

**A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE: ABBAS PUSHES
“NAKBA” & “UDI” AT UN, NETANYAHU NOTES “NO STATE
WITHOUT NEGOTIATIONS”; AND IN MONTREAL, A STRICKEN
RABBI’S JEWISH COURAGE**

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Isranet Daily Briefing, September 23, 2011

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ABBAS: TIME FOR PALESTINIAN INDEPENDENCE [abbas-un-netanyahu-notes-no-state-without-negotiations/](https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/week-life-jewish-people-abbas-un-netanyahu-notes-no-state-without-negotiations/)

Editorial

Jerusalem Post, September 23, 2011

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas on Friday said that “the time has come for Palestinian independence,” in a speech to the UN General Assembly, shortly after he officially submitted a request to the world body for recognition of Palestine as a full member state.

“Enough, enough, enough,” Abbas stated, saying that “63 years of ongoing tragedy must end.”

Abbas called the UN vote on the PA request for statehood a “moment of truth” in which the world must decide if it will continue to allow “the last occupation in the world to continue.” The PA president held up a copy of the official request for statehood to raucous applause from the crowd of world diplomats. He added that the state in question should have the pre-1967 lines as its borders with east Jerusalem as its capital.

He called on the nations of the world to vote for the recognition of Palestine and urged the UN Security council to expedite their decision. “I say to the Israelis, come to peace,” Abbas said during the speech, reiterating his position that the statehood bid should not be an impediment to the peace process.

Abbas said the Palestinians would continue peaceful, popular resistance to Israeli occupation and warned that Jewish settlement construction threatens both to destroy the two-state solution and the survival of his fledgling government, the Palestinian Authority.

The PA president blamed Israel’s continued building of settlements on “Palestinian land” for the impasse in the peace process. Abbas said that over the past year all attempts to renew peace negotiations were repeatedly “smashed against the rocks of the Israeli government’s positions....”

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NETANYAHU: NO PEACE THROUGH UN RESOLUTIONS [netanyahu-notes-no-state-without-negotiations/](https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/week-life-jewish-people-netanyahu-notes-no-state-without-negotiations/)

Editorial

Jerusalem Post, September 23, 2011

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu addressed the UN General Assembly on Friday, saying despite popular perception, Israel and he himself want peace, but that peace “must be anchored in security” and can not be forged by UN resolutions....

“Palestinians want a state without peace,” Netanyahu stated, telling the assembled diplomats, “You should not let that happen.” Netanyahu called on Abbas to renew peace talks immediately, “today at the United Nations.” “If we genuinely want peace, what is there to stop us,” Netanyahu asked Abbas. “With God’s help lets find the common ground for peace. I can’t make peace without you,” Netanyahu said during his address.

Netanyahu criticized the hypocrisy of the United Nations, noting that the UN Security Council is now headed by Lebanon, who is controlled by Hezbollah—a group considered a terrorist organization by the United States, Israel, and the European Union. The UN, Netanyahu said, denounces Israel more than any other nation.

The prime minister called comments by PA officials that Jews would not be allowed in a future Palestinian state “ethnic cleansing.” He called laws in Ramallah making the selling of land to Jews punishable by death “racism.”

The prime minister stated that Palestinians should “give up the fantasy of flooding Israel” with millions of refugees, saying that he did not want Palestinians to try and change the Jewish character of the state.

Netanyahu called for the release of kidnapped IDf soldier Gilad Schalit. “Every nation represented here should request his release,” Netanyahu declared to applause. “If you want to pass a resolution about the Middle East today, that’s the resolution you should pass,” the prime minister said.

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PALESTINIAN STATEHOOD AND THE LESSONS OF OSLO
[abbas-pushes-rosenthal-netanyahu-notes-no-state-without-negotiations/](https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/week-life-jewish-people/abbas-pushes-rosenthal-netanyahu-notes-no-state-without-negotiations/)

Fouad Ajami

Wall Street Journal, September 23, 2011

‘U.N. 194’ is the slogan of the campaign to grant the Palestinians a seat at the United Nations, to recognize their authority as the 194th nation in that world body. This is the Palestinians’ second chance, for there was the session of the General Assembly in 1947 that addressed the question of Palestine, and the struggle between Arabs and Jews over that contested land.

