

ISRAEL NEWS FROM CALVARY

CHAPEL JERUSALEM

May 19, 2004 ~ Iyar 28, 5764

COMMENTARY: "WHAT IS SO IMPORTANT ABOUT JERUSALEM?" (A Jewish perspective of the importance of Jerusalem- Arutz 7)

On 9 Av 586 BCE/BC, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the First Temple. Thirty-seven years ago, on 28 Iyar 1967, during the Six-Day War, Israel regained control of Biblical east Jerusalem, including the Temple Mount. Israel, for the first time in more than 2,000 years, was in complete control of the entire city. Within a few days, Defense Minister Moshe Dayan gave control of the Temple Mount back to the Moslems, while maintaining Israeli sovereignty over it. Thirteen years later, Israel adopted its "Basic Law: Jerusalem", declaring, "Jerusalem, complete and united, is the capital of Israel".

If the above had happened in any other nation, it wouldn't have garnered much attention from the rest of the world. But it didn't happen in just any other nation. It happened in the nation of Israel. Because of this, the entire world is in an uproar.

On 29 November 1947 - six months before the declaration of the State of Israel - the United Nations passed Resolution 181 (II). One of the main points of this resolution was the establishment of Jerusalem as a "corpus separatum" (a "body of separate covenant"). This means, basically, that the UN separated the city of Jerusalem from the rest of the world and created a separate covenant for it. This has never been done before in all of history. In 1950 the UN adopted the "Statute for the City of Jerusalem" setting forth the regulations for the administration of the city of Jerusalem by the United Nations. It would be an "international city"; it would not be linked to, or controlled by, any nation or government except the United Nations.

What makes Israel so important to the United Nations? Why would the world be so concerned about an ancient city like Jerusalem? It is located approximately 27 miles inland from the coast. It has no natural resources. Most of it is built upon the ruins of previous structures. What makes it so important that the United Nations would set it apart from any other city or nation in the entire world?

The interesting aspect is that Jerusalem has never been important to the nations unless it was important to Israel. When Israel started to return to the Land in large numbers during the late 1800's, the nations began to stir. It was just a little more than 50 years later that the UN adopted its "Statute for the City of Jerusalem".

The importance of Jerusalem lies in its spiritual aspect, not its physical makeup. It is a city that lives and responds to the Holy One of Israel. G-d declares to Ezekiel how He had mercy on Jerusalem, how He blessed her and made a covenant with her (Ezekiel 16.6-14). Jeremiah laments of her misery and suffering after G-d judged her (Lamentations 1.1-22). Yet G-d

declared that He will not forget Jerusalem; He will establish an everlasting covenant with her (Ezekiel 16.60-63). Jerusalem is the center of the earth, according to the L-rd (Ezekiel 5.5). Its very existence continually proves that there is a G-d and that He will judge every man and hold him accountable for his deeds.

G-d has declared that Jerusalem is the place from which He will reign: "At that time they shall call Jerusalem 'The Throne of the L-rd'" (Jeremiah 3.17a). It is to Jerusalem that the Glory of the L-rd will return (Ezekiel 43.1-4). The L-rd said He was "exceedingly jealous for Jerusalem" (Zechariah 1.14). Many of the prophets spoke of the L-rd's return to Jerusalem. The L-rd declared through Zechariah, "I will return to Jerusalem with compassion; My house will be built in it', declares the L-rd of hosts" (Zechariah 1.16a; see also Zechariah 2.12; 8.3). More than 4,000 years ago Abraham understood the importance of the city when he declared that Mount Moriah, in the midst of Jerusalem, would be "the place where G-d will be seen" (Genesis 22.14).

Yet G-d also declared that Jerusalem would be a problem for the nations of the world: "Behold, I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that causes reeling to all the peoples around; and when the siege is against Jerusalem, it will also be against Judah. And it will come about in that day that I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who lift it will be severely injured. And all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it" (Zechariah 12.2-3). The L-rd also gave warning of His judgment against those who come against Jerusalem: "And it will come about in that day that I will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem" (Zechariah 12.9); "Now this will be the plague with which the L-rd will strike all the peoples who have gone to war against Jerusalem; their flesh will rot while they stand on their feet, and their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongue will rot in their mouth" (Zechariah 14.12).

Jerusalem is important to the Holy One of Israel. It is the place that He has chosen to dwell in the midst of His creation. It is also the place where He will judge the nations.

Does this scenario sound familiar? It should. It is happening in our very day. Literally all of the nations of the world are gathering against Israel. The line has been drawn in the sand. It is the people of the G-d of Israel standing against all the nations of the world. Whose side will you be on? This is not the time to be straddling the fence. Now is the time to make a stand. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, for through her peace will come the peace of the world. Stand and see the salvation of the L-rd.

OPERATION RAINBOW: ISRAEL MOVES INTO RAFAH

Just hours after Operation Rainbow got under way, Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz said there is no time limit on the army's operation in Rafah.

