



Obama should also visit the Gaza Strip

U. S. President Barack Hussein Obama visits a country that is considered by the U. S. ruling class its closest and most reliable ally. Every time, issues concerning the security of the State of Israel come up, the politicians pledge allegiance to a government of a state that violates almost every democratic value the U. S. pretends to be proud of. Obama will be “welcomed” by a Prime Minister who is going to lead the most extremist government ever formed in Israel. Stephen Lendman writes: “They represent what demands condemnation.” In the last four years, Benjamin

Netanyahu not only ridiculed Obama at several occasions but also took side with his contender Mitt Romney to obstruct the president’s reelection.

The U. S. President won’t have a final peace plan in his luggage because he knows that, historically, all American “peace initiatives”, so far, were subverted by the Israeli governments, if they did not serve their geopolitical aims and their insatiable security needs. To blame only the Israeli side, however, would be too simple. Half of the political blame deserves the U. S. governments themselves because they have always taken the Israeli position when it came to negotiations. They are miles away from being an honest broker. This was particularly evident during the Camp David negotiations in the year 2000, when the Clinton people acted as intermediaries between the Israeli and the Palestinian delegations. The “American” proposals were always identical to the Israeli ones. The U. S. government should not lament about the Israeli illegal colonies on Palestinian land because without their huge financial subsidies and political consent Israel could have never proceeded with its colonial settlement project for the last 46 years.

Obama should have a straight talk with Netanyahu about Israel’s ongoing manifold violations of human rights and the illegal colonization of Palestinian land. He should not be distracted by Netanyahu’s obsession with the phantom Iranian nuclear threat. Iran does not pose a threat to anybody, and Obama and the American political elite know that. All countries in the region feel threatened by Israel’s huge nuclear arsenal. It has to be put under the control of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna. To get the Israeli government moving politically, the U. S. should stop subsidizing Israel with billions of U. S. taxpayers’ dollars. Obama should stop using the U. S. veto power in the United Nations that undermines the credibility of American foreign policy. To be the self-proclaimed champion of human rights, democracy and freedom does not go well with the unconditional support of an occupying regime that violates every democratic norm.

The U. S. president should not only see Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas in Ramallah but also the democratically elected Prime Minister in the Arab world, Ismail Hanija, who resides in the “open-air prison” of the Gaza Strip. In Gaza, Obama can see firsthand how Israel treats the Palestinians. Erez checkpoint is a real political treat! In Gaza, the President will see that Hamas is not a terror organization but a political player who has to be taken seriously, especially, after the organization’s political leadership moved to Qatar. Hamas is ready to recognize the State of Israel after it withdraws its occupation forces and grant the right of return in principal. The U. S. President should also visit the wall in occupied East Jerusalem and Bethlehem and should call on Netanyahu to tear it down. Perhaps

Obama knows that Israel has built “Jewish only roads” and brought into use “Arab only buses”. He should tell Netanyahu again that his policy is not in the real interest of Israel like he did few weeks ago.

Obama may try to convince Abbas to resume the so-called peace talks. But Abbas and his team is not the problem. Israel’s government is the largest obstacle to peace in the Middle East. The only token-liberal among all the extremists in the incoming Israeli government is Tzipi Livni, the new justice minister, who will be “responsible” for the negotiations with the Palestinians. According to the “Palestine papers”, in recent negotiations Livni was as unwilling to compromise as all other Israeli negotiators before her. To demonstrate Livni’s rejectionist attitude, Saeb Erekat, the chief Palestinian negotiator, remarked to her: “The only thing I can’t do is to convert to Zionism.” So much for the alleged liberal image of Livni. By the way, the main representatives of the new Israeli government are Ashkenazi. Over half of the population (orthodox Jews and Arabs) is not represented.

Instead of reviving a corpse called peace process, Obama should put the screws on Netanyahu to accept the Arab League peace offer from 2002 and 2007. It was not a meticulously elaborated peace plan but rather a first step to solve the 115-year old conflict. In short, the Arab League offered Israel a peace agreement and the normalization of relations, if Israel withdraws from Occupied Palestinian Territory and solves the refugee problem. Israel rejected it off-hand, and so did the Bush administration. Since then, Israel lives not only in total isolation in the region but is surrounded by Arab countries, which are rocked by upheavals, turmoil, and civil war. In this situation, think about an attack on Iran, amounts to a suicide. At least, Obama should not lead the United States into another disaster.

Without credible American political pressure, the Netanyahu government will be unwilling to grant even the smallest concessions to the Palestinians. Obama should show more empathy to the Arab course and the Palestinians in particular in order to improve America’s reputation among the Muslims worldwide. To revive the Arab peace plan would be a sign of friendship, and Israel would be the best place to demonstrate it.

Ludwig Watzal

First published here¹ and here².

¹ http://mwcnews.net/focus/analysis/25483-obama-visit.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+mwcnews%2FXrew+%28MWC+News+Alert%29

² <http://www.eurasiareview.com/17032013-obama-should-also-visit-the-gaza-strip-oped/>