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The Paris Conference Has Been a Mere Waste of Time

In the light of the outcomes, the Paris Conference has been a waste of time and resources. No new initiatives or actions have been adopted in order to advance towards a fair and lasting peace; nor have Israel's legitimate positions been reconsidered. As the Joint Declaration states, the conference has sadly reaffirmed the trendy narrative on the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians after the unfair UN Security Council Resolution 2334, and it has rewarded once again the obstructionist and violent attitude of the Palestinian leadership.

We at the Friends of Israel Initiative have constantly requested to call off the conference and we asked President Hollande to cancel it because it would put the peace farther away. After the conference, the main reason we pointed out has been confirmed: Despite its good intentions, the so-called Paris Peace Conference has not produced positive results; on the contrary, it has isolated Israel and expanded the gap towards direct negotiations.

In this regard, the condemnation of terrorism and incitement carried out by the Palestinians has not been sufficient. Putting on the same level the wave of indiscriminate attacks against innocent Israeli civilians and the building of houses in the Jewish settlements, located in disputed territories—rather than occupied—is immoral. Doing so we only see a dark intention: To increase the pressure on Israel in order to obtain concessions that it is not keen to accept. The current stagnation of the peace process is not Israel's fault; the Palestinian lack of willingness to coexist with Israel is. Actions speak louder than words.

The attending countries have thus targeted the settlements again as the main obstacle for the viability of an eventual Palestinian State. The Palestinian Authority's dysfunctional and corrupt administration in the West Bank, and the radical and Islamist reign of Hamas in Gaza are the main reasons behind the impossibility of the establishment of a Palestinian State. It is alarming that the conference called for European economic aid to Palestinians despite the corruption and the salaries of the terrorists that Palestinian Authority pays with foreign money. Palestinians have turned an unsolved conflict into a way of life, and the conference has encouraged keeping this nonsensical strategy, which is undoubtedly detrimental for a lasting peace.

In addition, we insist, the West Bank is not an occupied territory: it is a territory in dispute. We have long missed this level of concern regarding real occupations such as Tibet or Northern Cyprus. The disproportionate focus on Israel and the settlements is not fair for the only democracy in the Middle East.

Nevertheless, despite the distorted approaches regarding the conflict, the attending countries have stressed direct negotiations as the only way to achieve a peace agreement and they have discarded foreign impositions. The borders are a major issue in the conflict which, according to the Oslo Accords and other international peace plans, must be negotiated in bilateral negotiations. However, what the attendees have ignored is the essential fact that it is impossible to negotiate with a counterpart who does not recognize you as a legitimate neighbor. As a clear sign of this

reality, we have witnessed how the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has threatened to de-recognize Israel if the U.S. Embassy is moved to Jerusalem — the U.S. Congress passed a bill in 1991 allowing this movement. Abbas repeats Arafat's answers, so "there is no partner for peace" as Ehud Barak said in the Camp David II Summit.

This conference has hurt the peace process since it has not resulted in any positive action and it has tried to extend the Palestinians' inefficient and parasitical government. Given all the problems that currently afflict the world, it is even ridiculous to gather 70 countries and issue a statement that does not point to anything new and insists on keeping a corrupt establishment in place.

The conference would have been a worthwhile effort if, once and for all, the attending countries would have forced Palestinians to sit at the negotiating table without preconditions — as Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu has been asking for almost a decade. Unfortunately, the intention of the conference has been to blame it all on Israel.

The Paris Conference has been yet another wasted opportunity to advance peace — in sum, what a waste of time.

FOII's Efforts to Defend Israel in the Last Campaign of International Delegitimation

Last month, Israel again suffered an assault on its legitimacy. On this occasion, the international campaign to delegitimize Israel's claims was promoted by its stronger ally: The U.S. The adoption of Resolution 2334 by the UN Security Council, condemning Israeli settlements in the West Bank and defining East Jerusalem (and the Old City), and the so-called —and futile— Peace Conference in Paris have increased the international pressure on Israel while it has rewarded the Palestinian attitude. Obama's treason and the global pressure have yielded difficult moments for Israel and its legitimacy and, as always, FOII has been with the Jewish State defending its right to exist and to get fair treatment.

As a result, FOII has implemented an intensive agenda in order to help reverse the trend and to convince Western leaders not to burden Israel.

ACTIONS AGAINST UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 2334

FOII's statement after the vote of Security Council Resolution 2334:
"Settlements are not the problem" ([Read the full text](#))

Op-eds

- "Obama's Parting Betrayal of Israel" Ambassador John Bolton, The Wall Street Journal, December 26 ([Read](#))
- "Obama and the UN's outrageous assault on Israel's legitimacy" Rafael Bardaji and Colonel Richard Kemp, Times of Israel, December 26 ([Read](#))
- "Seven Grave Errors in Obama's Policy toward Israel", Carlos Alberto Montaner, December 27 ([Read](#))
- "The Ultimate Offense of Obama and Kerry against Israel", Friends of Israel Initiative, January 2 ([Read](#))

ACTIONS TO CANCEL THE PARIS CONFERENCE

Letter to President Hollande to call off the Paris Conference ([Read the Letter](#))

Op-eds

- "Call Off the Paris Conference", Rafael Bardaji and Colonel Richard Kemp, Israel Hayom, January 12 ([Read](#))
- "Paris on the UN and Obama's Heels", Fiamma Nirenstein, Il Giornale, January 13 ([Read](#))



"The underlying problem is the tenacious refusal of the Palestinian leadership in the West Bank, linked to Fatah, and that which controls the Gaza Strip, subordinate to Hamas, to recognize the existence of the Jewish State and declare clearly that they are willing to live peacefully with their neighbors."

Carlos Alberto Montaner

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