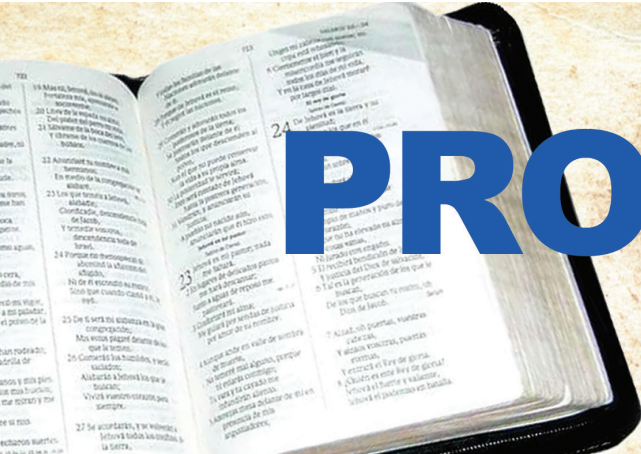


Today's News in Light of the Bible

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Israel Grateful for Support but Worried by Iran Nuclear Talks



DR. ED HINDSON

My dear friends,

Why is Jerusalem so important?

From Jerusalem, God said, "I am going to do something here that will change the course of human history." It is the city where He would raise up David to be the king and where His Temple was planted. But, it is also where judgment would fall on His own people because they turned their backs on Him.

Yet, God graciously reached out again and again, and finally sent His own Son to Jerusalem. There, Jesus was rejected, crucified and resurrected!

The final drama of Jerusalem unfolds in Biblical Prophecy. The Bible tells us in the last days, the remnant of the Jewish people will be regathered to Jerusalem. Eventually, the Messiah will come to Jerusalem and reign there on David's throne, ruling the world in righteousness for 1,000 years on Earth.

Until He returns,

Ed Hindson



Israel's Iron Dome intercepts missiles.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken got a very warm welcome to Israel on his first visit to the region in his new role after Operation Guardian of the Walls, in which the US and Israel saw mostly eye to eye, but things got chillier when it came to Iran nuclear talks. Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi met Blinken on the tarmac at Ben-Gurion Airport and said it was "a great honor" to host him. Ashkenazi, like every other Israeli official Blinken met, effusively thanked the secretary of state for "America's strong stance beside Israel and its right to defend itself and its citizens."

The secretary of state emphasized that US President

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UN Opens Israeli War Crimes Probe, Calls For Embargo

The United Nations Human Rights Council voted 24-9 to launch an investigation against Israel for alleged war crimes, including during the recent war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip, and called for an arms embargo against the Jewish state. An additional 14 countries out of the 47-member body abstained. It marks the first time that the UNHRC created a permanent fact-finding mission with respect to any UN member state. Israel's Foreign



Ministry immediately stated that it had no intention of cooperating with the probe.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated: "Today's shameful decision is yet another example of the UN Human Rights Council's blatant anti-Israel obsession. Once again, an immoral automatic majority at the Council whitewashes a genocidal terrorist organization that deliberately targets Israeli civilians while turning Gaza's civilians into human shields. This while depicting as the 'guilty party' a democracy acting legitimately to protect its citizens from thousands of indiscriminate rocket attacks. This travesty makes a mockery of international law and encourages terrorists worldwide," he said.

In the debate that preceded the vote, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michele Bachelet warned that Israeli actions may already constitute "war crimes." The "commission of inquiry" would examine incidents that occurred both before and after April 13, 2021 within sovereign Israel,

including Jerusalem, as well as in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The decision to call for such a probe was submitted by the Palestinian Authority and Pakistan on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

The United States said it was "deeply unfortunate" that the vote occurred "while we and others have been working to uphold and strengthen the ceasefire, ensure humanitarian assistance to Gaza." It's Geneva mission

added that creation of a probe "threatens to imperil the progress that has been made in recent weeks... We will continue to advocate for Israel to be treated fairly in the Human Rights Council." Germany took issue with an "indefinite" commission of inquiry that would "far exceed" any past fact-finding probes.

Israel's Ambassador to the UN in Geneva Meirav Eilon Shahar warned the council against making a moral equivalence between Israel and Hamas, noting that prior to the start of the Gaza war one of its leaders called to cut off the heads of Jews. "On May 7th, a senior Hamas leader, Fathi Hammad, said and I quote "cut off the heads of the Jews with knives." Just three days later, Hamas launched an unprovoked, unjustified attack against the civilian population in Israel, while cynically hiding military infrastructure in the midst of Gaza's civilian population.

