a nuclear strike on Europe at short notice, but Moscow has consistently denied any such violation.

U.S. Ambassador to NATO Kay Bailey Hutchison said Washington remains committed to a diplomatic solution but is prepared to consider a military strike if the development of the medium-range system continues.

"At that point, we would be looking at the capability to take out a [Russian] missile that could hit any of our countries," Hutchison said.

"Countermeasures [by the United States] would be to take out the missiles that are in development by Russia in violation of the treaty. They are on notice."

She later clarified in a tweet that she was not talking about a pre-emptive strike against Russia.

"My point: Russia needs to return to INF Treaty compliance or we will need to match its capabilities to protect U.S. and NATO interests. The current situation, with Russia in blatant violation, is untenable."

In Washington, Nauert said the United States had for some time argued that Moscow was not in compliance with the treaty.

"What Ambassador Hutchison was talking about was improving overall defense and deterrence posture. The United States is committed to upholding its arms control obligations and expects Russia to do the very same thing," she said, adding that the U.S. was discussing the issue with its allies.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said such statements are dangerous and that it would provide detailed answers to Washington.

"It seems that people who make such statements do not realize the level of their responsibility and the danger of aggressive rhetoric," TASS news agency quoted spokeswoman Maria Zakharova as saying.

Newsletter Wednesday October 3, 2018

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| Netanyahu urges IAEA to send inspectors to Iran immediately

After International Atomic Energy Agency issues laconic statement on **secret Iranian nuclear site near capital**, PM Netanyahu fires back, warning time may be running out • PM's office: No reason to wait, radiation levels at site will prove Israel is right.

Ariel Kahana and Eldad Beck

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the U.N. General Assembly last week | Photo: Reuters

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu lambasted the International Atomic Energy Agency on Tuesday, hours after it issued a laconic statement **dismissing his claim** of a secret nuclear installation in Iran.

Netanyahu said the agency, which has been tasked by the United Nations with verifying Iran's nuclear compliance, "must inspect the site immediately," before it is too late.

Addressing the U.N. General Assembly last week, Netanyahu presented world leaders with evidence that **Iran was storing nuclear-related material in violation of the 2015 deal with world powers**. The undeclared **site is located in Turouzabad, just outside the capital Tehran**, and could potentially store up to 300 tons of material and equipment.

Netanyahu even held up a prop with the coordinates and an image of the installation, and later tweeted what appeared to be a satellite image of the site.

"The IAEA relates to inspections that it has carried out in various places in Iran but it does not relate to the specific site in Turouzabad which Prime Minister Netanyahu referred to in his U.N. speech," Netanyahu's office said in a statement on Tuesday.

"There is no reason to wait. The IAEA must inspect the site and immediately dispatch monitors with Geiger counters and the prime minister's words will be seen as verifiably true."

In its statement on Tuesday, the IAEA insisted it had visited "all the sites and locations in Iran which it needed to visit," but did not give a specific time or date when the site in Turouzabad may have been inspected.

"The agency sends inspectors to sites and locations only when needed. The agency uses all safeguards relevant to information available to it but it does not take any information at face value," the statement quoted IAEA chief Yukiya Amano as saying.

"In order to maintain credibility, the agency's independence in relation to the implementation of verification activities is of paramount importance," he said.

A senior Western diplomat told Israel Hayom that the European Union would fail to salvage the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran, despite efforts to bypass U.S. sanctions.

In recent weeks, senior European officials, including EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini, have introduced measures aimed at enabling companies in the 28-member bloc to trade with Iran without being blacklisted by the U.S. Treasury. This includes various banking schemes and legal maneuvers.

But the Western diplomat told Israel Hayom that "there is zero chance that EU companies will continue trading with Iran, as the EU has virtually no viable option to protect companies from the U.S."

He said it was "hard to believe that a company would want to take the risk of being targeted by U.S. authorities just for the sake of trading with a small and fragile economy such as Iran's. In the cost-benefit analysis, it is just not worth it. Prime Minister Netanyahu

Newsletter Tuesday October 2, 2018

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Top German paper urges Berlin to 'sever all trade ties with Iran'

The Islamic republic's persistent calls for Israel's annihilation mean "Iran cannot be an ally at this time, neither in the fight against terrorism nor as an oil supplier or trade partner," argues article in Bild, Germany's most-read daily newspaper.

Israel Hayom Staff

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani at a news conference on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly | Photo: Reuters

A top German newspaper on Tuesday called on the government in Berlin to suspend all trade ties with Iran over its terrorism and its repeated called for Israel's annihilation.

