



ISRAEL MATTERS!

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Israel, U.S. In Dispute Over Iran Deal

Israel Linked to Mystery Blast at Syrian Military Base

Israeli forces are seen as most likely responsible behind a recent attack on a Syrian air-defense base outside the east Mediterranean port of Latakia in which Russian-built surface-to-air missiles were said to have been destroyed. Syrian rebel sources said the facility at Snobar Jableh, just south of Latakia, was ripped by explosions. The area was sealed off by Syrian forces.

The Israeli military made no official comment. Israel was blamed for blasting another base near Latakia July 5 in which some of the 72 supersonic P-800 Yakhont anti-ship cruise missiles delivered from Russia in 2011 were reported destroyed.

Israel is said to have carried out at least four strikes against targets in Syria this year, all of them apparently hitting advanced weapons Syrian president Assad was supposedly transferring to Hezbollah, or which the Israelis did not want to see fall into Hezbollah hands.

The first three attacks were clearly air strikes. But some reports said the July 5 operation involved at least one missile fired from an Israeli Dolphin-class submarine in the eastern Mediterranean. If correct, it would be the first offensive operation carried out by one of the German-built diesel-electric subs which reportedly are capable of launching nuclear-tipped cruise missiles.

Satellite images obtained by Israel's Channel 2 television network showed the facility that was hit contained Russian-built S-125 Neva and SA-3 air-defense missile batteries. [UPI]

The United States has vowed that it would not cave in to Iran in negotiations over the Islamic republic's nuclear program despite charges from Israel and France that negotiators were proposing to let Iran maintain its nuclear capacity. U.S. Ambassador to Israel Daniel Shapiro vowed that President Obama would not allow Iran to obtain nuclear weapons and that the United States would not sign on to a "bad deal" at negotiations with Iran.

Speaking at the Jewish Federations of North American General Assembly in Jerusalem, Shapiro said that the U.S. would not "squander" the leverage of economic sanctions on Iran, which wants those sanctions removed. Shapiro said that no deal on Iran's atomic program would be better than a bad deal. His comments came as the U.N.'s nuclear chief reached a deal to allow expanded monitoring of Iran's nuclear sites, but not an agreement to dismantle its ability to make material for nuclear weapons as the Security Council has demanded.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry again defended U.S. efforts with Iran, saying that the major powers were unified on an Iran nuclear deal during talks in Geneva but the Iranians did not accept it. Speaking to reporters in Abu Dhabi, Kerry lashed out at opponents to the proposal. Among them are Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who told Kerry that the proposed deal gave Iran all it wants on sanctions and did nothing to end Iran's ability to make a nuclear bomb. "The time to oppose it is when you see what it is, not to oppose the effort to find out what is possible," Kerry said. "We are confident that what we are doing can actually protect Israel more effectively and provide greater security."

Kerry's statement appeared to contradict the stance of French foreign minister Laurent Fabius, who told France Inter radio that Paris would not accept what he called a "sucker's deal." France announced that it did not support the proposal backed by the US because it did not adequately address security concerns of Iran's neighbors. That was the reason given by Netanyahu for his opposition to the proposal. Not waiting for the proposal to be announced by Kerry as a done deal, Netanyahu, apparently aware of the contours of the proposal, came out publicly to say it would imperil its very existence because it did not guarantee the end of Iran's nuclear bomb capabilities.

The Iranian question is just the latest issue to severely fray relations between Israel and the United States in recent months, along with

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Israel Diplomat Speaks at JCC



Israeli Counsel General, Ido Aharoni, recently spoke at a program sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven. Aharoni has become an expert in the Israeli diplomatic and public relations leadership, on nation

branding efforts. His talk was entitled “Israel: Isolation and Innovation.” The Counsel General summarized several “reasons for optimism” in current diplomatic affairs which involve US, Israeli, and Jewish interests.