This constitutes a double war crime,"

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Favorable View of Palestinian Authority on the Rise

Recently in Atlanta, as hundreds of pro-Palestinian demonstrators rallied downtown, one sign stood out: “We can’t breathe since 1948,” it read – a nod to the social unrest of the past year after the death of George Floyd. Experts said it’s a reflection of the way American support for the Palestinian cause is growing. A recent Gallup poll showed it was on the rise even before the latest Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Results of Gallup’s annual World Affairs poll, released in March, show that although most Americans still sympathize with Israel, favorable views of Palestinians are on the rise. Roughly 30% of overall respondents said they had favorable views of the Palestinian Authority, up from 21% in 2018 and higher than the annual average of 19% since 2001. Such views are increasingly partisan: Republican support for Israel is at 85% compared with 77% of Independents and 64% of Democrats. The percentage of Republicans who view the Palestinian Authority favorably has risen to 19%, up from 9% in 2018.



Omar Baddar, communication director for the California-based Institute for Middle East Understanding, said that even before the recent conflict, liberals had been increasingly critical of Israel. Although more Americans say the United States should pressure Palestinians more than Israel to resolve the conflict, Gallup reports those saying the onus is on Israel represent a new high of 34%, up from 27% in 2018.

Celebrities are increasingly outspoken about

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Eilon Shahaar said. “We will make no apologies for defending our citizens. Israel has the capabilities to defend its people in accordance with international law and we will continue to do so,” she said. Earlier in the day, she said, those who support the Palestinians should condemn Hamas.

During the debate Bachelet agreed Hamas caused deaths and injuries in southern Israel and its “rockets are indiscriminate and fail to distinguish between military and civilian

objects, and their use, thereby, constitutes a clear violation of international humanitarian law.” Such violations include Hamas launching rockets from civilian areas, she said. “However, the actions of one party do not absolve the other from its obligations under international law,” Bachelet explained, nor did she accuse Hamas of potential war crimes. This is yet another example of the United Nations blatant attacks on Israel while failure to hold other groups accountable. — *PNL*

PRAY: Pray the overt anti-Semitism within many members of the United Nations will stop and Israel will finally be treated fairly.

Joe Biden “made crystal clear throughout the violence that the US fully supports Israel’s right to defend itself against attacks such as Hamas firing rockets indiscriminately against civilians.” The US really did stand up for Israel during Operation Guardian of the Walls, and Israeli officials were satisfied behind the scenes, as well.

The US blocked repeated attempts by the UN Security Council to release one-sided statements that condemned Israel while ignoring Hamas. Statements from Blinken and Biden unequivocally defended Israel’s right to defend itself and condemned Hamas terrorists. After the truce, they promised to replenish Israel’s Iron Dome batteries.

However, Israeli officials were not nearly as pleased with the Biden administrations continued talks with Iran. The fifth round of indirect nuclear talks between the US and Iran began in the Austrian capital on the same day as Blinken’s visit to Israel. The goal of the negotiations is for the sides to return to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). On that, officials in Jerusalem are united in their opposition.

Some Israelis may say otherwise, but according to those people who actually make decisions, “this is unanimous between the defense minister, foreign minister all the senior officials in the defense establishment. There is no daylight between the prime minister’s stance and that of all the defense professionals in Israel that this agreement is bad,” Ambassador to the US and the UN

Gilad Erdan said.

There is something blatantly contradictory between working in Jerusalem on finding ways to help rebuild Gaza while ensuring the funding does not benefit Hamas and even undermines Hamas, as Blinken posited the aid would do, while his envoy Rob Malley was negotiating to remove sanctions from Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad benefactor the Islamic Republic of Iran. The same goes for declaring a commitment to Israel’s security while in talks to return to an agreement that would give Iran international legitimacy to develop a nuclear weapon in nine years.

Israeli concerns about those inconsistencies came out before, during and after Blinken’s visit. “Israel values our friend the US very much,” Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a speech the night before Blinken’s arrival, “but ensuring that the ayatollahs will not stop the thousands of years of existence of the Jewish people will require

us to make courageous and independent decisions.... With or without an agreement, we will do everything to prevent Iran from arming itself with a nuclear weapon – because that is our existence.” Netanyahu hopes the US will not return to the JCPOA, which “paves the way for Iran to have an arsenal of nuclear weapons with international legitimacy.”

Biden has been surprisingly supportive of Israel up to this point, even after taking flak from his own party. His relationship with Iran will ultimately be the deciding factor for many Israelis.— PNL



Negev, Israel - March 13th, 2021: An Iron Dome anti rocket battery, deployed in a flower field.

PRAY: Pray for Israel’s defense and that America will continue to stand with its ally in the Middle East.

UN Atomic Watchdog: Access to Iranian Data Lacking

The United Nations' atomic watchdog hasn't been able to access data important to monitoring Iran's nuclear program since late February when the Islamic Republic started restricting international inspections of its facilities. The International Atomic Energy Agency reported in a document distributed to member countries and seen by The Associated Press that it has "not had access to the data from its online enrichment monitors and electronic seals, or had access to the measurement recordings registered by its installed measurement devices" since February 23.

