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"Let us be alert to the season in which we are living. It is the season of the Blessed Hope, calling for us to cut our ties with the world and build ourselves on this One who will soon appear. He is our hope—a Blessed Hope enabling us to rise above our times and fix our gaze upon Him." Tozer

Turkey: Erdogan's Obsession to Take Jerusalem

by Burak Bekdil July 17, 2017 Gatestone Institute

Simply put, Jerusalem's Judaic history dates back to thousands of years before the birth of Islam, only in the seventh century CE.

As an American friend delicately asked: "Isn't Turkey supposed to be investing millions to help rebuild Gaza?"

Not, it seems, when Islamist ideology is involved.

Less than a year ago, Turkey and Israel agreed to end their six-year-long diplomatic stand-off and officially "normalized" their relations. They appointed ambassadors Kemal Okem to Israel and Eitan Na'eh to Turkey, two prominent career diplomats, who, since then, have been struggling actually to normalize formally normalized ties. As some observers, including your humble correspondent, cautioned in 2016:

"Erdogan had pragmatically agreed to shake hands with Israel, but his ideological hostility to the Jewish state and his ideological love affair with Hamas have not disappeared; so the Turkish-Israeli 'peace' would not be easy to sustain".

Only half a year into the "normalized charter" Erdogan in May pledged that his government would work with the Palestinian people to guard against the "Judiazation of Jerusalem." This may be vintage Erdogan. The Turkish president's promise was not too different from a call for a struggle to guard against the "Catholicization of the Vatican."

It is elementary history that Jerusalem's pre-Islamic period of 3300-1000 BCE appeared in the book of Genesis -- the time of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob -- when Erdogan's ancestors were probably hunters in the steppes of Central Asia. The years 1000-732 BCE marked the period of the ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Simply put, Jerusalem's Judaic history dates back to thousands of years before the birth of Islam.

Nevertheless, according to Erdogan, there is a necessity "to protect-against the Judaization of Jerusalem." Erdogan, in his May speech, also repeated an earlier call for Muslims from around the world to "visit al-Aqsa" mosque, located on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. "As a Muslim community, we need to visit al-Aqsa Mosque often," he said. "Each day that Jerusalem is under occupation is an insult to us."

Jerusalem, with the Temple Mount in foreground. (Photo by Lior Mizrahi/Getty Images))

In 2016, a total of 26,000 Turks visited al-Aqsa Mosque (out of a population of 80 million). Erdogan also said he wants "hundreds of thousands of Muslims" at the Muslim holy site in his campaign to "flood Jerusalem [with Muslims] and drive out the occupiers".

During the reconciliation with Israel, Ankara pledged to end its support for Hamas; Turkey even expelled Saleh al-Aroui, the most senior Hamas official then residing in the country. But ultimately, there were reports that Erdogan was not really willing to live up to his end of the bargain. The journalist Yoav Zitun wrote in Ynet News:

Hamas' presence in Turkey continues despite the departure of Saleh al-Aroui, who headed Hamas in Turkey before leaving the country following Israeli demands during the reconciliation negotiations.

His successors are recruiting Palestinian students to study in Muslim countries in general and Turkey in particular. The students are then sent for military training in Lebanon or Syria, and from there, return to the West Bank to carry out attacks against Israel.

Zitun details some intriguing cases:

For example, two months ago, the IDF and Shin Bet detained a Palestinian who had been living in Turkish Cyprus for several years. In August 2015, Qazmar was recruited in Jordan by Hamas, given military training and explosives expertise. During a meeting with Hamas operatives in Istanbul last January, he was instructed to recruit terrorists in the West Bank using encrypted memory cards.

Another highly publicized case concerns Muhammad Murtaja, who has head of a humanitarian aid organization of the Turkish government in Gaza. According to the Shin Bet following his arrest, Murtaja was accused of transferring millions of dollars to Hamas operatives that was donated by Ankara.

Turkish money flowing into the hands of men who are committed to the annihilation of Israel is part of ideology, not humanitarian aid.

Trying to brand itself as the international savior of the Islamist cause, Turkey has, since 2004, invested millions of dollars into 63 different projects designed to "defend and strengthen the Muslim heritage and character of Jerusalem." The money is often channeled through a government agency, the Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA).

