



ISRAEL MATTERS!

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Netanyahu: Trump Feels ‘Very Warmly’ About Israel, Jews

New Turkish Ambassador Arrives in Israel



The new Turkish ambassador to Israel, Kemal Okem, arrived recently at Ben Gurion Airport, where he was greeted by Meron Reuben, head of the Foreign Ministry’s protocol department. [Photo, Reuben (left) and Okem (right)].

Okem came to Israel with his wife and two sons to fill the position that has been vacant for the last six years as a result of fallout from the Mavi Marmara incident, following which former Ambassador Ahmet Oğuz Çelikkol was recalled.

Israel and Turkey have since signed a reconciliation agreement, wherein Israel agreed to pay compensation to the victims and their families, while Turkey agreed to reduce Hamas activity in its territory and drop all legal proceedings against Israel and the IDF.

Okem’s last position was a political advisor for Prime Minister Binali Yildirim. He is a career diplomat who previously served as the deputy director general for the Middle East at the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where he was in charge of the Israel desk.

Okem is described as having an excellent rapport with Israeli diplomats and is reportedly very excited to assume the position as ambassador. Before arriving in Israel, Okem met with his Israeli counterpart, Eitan Na’eh, who arrived in Ankara. The two exchanged pleasantries and promised to keep in touch with one another. [Ynetnews.com]



US President-elect Donald Trump feels “very warmly” about Israel and the Jewish people, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in an interview with CBS’s 60 Minutes. In an excerpt from the interview, the Israeli leader said: “I know Donald Trump. I

know him very well ... his support for Israel is clear. He feels very warmly about the Jewish state, about the Jewish people and about Jewish people. There’s no question about that.”

Asked if he expected a better relationship with Washington after the tumultuous years of Barack Obama’s administration, Netanyahu admitted that he had had differences of opinion with Obama, particularly on the US-led nuclear accord with Iran. But he insisted that the matter was never personal.

“Yeah, we had differences of opinion, I had differences of opinion with President Obama,” he said. “Suppose we had the greatest of personal chemistry, okay? So what, you think I wouldn’t stand up against the Iran deal if I thought, as I did, that it endangers the existence of Israel? Of course I would.”

A recent poll found that the vast majority of Israelis believe Trump will be a “pro-Israel president.” According to the poll conducted by the Dialog polling firm, 83 percent of Israelis view Trump, a Republican who has made statements putting him in line with many of the Israeli government’s right-wing policies, as pro-Israel.

Trump has said he will seek to broker an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal, while statements by him and advisers have painted him as supporting or being willing to tolerate settlement building and recognize a unified Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, two issues on which the Netanyahu government often clashed with Obama over the last six years.

Most Israelis polled also said they were not overly concerned with fears of a rise in anti-Semitism in the US in the wake of Trump’s victory, which has emboldened some racist and anti-Semitic groups, part of the so-called “alt-right.”

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GOP Senators Demand Palestinians Stop Rewarding Terrorism

Taylor Force “exemplified the spirit of discovery, learning and service,” in the words of Vanderbilt University chancellor Nicholas Zeppos. A West Point graduate from Lubbock, Texas, who served as a field artillery officer deployed in Afghanistan and Iraq, Force’s last breath would be drawn in a different battle zone—the streets of Israel.

Force was studying at Vanderbilt and working toward his MBA. He came to Israel as part of a university group studying global entrepreneurship. But that all changed on March 8, 2016, when 22-year-old Palestinian Bashar Massalha went on a stabbing spree in Jaffa, killing Taylor and wounding 11, including a pregnant woman.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu offered words of consolation to Force’s parents, “May his memory be a blessing.” The U.S. State Department condemned the attack.

But the Palestinian Authority had a different perspective on the murder of Force and attempted murder of a dozen more lives. PA President Mahmoud Abbas praised Massalha for his attack, describing him as a “heroic martyr” and role model for young Palestinian children. Arabs in the disputed territories and Gaza celebrated the murder of Force and the attacks against Israelis. Unbeknownst to the American taxpayer is their complicity in the murder of Taylor Force and all Israelis killed by Palestinian terrorists.

Receiving over \$300 million in 2016 for aid from the U.S.,

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In regard to the Iran nuclear deal, which Trump said during the campaign he would tear up, calling it one of the worst agreements in history, 42% of Israelis believe there is no chance he will scrap the nuclear accord, with only 13% saying there is a high chance he will tear up the deal.

Netanyahu himself said that Israel’s settlement policy is not governed by the United States and the incoming Trump administration will not change that.

The premier recently told the annual Brookings Institution’s Saban Forum for Middle East Policy that he would raise the “bad” Iran nuclear deal with Trump, and urged continued US intervention in the Middle East. He also appeared to brush off fears of an uptick in anti-Semitism in the US, noting that the fringe trend of anti-Jewish hatred was a feature of all democracies.

Asked whether Trump’s incoming administration will allow Israel to do whatever it wants regarding settlement building in the West Bank, Netanyahu said “I think we have been doing what we want.” [TimesofIsrael.com]

\$550 million the previous year, Palestinian terrorists and their families receive a monthly stipend for the murder or attempted murder of civilians.

According to the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), the PA will pay nearly \$140 million to terrorists and their families in 2016. Amounts range from \$364 to over \$3,100 per month. NRK-TV in Norway reported earlier this year that the more heinous the attack, the higher the monthly stipend.

Making Americans complicit in terrorism, or “pay to slay” as it’s referred to by Israel advocates, is not a new phenomenon. But new efforts have emerged to make the PA accountable to the U.S. taxpayer. Senate Bill 3414 was introduced at the end of September by GOP Sen. Lindsey Graham “to condition assistance to the West Bank and Gaza on steps by the Palestinian Authority to end violence and terrorism against Israeli citizens.”

Graham recently stated, “Why is the Palestinian Authority paying young Palestinians to commit acts of terror against innocent Americans like Taylor Force or Israelis? The Palestinians need to decide – do they condemn these horrible acts or do they reward them? You can’t be a partner in peace when you are paying people to commit terrorist acts. The choice the Palestinians make will determine the type of relationship they have with the United States in the years to come.”

Commonly referred as the Taylor Force Act, the legislation has 10 Republican co-sponsors and requires that the PA “is taking credible steps to end acts of violence against United States and Israeli citizens ... is publicly condemning such acts of violence and is taking steps to investigate or is cooperating in investigations of such acts to bring the perpetrators to justice.” The bill also requires that the PA “has terminated payments for acts of terrorism against United States and Israeli citizens to any individual who has been imprisoned ... for such acts of terrorism,” including a family member of any individual who died committing such acts of terrorism.

“The United States should hold Palestinian leadership fully accountable for continuing to incite violence against Israeli and American citizens and for providing financial support to terrorists and their families,” said Sen. Mark Kirk. “This is a no-brainer that’s critical to encouraging the emergence of a credible partner for peace with Israel, a fellow democracy and our closest ally in the Middle East, yet this administration refuses to do it.”

In a recent statement released by Christians United for Israel, the largest pro-Israel organization in the United States, founder and chairman Pastor John Hagee said, “the Taylor Force Act isn’t about Democrat vs. Republican, it’s about right and wrong. Every member of Congress should back this legislation, and it should be one of the easiest decisions they make.” [Observer.com]