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Netanyahu: US, Not Moscow, Is the Cornerstone of Israeli Foreign Relations

Israelis Angered Over International Coverage of Tel Aviv Terror Attack

A number of international news forums, including the BBC and CNN networks, have angered Israelis for their misleading headlines about the recent terror attack in Tel Aviv's Sarona Market which claimed



the lives of four Israelis. CNN for example, referred to the terrorists in quotation marks.

This is not the first time CNN has cast doubt over the terrorist motivations of an attack when perpetrated in Israel. In December 2015, Israel demanded an explanation from CNN for what it described as "dishonest and unethical journalism" in its coverage of a stabbing attack which took place in Jerusalem's Old City.

The BBC headline reporting the attack avoided the use of the term 'terror' at all: 'Tel Aviv shooting: Three killed in shopping center attack.' BBC has also come under criticism for its apparent biased reporting on terror attacks in Israel. In October, 2015 a stabbing attack in Jerusalem's Old City which resulted in the death of two Israelis by a 19-year-old Palestinian, was reported: 'Palestinian shot dead after Jerusalem attack kills two.'

Sky News, The Guardian, and The Telegraph also omitted the nature of the attack. The New York Times referred to the terrorists as "Palestinian gunmen." By contrast, Fox News headlines led with "Terror in Israel." [Ynetnews.com]



The U.S. remains Israel's chief ally and cannot be replaced by Russia, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said recently before flying home after a two-day visit to Moscow. "It is not desirable or practical to replace the United States [with Russia]. The US is the cornerstone of our foreign relations," Netanyahu told reporters. He had visited Moscow for the third time this year, and held his fourth face-to-face meeting with President Vladimir Putin.

Although the trip was a celebration of 25 years of diplomatic ties, it fueled speculation that Israel is seeking to grow closer to Moscow and to distance itself from Washington, particularly in light of Netanyahu's contentious relationship with President Barack Obama, with whom he has met only once in the past year. But Netanyahu said that the idea that his frequent trips to Russia were part of a plan to replace Washington with Moscow is "nonsense." "I'm not looking for an alternative. We have a firm relationship with the US," Netanyahu said, describing it as "steadfast and unwavering."

Israel wants strong ties with as many countries as possible, the prime minister said.

Regional issues have demanded coordination with Russia and this particular meeting took place to mark 25 years of diplomatic relations.

Netanyahu's last visit was in April. PA President Mahmoud Abbas also visited that month, during which time he met with Putin.

Earlier in the day, when meeting with Moscow's Jewish community, Netanyahu spoke about Syria and said he was doubtful that Syrian President Bashar Assad will continue to rule Syria in the future. He clarified that Israel is not involved in any attempts to unseat Assad and that it is involved in the Syrian conflict only to the extent that is necessary to protect Israeli interests.

This is particularly true with regard to Iran which already operates in Syria. "We want to ensure that Syria does not become a launching ground for attacks against Israel, not by Syrian forces, not by Iranian forces, not by Hezbollah, and not by Islamic forces. "My policy is to take all steps necessary to prevent this," he said. "We are standing by our redlines with

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respect to Israel's security," he said.

Once the Syrian conflict has ended it is unlikely that the country will look the same as it did before the outbreak of its civil war, he said. "I do not know if we can put the Syrian omelet back in the egg," Netanyahu said.

Syria is not the only country in this situation, he said. Iraq, Libya, and Yemen no longer exist the way they used to, so a new order will be needed. Netanyahu told the Jewish community he has discussed at length this new order with President Vladimir Putin when the two met. "Its important that they [the former regimes] are replaced in a way that does not generate future tragedies or endanger our state," he said.

Israeli leaders have sought assurances from Russia, which sent forces to Syria last year to help Assad, that it would not allow Iran and Hezbollah to be bolstered by the partial military withdrawal that Moscow announced last month. Israel and Russia have maintained a hotline to prevent any accidental clash between their aircrafts over Syrian territory.

Israel has launched dozens of strikes in Syria during April against suspected arms transfers to Lebanon's Hezbollah terrorists.

[JPost]

In Russia, Netanyahu Receives IDF Tank Captured in 1982 War

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu formally received on Israel's behalf an IDF Magach-3 tank captured by Syria in the 1982 First Lebanon War, which had been housed in a Russian museum for several decades.



The return of the tank, Netanyahu said in Moscow, would be of some comfort to the families of three IDF soldiers who manned it and who have been missing since its capture 34 years ago.

The tank was seized during the June 11, 1982 battle of Sultan Yacoub, considered one of Israel's worst failures in the war, in which 30 IDF soldiers were killed and another three, who were assigned to the Magach-3, disappeared.

In the ceremony at the Moscow tank museum [photo, above], Netanyahu thanked Russian President Vladimir Putin for the "warm humanitarian gesture," and vowed Israel would not rest until it located the three soldiers, Zvi Feldman, Yehuda Katz and Zachary Baumel.

Syria handed the tank over to its then ally, the former Soviet Union, so Moscow could use it to study Israeli tank construction. It has been housed at a museum some 70 kilometers (43 miles) from Moscow ever since.

"This is an emotional moment for me and for all the citizens of Israel," Netanyahu said. "We mark 25 years since the renewal of diplomatic relations... and our deep connection is an expression of our shared, continuous history of struggle and untold suffering."

He continued: "Anyone who has fought in battle knows the importance of the principle that we adhere to — in battle, you do not leave a comrade behind. For 34 years, we have searched for our warriors in the knowledge we will not rest until we bring them to Israel for burial. Throughout those 34 years, the Katz, Feldman and Baumel families have had no grave to visit, but now they will have this tank, a remnant of Sultan Yacoub that they can visit and also touch — and through it remember their sons.



"We will continue to search for them as we still do for Hadar Goldin and Oron Shaul [IDF soldiers missing since they fell in the 2014 war with Hamas]. I would like to take this opportunity to thank President Putin profusely for this touching humanitarian gesture, and thank him first and foremost also on behalf of the families," Netanyahu said.

The prime minister also paid tribute to the cooperation between the two nations throughout the process of securing the tank's return. "I think this event signifies deep emotional connection between us, and the connection between nations that are from time to time compelled to fight for freedom," he said.

"Thank you so much for your cooperation with the IDF officers who are here. I thank you, the IDF officers, for the excellent work you have done and I'm sure this tank [placed] in Latrun [the official memorial for fallen Armored Corps troops] will also be symbol of heroism of our soldiers and also of the friendship and closeness between us."

The ceremony came at the close of the prime minister's two-day visit to Moscow, where he and Putin held their fourth round of talks in less than a year.

[TimesofIsrael]