

Israel Update from David Dolan

Week of October 26, 2009

Shalom from the lovely north coast of Wales!

I am in the UK half way through a month long speaking tour, with meetings going well. Several more venues have been added to my time here, which I will detail below.

I did many interviews in Israel the first half of this month for the American *Zola Levitt Presents* television program. Among those I spoke with were Paul Wilbur, Barry and Batya Segal, Lance Lambert, *Jerusalem Post* columnist and author Saul Singer, and several leading Israeli archeologists, along with two former military commanders during the 1967 Six Day War who played pivotal roles in the battle for Jerusalem. I was especially touched to speak with the man who suddenly found himself leading Israeli paratroop forces in the Ammunition Hill battle, among the fiercest of the war, after his commander was badly wounded. The interviews should begin airing in December, and will also be available for viewing on line around the world via the Zola Levitt web site.

This month's Israel news report is posted below, and also on my web site, www.ddolan.com. It covers the renewed Palestinian violence in Jerusalem this month, which I experienced firsthand, the latest fallout from the UN Goldstone report on the Gaza Strip conflict early this year, and recent developments with Turkey and Iran. I take a detailed look at the Goldstone report, since it has potentially grave implications for Israel and other nations struggling against terrorism. I also quote the chief Israeli archeologist responsible for the Jerusalem area, and the Haifa University professor who heads the City of David digs (both of whom I interviewed earlier this month) concerning Palestinian accusations that Israel is conducting clandestine archeological digs under the Temple Mount—a charge that both men adamantly denied.

Despite tensions in the region, which are fairly standard I am sad to say, I am looking forward to hosting a **tour to Israel next year** beginning in early June. I believe it will be a special time for all that will never be forgotten. After being gone from the land for some time due mainly to business and family matters abroad, it was an extra blessing for me to be back home in Israel over the past few months—where I have lived since 1980. Although I encountered some rumors that I have left Israel, that is not the case at all—I still have my apartment in Jerusalem (not to mention most of my clothes!!) and plan to return next year after a trip to the States and Australia. It is a unique land for sure.

If you have never been to the Promised Land, or would like to come again, I would be very pleased to host you next June! We will focus not only on stirring ancient biblical sites, like Jerusalem's walled Old City, Bethlehem, the Sea of Galilee, etc, but also on the Israel of today, which I know very well. I believe you will be blessed to come along if you can. Details of the Israel tour, including prices and precise dates, can be viewed by clicking this link to my web site: <http://www.ddolan.com/updates.asp?updateid=151> Hope to see you on board!

Here are the additional UK meetings not listed on my web site, all of them in the greater Manchester area.

Wednesday evening, 28th October. Billinge Family Church, 3 Crank Road, Billinge, Wigan, at 7.30 PM

Saturday morning, 7th November. Sulam Yacov Messianic Fellowship, Manchester, 10:00 AM

Sunday morning, 8th November. Ainsdale Evangelical Fellowship, Ainsdale (near Southport), 10:30 AM

VIOLENCE FLARES AS UN BODY CONDEMNS ISRAEL

By David Dolan

The Israeli government and media were focused on there separate but closely related topics during October—the lack of substantial progress in American attempts to jumpstart Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, the Goldstone Commission report on last winter’s conflict between IDF and Hamas forces in the Gaza Strip, and Iran’s ongoing nuclear program. Meanwhile Turkey canceled a joint military exercise with Israel, objecting to the possibility that Israeli Air Force jets set to take part over Turkish skies might have participated in last winter’s armed conflict with Hamas forces.

Later in the month, attention shifted to Geneva where Palestinian Authority officials demanded that the United Nation’s Human Rights Council, which commissioned the Goldstone report earlier this year, endorse its demand for a fresh Security Council condemnation of Israel, including punitive measures. Noting that UN member states had not issued even one resolution calling for the radical Palestinian movement to cease firing rockets at Israeli civilian communities over the past eight years, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu blasted the PA move as both cynically unfair and yet another major blow to the Obama administration’s efforts to force the stalled peace process back on track.

