

Instead of ‘[Expletive]’ Netanyahu, Shouldn’t Obama Worry About Iran?

Naftali Bennett, Israel’s economy minister, got it 100 percent right in a Facebook posting just a few hours after the latest blow to American-Israeli relations surfaced in the media.

Responding to the anonymous “senior Obama administration” official who told *The Atlantic* correspondent Jeffrey Goldberg that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was a [expletive], Bennett said, “Cursing the prime minister and calling him names is an insult not just to him but to the millions of Israeli citizens and Jews across the globe. The leader of Syria who slaughtered 150,000 people was not awarded the name [expletive]. Neither was the leader of Saudi Arabia, who stones women and homosexuals or the leader of Iran who murders freedom protestors.”

I also would have added Qatar into the mix, as that terror-financing, slave-owning Gulf emirate is also fawned over by the Obama administration, but Bennett’s point stands nonetheless. Our officials in Washington come across as a vindictive and petty bunch, accusing an ally of cowardice while hiding behind anonymity, and guilty of hypocrisy in its rankest form.

[Expletive]? That’s rich, coming from an administration whose fear of Vladimir Putin is the subject of derisory mirth in the Kremlin, and whose cravenness toward Bashar al-Assad’s regime in Damascus has directly resulted in the deaths of thousands of innocent Syrians. Blissfully dismissive of their own failings, they round on Netanyahu, a man who served with distinction in his country’s elite Sayeret Matkal army unit, by calling him, of all things, a coward.

That's not the only epithet. As Goldberg pointed out, "Over the years, Obama administration officials have described Netanyahu to me as recalcitrant, myopic, reactionary, obtuse, blustering, pompous, and 'Aspergery.'" (For those unclear as to what that last term means, it's a pejorative description for people with Asperger syndrome, a form of autism, and it's as nasty as calling someone a "retard." Remember that the next time you hear another kumbaya, "let's heal" speech from Obama.) You have to think that, sooner or later, the administration will join the chorus of confirmed Israel-haters by labeling Netanyahu as a "baby killer" and a "war criminal."

Sure, the Obama officials will say that the Israelis started it, by citing the injudicious comments about Secretary of State John Kerry uttered in private by Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon. But Ya'alon was man enough to apologize for what he said, and that still didn't stop the administration from pursuing a private vendetta against him, blocking him from meeting with key officials like Vice President Joe Biden during his recent visit to Washington.

And while the Israelis wish they could turn back the clock on Ya'alon's advice to Kerry to "take his Nobel Prize and leave us alone," Obama's appointees see nothing wrong with insulting Netanyahu in such a grotesque manner because, you see, they are Right with a rolling, upper case "R," and therefore anything goes.

I've argued many times in this column that, as far as Israel is concerned, the Obama administration is a lost cause. The only question now is how much damage they will do before Obama departs the White House—a day that can't come soon enough, frankly.

The immediate danger lies on two fronts. First, there are the Palestinians. Any doubts that the Obama administration believes that Israel is responsible for the stalemate with the Palestinians will have been dispelled by Goldberg's

revelations.

As far as Obama, Kerry and company are concerned, the primary problem is Israel's insistence in building new housing units in its undivided capital, Jerusalem. Their impatience could reach the point where the U.S. no longer backs Israel at the United Nations, thereby allowing Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas' crusade for unilateral recognition to reach fruition.

In the event of such an outcome, Israel could find itself worryingly isolated, as the European governments are anxiously awaiting a signal from the Americans that it's okay to abandon the Jewish state. If so, we will then be confronted with the edifying spectacle of the world's democracies aligning themselves with tyrannies from Venezuela to Iran in singling out Israel for opprobrium.

Secondly, there are the Iranians. The deadline for a final deal over the mullah's nuclear ambitions—November 24—is upon us. Perhaps Obama thinks that cursing Netanyahu will persuade Iran's Supreme Leader, the brutal Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, to accept a deal. Judging by the breathlessly excited manner with which the regime's English-language outlet, the Holocaust-denying *Press TV*, greeted the vulgar name-calling incident, the president might be onto something.

But what benefits will a historic accord with the Iranians bring us? Very few; whereas the costs will be enormous.

For a start, this isn't just about Israel. We will alienate the conservative Arab states like Egypt and Saudi Arabia, all of them already angry and frustrated with Obama's kowtowing to Tehran. We will permit an Islamist state to become a nuclear power at the same time that it backs terrorist organizations like Hamas and Hezbollah with money and weapons.

We will lose our leverage over the Iranians, in the form of biting sanctions, with few resources at our disposal to compel

them to cooperate with international nuclear inspectors when they start—as they inevitably will—obstructing them at every turn. And we risk, again, the prospect of an Israeli preemptive strike, because whatever else Netanyahu might be, he's no [expletive].

Umpteen immediate questions remain, among them: Will Obama apologize for the [expletive] remark? Will he publicly name and discipline the officials who showered Netanyahu with insults? What will he do if the Iranians decline to make a deal?

But the biggest question of all is a long-term one. What will the strategic map of the Middle East look like once Obama is done? That's what should be occupying the minds of Israel's leaders, who are painfully aware that Obama's peace efforts can only lead to more conflict and strife.

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