In an article in Germany's most widely read daily newspaper Bild, Julian Roepcke, the paper's foreign news editor, argued that Iran's missile strikes in Syria this weekend "under the auspices of the 'war on terror' might sound good, but the opposite is true. The **missiles themselves** are a message of terror, because they **carry inscriptions reading 'Death to Israel and 'Death to the USA'** – and that is deadly serious for the mullahs."

Iran's missiles, he continued "were not fired against Islamic State, but rather against those who stand in the way of the corrupt regime in Tehran, against those who do not want to stand idly by as Iran's leaders, again and again, call for the 'extermination' of Israel. By the mullahs' crazy logic, ISIS is also the creation of the heinous West, the U.S. and Israel," he wrote.

"Iran cannot be an ally at this time, neither in the fight against terrorism nor as an oil supplier or trade partner," Roepcke concluded.

The United States pulled out of a 2015 nuclear agreement with Iran earlier this year and subsequently reimposed economic sanctions on the Islamic republic. Since then, the European signatories to the accord – Britain, Germany and France – have been trying to come up with ways to salvage the agreement, chiefly a mechanism that would allow for trade with Iran to continue despite the American sanctions.

The Bild is Germany's most widely circulated daily, printing 2.7 million copies a day. Between its various platforms, the paper, which is considered pro-Israel, has an average daily readership of 12 million.

Newsletter Tuesday October 2, 2018

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Israeli public overwhelmingly in favor of Trump's policies

Pew Research Center data shows **80% of Israelis have an overall positive view of the U.S.** and 86% say that the U.S. takes Israeli interests into account, up from 69% who said the same in 2013 • 65% believe it would be best if U.S. was leading world power.

Reuters and Israel Hayom Staff

U.S. President Donald Trump addresses supporters during a Make America Great Again rally in Tennessee, Monday | Photo: Reuters

Public support in Israel for U.S. President Donald Trump is among the highest in the world, according to a study conducted by the Pew Research Center between May and August of this year that surveyed attitudes by country on Trump's policies and performance on international issues.

Following the Trump's administration's controversial relocation of the U.S. Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, popular Israeli support for the U.S. president jumped from 56% in 2017 to 69%.

Approximately 80% of Israelis polled expressed an overall favorable opinion of the U.S, and 52% of Israelis said that the U.S. was doing more to address global issues than it was a few years ago. This is the largest percentage of any national population surveyed to say this.

When asked whether current U.S. policy took Israel's interests into account, 86% responded yes, up from 69% who said the same in 2013.

When it comes to changes in U.S.-Israeli relations, 79% of Israelis polled said this past year had been marked by improved bilateral ties.

Over two-thirds (65%) of Israelis believed that it would be best for the world if the U.S. were the leading national superpower, with 13% saying they thought China should assume that role.

Trump also came out well in the Philippines and South Korea, both of whose positive ratings for the U.S. leader were over 80%.

Not all countries whose citizens were polled by Pew researchers were equally as supportive of the U.S. and its leader. Only 26% of Russians currently hold a favorable view of the U.S., compared to 41% in 2017, and the percentage of Russian respondents who approve of Trump personally has plummeted to just 19%, from 53% in 2017.

Overall, most nations polled were disapproving of the U.S. and Trump, with a median of 70% expressing no confidence in the American administration.

Newsletter Sunday September 30, 2018

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| **After UN reveal, PM to share more Iran nuclear secrets**

Western diplomats say that while Israeli intelligence has been brought to U.N. nuclear watchdog's attention, it does not constitute a "smoking gun" against Iran • PM: Iranian officials criticized U.N. address but didn't deny it, which says everything.

Yoav Limor and Mati Tuchfeld

PM Benjamin Netanyahu at the U.N. General Assembly, last week | Photo: Reuters

Israel plans to share recently obtained intelligence on covert Iranian nuclear activity, as well as on its efforts to arm its Lebanese proxy Hezbollah, with several countries worldwide in an effort to drive them to act against the Islamic republic.

Addressing the U.N. General Assembly on Thursday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu revealed that Iran was maintaining a secret warehouse holding nuclear-related material, in violation of the 2015 deal with world powers.

He further lambasted Iran for its involvement in the Syrian civil war and its attempt to establish permanent military bases there from which to attack Israel, as well as for its funding and arming of Hezbollah, presenting world leaders with evidence that the latter was using Iranian funding to build weapon production facilities in the heart of Lebanese capital, including near Beirut's international airport.

Israel Hayom learned Saturday that Israel will first and foremost share the information with the other signatories to the 2015 accord, namely Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China, as well as with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

This means to show them that while they insist on backing the deal and look for ways to circumvent the issues that arose in the wake of the U.S.'s decision to withdraw from the deal in May, Iran continues to deceive them and the U.N. by secretly pursuing nuclear weapons.

Israeli intelligence has found that the facility, disguised as a carpet manufacturing plant, housed hardware and software directly connected to Iran's nuclear program.