Without revealing any details, Netanyahu later told a visiting Spanish official that the stand off with Washington over Israeli settlement construction had been resolved. Meanwhile violence erupted in and around Jerusalem between Israeli security personnel and Palestinians egged on by Hamas, which called for a new attrition war against the detested Jewish state. Although clashes occurred in several locations during the week-long Feast of Tabernacles, the radical group’s call for a “day of rage” featuring massive unrest on Friday October 9 did not materialize; partly due to tough Israeli security measures. However clashes broke out again on the Temple Mount toward the end of the month, spurred on by fabricated Palestinian claims that Israel was planning to harm or take over the holy site.

Iran’s extremist Shiite Muslim regime continued to issue portentous threats of horrendous retaliation if Israeli leaders dare to order military strikes on the country’s far-flung nuclear facilities. This came as Iran resisted fresh western attempts to get them to stop enriching uranium inside their country. They did not immediately respond to an offer to move their enrichment process to Russia, where quantities and quality of weapon’s grade uranium could be more closely monitored and supervised. Israeli officials expressed concern that Tehran’s acceptance of the UN-backed offer might allow the rogue regime to avoid punitive sanctions and a possible military strike on its enrichment facilities while secretly continuing efforts to produce nuclear warheads.

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL BLASTS ISRAEL

The United States government urged Palestinian Authority leaders to postpone their planned formal request that the UN Human Rights Council send the Goldstone Commission report about last winter’s Gaza Strip conflict to the full UN General Assembly for a debate and ratification vote. Initially, PA President Mahmoud Abbas reluctantly agreed to the deferment, which set off a firestorm of indignant protests from Hamas leaders, regional Muslim governments and Arab media outlets.

Hamas took full advantage of the angry anti-Abbas sentiments, despite the fact that the Goldstone report not only accused Israel of committing serious war crimes during the three week conflict, but also pointed a finger at reprehensible Hamas actions as well. The Iranian-backed group launched a furious campaign of public invective and denunciations against the PA Fatah leader, featuring the throwing of shoes at ubiquitous pictures of Abbas—a particularly pungent insult in Middle East Muslim culture. As a result of the hostile Hamas campaign, Fatah officials called off announced plans to sign an Egyptian-sponsored reconciliation accord with the Islamic group in

Cairo, which would have possibly brought Hamas members back into the Fatah-led PA government.

Many political analysts saw the Hamas action as a precursor to the upcoming campaign for the next round of Palestinian legislative and presidential elections, which Abbas announced would be held next January 24. The 74 year old PA leader accused Hamas of not wanting fresh elections at all, maintaining that when the radical Muslim group won the previous vote in January 2006, it assumed it would be the last national election ever held—leaving the group forever entrenched in power.

Under intense internal pressure from his Fatah party colleagues and cabinet ministers, Abbas quickly reversed his heavily criticized Goldstone postponement decision, which subsequently triggered a special session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva on October 15. Supported by the US, UK and France, Israeli officials attempted in vain to prevent the session from taking place, arguing it would only create another serious roadblock in the path of American-led attempts to restart the frozen peace process. US Middle East envoy George Mitchell stated that the Obama administration considered the Goldstone report “one sided and deeply flawed,” while adding that Obama’s efforts to restart Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations would continue “notwithstanding the report.”

In the end, the Council voted 25 to 6 to adopt the commission’s controversial conclusions, which were mainly focused on alleged Israeli military violations. The action sent the report to the UN General Assembly for discussion and possible endorsement. Among nations supporting the move were three containing more than half the people on earth—China, India and Russia. Voting against were the US, Holland and Italy, along with three former Soviet satellites, Ukraine, Slovakia and Hungary. Eleven countries represented on the Council abstained. The UK and France did not show up for the vote.

Adding insult to injury, the resolution that the Human Rights Council put forth for consideration by the General Assembly included a condemnation of Israeli home building in Jerusalem, blaming the Jewish state for the recent violence there that was actually instigated by Hamas and its allies. More ominously, the Palestinian-backed resolution demands that the Goldstone report be referred to the UN Security Council, which has the power to send it on to the UN’s Criminal Court in the Netherlands for possible prosecution of Israeli political and military leaders and Hamas officials if the two sides do not launch their own internal investigations of the alleged war crime abuses.

