The New UN Consensus on Syria: Israel Must Pay!

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By Benny Avni

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The Bashar al-Assad regime is outraged. So angry, in fact, that on Tuesday it asked the UN Security Council to do something. And the council, including America, finally agreed on something regarding Syria: It must get back the Golan Heights from Israel.

Not Raqqa, the capital of the ISIS caliphate, nor ancient Palmyra. Not northeast Syria, owned by the Kurds, nor the Syrian heartlands controlled by the al Qaeda-affiliated al-Nusra Front. And not the enclaves ruled by Druze and various warlords.

Nah. After all, what are half a million lost Syrian lives compared to Syria’s wounded pride over events of a half-century ago?

The Golan, which Israel annexed shortly after winning in a 1967 defensive war, is the itch that the Assad clan keeps scratching.

This month Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu convened his cabinet’s weekly meeting on the Golan — a first. The high plateau will forever remain Israeli, he later declared. That declaration was “against all Security Council resolutions,” Rafael Dario Ramirez, the UN ambassador of Venezuela, told me Tuesday.

So he and his Egyptian colleague called for a special meeting of the UN body charged with maintaining global peace and security. Later, all council members (including the United States) expressed “outrage” over Netanyahu’s statement. They recalled a 1981 resolution that declared that year’s annexation of the Golan by Israel “null and void, and without international legal effect.”

On the Israeli side of the Golan you’ll find apple groves, quaint wineries and beer microbreweries — not to mention the Mideast’s best locally-grown steak (grass-fed and kosher, too). Also there, you can get closest to the raging war on the Syrian side without risking life or limb.

That’s what UN peacekeepers do. They’ve been stationed on both sides of the border to observe a Syrian-Israeli ceasefire, since Damascus tried to wrest the Golan by force in 1973.

Soon after the civil war erupted in 2012, Assad started neglecting the Golan. The border area was taken over by gangs, who discovered kidnapping UN peacekeepers is a lucrative business. The United Nations withdrew to the safety of the Israeli side, where it continues to periodically report on ceasefire violations by “both sides.”

“Sides”? In Geneva, UN envoy Staffan de Mistura is trying in vain to get Syria’s numerous warring factions to negotiate with each other. He can’t even get them in the same hotel room.

Indeed, the entire Mideast is involved in Syria’s multi-sided war, plus Russia and the United States. Assad controls a third of the country. No one knows how to end the carnage.

Israel, miraculously, is the one Syrian neighbor to (mostly) stay out. It has its interests, of course. Last week Netanyahu confirmed reports of several successful attacks on convoys transferring arms to Hezbollah in Lebanon.

He also flew to Moscow for a hastily arranged meeting with President Vladimir Putin, after Russian planes reportedly buzzed Israeli jets over Syrian skies. Netanyahu wanted to resume and tighten coordination with Moscow, to allow both countries to maintain their interests in Syria.

Yet once Bibi publicly reasserted Israel’s hold over the Golan (perhaps for domestic political reasons), international-law eggheads jumped to Assad’s aid: He who can barely control his capital, Damascus, somehow has indisputable sovereignty over the Golan. Israel must return an occupied territory, goes the cry from Malaysia to Morocco.

Return to whom? To al-Nusra or ISIS, which the entire world has declared unworthy of even participating in the Geneva peace talks? To Hezbollah, which tops the US terrorist list and now tries to establish a beachhead on the Golan? To Assad the butcher, who, according to President Obama, has lost legitimacy?

Whatever. The Security Council, including America, called Tuesday for returning the Golan and, indeed, negotiating “to establish a comprehensive just and lasting peace in the Middle East.”

Yes, in the past Netanyahu tried to negotiate a return of the strategic Golan to Syria. One of his successors may one day do so again, perhaps after Syria, a country that no longer really exists, is properly divided.

But now? Those who think so must be off their meds.