A vote took place on the partition resolution that November and provided for two states to live side by side. It was a close affair. It required a two-thirds majority, and the final tally was 33 states in favor, 13 opposed, 10 abstentions, and one recorded absence. Israel would become the 58th member state. The Palestinians refused the 59th seat.

Arab diplomacy had sought the defeat of the resolution, and the Palestinians had waited for deliverance at the hands of their would-be Arab backers. The threat of war offered the Palestinians a false promise; there was no felt need for compromise. The influential secretary-general of the Arab League, the Egyptian Azzam Pasha (by an exquisite twist of fate a maternal grandfather of al Qaeda’s leader Ayman al-Zawahiri), was to tell a talented, young Zionist diplomat, Abba Eban, that the Arab world was not in a compromising mood. “The Arab world regards the Jews as invaders. It is going to fight you,” he said. “War is absolutely inevitable.”

For the Zionists, the vote was tantamount to a basic title to independence. But the Jewish community in Palestine had won the race for independence where it truly mattered—on the ground. Still, theirs was a fragile enterprise.

Britain, the Mandatory Power in Palestine since the end of World War I, had wearied of the Zionists, of the Arabs, and of the whole sordid burden of adjudicating their competing claims. The British Empire was broke and looking for a way to reduce its burdens. In August 1947, it had given up

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India, the Jewel of the Crown, pushed to establish a state of its own. No state-violence between Hindus and Muslims provided a shameful precedent to negotiations/imperial dominion. It was no use shedding blood and treasure in Palestine, and Pax Britannia was eager to pass the problem onto the U.N.

Nor were matters clinched for partition, and for the cause of a Jewish state, in the American councils of power. President Harry Truman was indecisive. He drew sustenance from the Bible and the cause of Jewish statehood tugged at him, but he was under immense pressure from a national security bureaucracy that had no sympathy for the Zionist project. An accidental president who had come to the presidency after the death of FDR, he lacked the self-confidence a crisis of this kind called for.

His secretary of state, Gen. George Marshall, was dubious of the idea of partition, fearful that a war would break out over Palestine that would require the intervention of American troops. Truman stood in awe of Marshall, regarded him as one of the “great commanders of history.” Secretary of Defense James Forrestal was more antagonistic still. There were oil interests in the Arab world, and a big strategic position in the region to protect.

The voting at the U.N. was messy. In the end, all American doubts were swept aside, and the United States opted for partition, lobbied for it, and was joined by the Soviet Union. Britain abstained. The tire magnate Harvey Firestone secured Liberia’s vote for partition. The Philippines hesitated but cast a favorable vote. India had hinted that it was in sympathy with partition but in the end chose not to run afoul of the sensibilities of its own Muslim population. Rumor had it that the delegate from Costa Rica sold his country’s vote for \$75,000.

“The partition line shall be nothing but a line of fire and blood,” Azzam Pasha warned. And history would vindicate him. Six months later, with Britain quitting Palestine without even a ceremonial handover of responsibility, war would break out.

But the scenarios of doom for the new Jewish state were not to be fulfilled. Israel held its own. And the Palestinians who had bet on the Arab cavalry riding to the rescue were to know defeat and dispossession.

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Abbas pushes a wide Arab claim, Netanyahu notes no state
Palestine was to be divided—there was the new Jewish state, without negotiations/
sovereignty over the West Bank and east Jerusalem, Egyptian control
over Gaza. The victory of Israel two decades later in the Six Day War
reunited the land and, ironically, gave the Palestinians a chance to
release themselves from pan-Arab captivity.

