

Israel will “go it alone”

Mike Evans

President Obama likes to boast that America and Israel are strong allies; but is it really true? Perhaps Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was more correct than we wish to admit when he told congressional leaders this past week that the two countries didn't always see eye-to-eye. He suggested that was because they were on different sides of the scale—one a world power, the other smaller and infinitely more vulnerable. The week of Purim, when Israel's appeal for America to stand by them against Iran was made, one hundred missiles were fired into Israel from Gaza.

Taking into consideration the various scenarios since 1948, it is quite easy to see why the prime minister might feel as he does. Immediately after Israel declared her statehood and President Harry S. Truman recognized the Jewish state against the advice of his own State Department, Israel was attacked by her aggressive and belligerent Arab neighbors. Israel prevailed, and her inhabitants set out to carve a nation from the sand and bedrock of a heretofore neglected Palestine.

When we take a look at the various administrations since that of Richard Nixon, the Israel-US friendship has been maintained only through tough determination on Israel's part. Under the Carter administration, strong pressure was applied to force Israel to the peace table at Camp David. Prime Minister Menachem Begin was prodded to sign land-for-peace agreements that were supposed to lessen tensions within the region.

During his presidency and certainly after his defeat in 1980, President Carter pushed for a Palestinian state, befriended Yasser Arafat, had tea with terrorist leaders sworn to annihilate Israel, and penned books maligning the leaders of the Jewish state—all without repercussion or reprimand. He remains the US Statesman Emeritus.

In 1981, despite public US objections, and perhaps providentially for much of the Western world, Mr. Begin proceeded with a plan to bomb Iraq's Osirik nuclear reactor. I was with him earlier that week and read him a scripture, “No weapon formed against thee will prosper.” In that same meeting, I also talked with him about Jonathan Netanyahu, the brave leader who was killed during the Entebbe raid. I asked him to give Jonathan's brother, Benjamin, a job in the government; Begin did not know him. He asked, “Why should I?” I replied, “Because one day he will be prime minister, not once, but twice.” Begin laughed, but soon afterwards gave Benjamin a government position.

Upon being told of the Osirik bombing, President Reagan responded with, “Boys will be boys.” With the exception of the war in Lebanon in 1982 which exposed some philosophical differences between the two countries, Reagan's government favored Israel and emphasized her importance as an ally. Organizations favoring Israel labeled the president as having the “most pro-Israel ever” administration.

George H.W. Bush raised the indignation of our Israeli friends when in 1990, he called East Jerusalem “occupied” territory and not a sovereign part of Israel. More importantly, he pressed Israel not to respond when targeted with SCUD missiles during the Persian Gulf War. Rather than consider the safety of Israeli civilians, the first thought was the fear of losing Saudi Arabia and Egypt as allies against Saddam Hussein. Even after Israel’s compliance with the president’s request, his Secretary of State James Baker demanded Israeli presence at the Madrid Peace Conference. It proved to be yet another attempt to appease Arab sensibilities by forcing Israel to give up more land for peace.

On January 2, 2001, when he was supposed to be vacating the White House to make way for President George W. Bush, President Bill Clinton came up with yet another peace initiative, this one involved even more far-reaching Israeli concessions than those Israel’s Prime Minister Ehud Barak had agreed to at Camp David and Arafat had refused just before initiating a Second *Intifada*. The president desperately wanted to leave behind a legacy of peace in the Middle East.

Arab sources show that Clinton’s far-reaching offer involved an extraordinary new development: it gave Arafat almost everything he wanted, including ninety-eight percent of the territory of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza, all of East Jerusalem except for the Jewish and Armenian quarters, Palestinian sovereignty over the Temple Mount, conceding only the right of Jews to pray there, and a compensation fund of \$30 billion. Arafat thumbed his nose at the president and stalked indignantly out of the meeting. Why? He was not satisfied with a portion of Israel’s land; he wanted it all.

The Obama administration seems to have taken a page from both Carter’s and Clinton’s playbooks. Israel has certainly suffered the effects of the president’s attempts to “engage” the Muslim world. Rather than appearing “presidential,” Mr. Obama’s bowing and groveling has only served to embolden and empower hostile regimes. The administration’s lack of backbone toward Middle East terrorist organizations has simply placed America and Israel in greater danger, especially from the fanatics in Iran.

Despite President Obama’s push for more stringent sanctions against that nation, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has called for “the Zionist regime” to be taken to pieces. He has declared that “anybody who recognizes Israel will burn in the fire of the Islamic nation’s fury.” When I arranged an exclusive interview with him for the Fox News Network, he said to me, “America is the big Satan; Israel is the little Satan, but both are going down.”

To Ahmadinejad, America has become a toothless and clawless tiger, no longer able to stop his rogue state from using its enriched uranium to make nuclear weapons. God help us and Israel if his perception is true and his threats are more than boastful talk.

This issue has become more critical than ever since Prime Minister Netanyahu’s visit with Mr. Obama earlier this month. Mr. Netanyahu requested advanced “bunker-busting” bombs and aircraft necessary to refuel in mid-air. The request was apparently denied by Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and/or other US officials. White House spokesperson Jay Carney stated that there had been no direct talks between the prime minister and President Obama regarding this matter.

One Israeli newspaper reported, however, that the president had based any military assistance on the assurance that Israel would not attack Iran in 2012, an election year.