

Hague's Visit Sparks Israel-UK Clash On Iran, Mid East, Palestinians

UK Foreign Secretary William Hague ruffles feathers in Jerusalem

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Note from Pastor Kevin Lea: The Scriptures predict that in the last days all the nations of the world will be against Israel and Jerusalem. The vast empire of the United Kingdom saw its decline begin when they tried to prevent the formation of the Jewish state of Israel in 1948. Apparently, they have not learned from this mistake and are heaping more judgment on their heads.

Zech 12:2-3, 9 "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it. It shall be in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. NKJV



The sharp differences between Israel and Britain, similar in many respects to the unpublicized arguments between Washington and London, came to the fore Wednesday, Nov. 3, during William Hague's first visit to Israel as UK Foreign Secretary.

He was informed that Israel had halted the strategic dialogue with the UK in protest against the failure of

successive British governments to repeal a law allowing private individuals to file war crimes suits against foreign dignitaries.

Since 2005, pro-Palestinian activists have used the concept of "universal jurisdiction" to threaten Israeli leaders with arrest for alleged war crimes. Several serving and former Israeli leaders have cancelled trips to Britain after being warned they could be arrested. The latest was Deputy Prime Minister Dan Meridor, who cancelled his trip to Britain last month to avoid prosecution for taking part in the government decision to intercept a Turkish vessel threatening to break Israel's blockade of Gaza. Nine Turks were killed resisting an Israeli army raid.

"As long as they (Israeli delegates) can't come to Britain without fearing arrest, they won't come out," said Andy David, a Foreign Ministry spokesman. "The ball is in their (Britain's) court."

Israel made this a public issue not only in protest against Britain being placed off-limits for one of its ministers, but out of deep resentment over the way the foreign secretary's visit was managed. According to an advance notice from London, Hague had asked for

closed-door sessions at the British ambassador's residence in Ramat Gan to sound out Israeli intelligence chiefs about the Israeli cabinet's view on Iran's nuclear program and their assessments.

Israeli officials pointed out that the British minister was being unbearably patronizing in acting as though London called the shots on the nuclear question rather than Washington and Jerusalem. One Israeli intelligence source complained that an ambassador's residence was hardly a fitting venue for the discussion of this highly-charged issue, which is customarily aired in the offices of presidents, prime ministers or defense ministers on an equal footing.

Instead of going through the proper channels, Hague sought to summon the Mossad director Meir Dagan, Shin Bet chief Yuval Diskin, Moshe Yaalon, minister for strategic affairs, Dan Meridor and the director general of the Israel Atomic Energy Commission, Shaul Chorev to his presence.

The British Foreign Secretary is the authority in charge of MI6, the secret service which corresponds to the US CIA and Israeli Mossad. He is also competent to authorize its operations.

However, Hague pointedly avoided paying a courtesy call on his opposite number, Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, or even meeting Defense Minister Ehud Barak and the chairman of Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, Tzahi Hanegbi, who leads the strategic dialogue with London. When this was discovered, Jerusalem made it clear that the British Foreign Secretary could invite whom he wished to meet, but all his Israeli guests had been instructed to avoid discussing any substantial military, intelligence or strategic matters with him.

Rather than smoothing ruffled feathers in Jerusalem, Hague hit back by meeting with representatives of three groups at the forefront of the Palestinian civil disobedience movement. After visiting Ramallah, he talked to Palestinians and their supporters about their weekly demonstrations against Israel's security barrier. Ignoring the violent nature of these protests, Hague praised the idea of "nonviolence" and listened to their arguments. Indeed, he is quoted as telling them that when "negotiations become an eternal promise that is never kept because of Israel's unwillingness to accept a fair solution, popular resistance to the occupier becomes the only possible alternative remaining to the Palestinians to attain their rights without resorting to armed struggle."

The British minister's words were taken in Jerusalem as questioning the integrity of Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's constantly rebuffed request for direct talks with the Palestinians and, moreover, as incitement of the Palestinians to turn to "popular resistance" (a term the Palestinians used for their 2000-2002 suicide terror war against Israel).

Hague, the first member of the British Conservative-led government to visit Israel, will find before he leaves Thursday, that Israeli officials have washed their hands of him.