While the IAEA and Iran earlier acknowledged the restrictions limited access to surveillance cameras at Iranian facilities, the report indicated they went much further. The IAEA acknowledged it could only provide an estimate of Iran's overall nuclear stockpile as it continues to enrich uranium at its highest level ever. Iran started limiting inspections in a bid to put pressure on President Biden to lift crippling sanctions reimposed after President Trump unilaterally pulled out of the 2015 nuclear deal in 2018. Under the deal, the IAEA placed around 2,000 tamper-proof seals on nuclear material and equipment. Those seals communicated electronically to inspectors. Automated measuring devices also provided real-time data from the program.

Known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the 2015 nuclear deal signed by the United States, Germany, France, Britain, China and Russia permits Iran to keep a total stockpile of 202.8 kilograms (447 pounds) of enriched uranium. Talks are currently underway in Vienna for the U.S. to rejoin JCPOA.

Since the U.S. withdrawal, Iran has been steadily violating its various restrictions,



including the types of centrifuges it's allowed to use, the amount of enriched uranium it is allowed to stockpile, and the purity to which it is allowed to enrich. In the IAEA report, the agency released estimates of Iran's stockpile rather than precise figures, saying that as of May 22, Iran's total enriched uranium stockpile was 3,241 kilograms (7,145 pounds), up about 273 kilograms (600 pounds) from the last quarterly report.

The current stockpile also includes 62.8 kilograms (138.5 pounds) of uranium enriched up to 20% purity, and 2.4 kilograms enriched up to 60% purity — well above the 3.67% purity allowed under the JCPOA.

Despite Iran's violations of the deal, other nations involved have stressed the agreement was still important as it allowed international inspectors to continue their surveillance of Iran's nuclear facilities. Under a confidential agreement called "Additional Protocol" with Iran, the IAEA collects and analyzes images from a series of surveillance cameras installed at Iranian nuclear sites. Those cameras helped it monitor Tehran's program to see if it is complying with the nuclear deal.

Iran's hard-line parliament in December approved a bill that would suspend part of U.N. inspections of its nuclear facilities if European

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Palestinian support. This has caused an increase in support in the younger generations that many times blindly follow their favorite celebrities. Thousands demonstrated from Boston to Los Angeles, supporting Palestinians in rallies and marches marking the 73rd anniversary of the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. Among those marching in New York City's Brooklyn borough was supermodel Bella Hadid who's father is Palestinian. Entertainers Rihanna, Zayn Malik and Rage Against the Machine posted Palestinian support on Instagram. Actors Mark Ruffalo, Susan Sarandon and Viola Davis took to Twitter to condemn Israel. Last year, actor Seth Rogen made waves when he said he was "fed a huge amount of lies about Israel" growing up as a Jewish boy, and his elders omitted information about Palestinian displacement.

The violence has also raised tensions with the United States. In Los Angeles, a brawl broke out outside a sushi restaurant between sidewalk diners and a group of men passing by in cars waving Palestinian flags. In Michigan, President Joe Biden's visit to a Ford plant in heavily Arab

American Dearborn was met with protest over U.S. support of Israel.

Some see similarities between struggles of Palestinians and Black community in U.S. When the most recent conflict began, the Black Lives Matter chapter in Paterson, New Jersey, issued a statement expressing Palestinian solidarity. "Our deep roots of solidarity are part of a rich tradition of mutual support and exchange between Palestine and U.S.-based liberation movements."

Baddar said the link between the struggles of Palestinians and Black Americans – a concept scholars call Black-Palestinian transnational solidarity – dates to the 1980s, when Jesse Jackson ran for president on a platform that included demands for Palestinian human rights. The years since have produced other comparisons in terms of discriminations and militarized police response, he said.

Although most Americans still support Israel, one cannot downplay the significance of celebrity political activism to sway the younger generation. In the future, this could lead America away from supporting Israel.— *PNL*

PRAY: Pray America will continue to support Israel, both now and in the future.

UN ATOMIC WATCHDOG from page 5

signatories didn't provide relief from oil and banking sanctions by February. IAEA Director-General Rafael Grossi was able to negotiate a last-minute deal in February regarding footage shot by surveillance cameras. Tehran said it would delete the images unless diplomats reached a deal in Vienna to lift sanctions. His agency still can't access the images taken by

the cameras for the time being, but could regain access to the material if a deal is reached — an emergency measure Grossi called "not ideal."

Iran's economy is reeling. The possible deal promises economic incentives in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program. Without oversight, many are concerned Iran will gain momentum on becoming a nuclear power.— *PNL*

PRAY: Pray regulations will be restored and Iran will be permanently stopped from becoming a nuclear power.