First, though the “Arab Spring” is badly named, current diplomatic events represent an opportunity for Israel, not just a threat. He explained that the French-British agreement of 1916 divided much of the Arab world into somewhat artificial states after World War I, with the Ottoman Empire’s defeat. Though the conflicts in the Arab states, such as Syria and Iraq, increase some threats to Israel, in the long run, more logical, more stable ethnic and tribal divisions may emerge. Further, the myth that the Arab-Palestinian dispute is the keystone to Middle East peace is clearly disproved by news events in the past couple of years.

Second, Mr. Aharoni noted when his family first came to Israel before 1948, there were tremendous water, energy,

soil, and other environmental challenges. In the past ten years, through desalinization plants, conservation and other measures, Israel has become practically self-sufficient in water. Self-sufficiency in natural gas is approaching with newly-opened wells in Israeli waters. Aharoni described these events as tremendous changes and opportunities.

Third, Mr. Aharoni emphasized that among Israel’s greatest assets and opportunities is the pattern of questioning, creating new ideas, and education that Jewish and Israeli culture foster. He cited the large number of Israeli patents, inventions, and science papers and that many have noted the disproportionate number of Israeli tech companies on NASDAQ (the smaller, tech-oriented American exchange). He called these cultural patterns Israeli’s “huge strength.”

In closing, Ambassador Aharoni argued that in reaching out to European, American, and other leaders Israel needed a new approach. He said repeating Israeli or Jewish problems, in strict, stern terms to try to “win debates” such as at the UN, often does not move listeners. He urged instead that Israelis (and American Jewish supporters) form relationships with key leaders, government and non-government, who might be interested in what Israel can offer in the way of new ideas and new technology to work on common social and government problems.

By: Gordon Fain, Special Correspondent to Israel Matters!

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the U.S. decision to tackle Syria’s chemical weapons with diplomacy, and Obama’s emphasis on the Israeli-Palestinian standoff as being the major problem facing the Middle East. Israel complains that an increasingly radicalized Syria, the spread of Islamist ideology in Egypt and elsewhere, and a nuclear bomb in the hands of what Netanyahu has called “Islamofascist fanatics” in Iran are the real problems in the Middle East.

Israel says it is mystified by the foreign policy of the United States. Netanyahu said he was telling Western leaders that the proposed deal was dangerous for the world and the USA, not just Israel. He insisted to CBS’ Face the Nation that the purpose of the Geneva negotiations is to get Iran to bend to the will of the U.N. Security Council’s demand that it remove the technology and material used for making a possible bomb.

Rep. Trent Franks, R-Ariz., warned that the President’s Israel policies – allowing Iran to dominate in Syria, insisting on a Palestinian state while the region is in turmoil, and offering Iran a deal that Israel clearly opposes – shows Obama and Kerry to be unsympathetic to Israeli security needs. Iran’s nuclear capability “is truly an existential threat to Israel,” and Obama “has ignored Israel’s realities,” Franks said. [USA Today]

Paula Abdul to Have Bat Mitzvah in Israel



Paula Abdul is connecting with her Jewish roots. The “American Idol” alum, 51, visited Israel to have a belated bat mitzvah, reportedly at the Western Wall.

“Beyond being Jewish, I’ve always found myself to be very much in tune with spirituality,” the singer said in an interview. “I feel very grateful coming to Israel now, where as a woman I know who I am a lot more than even 10 years ago.”

Abdul traveled around the country as a guest of Israel’s ministry of tourism. In addition to visiting with President Shimon Peres [picture, left] at his home, Abdul traveled extensively around Jerusalem, going to the Old City, the Yad Vashem Holocaust museum, Israel Museum, and the Machane Yehuda Market.

Another stop was the Dead Sea. Abdul, who will appear as a judge next year on Australia’s version of “So You Think You Can Dance,” was seen floating in it while wearing a black and red one-piece bathing suit. She was also photographed covering herself with its mineral-rich mud.