“We need to have full membership at the U.N. We need a state, a seat at the United Nations,” Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas declared last week in Ramallah as he launched this bid, in defiance of American wishes. Thus state-building would be bypassed, and the Palestinians, in a familiar pattern of their history, would place their faith in deliverance through the indulgence of others.

But were the Palestinians to look at their history, they would come to recognize that the one break that came their way happened in 1993, through direct negotiations with Israel. The peace of Oslo that secured them their national authority, that brought Yasser Arafat from his Tunisian exile to Gaza, was a gift of direct diplomacy. Arafat was looking for redemption; he had bet on Saddam Hussein in the Gulf War of 1990-91 and lost the financial support of the Arab oil states. Israel, for its part, had just elected a war hero, a stoical, determined man, Yitzhak Rabin, as its leader, and he had campaigned on the promise of getting “Gaza out of Tel Aviv.”

True, the ceremony of reconciliation on Sept. 13, 1993, had taken place on the South Lawn of the White House, Bill Clinton nudging Arafat and Rabin together for that reluctant handshake. But the Americans were giving away the bride long after the couple had eloped.

A generation after that handshake, the lesson of that accord remains unaltered. There can be no avoiding the toil and the exertions of direct negotiations. The deliberations at the U.N. are only theater, just another illusion.

(Fouad Ajami is a senior fellow at Stanford University’s Hoover Institution.).

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THE DOWNGRADING OF THE PALESTINIAN UN BID [netanyahu-notes-no-state-without-negotiations/](https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/week-life-jewish-people/netanyahu-notes-no-state-without-negotiations/)

Herb Keinon

Jerusalem Post, September 23, 2011

Distinct similarities are beginning to emerge between the “freedom flotilla” that was supposed to set sail for Gaza from Europe this summer with “1,500 activists in 15 ships,” and the Palestinian’s unilateral statehood bid that PA President Mahmoud Abbas is expected to launch Friday at the UN.

Both were accompanied by sound and fury and expectations of what these “dramatic, historic” steps would signify. Both were accompanied by nightmare predictions, here and abroad, of the damage that would be caused to Israel, and of how it would further isolate our already badly isolated country. Both were held up as evidence of this country’s impotence and the failure of its diplomacy. Both were used to strike fear into the hearts of the populace that things have rarely been worse.

In the end, the vaunted flotilla ended with a whimper as the Greeks prevented it from setting sail, and only one vessel with a motley handful of radical leftists and journalists took to the seas, easily intercepted by the navy. And while the Palestinian UN gambit is still a work in progress, there, too, the buildup is shaping up as being much greater than the climax.

US President Barack Obama’s speech at the UN on Wednesday took much of the sting out of the Palestinian gambit. If the bid was an attempt to isolate Israel as much as it was an effort to create a virtual Palestinian state, then Obama’s words severely immobilized that effort. A country with the degree of rhetorical cover support given by the US president at the United Nations in New York, and not at an AIPAC policy conference in Washington, is not an isolated country—despite what some media outlets may be reporting.

The Palestinian reflexive reaction, as well as that of many of their supporters around the world, was that these words came out of Obama’s mouth only because of his need for the Jewish vote in the 2012 election,

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and because of the nefarious Jewish lobby control of US foreign policy, state-
But make no mistake, the broad brushstrokes of Obama’s ~~with fully~~ negotiations/
crafted speech were most definitely shared beforehand not only with
Israel, but also with America’s Arab allies—countries like Saudi Arabia,
Oman and Jordan—and with its European partners....

As Abbas takes the podium Friday afternoon, much of the
winds—primarily thanks to Obama’s strong speech against the
move—have been taken out of the Palestinian sails. While Abbas’s move
has definitely not yet run its course, and while there may still be
surprises at the UN—let alone violence in the territories—the UN bid is
looking increasingly like this summer’s flotilla: More bark than bite; more
mild breaker than tsunami.

A ROSH HASHANAH LESSON FROM THE ‘BLINKISCHER REBBE’

Gil Troy

Canadian Jewish News, September 15, 2011

On July 15, Ronnie Cahana, the 57-year-old rabbi of Congregation Beth-El
in Montreal’s Town of Mount Royal, suffered a massive stroke in his
brainstem. He now lies immobilized in the Montreal Neurological
Institute, unable to talk, walk or even wave.

