

Fun at the United Nations and in Congress: Israel Wins the Comedy Competition

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Most people are unaware of the fact that the annual opening of [the United Nations General Assembly](#), which takes place in September, is actually a major audition opportunity for aspiring stand-up comedians. This year, American President Donald Trump was one of the pre-event favorites according to the Las Vegas betting line based on his hilarious tweets back in January explaining that he is “like, really smart,” before observing that he “would qualify as not smart, but genius....and a very stable genius at that!”

To be sure, when he addressed the assembly on September 25th and rambled on about how “In less than two years, my administration has accomplished more than almost any administration in the history of our country,” the audience was ready to share in the fun and laughed out loud at the absurdity of the notion. They were still giggling on the following day when U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley quipped with a straight face that the audience was actually laughing with Trump out of respect for him and what he was saying.



Trump’s *tour de force* seemed unbeatable but the wily Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had an ace up his sleeve. Bibi’s performance back in 2012 when he produced the by now infamous cartoon of an alleged Iranian nuclear bomb about to go off was still recalled by many in the audience as the ultimate stand-up joke U.N. style, a legendary performance. But the same creative thinking that produced the bomb with its lit fuse had come up with a different kind of delayed action joke that Bibi knew would confuse his audience [before being revealed for what it was](#), trumping Trump’s attempt at humor, so to speak. Netanyahu produced a series of large photos taken near Tehran by Israeli intelligence showing a wall and a gate. He [said it was](#) an Iranian “secret atomic warehouse for storing massive amounts of equipment and material for Iran’s secret nuclear weapons program.”



The audience gasped, clearly impressed by Bibi’s unexpected rollout of a hitherto unknown top secret installation, but the joke came the next day when it was revealed that the complex inside the wall actually contained a number of businesses, including a scrap metal dealership and a carpet cleaning service. Bibi likely reacted with his Gary Cooper grin, “Hey, the joke’s on you guys who are always whining about Israel’s nuclear stockpile.” A U.S. intelligence official was also apparently in on the jape, [commenting a day later that](#) “What Netanyahu said last night was slightly misleading. We knew about the facility in Tehran and it’s a place full of file cabinets and documents, not aluminum pipes or centrifuges.”

So it was a weekend of fun for the Israeli delegation, including convivial friendly banter with the representatives of all Israel's four or five friends in the General Assembly, but you can only generate so much excitement when talking to a dry stick like Nikki Haley or the ambassador from Micronesia. Fortunately, good news had come through late in the week, concerning how seven more demonstrating Gazans had been shot dead by Israeli snipers, and there was also an exciting new development in that the Israeli navy had now gotten into the game, shooting Gazans demonstrating on the beaches along their own seafront since Israel regards anyone who seeks to access the water as being a terrorist, transgressing against Israel's modern-day *Mare Nostrum*. Ninety-three more Palestinians were injured, 37 of whom were wounded by gunfire.

There was also a lot of funny stuff going on in Washington, perhaps driven by a desire to outdo the frolicking taking place at the U.N. building in New York City. Congressmen got together and said, "Hey, let's see what we can give to Israel without anyone in the media coming out with so much as a peep." One Congressman, possibly Chuck Schumer or Ben Cardin or even Lindsay Graham, must have come up with the idea for [a new law](#) that would compel the White House to give to Israel a minimum of \$3.8 billion dollars a year for the next ten years no matter what Israel does or says. Shoot Arabs, kick them out of their homes, or just simply treat them like shit, it will all be the same to Uncle Sam. If they want to bomb Peoria, be my guest. Written into the bill is the provision that the president cannot in any way reduce or delay the payment going from the U.S. Treasury to the Israeli Central Bank.

And \$3.8 billion is only a minimum. Section 103 of the House bill removes all limitations on how much money Israel gets. Under the new act, instead of \$38 billion being [the cap](#), as stipulated in the [2016 memorandum of understanding](#), it will be a minimum payment until 2028. Constant lobbying by Israel and its friends in the Congress will inevitably mean that the amount might double or triple during that time period. This is a huge gift to Netanyahu, who is undoubtedly laughing all the way to the bank, as the expression goes.

Section 106 of the bill is another freebee, increasing Israel's access to a U.S. provided war-reserve stockpile that is maintained in Israel by completely removing the limits on how many weapons can be "transferred," without any payment or charge. The existing limit of \$200 million worth of arms *per annum* charged against the aid package has now been eliminated, allowing the Israelis to take whatever they want.

And there's more. Section 108 of the Act permits Israel to export arms it receives from the United States, even though that violates U.S. law. And it will also be allowed to use the American aid to buy weapons from its own defense industries, eliminating any benefit for U.S. domestic arms manufacturers.

In short, the comedy routine by the U.S. Congress vis-à-vis Israel has consisted of rolling over and playing dead while handing over the reins of American foreign policy to a foreign power. Netanyahu has scored a hat trick, defying U.S. interests while increasing both aid and concessions. The House bill that spells it all out in detail will now go back for Senate approval, and then to Trump to be signed into law.

The only ones not laughing at the comedy routines both at the U.N. and in Washington are the American taxpayers and those of us who want U.S. foreign policy to respect American values and interests. And by the way, the House has [named the bill after](#) Miami Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, a well-known Israel firster whose groveling before

Netanyahu and Jewish groups has been notable even by the low standards of the House of Representatives. The bill is now officially the "[Ileana Ros-Lehtinen United States-Israel Security Assistance Authorization Act of 2018](#)."

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