In these efforts to "defend and strengthen Jerusalem's Muslim heritage and character" Turkey also partnered with Sheikh Raed Salah, leader of the Northern Branch of the Islamic Movement in Israel, and with Sheikh Akram Sabri, a former mufti of Jerusalem. Both men oppose to Israel's right to exist.

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Trump delegation meets with Palestinian and Israeli officials on resuming peace negotiations

beholdisrael.org

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Meetings with PA held on Tuesday, with Israeli officials held Wednesday; PA claims US asked Israel to “restrict” settlement growth, Israel denies reports

The Trump Administration’s Middle East delegation met with Palestinian Authority officials in Ramallah and Israeli officials in Jerusalem through out the week, the meetings centered on resuming peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

On Tuesday, President Trump’s special envoy to the Middle East Jason Greenblatt and Ambassador David Friedman met with senior Palestinian official and head negotiator for the Palestinian Authority, Saeb Erekat, PA Intelligence Chief Majid Faraj and Head of the Palestinian Fund, Mohammed Mustafa.

The meeting focused on main topics for negotiations, including Jerusalem, security, borders, settlements, energy, water and Palestinian refugees.

According to reports following the meeting, the Trump Administration intends for peace talks to resume soon. In a press release from the White House, the delegation has an “open, cordial, and frank discussion on many topics related to peace negotiations. The [American] administration believes that in order to give everyone the best chance to reach an ultimate deal, it is critical to have negotiators that are close with the president and that is why the team includes senior adviser Jared Kushner, Greenblatt and Friedman.”

Erekat reported that the United States told Israel to restrict its settlement expansion, Erekat stating after their meeting “they told Netanyahu that restricting settlement construction is necessary”. Israel denied these reports on Wednesday.

On Wednesday, Prime Minister Netanyahu met with Greenblatt and Friedman in Jerusalem, the meeting centered on reaching a “conflict-ending peace agreement” between both sides, as well as “the Trump Administration’s interest in improving the economic environment for Palestinian business community, including Gaza,” according to the US Consulate in Jerusalem.

Christian Slapped With \$12,000 'Shariah Fine' For Not Removing Shoes In Canada

Leo Hohmann Reposted from WND

Canada is now fining its citizens for offending people of the Islamic faith.

John Alabi, 53, is a Christian and a landlord who lives in the Toronto area and is being ordered to pay a fine of \$12,000 by the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal because he failed to remove his shoes when he entered the apartment he was renting to a Muslim couple.

His crime? Religious discrimination, according to the tribunal.

The tenants were planning to move out of his rental home, and he says he gave the couple the required 24-hours notice that he would be showing the apartment to another tenant.

They told him not to come while they were praying, and to text first. He agreed. But when they stopped answering his text messages, he showed the apartment.

The Muslim tenants waited eight months before filing their grievance with the human rights tribunal, where they receive free representation, the Toronto Sun reported. The couple even searched his Facebook page and found a joke they considered offensive and used to bolster their case. The tribunal agreed he harassed them and failed in his duty to accommodate their religious needs – and awarded them \$6,000 each – plus interest.

Alabi says he does not have the money to pay the fine and doesn't know what he's going to do.

"What about my rights?" asks the father of three, who has since sold the house. "What about my rights to show my place so I could rent it and put food on the table for my family?"

Faith Goldy, a reporter for Rebel News Service, is crowdfunding support for Alabi and recently aired an interview with him.

Watch Rebel Media reporter Faith Goldy's interview with John Alabi.

"I don't have the money. I work very hard. If they go into my bank account right now, I don't have \$12,000 there," says Alabi, who lost thousands of dollars in legal fees and time off work.

"It has just shattered me. I am broken. I am broken."

While it sounds extreme that a government agency would order a citizen to pay money to a Muslim for offending the Muslim faith, the U.S. is rife with examples of progressives attempting to implement similar restrictions upon non-Muslims, says Pamela Geller, an author and anti-Shariah activist.

"We are already traveling down that path. The foremost indication of this is in the general acceptance of Islamic free-speech restrictions," Geller told WND.