Western diplomats said Saturday that while this information had to be brought to the IAEA's attention, it did not constitute a "smoking gun" proving Iran was in violation of the nuclear deal.

The decision to reveal the information at the U.N. General Assembly was made after the data was carefully scrutinized by the IDF and the Mossad, Israel's national intelligence agency, to ensure making it public would not compromise sensitive sources.

A senior political source said that Netanyahu sought to have his U.N. address incriminate Iran "across the board," which led to the decision to include the intelligence pertaining to Hezbollah's weapon production efforts.

Israeli military intelligence has been closely monitoring the Shiite terrorist group's efforts for the past year, and has already shared it with several Western intelligence agencies, he said.

Iranian officials dismissed Netanyahu's claims at the U.N., with Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif denouncing the allegations as an "obscene charge" and calling the Israeli prime minister "liar who would not stop lying."

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said that "the world will only laugh loudly at this type of false, meaningless and unnecessary speech and false shows."

In Lebanon, where Hezbollah sits in the government and wields considerable political power, the allegations against Hezbollah prompted a heated public and media debate.

The fact that one of the Hezbollah sites revealed is located near Beirut's international airport prompted harsh criticism at the group for jeopardizing the country's tourism industry, which is one of its main sources of revenue.

The Israeli official said that as the Lebanese government it mostly powerless against the Shiite terrorist group and it is unlikely that any Western nations would attempt to curb its activities, the Israeli policy of thwarting any Iranian attempt to smuggle weapons to Hezbollah will remain in place.

A source in Netanyahu's entourage to the U.N. General Assembly said that Thursday's speech has unsettled the Iranians, who have been backed into a corner on the issue.

Another source said that Netanyahu himself stressed that he would not have gone forward with the revelations without the support of the Israeli intelligence community.

Describing the speech as a "call for action," Netanyahu also noted that the fact that Iranian officials "criticized the addressed, they didn't deny [the allegations], which says everything."

Newsletter Sunday September 30, 2018

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Palestinians ask World Court to order US Embassy out of Jerusalem

"State of Palestine" launches action against United States in International Court of Justice, arguing that Trump administration's decision to move U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem violates 1961 Vienna Convention • No date immediately set for court hearing.

Daniel Siryoti, News Agencies and Israel Hayom Staff

A road sign points the way to the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem | Photo: Reuters

The International Court of Justice said on Friday it has received a complaint from the "State of Palestine" against the United States, which argues that the placement of the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem violates an international treaty and it should be removed.

The court, known as the World Court, is the United Nations' venue for resolving disputes between nations.

It issued a statement saying the Palestinians were arguing that the 1961 Vienna Convention of Diplomatic Relations requires a country to locate its embassy on the territory of a host state.

The Palestinians have asked the court "to order the United States of America to withdraw [its] diplomatic mission from the Holy City of Jerusalem."

Israel reunited west and east Jerusalem after the 1967 Six-Day War, but its sovereignty over east Jerusalem, which the Palestinians want as the capital of their future state, remains internationally disputed.

In December, U.S. President Donald Trump broke with decades of policy and recognized the united city as the Israeli capital, and said the U.S. Embassy would relocate from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, which it did in May.

Palestine was recognized by the U.N. General Assembly in 2012 as a non-member observer state. Its statehood is not recognized by either Israel or the United States.

Cases at the ICJ can take years to complete. Its decisions are final and legally binding but are not always adhered to. No date was immediately set for hearings.

Newsletter Friday September 28, 2018

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At UN, Netanyahu exposes another secret Iranian nuclear warehouse

Addressing U.N. General Assembly, prime minister urges tougher action against Iran, says European leaders must join U.S. efforts to curb Tehran's nuclear ambitions •

Netanyahu: Israel will do whatever it must to defend itself against Iran's aggression.

Mati Tuchfeld, News Agencies and Israel Hayom Staff

PM Benjamin Netanyahu at the U.N. Assembly, last week | Photo: AP

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday described what he said was a **secret atomic warehouse in Iran** and **accused Europe of appeasing Iran**.

Addressing the United Nations General Assembly, Netanyahu showed an aerial photograph of the Iranian capital marked with a red arrow and pointed to what he said was a previously secret warehouse holding nuclear-related material.

In May, Netanyahu revealed that Israel had obtained incriminating evidence from an Iranian archive, proving Tehran has lied to world powers during and after the signing of the 2015 nuclear agreement.

The evidence – over 100,000 pages and 183 CDs – was obtained in a secret operation by the Mossad, Israel's national intelligence agency.

Addressing world leaders on Thursday, Netanyahu accused Iran of hiding a clandestine **nuclear warehouse in a rug-cleaning plant in Tehran**, arguing that this showed Iran still sought to obtain nuclear weapons despite ostensibly agreeing to relinquish this aspiration.