Yet, his mind is intact and his spirit is soaring, and from his hospital bed,
Rabbi Cahana is teaching his devoted congregants, his loving family and
the rest of us, about the soul’s power and Judaism’s deeper meaning,
even when we lose the physical, the material. “I live in a broken place,”
he said when stricken, “but there’s holy work to do.”

Rabbi Cahana’s body is in trouble. A ventilator and other tubes do for
him what most of us do naturally. Nevertheless, he may be the
healthiest—and happiest—person I know. “Emotional paralysis is far
worse than physical paralysis,” he preaches. “To live humanly is to
believe in the pure and the profound. To live Jewishly... is to choose the
blessing over the curse. I choose blessing and feel blessed.”

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Before the stroke, this gangly, portly, mustachioed rabbi was the most
Texan Texan, and the most unconventional Conservative without negotiations/
befriended Ronnie and his amazing wife, Karen, decades ago in the
Young Judaea Zionist Youth Movement.

A dazzling personality, both vital and ethereal, as well as a passionate Jew and perpetual seeker, Rabbi Cahana has never done small talk. He makes even the most casual interaction intense and intimate. Watching him with his congregants and his family is wondrous. His “How are you?” is never perfunctory. Rather, it’s a sincere probe, asking whether you’re getting the most out of your life, nurturing fulfilling relationships while benefiting from the kind of profound interaction he enjoys with Judaism and God.

Visiting the bedridden rabbi, you brace for heartbreak and emerge uplifted. He mouths words—or laboriously blinks them out. When no one can read his lips, he closes his eyes, and someone starts reciting “a, b, c...” He opens his eyes at the desired letter. The “Blinkischer Rebbe,” as Karen calls him, blinks out stirring weekly sermons, greeting congregants from his “subterranean world,” urging them to use the blow he sustained to experience life and Judaism in new dimensions.

“I know the end will be good,” this rabbinic Stephen Hawking insists. “I did not lose anything. I gained.”

All summer, Rabbi Cahana has bathed in his extraordinary family’s love and laughter—he and Karen have five fabulous children, ages 14 to 23. Karen says it’s hard to despair when he’s so positive, when he delights in “feeling” every prayer for him, “visiting” with his late father, renewing his relationship to Judaism and God by painstakingly re-learning each mitzvah, bringing new meaning to each commandment.

On Tisha b’Av he fasted, demanding that his feeding tube be shut down. Every weekday morning, he puts on tfillin at the same time his congregants do.

“Finding spiritual paths in the hospital while vulnerable and fragile,” he blinked to them, provides “a great delight of the day... I hear the tone, rhythm, the light banter, music and join you. I know our sounds and I

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listen to your voices. ~~Our prayers are good and honest, and God does~~ **no state-
favourably on the kind.”** [without-negotiations/](https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/week-life-jewish-people)

Currently, he can only wear the head phylacteries. This, he calls “the most healing of privileges. The retzuot [straps] course through the whole body...from the mind. Crown encircles the cranium. In the holiest of holies, the keshet, which we believe lies contiguously off of Hashem’s holy keshet knot, sits on the brainstem to heal, to repair, to purify the world.”

This year, I witnessed the miracles that can occur despite catastrophic brain trauma after my father took a serious fall and recovered remarkably. Rabbi Cahana has already progressed much faster than the doctors predicted. This Rosh Hashanah—as those who can rally around the Cahana family, bombarding them with the love and support they need—we should also learn from the Blinkischer Rebbe’s teaching.

Let us follow him, temporarily, voluntarily, into the realm of the purely spiritual, the world of the soul, his transcendent universe of pure Jewish thought and emotion. And let us return less complacent and more compassionate, less tense and more intense, less alone and more loving, learning that whatever this next year brings, “the end will be good.”