"The aim of the operation is to enable us to deal effectively against weapon smuggling. Even now, Palestinian terrorists are making supreme efforts to smuggle weapons into the Gaza Strip that will enhance the threat and change the strategic balance," he said. "The operation is not limited in time and will depend on assessments and goals attained in the coming days."

IDF: ARMS ARE WAITING ON OTHER SIDE OF BORDER

The army has received information in recent days regarding a shipment of Strella shoulder-launched anti-aircraft missiles, Sagger anti-tank missiles, and other long-range rockets that are waiting on the Egyptian side of the border to be smuggled through tunnels into the Gaza Strip, a senior IDF officer said on Tuesday.

As the IDF launched Operation Rainbow against the terrorist network in Rafah, current assessments show that at least three or four tunnels are still operating in the area, the officer said.

The weapons are brought to the area by boats anchored at El-Arish, tunnels dug underneath the Suez Canal, and from the east. They come mainly from Hizbullah and Iranian elements, whose aim is to deliver them to terrorists not only in the Gaza Strip but in Judea and Samaria as well, the officer said.

"Weapons such as these with a long-distance capability threaten not only Ashkelon and Ashdod but other areas," the officer said. "Our aim is to prevent the smuggling of such weapons that will violate the strategic balance and the existing status quo."

PALESTINIANS USING ADVANCED TOOLS TO DIG TUNNELS

Battalion Commander Lt. Col. Babi Ben-Itach has told (MAARIV) that the 'Palestinians' who dig up weapons-smuggling tunnels on the Egyptian border have begun using professional electric tools unseen by the IDF so far.

Sunday, Desert Patrol battalion fighters and undercover Border Guard officers uncovered an arms-smuggling tunnel in the Rafah area. Six 'Palestinians' who were digging up the tunnel were caught in the act and surrendered to IDF forces following negotiations. A search of the tunnel, which was five meters [16 feet] deep and 200 meters [218 yards] long uncovered electric digging tools. Lt.Col.Ben-Itach also emphasized that the arrests of the tunnel diggers is of great intelligence value. According to him, their capture will shed more light on how the tunnel construction system operates and on the organizations behind the weapons smuggling. "Interrogation of the tunnel diggers revealed that 17 year-olds dug for five days straight. They dug, ate and slept inside the tunnels without leaving even once in order to finish the job on time", Ben-Itach said.

"It is sheer exploitation of people who are forced into the job because of the difficult economic situation in the area, they don't think about the fact that the tunnels are used for smuggling weapons to terror groups", he said. The six arrested were taken in for questioning by the GSS and the tunnel was blown up in a controlled detonation by Border Police sappers on Sunday.

SEE HOW THE TUNNELS ARE DUG: (Note from Pastor Kevin: This web article is posted on our web page in an article titled "Why Israel is taking out the tunnels of Rafa."- in the handout section under Israel.

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Terrorism-+Obstacle+to+Peace/Terror+Groups/Weapon+Smuggling+Tunnels+in+Rafah+May+2004.htm>

SYRIA DEFIANT OVER US SANCTIONS

Syrian President Bashar Assad yesterday said he would not comply with a US demand to expel Hamas and Islamic Jihad leaders from Damascus in the wake of the imposition of stiff American sanctions for supporting terrorist groups.

"These are not leaders. They are political spokesmen," Assad said during a meeting with American editors in Damascus, according to (Ha'aretz)

"We don't expel people," Assad continued. Instead, they should be allowed to "go back home" without fear of imprisonment – comments reflecting Syria's official rejection of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish State. Washington announced Tuesday that it is to embargo all exports to Syria, apart from food, medicine and aircraft parts, after accusing Syria of supporting terrorism, pursuing weapons of mass destruction and obstructing the efforts of the US-led coalition in Iraq, according to The Jerusalem Post.

Nevertheless, the European Union - the world's largest trading bloc has pledged to press ahead with negotiations over a trade agreement with Syria in defiance of the US decision.

MEANWHILE: TURKEY OFFERS SYRIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Turkish State Minister for Trade Affairs Kurshad Tuzmen on Sunday said it has been agreed, during the latest visit to Syria last March, to sign an agreement of free trade zone between Syria and Turkey before the end of this year. In a press conference, Tuzmen added Turkey holds talks to sign agreements of free trade zones with Arab and African countries, indicating that Turkey signed an agreement with Morocco and another one, by the first letters, with the Palestinian Authority. (SANA-Official Syrian News Agency)

MEANWHILE: CHINA INCREASES AID TO SYRIAN MISSILES

China has increased assistance to Syria's medium-range missile program. Western diplomatic sources said Beijing has sent several delegations and technicians to accelerate Syria's program for extended-range Scud missiles. The sources said the increased aid was first detected in late 2003 in what they termed a major development.

"The Chinese effort is meant to provide Syria with technical assistance that it has not been able to receive from other countries," a diplomatic source said. "The focus is to extend the Scud from short-range to medium- and even intermediate-range."

The sources said the Chinese assistance appears to be replacing that of North Korea, which was the prime supplier to and developer of Syria's missile programs. Pyongyang supplied and helped develop the Scud C and Scud D programs. (MENL)

NEWS REPORT FROM JERUSALEM

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