

TODAY'S "SHORT TOPIC"

NETANYAHU AGREES TO ADDRESS CONGRESS: SOME POLITICS but MOSTLY SURVIVAL!



By Stephen L. Bakke  February 12, 2015

Here's what provoked me:

A writer decided to repeat the party line about Netanyahu disrespecting the President by accepting the invitation to address a joint session of Congress without the blessing of President Obama. They charge pure political motives. But that really misses the biggest motivation for the Prime Minister to accept this invitation – national survival.

Here's my response:

Netanyahu Agrees to Address Congress: Some Politics but Mostly Survival!

Dan Mostue took a shot at Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu for agreeing to address Congress (Kudos for resistance by Ellison, McCollum, 2-12). He believes Netanyahu was using the U.S. Congress to bolster his re-election in Israel, and that Speaker Boehner was accommodating him. Mostue considers the boycott by two Minnesota Representatives appropriate punishment for the Prime Minister.

The U.S. Congress is one of the most important groups for the Prime Minister to impress with his national security issues. That body provides funding for the most powerful military in the world, and military support is one thing Israel needs for its survival. Boehner is “marching to his own drummer” because that’s the precedent set by Obama relative to Congress. Obama’s actions give little motivation for Congress to do differently.

Considering how Obama has trivialized Netanyahu’s problems, there’s no obligation for the Prime Minister to follow this minor protocol. The fact that Obama hasn’t “blessed” this address should hold little sway for Netanyahu. Formality shouldn’t trump the more important issues Israel is dealing with.

Time is getting short for many security issues affecting Israel. I’m sure the Prime Minister understands the significant downside of NOT taking this rare opportunity to present his case to Congress. That reality alone argues for ignoring Obama’s wishes. Those hostile to this speech, and who charge pure political motives by the Prime Minister, are misinterpreting reality. For Israel and Netanyahu this is just a little bit about politics and a whole bunch about their national survival.