The UN's Obsession with Israel by the Numbers

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The latest United Nations indictment by its so-called Human Rights Council of the Israeli Defense Force for its self-defense in the summer 2014 should not surprise. The record of the United Nations on the world’s only Jewish state, expressed in simple numbers, convicts the UN itself of suffering from a serious obsession with that tiny country.

In 1991, following the Gulf War, known in Israel as the “Scud War,” this writer was hired by the Office of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir to do a statistical analysis of voting patterns at the UN some of whose discoveries were jaw-dropping.

The background to the project was as follows: After America’s successful ousting of Saddam Hussein’s army from Kuwait, President George Bush, 41, delivered a victory speech to a joint session of Congress in which he resolved to create a new world order in the Middle East starting with peace between Israel and the “Palestinians.” Proposed was a peace conference between Israel and this phantom nation under UN auspices, which idea Jerusalem adamantly opposed.

The Bush-Baker administration dismissed Israel’s objections as so much Jewish paranoia, so one of the Shamir government’s tactics was to commission this writer to illustrate in simple numbers just how hostile the UN is to Israel and thus no conference under its auspices would be acceptable to it.

The study took three months. It entailed reading and categorizing 870 UN Security Council and General Assembly resolutions on Israel since the UN’s founding in 1945 through 1989 (the last year whose records had become publicly available.)

In this period, 26% of all Security Council resolutions focused on the Arab-Israeli conflict. Forty-two percent were neutral. Among the remainder, 4% were critical of an Arab state or states; 96% criticized Israel. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was never criticized.

During the UN’s first forty-five years, at least one Arab state sat on the Council in thirty-nine of them. Israel never sat on the Council.

The Security Council “called upon,” “demanded,” “requested,” etc. Israel to “comply, desist, refrain,” etc. from some action twice as often as the Arabs. In these requests, Israel was explicitly named 105 times; an Arab country was named only twelve times. The PLO was never named.

The Security Council expressed its “concern,” “grave concern,” “regret,” “deep regrets, “shock,” etc. over Israeli actions thirty-one times; about Arab states or the PLO, the Council never expressed any negative sentiments.

The Security Council “condemned,” “censured,” “deplored,” “strongly deplored,” etc. Israel forty-nine times. Regarding the Arab states and the PLO, the Council never “condemned,” “censured,” “deplored,” “strongly deplored” any of them.

In the General Assembly, where resolutions are nothing more than toothless recommendations, the numbers skyrocket. Of the 690 votes, 30% were neutral, commonly over procedural re-authorizations of budgets for peacekeeping forces. Of the remaining 485 votes, 8% (56) opposed Arab desires, commonly in opposition to fresh funding for peacekeeping efforts; 429 votes (62%) went against Israel.

The General Assembly “called upon,” “demanded,” “requested,” etc. Israel to “comply, desist, refrain” from some action four times. Israel was “called upon,” “demanded,” “requested” to “comply, desist, refrain” 305 times.

The General Assembly expressed its “concern,” “grave concern,” “regret,” “deep regrets, “shock,” etc. over Israeli actions 179 times. Regarding Arab actions, never.

The General Assembly “condemned,” “vigorously condemned,” “strongly condemned,” “deplored,” “strongly deplored,” “censured” or “denounced” Israel 321 times. No Arab state and the PLO were ever condemned.

In sum, the number of General Assembly votes by member-states cast with or for Israel’s position was 7,938, versus a cumulative 55,642 votes against Israel. Although there were only 690 numbered resolutions, many called for separate ballots internally on different parts. For example, with today’s 193 member-states, a typical tally on a resolution requiring five separate votes could mean a score of 150 ayes, 2 nays and 33 abstentions multiplied by five. Thus, one resolution in one day could result in 750 anti-Israel country-votes. Ergo, the colossal figure of 55,642 anti-Israel votes over forty-six years.

Now, as a thought experiment, imagine the General Assembly chamber before the advent of electronic voting from one’s desk. That would mean over 1,200 fists with thumbs pointing down shooting up in the air against Israel every month without letup for forty-six years.

This behavior has a kind of ritual flavor to it, sort of like a routine, spiritual exercise, like daily mass. In George Orwell’s satire of the Soviet state, *1984*, government bureaucrats were required every workday to watch a film clip of Big Brother’s Public Enemy No. 1, the Jew Goldstein in what was call the “Two-Minutes of Hate.” The one at the UN might be called “Damning the Jews.”

After the Six-Day War, the pace of Israel-bashing increased from roughly a quarter of all resolutions to almost a third. Moreover, the above record does not take into account anti-Israel votes cast in other UN agencies and departments in which the PLO had a representative who ensured that whatever the issue the suffering of the Arabs at the hands of Israel was voted on. If, for example, the agenda concerned women’s rights around the world, the suffering of women under Israeli oppression would merit a separate vote; if the issue was desertification, Israel’s alleged destruction of the environment in the OPT (UN shorthand for the “Occupied Palestinian Territories”) was also singled out for special rebuke.

In the end, the Shamir government was able to resist President Bush and Secretary of State Baker’s desire to subject Israel to a UN administered “peace” conference. Under no circumstances would Israel subject itself to such a kangaroo court. Hence, 1991’s historic round table talks were held not in New York City or Geneva but under U.S. and Russian sponsorship in Madrid.

To this day, Israel remains the only member-state in the UN prevented from sitting on the Security Council, which -- the bright side of this story -- at least fulfills the Biblical prophecy of thousands of years ago spoken by the gentile prophet Balaam (Numbers 23:9) who said, “This is a people that will dwell alone and not be counted among the nations.”