



B'NAI B'RITH WORLD CENTER - JERUSALEM

He called for the widening of the policy to check Iran to include its long-range missiles since these – unlike uranium enrichment – have no possible peaceful use. He declared that Israel is part of the coalition created by the Obama Administration against Israel. The president described Israel as a geographical mistake – only 1 percent of the Middle East land mass – and as a land that was enriched by the people rather than a people that was enriched by the land.

Regarding Israel-Palestinian relations, Peres said that Israel's major concern is to remain a Jewish state; therefore, if forced to choose between land and a Jewish majority, Israel must choose a Jewish majority over land. "Even peace without a Jewish majority would be worthless."

Peres ended by saying that just as Israel expects the US to understand its problems, Israel needs to understand the problems faced by the US. "President Obama," he said, "was fair to Israel. He is basically a man of values."

Focusing most of his comments on Iran, Netanyahu said that while stemming the Iranian threat is a vital interest for other countries, for Israel it is a matter of existence. Assuring the audience in the Jerusalem Convention Center that he was fully up to date on the proposal being discussed by the P5+1 group with Iran, Netanyahu declared that what is being offered would allow Iran to retain all of its nuclear capacity in the face of repeated demands of the international community that it be dismantled.

"Not one centrifuge would be dismantled and they get to keep all their enriched uranium, while the sanctions are rolled back. They would need only two months to create the fissile material needed to make a bomb."

He warned that in this scenario, the sanctions would crumble and declared, "I will not be silenced when it comes to the security of the Jewish state" and called on those present to speak up. The Iranian regime cannot be allowed to get nuclear weapons. We cannot let up now. We have not come four millennia to have the likes of the Ayatollahs threaten us. We will always defend our state."

Regarding the Palestinian issue, Netanyahu said he is ready for a historic compromise that would entail two states for two peoples with mutual recognition of national rights in defined borders.

The hitch, he said, is that the Palestinians have consistently refused to accept the principle of Israel as a Jewish state so that even after a peace accord, Palestinians intend to continue to demand national rights in the State of Israel ("one state for one people – the Palestinians – and one state for two peoples – Jews and Palestinians").

The Prime Minister argued that while Israel has made difficult decisions to promote peace including withdrawals, building freezes, and release of murderous terrorists, the Palestinians have made no compromises and continue to be pampered by the international community.

He ended by vowing that "Peace is not a one way street – and it won't be. It will be very tough for Israel, but also for the Palestinians. We do not want a fake peace. I hope they rise up to the challenge."

Other featured speakers at the Assembly included former peace negotiator Amb. Dennis Ross, former Under Secretary of State Stuart Eizenstat, Jewish Agency chairman Natan Sharansky and Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat.

The Assembly also provided an opportunity to showcase JAFI projects such as Partnership2Gether and Ethiopian aliya and included a rich Shabbat program.