



ISRAEL MATTERS!

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Obama in Israel: Jewish State Has Right to Exist

Gas Begins Flowing from Recently Discovered Israeli Field

Natural gas from the Tamar field began flowing recently, bringing to an end two years in which Israel has had a dearth of natural gas. The Ministry of Energy and Water Resources announced that the first supplies of the natural gas would reach Israel's shores after undergoing a journey of nearly 200 kilometers of pipelines.

At first the supply of Tamar gas will only be partial but there should be full capacity flowing soon, energy sector sources believe. The field, which was discovered in 2009, has an estimated 9 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

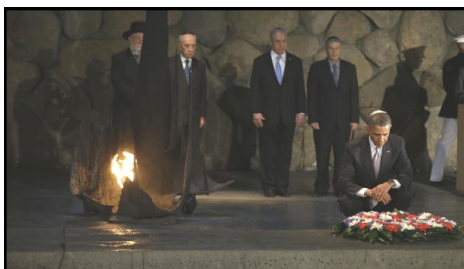
Minister of Energy and Water Resources Silvan Shalom said that this was a "historic moment" and as Israel celebrated Passover, the holiday of freedom, it was also celebrating achieving energy independence.

Although the Tamar field is offshore from Haifa, the gas will flow south through pipes to come onshore at Ashdod through the existing infrastructure for the Yam Tethys field. In 2010, Israel's planning committee nixed plans to build a northern gas terminal due to opposition from environmentalist groups.

The CEO of Noble Energy, one of the owners of Tamar, Charles Davidson, said, "I congratulate Israelis. The gas production is a great achievement that will reduce the country's dependency on energy imports and will move the country significantly closer to energy independence."

Since 2011, when gas stopped flowing from Egypt, Israel has been forced to buy more expensive and more polluting diesel and heavy industrial fuel.

[Globes Online]



Wrapping up his three-day visit to Israel, President Obama paid respects to its heroes and to victims of the Holocaust, solemnly reaffirming the Jewish state's right to exist. Accompanied by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President

Shimon Peres, Obama laid wreaths at the graves of Theodor Herzl, the founder of modern Zionism who died in 1904 before realizing his dream of a Jewish homeland, and former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who was assassinated in 1995.

The president also toured the Yad Vashem Holocaust [photo] memorial, declaring after that the memorial illustrates the depravity to which man can sink but also serves as a reminder of the "righteous among nations who refused to be bystanders."

The stop at Herzl's grave, together with his visit to see the Dead Sea Scrolls, the ancient Hebrew texts, were symbolic stops for Obama that acknowledged that the rationale for Israel's existence rests with its historical ties to the region and with a vision that predated the Holocaust. Obama was criticized in Israel for his 2009 Cairo speech in which he gave only the example of the Holocaust as reason for justifying Israel's existence. "Here on your ancient land, let it be said for all the world to hear," Obama said at Yad Vashem, in a clear response to that criticism. "The State of Israel does not exist because of the Holocaust, but with the survival of a strong Jewish state of Israel, such a holocaust will never happen again."

The trip sent a powerful message to the world about the policies and positions of the Obama administration, including:

Underscored the Jewish Connection to Israel

President Obama articulated his understanding of the more than 3,000-year bond that the Jewish people have to the land of Israel. When visiting the grave of Theodore Herzl he said, "Atem lo levad — You Are Not Alone." By doing so the president delivered the message to the international community and the Israeli people that the bond between the United States and Israel is unshakeable, and that America will always stand by Israel.

(Continued)

Miss Israel: Obama a 'World-Class Hunk'



President Barack Obama has earned a new title: world-class hunk. That was the assessment of Miss Israel, the 21-year-old Ethiopian immigrant Titi Aynaw who met Obama during his recent visit to Israel. "He's an exciting man, a world-class hunk, charming and an extraordinary gentleman," she told the Israeli publication Yediot Aharonot.

Aynaw and Obama were introduced by Israeli President Shimon Peres [photo] during the state dinner that occurred on Obama's first presidential trip to Israel, according to Israeli news accounts.

"You are very beautiful," Obama told her, according to the report. He added, "[a]nd Michelle would have been very happy to be as tall as you are."

When asked in an interview whether she was worried that Michelle Obama would be "jealous" when the president met Miss Israel, the beauty queen dismissed the question. "No, I am not worried," she said with a laugh. "She is a beautiful woman and she looks like a model, really...I don't think she will be jealous." [Politico]

Israel Reports Cyber Attack Campaign

A cyber attack campaign targeting Israeli government websites failed to cause serious disruption, officials said. The attacks came following warnings from the notorious Internet hacking collective, "Anonymous", that it would launch a massive hacking assault to protest Israeli policy toward the Palestinians.

Yitzhak Ben Yisrael, who founded the government's Cyber Bureau two years ago, said hackers had mostly failed to shut down key sites. He said as it was expected, there was hardly any real damage. Anonymous doesn't have the skills to damage the country's vital infrastructure, he added.

Posters using the name of the hacking group had warned they would launch a massive attack on Israeli sites to "erase Israel from cyberspace."

Ben Yisrael told Israel Radio there had been some disruptions to several websites, such as the Education Ministry, whose security protocols had not been updated. The statement issued by the Treasury said the Education Ministry's website had not been accessible during the weekend due a "technical fault." It was soon back online.

The Cyber Bureau was established to ward off hacking attacks on Israel's key networks. "They have not managed to disrupt even one website that has been protected (by the bureau) - the really important sites," Ben Yisrael said.

[Reuters]

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Stressed the Value of Israel to America and Israel's Contribution to the World

The president highlighted how the United States and the global economy is the beneficiary of Israel's scientific, technological, and economic capabilities. He underscored the point by stating "that innovation is just as important to the relationship between the United States and Israel as our security cooperation."

Recognized Israel's Dangerous Neighborhood

The president restated the perilous security situation that Israel is forced to confront, making specific references to the danger of Hezbollah, the influence of Hamas, the turmoil and chemical weapons in Syria, and the uncontrollable threat of a nuclear-armed Iran.

Iran

The president sent a powerful message that the world cannot contain a nuclear-armed Iran, and that America will not allow it to have an atomic bomb. He highlighted the regime's isolation, deteriorating economy, political infighting, and urged increased pressure. While express-

ing hope for a diplomatic solution, he warned that the window of opportunity for talks is closing. The president pledged that "[w]e will do what is necessary to prevent Iran from getting the world's worst weapons."

On the Palestinian Issue

The president urged direct talks immediately, and without preconditions. Prime Minister Netanyahu expressed appreciation for the president's views and reiterated his readiness to sit down with the Palestinians anytime and anywhere to reach a two-state agreement. The president also called on the Palestinians to recognize the Jewish state of Israel, and asked Arab states to begin normalizing relations with Israel.

The Danger from Syria

President Obama spoke to the danger that Syria poses to Israel and the entire region. He shared Israel's concerns about the transfer of chemical and advanced weapons that might be used by terrorists against the Jewish state, and warned Assad that the United States would hold him accountable for using or transferring chemical weapons.

[CBS News and AIPAC]