**Germany's dangerous stand against US, Israel must be stopped**

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Israel and the Trump administration have a German problem, ironically manifesting itself on Israel’s 69th birthday.  Just as President Trump’s emissaries and his UN Ambassador Nikki Haley are rightly insisting that Israel-bashing at the UN cease, Germany is moving in the opposite direction.

On May 2, 2017, in Paris, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is scheduled to adopt one more resolution singling out the Jewish state for criticism and attempting to deny Israeli sovereignty over its capital, Jerusalem. The Palestinians want Germany’s vote and are playing the old UN game of floating a terrible resolution and modifying it to just plain awful to win European support.  That Germany is playing this game is a repudiation of everything the United States is trying to accomplish – not to mention the allegedly special relationship between Germany and Israel.

This is not the first time that Germany has turned its back on Israel and America at the UN.  In March, Germany joined the jackals at the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) and voted for a resolution that promotes the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel. It was a stunning move, particularly since on the BDS resolution Germany split from both the United States (that voted against) and the United Kingdom, which at least abstained.

The Human Rights Council is composed of such UN human rights luminaries as Saudi Arabia, Qatar and China. The intent of these UN resolutions is to put a UN fist on the scale absent negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, and the consequence is to push the prospect of any negotiated settlement  into the distant future.

Germany, therefore, is playing with fire.

Just last week, Germany's foreign minister Sigmar Gabriel opted to meet with two hard-left NGOs that denigrate Israel's army and Israel’s right to defend itself. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu asked Gabriel to cancel the meetings. Gabriel refused, and Netanyahu  pulled the plug on a planned meeting between himself and Gabriel.

"My basic principle is simple,” Netanyahu explained, “I don’t welcome diplomats from other countries who visit Israel and at the same time meet with organizations that call our soldiers war criminals. The Israeli Army is the one force that keeps our people safe today. “‘Breaking the Silence’ is not a human rights organization. They deal only with criminalizing Israeli soldiers,” Netanyahu added.

Making matters worse, Gabriel met with the anti-Israel NGO ‘Breaking the Silence’ on April 25, 2017, a day after Israel’s day of Holocaust remembrance. Germany’s Chancellor Angela Merkel, to the astonishment of many veteran observers of her policy toward Israel, stood by Gabriel's treatment of Israel’s prime minister.

The German foreign minister then poured gasoline on the fire, suggesting Israel’s elected representatives were illegitimate. He told the Hamburger Abendblatt paper on April 29, 2017: “The current government is not Israel."  Gabriel is a repeat offender.  In 2012, he wrote on his Facebook page that Israel is an "apartheid regime."

Gabriel and his social democratic party have also been stoking the flames of anti-Americanism. In August 2016, the current president of the Social Democratic party, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, called Trump a "hate preacher."  After Ivanka Trump attended a women's forum in Berlin on April 25, 2017, Gabriel belittled her as a product of "nepotism" in an interview published four days later.  Steinmeier and Gabriel, however, have not had any qualms about going to great lengths to mainstream the radical Islamic regime in Tehran and to encourage cozy business ties with its leaders.

Germany’s UNESCO move presents the Trump administration with a challenge and an opportunity. Italy announced in advance that it would oppose the UNESCO resolution making it even more obvious that Germany has run out of excuses. A German anti-Israel vote at one more UN body should not be cost free.

Here is at least one cost that ought to be extracted. In the history of the UN, Israel has never been a member of the Security Council because of a long-standing discriminatory practice of excluding the Jewish state from all regional groups within the UN system. When Israel was finally admitted to the Western group, Israel declared that it would run in 2018-2019 for one of two spots reserved on the Council for Western group members. Belgium had also made such a declaration.

Only after Israel and Belgium had declared their candidacies, Germany scandalously announced it also would run, knowing full well that German candidacy would almost certainly deny Israel the seat in a contested election. There is a solution: Germany should be pressured either to withdraw or to split the two-year term with Israel.  There is precedent for sharing:  Italy and the Netherlands have split the 2016-2017 cycle.

Germany’s drift away from Israel and America, and its embrace of grossly discriminatory UN abuse of the Jewish state, is a dangerous development.  It needs to be encouraged to do the right thing.