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**T**ODAY (Thursday), the United Nations will host the “anti-racism” event colloquially known as Durban III in New York. It will most probably mark a further chapter in the UN’s unremitting campaign to delegitimise and demonise Israel by branding the Jewish State as racist.

The UN meeting has been dubbed Durban III because it is intended to “commemorate”, in the words of the UN General Assembly, the 10th anniversary of the modern-day, UN-sponsored hate-fest against Israel, which took place in Durban, South Africa in 2001.

Of all the nations in the world, Israel, and only Israel, was singled out as a racist state, deserving of moral and political opprobrium, isolation and exclusion. The late Palestinian chief Yasser Arafat was one of the key leaders at the conference who championed this.

In the meantime, anti-Israel activists have jumped on the Durban bandwagon to maliciously label Israel an apartheid state in order to form the backbone of their Boycott, Divestments and Sanctions campaign.

As if there was any doubt that the Durban process deserved to be thrown into the rubbish bin of history, the world’s foremost anti-Semite and September 11 conspiracy theorist, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad made certain of this at the follow-up review conference, called Durban II, in Geneva in 2009.

Ahmadinejad was the only head of state to attend that conference, where he yet again took the opportunity to question the Holocaust and legitimacy of the Jewish State. At the conclusion of Durban II, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, called it “a celebration of tolerance and dignity for all”.

Those who hoped Durban III would turn a leaf in the UN’s war against Israel, which is led primarily by diplomats from the Islamic states and supported by many African and developing nations, will be sadly mistaken.

The main “highlight” of the Durban III event will be the adoption of a political declaration by all the heads of state in attendance. This document is intended to be a call to action on these countries to combat racism and intolerance. However, front and centre of the declaration is its “reaffirmation” of the original anti-Semitic Durban Declaration of 2001. After all, this is a commemoration.

Thankfully, some of the world’s leading democracies – including Israel, Australia, the United States, Canada, Germany and the United Kingdom – have withdrawn from this sham of a conference, denying



# THE COUNTERVAILING VIEW

**Arsen Ostrovsky** explains why the Hudson Institute has organised a “Durban III” counter-conference to run concurrently with the controversial UN-sponsored talkfest.

it the legitimacy it most certainly does not deserve.

In announcing Australia’s withdrawal from Durban III, Prime Minister Julia Gillard’s spokesperson said Australia was “not convinced” that the meeting would avoid “unbalanced criticism of Israel and the airing of anti-Semitic views”, confirming the Government would not “support a meeting that chooses to reaffirm the original Durban declaration”.

Australia should be praised for taking such a principled stand, as it did at Durban II, to boycott this festival of hate.

However, more still needs to be done to further discredit the entire

Durban process and expose it for what it really is: nothing more than an insidious attempt to provide a hate-filled platform for some of the world’s worst human-rights abusers to single out and attack Israel, the sole democracy in the Middle East.

To counter the racist Durban conference, the Hudson Institute, a non-partisan, policy research institute, together with the Touro College Institute on Human Rights and the Holocaust, are hosting a one-day conference titled “The Perils of Global Intolerance: The United Nations & Durban III” on the same day as Durban III.

**T**HE conference, headlined by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel, will serve as a call to action and feature some of the leading human-rights advocates, foreign-policy experts, intellectuals, and key government officials from around the world.

In addition to Wiesel, the conference will include such distinguished speakers as Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz, former Israeli ambassador to the UN Dore Gold, Oscar-winning actor Jon Voight and former governor of Arkansas Mike Huckabee.

Also scheduled to speak are Dr Wafa Sultan, one of *Time* maga-

zine’s 100 most influential people in the world, former US ambassador to the UN John Bolton, Sudanese human rights advocate Simon Deng, Ronald Lauder, president of the World Jewish Congress, best-selling British journalist Douglas Murray, former New York City mayor Ed Koch and Professor Bernard Lewis, a leading scholar on Islam from Princeton University, among others.

Jason Kenney, the Canadian Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism is also slated to talk. Canada is one of Israel’s staunchest allies, and was one of the first countries to pull out of both Durban II and III.

Israel will also be represented at the event by Yuli Edelstein, the Minister of Information and Diaspora.

Speakers were galvanised, according to Anne Bayefsky, a senior fellow of the Hudson Institute and director of the Touro College Institute on Human Rights and the Holocaust, after learning that “Americans will be mourning the 10th anniversary of September 11, 2001 at the same time as the United Nations will appear to be legitimising the kind of intolerance that drives terrorism itself.”

Unlike the despots and tyrants at the UN, the leaders speaking at the counter-conference have a genuine interest and track record in combating racism and fighting for human rights.

They will use the opportunity to speak about their concerns and to educate the public and international community about the perils of embracing racism, anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance at the United Nations.

It should not go unnoticed that at a time when more than 2500 pro-democracy protestors have been murdered by Bashar al-Assad’s regime in Syria, with rampant human-rights abuses throughout the Arab Middle East, the UN General Assembly is once again choosing to single out Israel and play right into the hands of all those who seek to delegitimise the Jewish State.

Khaled Abu Toameh, *The Jerusalem Post*’s award-winning Arab-Israeli journalist and one of the speakers at the Durban III counter-conference, said, “What the Middle East needs is conferences that promote peace and coexistence, not hatred and violence.”

Indeed, that is the ultimate purpose of this counter-conference – to warn of the perils of intolerance and hatred, while promoting peace, coexistence and the defence of human rights.

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