Netanyahu said the site in question contained some 33 pounds of radioactive material that has since been moved, and called on the U.N. atomic agency to inspect the location immediately.

'U.N. must take action'

Criticizing the IAEA he said, "In May, I presented a short summary of what we obtained to the international media. I provided hard evidence of Iran's plans to build nuclear weapons and its plans to deceive the international community. Israel shared this information and even more damning evidence that we found with members of the P5+1, and with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

"Months have passed. The IAEA has still not taken any action. It has not posed a single question to Iran. It has not demanded to inspect a single new site discovered in that secret archive.

"So, given this inaction, I decided to reveal today something else that we have shared with the IAEA and with a few intelligence agencies. Today, I am disclosing for the first time that Iran has another secret facility in Tehran – a secret atomic warehouse for storing massive amounts of equipment and material from Iran's secret nuclear weapons program."

Holding up the image of the facility, he said, "Here it is. You see, like the atomic archive, it's another innocent looking compound."

Netanyahu noted that Iran was aware that the site had been discovered and was working to clean it out, to further deceive the IAEA.

"You have to ask yourself a question. Why did Iran keep a secret atomic archive and a secret atomic warehouse? ... The answer to the question is simple. The reason Iran didn't destroy its atomic archive and its atomic warehouse is because it hasn't abandoned its goal to develop nuclear weapons. In fact, it planned to use both of these sites in a few years when the time would be right to break out to the atom bomb.

"But, ladies and gentlemen, rest assured, that won't happen. It won't happen because what Iran hides, Israel will find," he asserted.

Netanyahu urged IAEA head Yukiya Amano to "do the right thing. Go inspect this atomic warehouse, immediately, before the Iranians finish clearing it out."

Taking aim at the ayatollahs' regime, Netanyahu said, "I also have a message today for the tyrants of Tehran: Israel knows what you're doing, and Israel knows where you're doing it. Israel will never let a regime that calls for our destruction to develop nuclear weapons. Not now, not in 10 years, not ever.

"Israel will do whatever it must do to defend itself against Iran's aggression. We will continue to act against you in Syria. We will act against you in Lebanon. We will act against you in Iraq. We will act against you whenever and wherever we must act to defend our state and defend our people."

Warning that Iran's hegemony aspirations would never be confined to the Middle East, Netanyahu criticized the fact that "while the United States is confronting Iran with new sanctions, Europe and others are appeasing Iran by trying to help it bypass those sanctions.

"I'm a historian's son, I have to ask. I ask not merely as an historian's son, I ask it as a Jew, as a citizen of the world, as someone who's lived through the 20th century: Have these European leaders learned nothing from history? Will they ever wake up?

Well, we in Israel, we don't need a wakeup call, because Iran threatens us every day. Because despite the best of hope, and there were many hopes around the nuclear deal, this deal did not push war further away. It brought war ever closer to our borders," the prime minister said.

He lambasted Iran for its involvement in the Syrian civil war and its attempt to establish permanent military bases there from which to attack Israel, as well as for its funding and arming of the Lebanon-based Hezbollah terrorist group.

He then presented evidence that the latter was using Iranian funding to build weapon production facilities in the heart of Lebanese capital, including near the Beirut's international airport.

IDF Spokesperson's Unit

Seattleite images of Iranian-funded Hezbollah facilities in Beirut

"I also have a message for Hezbollah today: Israel knows, Israel also knows what you're doing. Israel knows where you're doing it. And Israel will not let you get away with it," Netanyahu declared.

He lauded U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from the 2015 deal and impose new sanctions on the Islamic republic, saying, "Israel is deeply grateful to President Trump for his bold decision to withdraw from the disastrous nuclear deal with Iran. Many, many of our Arab neighbors are also grateful. And everyone who cares about the peace and security of the world should also be grateful."

Netanyahu urged European leaders to do the same.

"Instead of coddling Iran's dictators, join the U.S. and Israel and most of the Arab world in supporting new sanctions against a regime that endangers all of us and all of the world," he said.

The prime minister also hailed Arab states that have been pursuing stronger ties with Israel following the nuclear deal, saying the Iranian threat has, in fact, "brought Israel and many Arab states closer together than ever before, closer together than ever before, in an intimacy and friendship that I've not seen in my lifetime and would have been unimaginable a few years ago.

"Israel deeply values these new friendships, and I hope the day will soon arrive when Israel will be able to expand peace, a formal peace, beyond Egypt and Jordan to other Arab neighbors, including the Palestinians. I look forward to working with President Trump and his peace team to achieve that goal."

After thanking Trump and U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley "for the unwavering support they have provided Israel at the United Nations," the prime minister lauded the U.S. for deciding to halt its funding of UNRWA, the U.N. agency that aids Palestinian refugees.

