

CABINET COMMUNIQUE

(Communicated by the Cabinet Secretariat)

At the weekly Cabinet meeting today (Sunday), 11.7.10:

1. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made the following remarks:

"Last week [I held a series of meetings in New York and Washington, first of all with US President Barack Obama. I also met with senior American administration officials, media figures and Jewish community leaders.](#)

The alliance between Israel and the US is stable and strong. It has the support of the American administration and people. My visit to the US last week gave tangible expression to strength and durability of this unbreakable bond. In my meeting with the US President, we had a comprehensive and excellent discussion in which we covered a broad range of issues.

The first issue that came up was advancing the peace process between us and the Palestinian Authority. I reiterated to the President Israel's desire to proceed immediately to direct negotiations with the PA, with the goal being to advance the diplomatic process and try to reach a peace agreement. The condition for achieving this agreement is scrupulously maintaining the security of the country and its citizens. I gained the impression that the American side as well there is the recognition that we must proceed to direct talks in order to advance the peace process. I gained the impression that the President is also attentive to the State of Israel's special security needs. On these issues we are working in concert. We hope that the PA will accede to the call to begin direct talks at soon as possible.

The second issue that arose in my conversation with President Obama was the danger of [Iran](#) achieving nuclear weapons and thereby threatening not only Israel, the Middle East and the peace therein but the entire world as well. I very much appreciate the US President's statement that he is determined to prevent Iran from achieving nuclear weapons. I expressed my appreciation that he brought a decision on sanctions to the UN Security Council and that he signed into law aggressive US sanctions several days ago. I expressed both my hope that other countries will join in these aggressive sanctions and my assessment that if Iran indeed achieves nuclear weapons, there will be no effective containment policy against it. Therefore, everything must be done so that Iran does not achieve nuclear weapons.

The third issue that arose in our talks was [the nuclear disarmament conference](#). President Obama and the White House reiterated the American commitment to important strategic understandings with the State of Israel in this area. The President made it clear that American policy on these strategic issues has not changed and that the US understands – as the President put it – that due to the size of the threats against it and given our history, the State of Israel is in a special situation.

The fourth issue that came up in our conversation was [Gilad Shalit](#). I asked the President to use his full strength and influence to help us in achieving Gilad's release after four years of captivity, in which he was been denied any Red Cross visits – another war crime being perpetrated by Hamas. Immediately upon my return to Israel, [my wife and I met with Aviva and Noam Shalit](#). I updated them on my talks on Gilad's release and the efforts to bring this about.

These and other issues also came up in my meeting with US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates. I also spoke with them about the diplomatic process and Israel's security needs, and our plans to strengthen ourselves in the face of the possible plans of others in the region.

[I also met with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon](#) and, as I have said, with senior figures in the American media, including the editors of The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, as well as other networks and analysts. I also participated in [a very warm meeting organized by the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations](#).

In all of my meetings, I found understanding and support for Israel as a whole, understanding that Israel must be supported at this special time against the attacks – including physical and political – that we have withstood in recent months. I found broad support for [our decision to lift the civilian blockade on Gaza while strictly maintaining the security blockade](#), and the understanding that we are doing what must be done in order to prevent the entry into Gaza of weapons, missiles and rockets, out of concern for the security of Israel's citizens.

On Tuesday, I will meet with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Cairo. This will be our fifth meeting in one year. I hope to work with him in advancing the direct talks with the Palestinian Authority."

2. Pursuant to Article 7(A)(i) of the 1965 Israel Broadcasting Authority Law, the Cabinet decided to recommend to President Shimon Peres that he appoint Dr. Amir Gilat as a member of the IBA Council.

3. Pursuant to Article 23 of the 1959 State Service Law and in accordance with the recommendation of Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman, the Cabinet appointed Ilan Sztulman as Consul-General in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

4. The Cabinet decided to change the manner in which the PREVNAR vaccine is funded and administered.

5. The Cabinet approved draft amendments to the 2010 Criminal Procedure Law and authorized the Ministerial Committee on Legislation to submit the final draft to the Knesset.

6. The Cabinet approved draft amendments to the 2010 Civil Defense Law and authorized the Ministerial Committee on Legislation to submit the final draft to the Knesset.

7. The Cabinet decided to support Education Minister Gideon Saar's proposal to strengthen the official education system by allowing local authorities to expand school enrollment zones and enable parents and pupils a greater degree of choice in selecting a school. The plan will be launched on a pilot basis in the 2011-2012 school year, in several localities, to be determined separately.

8. The Cabinet decided to return the [Palmahim Beach plan](#) to the Central District Planning and Building Committee for reconsideration.

9. The Cabinet discussed two proposals to promote Zionism by means of contact with global Jewish communities, encouraging their members to visit Israel and strengthening Zionist identity among young people in Israel.