

'Something Is Rotten in the State of Sweden'

Many will surely recognize the adaptation of Shakespeare's famous quote from *Hamlet*: "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark." If Shakespeare were writing *Hamlet* today, he might very well have written that about Sweden rather than Denmark.

Separated in distance by more miles of water than lies between much of Israel's pre-1967 armistice line with Jordan and the Mediterranean coast, today Denmark and Sweden are separated by light years in terms of political and diplomatic savvy and international relevance.

Recently, the new Swedish government established a list of domestic priorities that, barring one, would have not made the radar of anyone outside Sweden. When the prime minister announced plans to recognize the "State of Palestine," he opened a diplomatic can of worms that resulted in an international backlash, starting in Israel, but with wide ripple effects. Until this point, the only European countries that had recognized "Palestine" were those that were part of the former Soviet bloc, when that entity still existed. Practically, these are irrelevant today.

Other states that have joined the recognizing "Palestine" bandwagon include the usual array of Arab and Muslim states, and others that are so closely tied to these that when this voting bloc in the U.N. says jump, they say how high. More recently, several Central and South American countries adapted this policy, giving new meaning to the term "banana republic." Though bananas are not indigenous to Sweden, its people have a particularly high rate of banana consumption. Along with its recent diplomatic policy, that prompts at least an honorable mention as a banana republic.

Making Sweden's announcement all the more absurd, and funny if it were in a Marx Brothers movie or *SNL* skit, almost immediately after announcing the intention to recognize "Palestine," and rightly suffering international backlash, they announced that their goal to do so was really intended to help kick-start peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

It's lovely for a country famous for its massage, well-built cars, meatballs, do-it-yourself furniture, and vodka to think that they can lend a hand to a conflict that's so old. That's lovely but naïve. And the way they went about it was ridiculous.

In addition to its other well-known products, Sweden is also now known as a growing hotbed of Islamic extremism, a product of the country's liberal democratic views. It is a reality that conveys liberal democracy as a future outpost of the same ideology that is behind ISIS today. Infamously, Sweden has a new Turkish-born cabinet member who participated in the illegal attempt to break the Israeli blockade of Gaza to prevent smuggling of weapons. Not only has this man participated in things of this nature, but he's on record calling Israel's very existence into question.

To express my displeasure at the Swedes' decision, I sent a note to the Swedish ambassador both in Israel and the U.S. Fortunately, one thing they are good at is publicizing their diplomatic missions overseas.

For other Swedish diplomatic missions, look here.

I write to the ambassadors asking pointed questions and making statements like:

I write to protest and decry your government's recent declaration that it will recognize "Palestine" as a state. What state are you recognizing? In what territory? With what borders? With whom as it's legitimate (elected) leadership? ...

has Sweden accepted Russian control over parts of Ukraine, and if so, why not just recognize that all former Soviet republics are really (still) under the authority of a new USSR in Moscow?

I wonder what borders your country recognizes "Palestine" under as well. The 1947 partition plan? The 1949 armistice lines? Today's borders according to the Oslo agreement? More modern amorphous notions of the 1967 "borders" with land swaps? Do you consider my house part of "Palestine?"

The current PA (PLO) President, Mahmoud Abbas, is in the ninth year of his four-year term. Do squatter's rights make him still a valid and legitimate president, or his partner in the on again off again unity government, Hamas? Hamas won a legislative election almost a decade ago, and then instituted a bloody coup to throw the elected PA government out of Gaza. If control of territory is your only litmus test, you're really on thin ice.

But let's say that your country's decision didn't run up against these and other challenges. This state of "Palestine" that you're recognizing exists primarily to destroy another state—mine, Israel. Both the leading political parties (today), Hamas and the PLO, are simply terrorist organizations whose charters call for the destruction of Israel. That's not very neighborly, now is it?

Statehood cannot come in a box from a build-it-yourself store that sells a few models of everything and then leaves the consumer to follow directions. It takes work. Sweden's decision sounds more like a do-it-yourself piece of Ikea furniture than anything remotely practical or reasonable.

You may find excerpts below from Dr. Martin Sherman's article "Failing the test of history" of interest. What's interesting is that this was published in 2008, long before Hamas's control of Gaza accrued tens of thousands of rockets and other

weapons, and long before they initiated a war against Israel this summer, firing some 4,600 of these at Israeli towns and cities, as well as deliberately using their own people as human shields, and UN facilities, schools and mosques, to hide their weapons, making their intentions completely clear.

The one famous Swedish diplomat who served your country with honor by saving Jews in the Holocaust, Raoul Wallenberg, is surely weeping in his grave.

Perhaps the Swedish government will understand this better in its own language: *något är ruttet i konungariket Sweden, något är ruttet*—something is surely rotten in Sweden.

Following the quote from *Hamlet* that astutely notes that Denmark is festering with moral and political dishonesty that is relevant to Sweden today, the character Horatio replies “Heaven will direct it,” meaning that heaven will guide the state of Denmark to health and stability. Let us pray that the same will be the outcome for Sweden.

Jonathan Feldstein was born and educated in the U.S. and immigrated to Israel in 2004. He is married and the father of six. Throughout his life and career, he has been blessed by the calling to fellowship with Christian supporters of Israel and shares experiences of living as an Orthodox Jew in Israel. He writes a regular column for Charisma’s *Standing With Israel*. You can contact Jonathan at firstpersonisrael@.