[Yahoo]

Philippine Envoy Thanks Israeli Government, NGOs as Aid and Assistance Continues in Wake of Super-Typhoon Haiyan



Soldier preparing supplies for the Philippines Photo: Courtesy IDF

Philippine Ambassador to Israel Generoso D.G. Calonge expressed appreciation to the country for the assistance Israel has offered to his storm-ravaged country, saying it made him “so happy.”

py.”

“I can’t describe the feeling right now... that my host country cares about our stricken people,” he told The Jerusalem Post. “I hope the people of Israel will maintain their attitude of people who are stricken with this crisis and who are on the losing end of natural disasters.”

The IDF, Foreign Ministry and Israeli and Jewish humanitarian organizations are sending aid workers to the Philippines to provide rescue and relief efforts in the wake of super-typhoon Haiyan. The recently confirmed death toll from the storm was at least 1,774, with estimates reaching 10,000. In addition, according to the UN, approximately 800,000 people have been displaced by one of the strongest storms to ever make landfall.

In a letter to Philippine President Benigno Aquino III on Sunday, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu extended his “heartfelt condolences” to the victims of the “horrific typhoon” and guaranteed Israel’s “assistance to alleviate the suffering.” Israeli Ambassador to the UN Ron Prosor said Israel was supporting the Philippines “not only in words but also in actions.”

In a statement, Prosor said the IDF was sending two Boeing 747s with 234 Israeli doctors, nurses and paramedics, as well as equipment to set up a state-of-the-art mobile hospital, to the Philippines. Heading the mission will be Col. Ramtin Sabati, who commands the National Rescue Unit, and will also include deputy Medical Corps chief Col. Dudu Dagan, who will act as commander of the field hospital.

Israel assembled a similar hospital in Haiti following the 2010 earthquake there, equipped with an intensive care unit and a maternity ward.

Members of the IDF’s Home Front Command and of the Foreign Ministry are already in the Philippines evaluating how Israel can most effectively provide aid, by assessing the situation and the country’s infrastructure.

The Home Front Command’s Search and Rescue Unit, whose past operations include disaster relief in Haiti and Kenya, is also assisting Philippine authorities in their

rescue and recovery efforts.

Israeli Ambassador to the Philippines Menashe Bar-On stated that “the Philippines and the Filipino People are close friends with Israel and the Jewish people,” adding that “at this moment, our urgent task is to extend help to the Philippine government.”

Transportation Minister Israel Katz announced that Israel and the Philippines had agreed to allow 21 direct flights a week to operate between the two countries. A spokeswoman for the Transportation Ministry said that while the contract had been finalized three days before the typhoon struck, this agreement would likely bolster Israel’s support of the Philippines in the future as the latter country rebuilds itself.

Meanwhile, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) has begun collecting donations online and over the phone for disaster relief, with support from the Jewish Federations of North America.

“As part of our ongoing response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, JDC will ship a container of critically important food, shelter, hygiene and medical supplies and will ensure the provision of water and sanitation items and shelter support through its partners the Afya Foundation and Catholic Relief Services,” the group said.

It added that would be sending an advance team of disaster relief and development experts to the Philippines “to assess damage and needs as well as consult with our local/international partners and the Filipino Jewish community to ensure maximum impact for storm survivors.”

The organization has a history with the East Asian country: As recently as 2009, the JDC and an Israeli partner fought a cholera outbreak there following another typhoon.

Israeli humanitarian organization IsraAID has already dispatched seven medical professionals to Tacloban City, one of the Philippine regions that suffered the most damage.

IsraAID chairman Shachar Zahavi told the Post on Sunday that the group’s immediate goal was “health intervention.”

Zahavi said that once the organization better understood the scope of the disaster, it would also deploy trauma professionals and child protection specialists.

Besides the Israeli and Jewish humanitarian aid, the UN has allocated \$25 million for immediate relief efforts in the Philippines and is appealing for an additional \$301m. The United States has committed \$20m., and the International Red Cross is aiming to raise \$94.6m., which it says would provide 100,000 families with food, clean water, shelter and other relief for the next 18 months.

[JPost]