

The Sabra Report

Raising Awareness and Encouraging Discussion About Israel

Netanyahu Meets Leader of Sudan; Former Foes to Move Toward Normalization

Raphael Ahren, Times of Israel, February 3rd 2020

Recap:

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu secretly met with the transitional leader of Sudan, Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, in Entebbe and agreed to normalize relations.

The Context:

- ✧ In the 1950s and 1960s, Israel had relationships with the newly independent African states however, ties soured in the 1970s due to pressure from Arab and Islamic states [1]. Sudan — a Muslim-Arab country in northeastern Africa — hosted the Arab League summit after the 1967 war that became famous for establishing the “three no’s,” no to peace with Israel, no to recognition of Israel, and no to negotiations with Israel [2]. Last month, Sudan joined other Arab league members in rejecting President Donald Trump’s “Deal of the Century [3].”
- ✧ Sudan, once under Iran’s sphere of influence, seeks to modernize its country and shed its designation as a state sponsor of terror [4].
- ✧ Expanding African ties is a central pillar to Israel’s foreign policy. In 2019, Israel re-established relations with Chad and began working to establish ties with Uganda and Guinea [5]. Upon normalization with Sudan, Israel expects approval to fly over Sudanese airspace, which would greatly shorten flight times to South America. Israel also hopes to repatriate more than 8,000 Sudanese asylum seekers currently in Israel [6].
- ✧ The Sudanese government said it wasn’t notified about the meeting and lambasted it on social media [7]. The Palestinian Authority called the talks a “stab in the back,” while Hamas said normalizing relations with Israel “encourages aggressions against Palestinians [8]”. Only two Arab states, Egypt and Jordan, have made peace with Israel however, in recent years, more Arab states, namely Saudi Arabia and the UAE, have warmed up to Israel as a result of shared concerns about Iran [9].

Conversation Points:

- ✧ Is anti-Iranian sentiment the only reason Israel is starting to see diplomatic breakthroughs across the globe?
- ✧ How successful can Burhan be without his government’s support?
- ✧ Why are African-Israeli relations mutually beneficial?

Israel Sends Coronavirus Protective Gear to China

Abigail Klein Leichman, Israel 21c, February 3rd 2020

Recap:

Israel's Magen David Adom contributed 2,000 masks and 200 full protection kits to help prevent the spread of coronavirus in China following an urgent appeal for protective medical equipment.

The Context:

- ✧ The novel coronavirus 2019-nCoV has infected 28,000 people globally – the vast majority in China – and killed 500.
- ✧ Magen David Adom, Israel's national EMS organization and the country's largest humanitarian organization, immediately responded to Chabad's request in China to help deal with the spread of the disease.
- ✧ Israel suspended flights from China and all returning travelers will be put in isolation for two weeks [10]. In response, China's acting ambassador to Israel invoked memories of the Holocaust saying, "many Jewish were refused when they tried to seek assistance from other countries." The Chinese government later apologized for the comment [11].
- ✧ China is an important trading partner for Israel, and it is believed that the two countries will conclude a trade deal sometime in 2020 [12].

Conversation Points:

- ✧ How can first aid responders adequately handle the coronavirus crisis if it is believed that Beijing is withholding vital information about the disease?
 - ✧ Will Israel's travel ban affect its future economic cooperation with China?
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As Threats Grow, NYC Launches \$100 Million Israeli-Run Cybersecurity Hub

Melanie Lindman, Times of Israel, February 4th 2020

Recap:

The Center for Cybersecurity Start-Ups, established by Jerusalem Venture Partners (JVP) and the New York City Mayor's Office, aims to transform the city into the global capital of cybersecurity innovation. The hub is already home to 28 start-ups, half of which are Israeli [13].

The Context:

- ✧ There are 10,000 job openings in the cybersecurity field in New York alone with an expected shortage of more than one million cyber security jobs worldwide in the coming years.
 - ✧ Founded and chaired by Erel Margalit, JVP has established more than 140 companies and completed 35 exits.
 - ✧ The 26,000 square foot center on Grand Street will connect start-ups with key stakeholders in the cybersecurity ecosystem, ranging from investors to multinational companies and academia [14].
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Conversation Points:

- ☆ What is Israel's next frontier as it continues to export its tech know-how around the globe?

Notes:

1. [Netanyahu's Uganda visit represents Israel's growing ties with Africa](#), Jerusalem Post, FEBRUARY 3rd 2020
2. [Courting Netanyahu, Sudan sees gateway to improved ties with US](#), Times of Israel, February 3rd 2020
3. [Meeting of Sudanese leader, Netanyahu stirs debate in Sudan](#), Samy Magdy, Washington Post, February 4th 2020
4. [Courting Netanyahu, Sudan sees gateway to improved ties with US](#), Times of Israel, February 3rd 2020
5. Ibid.
6. [Meeting of Sudanese leader, Netanyahu stirs debate in Sudan](#), Samy Magdy, Washington Post, February 4th 2020
7. Ibid.
8. [Netanyahu says Israel and Sudan to normalize ties soon](#), Al Jazeera, February 4th 2020
9. [Meeting of Sudanese leader, Netanyahu stirs debate in Sudan](#), Samy Magdy, Washington Post, February 4th 2020
10. [Israel Suspends All Flights from China, Isolates Arrivals Over Coronavirus Outbreak](#), Rina Rozenberg Kandel and Ido Efrati, Haaretz, January 30th 2020
11. [China's Holocaust comparison for Israel's coronavirus border closure isn't just offensive, it's inaccurate](#), Isabella Steger, Quartz, February 2nd 2020
12. [Can China Replace the United States in Israel?](#), DANIEL J. SAMET, Foreign Policy, FEBRUARY 3, 2020
13. [JVP launches New York cyber center, advances global ambitions](#), EYTAN HALON, Jerusalem Post, FEBRUARY 4th 2020
14. Ibid.

The Sabra Report is a newsletter intended to stimulate conversation about Israel by recapping major events & providing context. Our conversation points are meant to encourage discussion amongst friends and family.

The Sabra Report is written by Irving Safdieh.

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