

Opinion America and Israel Against the World

Coming soon: Maybe a joint exit from the United Nations? After all, the UN has also been critical of Israel

How did all this goodness fall upon us? What did we do to deserve it? Like a holiday present, the gifts from America landed upon us one after the other - first the American decision to quit UNESCO, and right after that, the Iran speech.

Israel responded as always with an outburst of joy. Not only Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, to whom the right wing chalked up the successes. Avi Gabbay, chairman of the Zionist Union, quickly did a Yair Lapid-worthy act, and published a statement of support for America's UNESCO decision; the party's Tzipi Livni joined in, and together they proved that these days there's no opposition in Israel.

Even they ignored the fact that it's been a long time since such a dangerous honey trap has been set for Israel. It has been a long time since it was so embarrassing — to be under Donald Trump's patronage and enjoy his favors in the only country in the world in which he is held in esteem.

Also embarrassing is the thought that the United States is about to quit an important international agency only because of Israel - a step that Israel would not have taken for any of its allies, neither Britain, nor Germany nor Japan nor South Korea, if they had found themselves in a similar situation. And it's no less embarrassing that under Israel's influence, the agreement with Iran, the most important international American achievement in recent years, could collapse. What a source of pride: Netanyahu and Trump together against the whole world.

UNESCO has indeed been very critical of Israel, like all international agencies. But in most cases its criticisms were relevant and proper. East Jerusalem is indeed occupied territory, as is Hebron, no matter how loud Israel screams. Freedom of worship in Jerusalem has indeed been trampled on by Israel. Try to put yourselves in the place of a Gazan (or a young Hebronite), who wants to go to the Al Aqsa Mosque.

In one instance, UNESCO failed seriously, when it ignored the Jewish connection to the Western Wall. It should have been reprimanded for that. But over the years it has recognized six sites in Israel as World Heritage Sites, recognition that brought honor and maybe tourists as well. There's even a public square in Haifa named after UNESCO.

Israel was expelled once from UNESCO because of excavations on the Temple Mount, and then reinstated, only following pressure from the United States. It wasn't good for Israel to be isolated and expelled. Now, following the United States, Israel could find itself isolated by its own doing.

There's no great friendship towards Israel in this move, which was obviously led by the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, another noisy grotesque from the Trump school, who is choking Israel with her blind and boorish sympathy, and harming the country. And what will come of it? The United States will leave UNESCO and Israel will follow. Trump's United States and Netanyahu's Israel in a bromance. And coming soon: Maybe a joint exit from the United Nations. It, too, has been critical of Israel.

The embarrassing decision to leave UNESCO was made at the same time the agency elected its new director general, Audrey Azoulay. France's former culture minister, she is the daughter of Andre Azoulay, adviser to the king of Morocco, a most impressive and noble statesman, a Moroccan Jew who fought all his life for a just peace in the Middle East, a true friend of Israel. He is ten times more concerned about Israel's fate than Trump and Haley together. We may presume that the new UNESCO director-general has absorbed her father's values. Now she will head the agency without the United States and Israel, who are isolating themselves to bits.

If Trump's UNESCO gift is more symbolic in nature, his decision to bring down the agreement with Iran could turn out to be a real danger. Trump decided to push Iran toward a nuclear bomb and Israel cheered him on.

The whole world supports the agreement, except for America and Israel, even though most of their defense experts also support it. The result, once again: America and Israel against the whole world. In this club, it's best not to be a member. To these gifts, it's best to say no, thank you. And as for such friends: Thanks, but we've already got enough enemies.

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