UNRWA claims it serves 5 million Palestinian refugees in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, but Washington and Jerusalem dispute this figure, saying that UNRWA policies only perpetuate the Palestinian notion of refugeehood thus undermining the chances for peace.

Criticizing the U.N. for its clear anti-Israel bias, Netanyahu said, "Day after day, the Trump administration has stood up to what has long been a specialty here at the UN – slandering Israel. Even though the shameful resolution comparing Zionism to racism was repealed 25 years ago, I'm sorry to say that its foul stench still clings to these halls.

"Here at the U.N. Israel is absurdly accused of racism ... apartheid ... and ethnic cleansing. Ladies and gentlemen, you know what this is? It's the same old antisemitism with a brand new face. That's all it is," he said, adding, "What is unique about the Jewish people is not that we have a nation-state. What is unique is that many still oppose us having a nation state."

'This is not how you achieve peace'

Turning his attention to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Netanyahu blasted Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, who spoke shortly before him, for rejecting all efforts to promote the regional peace process.

"Moments ago, President Abbas outrageously said that Israel's Nation-State Law proves that Israel is a racist, apartheid state.

"President Abbas, you should know better," Netanyahu exclaimed. "You wrote a dissertation denying the Holocaust. Your Palestinian Authority imposes death sentences on Palestinians for selling land to Jews. Did you hear that? If a Jew buys an apartment, a piece of land anywhere in the Palestinian territories, the Palestinian who sold him that land is executed. That's what the law says.

"President Abbas, you proudly pay Palestinian terrorists who murder Jews. In fact, the more they slay, the more you pay. That's in their law too. And you condemn Israel's morality? You call Israel racist?

"This is not the way to peace. This is not the way to achieve the peace we all want and need and to which Israel remains committed. This body should not be applauding the head of a regime that pays terrorists. The U.N. should condemn such a despicable policy."

Lauding Israel's achievements, Netanyahu said, "The nation-state of Israel is the only place where the Jewish people proudly exercise our collective right of self-determination. That right was recognized nearly a century ago by the League of Nations and over 70 years ago by the United Nations when it voted to support the establishment of a Jewish state. That's what it said, that resolution – a Jewish state.

"At the same time, Israel is a vibrant democracy, where all its citizens – Jews and non-Jews alike – enjoy equal individual rights, and these rights are guaranteed by law.

"In the Middle East, that's not obvious, now that's an understatement, In the Middle East, where women are often treated as property, minorities are persecuted, gays are hanged, Israel stands out as a shining example of freedom and progress. I could not be more proud to represent my country, Israel," he said.

Newsletter Thursday September 27, 2018

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At UN, Trump backs 2-state solution for Mideast conflict

U.S. president endorses two-state solution for first time since taking office, says, "That's what I think works best" • Trump: U.S. stands with Israel 100% • PM Netanyahu thanks him for backing Israel's right to self-defense, pulling out of Iran deal.

PM Benjamin Netanyahu and President Donald Trump at the U.N. General Assembly, Wednesday | Photo: AP

For the first time since taking office, U.S. President Donald Trump on Wednesday endorsed the two-state solution as the best way to resolve the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

Trump met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu earlier in the day. Trump told Netanyahu that "the U.S. stands with Israel 100%."

U.S. Vice President Mike Pence echoed the sentiment, tweeting, "The United States of America is proud to stand with Israel and her people, as allies and cherished friends. Under President Trump, we continue to work tirelessly to strengthen the relationship between the U.S. and Israel."

In a joint press conference held after their meeting, Trump told reporters that he believes that the two-state solution "works best."

He has previously been vague on the topic, suggesting that he would support whatever the parties might agree to, including possibly a one-state resolution, which might see the Palestinian territories become part of Israel.

"I like [the] two-state solution. That's what I think works best. That's my feeling. Now, you may have a different feeling. I don't think so. But I think the two-state solution works best."

He said that reaching a two-state solution is "more difficult because it's a real estate deal" but that ultimately it "works better because you have people governing themselves."

He added that he would still support Israel and the Palestinians should they opt for a one-state solution, though he believed that was less likely.

"Bottom line: If the Israelis and Palestinians want one-state, that's OK with me. If they want two states, that's OK with me. I'm happy if they're happy," he said.

In his earlier comments, Trump said his much anticipated but still unreleased Middle East peace plan could be presented in the next two to four months but was not specific as to timing.

A senior Israeli diplomat noted that "we have no control over the American timetable. They say it will be rolled out in three months – it's always in three months – and it's absurd to think that if the U.S. is working on such a proposal, we would do anything to circumvent them."

Netanyahu said that he was "not surprised" by Trump's preference for the two-state solution, despite the Palestinian's refusal to engage in peace talks.