Most tellingly, South African Supreme Court Judge Richard Goldstone, who chaired the four member commission that issued the damning report, told the AFP news agency he was “saddened” by the content of the council resolution, and especially that it entirely ignored sustained Hamas rocket launchings this decade upon Israeli civilian centers which triggered the IDF military operation just after Christmas last December. Ironically, this is the exact same criticism that has been leveled at his commission’s report.

Goldstone’s comment served to add weight to widespread sentiment in Israel and abroad that the Jewish jurist was entirely naïve to lend his prestigious name to the one-sided Human Rights Council’s mandate which established the commission. The official mandate did not even mention Hamas provocations, but instead blatantly stated that council members “strongly condemn the Israeli military operation which has resulted in massive violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people.”

Possibly backed by the UK, France, and other countries, the United States is expected to block any Security Council attempt to send the controversial Goldstone report to the international UN court. Still, even the *threat* of possible judicial action has been enough to send chills through the Israeli government and military establishment, with senior officials being advised by the Attorney General to stay away from Britain and other countries where legal petitions have already been

filed by anti-Israel individuals and groups demanding their arrest, detention and subsequent prosecution.

BIAS AND BLUSTER

In a stinging analysis of the Goldstone Commission report published in the *Jerusalem Post* on October 15, South Africa's current Chief Rabbi, Warren Goldstein, blasted the commission's "biased conclusions." The respected cleric, who is also a human rights attorney, noted that the commission's four members had all pre-judged Israel, charging it early this year with using "excessive force" in its military operation. This judgment came before any of them were named to the UN panel—which he added was probably the very reason they were recruited to serve by the Human Rights Council.

Specifically, three commissioners, including Judge Goldstone, had publicly endorsed an Amnesty International letter issued during the conflict that attacked the Israeli military campaign, stating that "events in Gaza have shocked us to the core." The fourth commissioner, Christine Chinkin, had signed a letter published in the *Sunday Times* of London which averred that the IDF Cast Lead operation—designed to finally put an end to unprovoked Hamas rocket assaults upon Israeli civilian communities that actually escalated after Israel's painful unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005—"amounts to aggression, not self defense, not least because its assault on Gaza was unnecessary." Such harsh pre-judgments, issued before even one shred of "evidence" was examined by the future commissioners, obviously casts a dark shadow on the body's impartiality and subsequent "findings," wrote Rabbi Goldstein.

The Jewish South African religious leader blasted the UN for "using the superficial veneer of law and legal methodology to give credence and credibility to its anti-Israel agenda." He pointed out that the Goldstone commissioners had spent only 11 days "investigating" the three week Gaza conflict, totally ignoring or vastly downplaying critical events that led up to it, especially the ongoing Hamas rocket blitz which was deliberately designed to kill and maim Israeli civilians. He noted that neither Israel nor Hamas had cooperated with the UN commissioners, meaning its conclusions were largely based on hearsay (Israeli government leaders decided not to give testimony to the commission since the Human Rights Council had made abundantly clear in advance that it was determined to find Israel guilty as charged).

Rabbi Goldstein especially condemned the report for focusing almost exclusively on Israel's military response to eight years of rocket assaults, launched after repeated pleas from Israeli leaders over the years for Hamas to halt its "terror producing" Kassam attacks, instead of on the Hamas provocations that spurred the operation: "The commission's findings were based on accepting the allegations of only one party to the conflict. It did not try to cross examine or challenge the witnesses in any real way."

The Chief Rabbi's sentiments were echoed in a London *Times* editorial published the following day. Similarly calling the Goldstone report "biased," it urged all European Union states to reject the report rather than abstaining in the Human Rights Council vote. The editorial stated that there is "no equivalence between the actions of Israel in self-defense and those of Hamas in seeking to destroy it." It called the Human Rights Council a "kangaroo court" that has become "notorious for block voting against Israel." It noted that "Hamas, backed and supplied by Iran, has rejected all attempts to persuade it to recognize Israel, instead relentlessly pursuing the destruction of the Jewish state in the interests of an intolerant and delusional pan-Islamic ideology." The editorial also pointed out that "Unlike Israel, Hamas consistently engages in the cowardly practice of using civilians as human shields.