"When I organized a free-speech event in Garland, Texas, my goal was to defend the principle of free speech in the face of violent intimidation," Geller said. "Yet even after jihadists attacked our event, I was blamed by the establishment media and many conservatives for provoking Muslims."

And that was more than three years ago. If Geller tried to hold a draw-Muhammad contest now, it would be impossible to pull it off anywhere in the United States, she said.

"No arena in the country would allow me to do so – not just because of the security risk, but because of the vilification that would come from the establishment media," Geller said. "Under what law is it wrong to depict Muhammad? Under Islamic law. But I am not a Muslim, and I do not live under the Shariah. Yet Shariah is advancing in the U.S. right under our noses, with the help of the political and media elites."

Robert Spencer, who works with Geller on various projects and is editor of the Jihad Watch blog, said Canada has been all but "conquered" by Islam, which is seen as a protected class by its enablers on the left. And the U.S. is not far behind in the race to establish Islam as the dominant religion in its culture, thanks to political correctness that seeks to destroy anyone who speaks a negative word about Islam. No other religion enjoys such favor from the U.S. media establishment.

"Criticizing Islam in any way will already get you stigmatized as a bigot and a hatemonger," Spencer said.

The city of Minneapolis recently implemented a hate crimes hot line for residents to call in and report their employers, police, friend or family members they suspect of anti-Muslim "bias" whether in word or deed. The cities of San Francisco and Nashville have similar snitch lines encouraging people to report fellow residents and accuse them of being anti-Muslim.

On Friday the Southern Poverty Law Center, whose followers include such radicals as James Hodgkinson, who attempted to assassinate Rep. Steve Scalise and a dozen other Republican congressmen last month, reiterated its claim that Spencer is an "anti-Muslim extremist." The SPLC's only evidence for smearing Spencer's character was that he said Islam is "not a religion of peace."

"Newspapers all over the country refused to print the Muhammad cartoons and stand for the freedom of speech; instead, they pontificated about 'respect' for Muslims," Spencer said. "We are well on the way to accepting Sharia blasphemy laws. And once that submission is complete, submission to the rest of Sharia will follow."

As for Alabi, he came to Canada 22 years ago from Nigeria.

"Since then, he's followed Canadian laws and worked hard; he carries not one but two jobs today, just to ensure his family is cared for," writes Goldy. "John's a man with the sort of story every Canadian should be proud of. But instead, he's being labelled a human rights violator."

Ralph Sidway, a Christian writer who commented on the story for his Facing Islam blog, noted that Canada is now blatantly implementing Shariah blasphemy laws, trying to force a Christian man to pay a punitive tax to his former Muslim tenants.

"Canada is in essence behaving like a conquered, dhimmi state, extracting jizya from its citizens to appease its Islamic masters, who rank highest in the Canadian Human Rights hierarchy," he wrote.

Israel Grapples With Iran's Growing Military Presence In Syria

prophecynewswatch.com

With the help of its powerful allies, President Bashar al-Assad's regime is gradually consolidating its grip over parts of Syria.

The six-year Syrian conflict has long ceased being a civil war, and Assad is no independent actor, but rather, he is part of an Iranian-led regional coalition.

Assad's recent victories are setting the stage for the continued spread of his steadfast backer, Iran, and its network of heavily armed Shi'a proxies.

Israel has been issuing stern warnings to Iran, telling it not to repeat past efforts to use its presence in Syria to set up bases of attack against Israeli targets.

The Jewish state has been frequently dealing with errant fire from Syria landing in Israeli territory in the Golan Heights--nearly 20 such instances in recent weeks.

Israel usually responds by firing on Syrian regime targets and vowing to respond to every breach of its territory.

Israel's wider concern, however, is that wherever Assad's forces end up rolling into, Iran's influence tends to appear.

Most recently, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu cautiously welcomed a southern Syria cease-fire, brokered by the U.S. and Russia, that came into effect Sunday.

The cease-fire followed Israel's reported push for Russia and the U.S. to establish a buffer zone in southern Syria where the Hezbollah terror group and other Iranian proxies would not be allowed to operate.

Tens of thousands of Iranian-backed Shi'a militia members are currently operating across Syria. Under Iranian command, they combat Sunni rebel organizations seeking to depose the Assad regime.

