

# Israel: "A Matter of Our Own Long-Term Interests "

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by **Christine Williams** <sup>[1]</sup> January 27, 2014 at 3:00 am

*While Canada continues to crack down on terrorist-supporting entities, the current U.S. Administration has been busy tightening its relations with the "unindicted co-conspirator," the Islamic Society of North America [ISNA], praising it as a "pillar of the American Muslim community," and entering into collaborative consultations with it before U.S. President Barack Obama left for Israel last March.*

Prime Minister Stephen Harper, the first Canadian leader ever to address Knesset <sup>[2]</sup>, stated some key points in his passionate support for Israel. He stressed values shared by Israel and Canada -- those of freedom, democracy and an intolerance for terrorism and terrorist links -- values which Canada, since its outspoken refusal to attend the patently racist United Nations' Durban Conferences (purportedly against racism) of 2011 and 2013, has overwhelmingly, and singly, demonstrated world leadership in advancing.

Harper said:

*"Canada finds it deplorable that some in the international community still question the legitimacy of the existence of the State of Israel. Our view that Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state is absolute and non-negotiable."*

*"Criticism of Israeli government policy is not in and of itself necessarily anti-Semitic. But what else can we call criticism that selectively condemns only the Jewish state and effectively denies its right to exist, to defend itself while systematically ignoring or excusing the violence and oppression all around it?"*



Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu (left) introduces Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper (center) at the Knesset podium, on Jan. 20, 2014. (Image source: Canada PM's Office)

His speech was not without opposition <sup>[3]</sup>. Prior to his address, Harper met with Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas in Ramallah (who by the way, with the help of the Kremlin, wrote a PhD dissertation denying the Holocaust); and Israel's *Haaretz* accused Harper of brushing aside the issue of Israeli settlements on so-called occupied Palestinian territory, when he stated: "Any attempt to have me, while present in the Middle East, single out the state of Israel for criticism, I will not do." So, Harper was accused of dodging the issue of the legality of the settlements -- regardless of the Palestinians' view, since they rejected the 1947 UN Partition Plan before the State of Israel was formed, both in their [PLO <sup>[4]</sup> and Hamas <sup>[5]</sup>] charters, their government-owned media and television outlets, and maps <sup>[6]</sup> of the entire country of Israel as one big settlement to be erased, as they put it, "from the river to the sea".

While on the subject of dodging issues, let us return to Abbas' PhD for a moment. Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, head of the Yisrael Beytenu party spoke at a meeting of a newly founded Knesset Lobby to Combat Anti-Semitism last summer about the significance of Abbas' PhD dissertation denying the

Holocaust. "There cannot be true peace or a diplomatic process," he stated, "with someone who denies the Holocaust." He also announced that he had a copy of Abbas's dissertation sitting on the bookshelf in his office; and that he did "not recall that any of those who welcomed the peace process reminded Abbas of his denial of the Holocaust, which he continues to do in media interviews," and that "modern anti-Semitism today is in the Palestinian Authority."

"You should see the PA's textbooks." Lieberman continued, "that do not teach the next generation -- the so-called generation of peace -- about the Holocaust. These are our so-called partners for peace..."

Canada has shown admirable resolve in standing up for principle on the global stage, both on Israel and regarding terrorism -- far more so than its American counterpart.

In fall 2012, while in New York during the opening of a new session of the UN, Harper personally intervened to pressure Abbas to drop his bid for upgraded status at the United Nations. He was described as having "a short, brusque meeting with Abbas , in which he was quoted as saying <sup>[7]</sup>: "If you keep doing what you're doing... there will be consequences," referring to Ottawa's pledge of \$300 million in aid over five years to the PA, starting in 2008, and whether or not it might be renewed.

In 2010, when Canada failed to win a seat <sup>[8]</sup> on the United Nations Security Council, many experts -- including Paul Heinbecker, Canada's former Ambassador to the UN -- put the blame on Canada's unrelenting support for Israel.

In dissociating itself from terrorism and terrorist entities, the current U.S. Administration has shown far less resolve than Canada at best, and encouragement for terrorism at worst, as in Obama's befriending <sup>[9]</sup> the Islamic Society of North America [ISNA], a Muslim Brotherhood entity which he went so far as to seek advice from <sup>[10]</sup> when he visited the Middle East last March. For some background: Steven Emerson, an expert in national security, terrorism, and "Islamic extremism," published an article in the Investigative Project on Terrorism entitled: "ISNA Admits Hamas Ties <sup>[11]</sup>". Hamas, which rules Gaza, is

a terrorist organization that calls for Israel's obliteration. U.S. federal prosecutors have named ISNA, among three prominent Islamic organizations in the U.S., as participants in an alleged criminal conspiracy to financially support Hamas. ISNA was listed as one of the "unindicted co-conspirators" [12] in the Holy Land Foundation (HLF) case, in which HLF founders were convicted of funneling more than \$12 million to Hamas. During that trial, ISNA and the North American Islamic Trust were also listed as "entities who are and/or were members of the U.S. Muslim Brotherhood.

ISNA's branch in Canada found itself in hot water, too, when four months ago the Canada Revenue Agency [CRA] stripped it of its charitable status over terror funding, following an audit of its books that pointed to evidence that linked the organization to Pakistani terrorist groups. The CRA issued a press release [13] that stated, "The Government of Canada has made it clear that it will not tolerate the abuse of the registration system for charities to provide any means of support to terrorism." Meanwhile a federal court has just backed up [14] former immigration minister Jason Kenney, by stating that he acted reasonably in cutting federal funding to the Canadian Arab Federation for supporting terrorist organizations.

While Canada continues to crack down on terrorist-supporting entities, the current U.S. Administration has been busy tightening its relations with the "unindicted co-conspirator," ISNA, praising [15] it as a "pillar of the American Muslim Community", and entering into consultative collaborations [16] with it before U.S. President Barack Obama left for Israel last March. Obama met with ISNA President Imam Mohamed Magid and other Muslim and Arab American leaders to discuss issues [17] "that will pertain to his upcoming trip to Palestine, Jordan and Israel." In addition to the consultations on his Middle East trip, Obama also had "an extensive 90-minute conversation... about his plans for immigration reform," according to the ISNA website.

Just four months before the Obama-ISNA collaboration, rockets from Gaza were pounding Israel [18], prompting Canada to issue a formal statement [19]:

*"We fundamentally believe that Israel has the right to defend itself and its citizens from terrorist threats.... Far too often, the Jewish people find*

*themselves on the front lines in the struggle against terrorism, the great struggle of our generation. Just last weekend, more than 100 rockets rained down on civilians in southern Israel from positions in the Gaza Strip.... Canada condemns the terrorist group Hamas and stands with Israel as it deals with regional threats to peace and security."*

One hopes that the world will take notice of Canada and its courageous prime minister standing for truth and justice in the face of massive opposition, and heed the significance of Harper's words: "Support today for the Jewish State of Israel is more than a moral imperative.... it is also a matter of strategic importance, also a matter of our own, long-term interests."

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