VIOLENCE ROCKS JERUSALEM

Acting as if they had been declared entirely guiltless in the Goldstone report, Hamas went on the warpath in early October after issuing harsh condemnations against Mahmoud Abbas for initially

agreeing to delay the Human Rights Council vote. Hamas leaders again denounced the PA chief for meeting and shaking hands with Binyamin Netanyahu in Washington in September, calling for Palestinians to take to the streets to protest Israeli “war crimes” and home building in Jerusalem and the disputed territories.

The situation was exacerbated when Raed Salah, the head of the radical “Islamic Movement” who lives in an Arab town in the Galilee, was arrested in Jerusalem after inciting violent protests against the Jewish state. Despite being released later the same day, his incendiary claims that Israel was attempting to harm Muslim interests and buildings on the Temple Mount significantly added to growing tensions in the city.

An Israeli policeman was stabled in the neck on October 6 by a Palestinian teenager as he conducted a security search on a bus in the northern part of Jerusalem, and more than a dozen other security personnel were injured as sporadic violence spread later in the week. A soldier was later stabbed by a Palestinian woman. Armed with rocks and broken bottles, Muslim throngs attacked a group of French tourists near the Temple Mount, charging they were actually Jewish settlers disguised as overseas tourists who were attempting to infiltrate Al Aksa mosque—an allegation the shocked visitors strenuously denied. Clashes then spread to several other locations around Israel’s capital city.

As a result of the violence, Israeli officials announced they would restrict the number of Muslims allowed on the Temple Mount for prayers on Friday October 9, with men under the age of 50 barred from the holy site. Hamas fiercely denounced the move. Not to be outdone by their Islamic fundamentalist opponents, the PLO Fatah party then called for a general work strike. Fueled by Arab satellite news reports, huge anti-Israel demonstrations were held that day in Lebanon, Syria, Iran and other regional Muslim countries.

Despite the upsurge in violence, Israeli officials later expressed relief that most Palestinians did not heed the Hamas and Fatah calls to take to the streets that Friday in what Hamas termed a “day of rage.” They saw this as a hopeful indication that local Arabs are not really seeking a third uprising attrition war at this time. However, security experts warned that with tensions very high, it might not take much to spark off another major period of widespread unrest.

After two weeks of relative calm, clashes again broke out on the Temple Mount in late October as Palestinian Muslims hurled rocks and plastic chairs at Israeli riot police. This followed fresh allegations that Israel was secretly planning to take over daily control of the site. Responding to the violence from his headquarters in Damascus, senior Hamas leader Khaled Meshal declared that “Jerusalem’s fate will be decided by jihad, not resistance or negotiations.” A Jordanian government minister also poured unnecessary fuel on the fire, declaring that “any further Jewish provocations” on the Temple Mount would “fuel violence in the region and jeopardize peace efforts.” Just what Israel was supposedly doing to provoke the Arab rioting was not spelled out.

Muslim officials and Hamas leaders, echoed by the PA and several Arab Knesset members, also charged that Israel was engaged in secret archeological digs under the Temple Mount. The accusation was personally denied to this reporter by the South African-born Israeli archeologist who oversees the Jerusalem District in the government’s Antiquities Authority, along with Haifa University Professor Roni Reich, who has conducted many digs near the Old City. Both archeologists told me the Palestinian claims were totally unfounded and politically motivated. PM Netanyahu echoed this, calling the Palestinian claims “patent lies.”

On October 14, Professor Reich escorted me and an American film crew into a narrow tunnel arching over a newly excavated portion of the main Roman road that connected the lower part of David’s City with the Temple Mount during the time of Jesus—continuing on north through the Old City.. The steep southern section of the road, popularly known as the Cardo, is comprised of stone slab steps heading up and down the hilly terrain. It was apparent to us that the tunnel is located considerably south of the Temple Mount, down the hill from the ornate Ottoman Turkish

walls that surround the Old City. Reich assured me that despite Palestinian claims to the contrary, no Israeli digging has been taking place anywhere near the Temple Mount, which Muslims claim exclusively as an Islamic holy.