Palestinian rejectionism has grown worse over a series of moves that they say show distinct bias toward Israel, chiefly Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and move the U.S. Embassy there.

The Trump administration has also slashed aid to the U.N. agency that aids Palestinian refugees and shuttered the Palestine Liberation Organization mission in Washington.

Netanyahu, who is slated to address the U.N. General Assembly on Wednesday evening, thanked Trump for his support and his decision to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal and said U.S.-Israel relations have never been better than under his administration.

"Thank you for your strong words in the General Assembly against the corrupt terrorist regime in Iran," Netanyahu said. "They back up your strong words and strong actions."

He further thanked Trump "for the extraordinary support that you have shown for Israel in this building. In the U.N., no one has backed Israel like you do, and we appreciate it."

"This is the first time that we are meeting after the American Embassy has been moved to Jerusalem. You've changed history, and you've touched our hearts," Netanyahu said.

The prime minister also expressed his gratitude for Trump's "robust defense of Israel's right of self-defense. I think everybody should understand that Israel will continue to do what is necessary and defend ourselves against Iranian aggression in Syria, in Lebanon, anywhere else. And I have no doubt that as we do so, we'll enjoy the support of President Donald Trump and the United States of America," he told reporters.

Speaking later with Israeli reporters, Netanyahu said that during his meeting with Trump, they discussed the downing of a Russian reconnaissance plane by Syrian air defenses, an incident that has stoked regional tensions and prompted Russia to announce plans to give Syria advanced S-300 missiles, which might hamper the Israeli Air Force ability to target Iranian assets in Syria.

Netanyahu said that all of his requests from Trump on this issue were "met in full," but offered no details.

A senior Israeli official dismissed reports suggesting Russian President Vladimir Putin had rejected Netanyahu's request for a meeting on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly session, saying that while Netanyahu had suggested they meet, the venue was never discussed.

"I believe they will meet in the coming weeks. Things are still too fresh," he said.

Prior to leaving for New York, Netanyahu said that the defense coordination between Israel and Russia in Syria will continue.

"We have an interest in continuing to act against Iranian consolidation in Syria," he said. "It is very important that we act wisely, that we stabilize ties with the Russians, to preserve the [deconfliction] mechanism and Israel's right and freedom defend itself on all fronts."

One senior official said that Netanyahu had full confidence in the IDF's findings over the incident, adding that "Syria's skies are very crowded. We have mounted hundreds of operations there over the past three years and no Russian soldier has ever been harmed. We are not to blame for what happened."

The Palestinians reacted cautiously to Trump's remarks, noting that a two-state solution has long been the goal of peace efforts, including a broader Arab-Israeli plan that would see Arab states all recognize Israel if the Palestinians got an independent state.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas' spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeineh said Wednesday that the Palestinians remain committed to their demand for a state based on the 1967 line with east Jerusalem as its capital.

"Peace requires a two-state solution, where the state of Palestine is based on the 1967 boundaries with east Jerusalem as its capital," he said. "This is the Arab and international attitude, and all final status issues need to be solved according to the international resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative."

Trump and his national security team have defended their position, saying that decades of attempts to forge Israeli-Palestinian peace have failed.

He said Wednesday that the embassy move would actually help peace efforts by recognizing the reality that Israel identifies Jerusalem as its capital. But he added that Israel would have to make concessions to the Palestinians in any negotiations.

"Israel got the first chip and it's a big one," Trump said. "By taking off the table the embassy moving to Jerusalem – that was always the primary ingredient as to why deals

couldn't get done – that's off the table. Now, that will also mean that Israel will have to do something that is good for the other side."

Newsletter Thursday September 27, 2018

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PA president to impose additional sanctions on Gaza, officials say

President Mahmoud Abbas hopes new sanctions will help him wrestle control of Gaza from rival Hamas, pressure Israel to resume the stalled peace process, Ramallah officials say • Palestinian FM: Abbas shelved plan to declare Oslo Accords null and void.

Daniel Siryoti, Mati Tuchfeld and Yehuda Shlezinger

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas | Photo: Reuters

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas plans to impose additional sanctions on the Gaza Strip, Palestinian officials were quoted by Arab media as saying Wednesday.

According to the reports, Abbas, who is currently in New York to attend the 73rd U.N. General Assembly, plans to convene his government upon his return to Ramallah and outline a series of new financial sanctions against Hamas, the terrorist organization that rules Gaza.

Hamas routed Abbas' Fatah-led government from power in Gaza in 2007, effectively splitting the Palestinian population into two separate political entities. Egyptian efforts over the past decade to promote a reconciliation between the rival Palestinian factions – the latest brokered in October 2017 – have so far failed.

