The U.N.’s Delusion

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Former US ambassador to the United Nations and staunch Israel defender Daniel Patrick Moynihan once said “everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not to his own facts.”

For decades, the UN has repeatedly shown that it thinks it can set its own facts about Israel, history be damned.

Moynihan is known for, among other things, giving a speech against the UN’s 1975 decision that “Zionism is racism,” a distortion that he called an “infamous act” by which “the abomination of antisemitism has been given the appearance of international sanction.”

On Friday, 43 years later, UN member countries authorized six anti-Israel resolutions in the General Assembly, including writing the Jewish people out of Jerusalem’s history, showing all these years later that the institution has not changed.

A resolution approved by 148 countries, and opposed by 11 that are committed to the historic truth, denied Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem. That and another, which was approved 156-8, spoke of al-Haram al-Sharif without mentioning that Jews and Christians call it the Temple Mount and that it is Judaism’s holiest site.

After the UN declared Zionism to be racism, Moynihan said in his speech: “As it is a lie which the United Nations has now declared to be a truth, the actual truth must be restated.”

The same applies to Friday’s decisions.

It is notable that the UN repeatedly twists the truth about the Temple Mount. Past decisions by UNESCO, for example, have also excluded the millennia-old connection between the Jewish People and Jerusalem.

The actual truth is that Jews prayed and made sacrifices to God on the Temple Mount long before Mohammed was born and the religion of Islam came into existence.

For 2,000 years in exile, Jews prayed to return to Jerusalem and to that very temple. Our calendar revolves around holidays that were once pilgrimages to the temple. This week, we celebrate Hanukkah, which means “dedication,” as in the re-dedication of the temple, after it had been desecrated by the Greeks.

If longstanding religious tradition is not proof enough, there is a gigantic piece of proof you can’t miss when visiting Jerusalem: the Western Wall, which is the supporting wall for the temple that still stands today.

Then there is the broad consensus among historians that the temples existed on the Mount, along with extensive archaeological proof backing it up. Anyone who wants to see that proof can visit the City of David and walk the road to the Second Temple dug up there recently. They can read the Talmud, look into the Temple Mount Sifting Project, where volunteers search through rubble from illegal construction by the Islamic Trust that manages the Temple Mount today, or just visit the Israel Museum. The sifting project alone has uncovered half a million artifacts.

And while it is true that Israel does not fully assert its sovereignty over the Temple Mount like it has over the rest of Jerusalem, this does not mean that it does not value its connection to the site. Israel prefers to not violate the status quo. Even the slightest change on the Mount leads to rioting, like what happened after Israel installed metal detectors following last year’s terrorist attack, in which two Muslim terrorists murdered two Druze policemen. Jews do not have religious freedom on the Temple Mount; they are not allowed to pray and if they do so they are removed by the police.

But the facts about the Temple Mount, historic or contemporary, are not of interest to the UN.

Israel’s Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN, Noa Furman, posited after the vote that “this omission was deliberate. It shows yet another instance of the Palestinian refusal to recognize the proven historical connection between Judaism, Christianity, the Temple Mount and Jerusalem as a whole.”

Furman called on the international community to “stop participating in such a blatant denial of history.”

Unfortunately, that seems unlikely to happen.

In 1975, Moynihan spoke of a practice at the UN “for a number of countries to combine for the purpose of doing something outrageous, and thereafter, the outrageous thing having been done, to profess themselves outraged by those who have the temerity to point it out.”

Forty-four years later, and the rot at Turtle Bay is sadly continuing to spread.