TURKEY AND IRAN

Israel officials were shocked and saddened when their only real regional Muslim ally, Turkey, suddenly cancelled scheduled joint military exercises on October 7. Turkish leaders in Ankara informed their Israeli counterparts that the annual “Anatolian Eagle” air force drills would not be held this year since at least some of the IDF jets that would participate had undoubtedly bombed Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip during last winter’s three week conflict. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip had harshly denounced the Israeli operation as it was underway, apparently responding to widespread regional Muslim anger whipped up by what Israeli officials said were distorted media reports focusing almost exclusively on Palestinian civilian casualties, with little or no coverage of the unprecedented Hamas rocket blitz on Israeli cities and towns near the Gaza Strip.

As a result of the cancellation, the United States and Italy also dropped out of the planned military exercises. However American forces held joint military maneuvers two weeks later with Israel, which many analysts said were mainly designed to send a clear message to Iran that their longstanding alliance remains strong. This came as Recep told a British newspaper that Iran’s notorious President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was Turkey’s “friend,” and after the country’s state-run television broadcast a program depicting Israeli soldiers as brutal murderers of innocent Palestinian children.

Israeli government officials attempted to downplay the unnerving Turkish actions, saying they probably reflected Ankara’s growing frustration that its decades-long attempts to join the expanding European Union have so far borne little fruit. Still, they indicated that various scheduled advanced weapons sales to Turkey might now be reviewed. Most disturbing to Israeli officials was the Turkish government announcement that it would step up relations with neighboring Syria, which is of course a vital Arab ally of Iran. Still, some analysts said this was unlikely to result in active Turkish support for Iran and Syria if Israel launches military strikes on Iran’s nuclear facilities.

Meanwhile the Shiite regime in Tehran failed to respond to a UN deadline for accepting a new offer designed to increase international supervision of its uranium enrichment program and prevent it from producing nuclear warheads. Under the UN Atomic Agency proposal, Iran would ship all the uranium from its main enrichment plant, located in the city of Natanz, to a Russian energy facility. The uranium would then be further enriched before being sent on to France, where it would undergo treatment to transform it into fuel rods for use in small reactors. Only at the completion of this process, expected to last 18 months, would the rods be delivered back to Iran to power a small nuclear reactor in Tehran, supposedly designed only for isotope research.

PM Netanyahu expressed skepticism over the UN offer, saying it would not lessen the country’s nuclear threat to Israel and the world unless Iran completely halted its uranium enrichment program. This came as French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner warned of a “race toward confrontation” between Jerusalem and Tehran, stating that world leaders must understand that “Israel will not tolerate an Iranian bomb.”

In these times of increasing violence and threats of war, it is especially worthwhile for all of God’s children to heed the word delivered long ago by Moses that we “*follow the Lord your God and fear Him. And you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him and cling to Him*” (Deuteronomy 13:4).

DAVID DOLAN is a Jerusalem-based author and journalist who has lived and worked in Israel since 1980.

- **[HOLY WAR FOR THE PROMISED LAND](#)** (Broadman & Holman), his latest book, is an overview of the history of the Israel and of the bitter Arab-Israeli conflict that rages there, plus some autobiographical details about the author's experiences living in the land since 1980. It especially examines the important role that militant Islam plays in the conflict.
- **[ISRAEL IN CRISIS: WHAT LIES AHEAD?](#)** (Baker/Revell), which examines the political and biblical prospects for a regional attack upon Israel, settlement in the disputed territories, and related topics, is also available for purchase, along with an updated edition of his popular end-time novel, **[THE END OF DAYS](#)** (21st Century Press).

You may order these books at a special discount price by visiting his web site at www.ddolan.com, or by phoning toll free 888-890-6938 in North America, or by e mail at: resources@yourisraelconnection.org

DOLAN'S DVD, "FOR ZION'S SAKE" is available for purchase. Click the title under "BOOKSTORE" for more details.

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