The consistent failure to reinstate the Palestinian Authority's power in Gaza has prompted Abbas to impose a series of crippling financial sanctions on its rulers, including suspending the salaries of thousands of Hamas government employees and cutting PA payments for the electricity used in Gaza, in an effort to regain control of the Strip.

These moves have significantly aggravated the already dire economic reality in Gaza. With unemployment exceeding 50% and no growth to speak of, the World Bank has recently warned the coastal enclave's economy was on the verge of "immediate collapse."

Abbas also hopes the sanctions on Hamas will pressure Israel to resume the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, deadlocked since 2014, the media reports suggested.

Meanwhile, Palestinian Foreign Minister Riad Malki, who is in New York with Abbas, told reporters that the Palestinian leader has had a "change of heart" and will not announce the suspension of the Oslo Accords, as previously planned.

The series of agreements signed in 1993 are the basis on which the Israeli-Palestinian peace process has been negotiated for the past 25 years.

Abbas has threatened to declare the accords null and void several times, which would have effectively ended all peace efforts.

"President Abbas has no intention of closing the door on the possibility of striking peace," Malki said.

Since December of last year, Abbas has refused to engage with American envoys, saying the U.S. could no longer serve as an impartial mediator in Middle East peace talks after the Trump administration officially recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Malki noted that Abbas plans to initiate the establishment of an international forum to head the peace efforts instead.

The Palestinian president also plans to petition the U.N. Security Council to declare the Palestinians a "state under occupation" and afford it the various protections available under the U.N. Charter, Malki said.

The Palestinian Authority will continue joining various international organizations as part of its diplomatic offensive against Israel, he noted.

Also Wednesday, Israeli lawmakers slammed Opposition Leader Tzipi Livni (Zionist Union) for meeting with Abbas in New York.

Deputy Minister for Public Diplomacy at the Prime Minister's Office Michael Oren lambasted Livni for "chasing after a man who refuses to make peace."

"The meeting between Opposition Leader Tzipi Livni and Abbas says a lot about the Israeli Left," Oren tweeted. "They pursue meetings with a Holocaust denier, a man who gives anti-Semitic speeches, pays stipends to terrorists who murder Jews, sues Israel in The Hague and, above all, refuses to make peace."

Likud MK Anat Berko also criticized Livni, saying that "at a time when the U.S. government, and especially President Donald Trump, stand by Israel and the truth, Livni has chosen to undermine government policy."

Newsletter Wednesday September 26, 2018

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Trump: Iran's terrorist regime must never get nuclear weapons

"We cannot allow a regime that threatens Israel with annihilation to possess the means to deliver nuclear warheads," U.S. president asserts in pro-Israel message at U.N. General Assembly • Trump: Mideast peace process is "advanced, not harmed" by U.S. policy changes.

Yoni Hersch, Reuters and Israel Hayom Staff

President Donald Trump at the United States General Assembly on Tuesday | Photo: EPA

U.S. President Donald Trump took aim at Iran on Tuesday as the General Debate of the 73rd Session of the U.N. General Assembly got underway.

"We cannot allow the world's leading sponsor of terrorism to possess the planet's most dangerous weapons. We cannot allow a regime that chants 'Death to America' and that threatens Israel with annihilation, to possess the means to deliver a nuclear warhead to any city on earth. Just can't do it," Trump told world leaders.

Video: Reuters

The American president, who was expected to meet with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday, lashed out at the Islamic republic for sowing "chaos, death, and destruction," vowing to counter its aggression.

"They do not respect their neighbors or borders, or the sovereign rights of nations," Trump said.

"Instead, Iran's leaders plunder the nation's resources to enrich themselves and to spread mayhem across the Middle East and far beyond. ... Iran's neighbors have paid a heavy toll for the region's [regime's] agenda of aggression and expansion. That is why so many countries in the Middle East strongly supported my decision to withdraw the United States from the horrible 2015 Iran nuclear deal and reimpose nuclear sanctions."

Trump noted that his decision to pull out of the nuclear accord with Iran in May was part the effort to restrain Iran rather than punish its citizens, who have seen their benefits of the deal squandered on the regime's regional ambitions rather than on improving their lives.

"The Iranian people are rightly outraged that their leaders have embezzled billions of dollars from Iran's treasury, seized valuable portions of the economy, and looted the people's religious endowments, all to line their own pockets and send their proxies to wage war.

"The Iran deal was a windfall for Iran's leaders. In the years since the deal was reached, Iran's military budget grew nearly 40%. The dictatorship used the funds to build nuclear-capable missiles, increase internal repression, finance terrorism, and fund havoc and slaughter in Syria and Yemen."

He asked that "all nations to isolate Iran's regime as long as its aggression continues."