Tehran is also working to link up its forces in Iraq together with those in Syria, with the goal of creating a continuous land corridor that stretches from Iran to Lebanon.

Meanwhile, Iran continues to use Syria as a transit zone for the trafficking of weapons to Hezbollah in Lebanon. Iran has overseen the construction of weapons factories in Syria--and now in Lebanon, too--that can produce accurate missiles for Hezbollah.

Dr. Eitan Shamir, former head of the National Security Doctrine Department in Israel's Ministry of Strategic Affairs, told JNS.org Israel should deal with Iran's threatening activities in Syria by setting up and enforcing "a number of red lines."

Red lines would include a ban on actions directly threatening Israeli security, such as the construction of a missile launch system in the Syrian Golan Heights, said Shamir, a researcher at the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies.

"Secondly, there should be a continuation of what the [Israeli] military calls 'the war between wars,' the continuous offensive intelligence and thwarting activities. At the same time, there should be serious preparation for the scenario of war," Shamir said.

During the last six years, Israel has reportedly waged a low-profile campaign to selectively target the Iranian-Hezbollah weapons trafficking network in Syria.

In Shamir's estimation, the IDF needs to safeguard its size and strength in light of the developing threats to the north.

"Mainly, it must continue to strengthen the ground maneuvering army, in case of an eruption on multiple fronts. That means continuing to invest a lot in the IDF, and not making cuts because it's fashionable," he said.

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and its overseas elite unit, the Quds Force, have in the past attempted to exploit their presence in southern Syria to orchestrate attacks on Israel, resulting in reported deadly Israeli airstrikes.

Israel's defense establishment is closely monitoring the crowded Syrian arena, always on the lookout for a renewed Iranian attempt to set up bases of attack, or attempts by Hezbollah--Iran's Shi'a-Lebanese terrorist army--to move into southern Syria, thereby threatening Israel from both Lebanon and Syria.

Iran's push into Syria has been successful so far, Shamir said.

"The Iranians have obtained an outpost in this area," he said, explaining that the Islamic Republic is using forces such as Hezbollah, Shi'a Iraqis and foreign Shi'a legions from across the Muslim world "so that the price is less painful" for Iran.

Dr. Ely Karmon, a senior research scholar at the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism in Herzliya, told JNS.org the Iranians are trying to exploit Russia's intervention in Syria.

Prior to Russia's entrance into Syria and its management of the air war against Sunni organizations, the Iranian-backed forces failed to stop the rebels.

Russia's intervention "changed the map," Karmon said, noting the "big victory" for Assad and his Shi'a allies in Aleppo. Now, he said, "they are trying to do the same in south Syria.

But here, they have a problem. Israel, Jordan and the Americans are opposed to their spread." All three nations could act to prevent Iran from moving into southern Syria.

Currently, Iran is commanding some 6,000 Hezbollah fighters, 7,000 Iraqis and some 20,000-30,000 Afghan Shi'a combatants in Iran, as well as some 100,000 Shi'a militia members in neighboring Iraq.

The Iranians also built up a pro-Assad militia composed of local Syrians, called the National Defense Forces, which has tens of thousands of members.

"The fact that the Iranians are integrated with Assad's army, and are trying to link up their forces from Iraq and Syria," Karmon said, shows how they are trying to create the land corridor from Iran to Lebanon.

The Iranians could come back and try to attack Israel from southern Syria, and are also seeking to create a port on the Syrian Mediterranean coastline, he warned.

"There's no doubt that this is their strategy," Karmon said. "At this stage, they are succeeding--hence we are seeing warnings by Israeli leaders." Yet Karmon expressed hope that the U.S. could work with Russia to create Iran-free zones in southern Syria.

He said reports of Israeli cooperation with moderate Sunni rebels near the Israeli border could form a part of Israeli efforts to keep the Iranians at bay.

But Israel cannot rely on America stopping Iran in Syria, Karmon cautioned.

"I think Israel must be ready, if the U.S. won't take steps vis-a-vis the Russians [to curb Iran]," he said. "Israel must see an Iranian presence on its border as a casus belli [justification for war]."