Trump also touted his administration's new approach to the peace process, saying he had no regrets about his decision to depart from the traditional U.S. policy regarding the status of Jerusalem.

"This year, we also took another significant step forward in the Middle East. In recognition of every sovereign state to determine its own capital, I moved the U.S. Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem," Trump said.

"The United States is committed to a future of peace and stability in the region, including peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians. That aim is advanced, not harmed, by acknowledging the obvious facts."

Trump also doubled down on his attacks on the U.N. Human Rights Council over its bias toward Israel and the United States. "I spoke before this body last year and warned that the U.N. Human Rights Council had become a grave embarrassment to this institution, shielding egregious human rights abusers while bashing America and its many friends," he said, noting that after realizing that the council failed to change course, "the U.S. took the only responsible course: We withdrew from the Human Rights Council, and we will not return until real reform is enacted."

He further reiterated his administration's decision to boycott the International Criminal Court in the Hague, saying that it too has shown a consistent bias toward United States and its allies. "For similar reasons, the United States will provide no support in recognition to the International Criminal Court. As far as America is concerned, the ICC has no jurisdiction, no legitimacy, and no authority.

"The ICC claims near-universal jurisdiction over the citizens of every country, violating all principles of justice, fairness, and due process. **We will never surrender America's sovereignty to an unelected, unaccountable, global bureaucracy.**"

Trump's address was met largely by silence from world leaders still not comfortable with go-it-alone views that have strained U.S. relationships with traditional allies worldwide.

His speech, while delivered in a low-key fashion, was nonetheless a thunderous recitation of his "America First" policies. He has disrupted the world order by withdrawing the United States from the nuclear deal and the Paris climate accord and threatened to punish NATO nations for not paying more for their common defense.

Trump said he had accomplished more than almost any previous U.S. president. The remark led to some murmuring and laughter in the crowd, taking the president slightly aback. "I didn't expect that reaction, but that's OK," he said.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani later spoke at the event as well, sharply criticizing Trump's decision to withdraw from the 2015 international nuclear deal.

He said he had "no need for a photo opportunity" with Trump and suggested the U.S. president's pull back from global institutions was a character defect.

"Confronting multilateralism is not a sign of strength. Rather it is a symptom of the weakness of intellect – it betrays an inability in understanding a complex and interconnected world," he said. Rouhani was defiant in his speech to the world body.

"What Iran says is clear: no war, no sanctions, no threats, no bullying; just acting according to the law and the fulfillment of obligations," Rouhani said. "Unlawful unilateral sanctions in themselves constitute a form of economic terrorism," he said, accusing the United States of bullying and stressed that no state or nation can be brought to the negotiation table by force.

He said that Iran was willing to engage the United States if it stops with its "threats and unjust sanctions that negate the principle of ethics and international law."

Rouhani said that "the biggest crisis the world is facing is the occupation in Palestine," adding that "the Israeli crimes would not be possible without the political backing of the United States."

U.N. court's hilarious attempt to order U.S.

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Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., right, accompanied by Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., left, speaks during a news conference on Capitol Hill in Washington, Wednesday, Sept. 13, 2017, to unveil their Medicare for All legislation to reform health care. (AP

Photo/Andrew Harnik)

Elizabeth Warren holds advantages over Bernie Sanders in potential 2020 clash of liberal titans

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Quiz: Can you pass a world history test?

Former Iraqi President Fuad Masum, center, leaves the presidency headquarters in the peace palace after the inauguration ceremony for the newly elected Iraqi President Barham Salih, center left, in Baghdad, Iraq, Wednesday, Oct. 3, 2018. Iraq's new president takes office after tapping Adel Abdul-Mahdi, 76, an independent Shiite

politician and former vice president for the post of prime minister. (AP Photo/Khalid Mohammed)

Iraq makes 'great progress' in selecting compromise candidates for president, prime minister

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Best states for concealed carry — ranked worst to first

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United States delegation Vice President Mike Pence, left center, National security adviser John Bolton, U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley, second from right, and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, far right, listens as President Donald address the United Nations General Assembly, Tuesday Sept. 25, 2018 at U.N. headquarters. (AP Photo/Bebeto Matthews)
United States delegation Vice President Mike Pence, left center, National security adviser John Bolton, U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley, second from right, and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, far right, listens as President Donald address the United Nations General Assembly, Tuesday ... more >

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By Cheryl K. Chumley - The Washington Times - Wednesday, October 3, 2018

ANALYSIS/OPINION:

You had me at the headline.

“U.S. ordered to lift some Iran sanctions by International Court of Justice,” blared NBC News, above its Associated Press story.

Would this be the same U.N. court U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton just told to take a hike?

Indeed, it is.

Bolton, in fiery September remarks in Washington, D.C. — delivered first in the context of discussing the