

Netanyahu: Insisting That He'd Ne'er Relent – Relented

by Hugh Fitzgerald



After two Israeli guards were shot to death on the Temple Mount on July 14, Israel promptly did what it should have done long ago: it installed metal detectors at the entrances to the Temple Mount, in order to make it harder for weapons to be smuggled onto it. There was nothing particularly unusual about such metal detectors. They are all over the world, most noticeably at every airport. Entrances to both the House and the Senate require visitors to pass through metal detectors. Metal detectors are now at the Houses of Parliament and the Palace of Westminster in London. They are at the provincial legislatures in Canada and at Parliament Hill in Ottawa. After the attacks on Bataclan in Paris and the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, more and more nightclubs have installed metal detectors. Government office buildings all over America have them. Courts have them. You can't look at the riches in the Louvre until you pass through metal detectors. Metal detectors, too, guard the Musee D'Orsay. Even to approach the

Eiffel Tower, you have to pass through metal detectors. In Washington, the Air and Space Museum, the Museum of American History, and the Natural History museums all use metal detectors. Fabled Fenway Park has metal detectors. The Taj Mahal has metal detectors. So does the Indian Parliament. At St. Peter's Basilica, there are metal detectors. There are now even metal detectors at checkpoints leading into St. Peter's Square. This year, for the first time, there were metal detectors at the Cannes Film Festival.

And in the Middle East, no important mosque or shrine is without its metal detectors. In fact, a lot of lesser-known mosques all over the world now have their metal detectors. No one seems to mind; everyone understands they are there to save lives. The Saudis have metal detectors at every entrance to the Great Mosque of Mecca. The Sayyeda Zainab Mosque (Shiite) in Damascus has metal detectors. So does the Mausoleum of Ruhollah Khomeini in Teheran. As for the Imam Reza Shrine in Mashhad, it, too, has metal detectors. There are metal detectors at the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi. And by now you can probably guess, not to be outdone are the Egyptians, with metal detectors at the Mosque of ibn Tulun in Cairo. And you would not be surprised to learn, I'm sure, that the Al-Abbas Holy Shrine in Karbala, Iraq has – you guessed it!– metal detectors. In Tehran, at the university, for Friday Prayers, everyone must pass through – a metal detector!

But there is one place where metal detectors are apparently an unforgivable offense. In Jerusalem, there are metal detectors for those wishing to visit the Western Wall, but that's okay, because it's Jews who are being checked on. But it's the other metal detectors, the ones put in place less than two weeks ago, that have become a source of rage among the "Palestinians." And while Prime Minister Netanyahu gave the impression he would not allow Israel to be swayed, he rather quickly changed his mind, and "insisting he would ne'er relent, relented." The Israelis removed the metal detectors

and instead installed security cameras. Again, the "Palestinians" appeared on the streets, ready to rage. Again they prostrated themselves in prayer on the street outside the Lion's Gate entry to the Temple Mount. Again they demanded the removal of security equipment, meaning now the security cameras. Again the Israelis gave the impression that in no uncertain terms, they would not back down. And then, still in no uncertain terms, Israel backed down again, and removed the security cameras, giving the "Palestinians" the victory they so richly undeserved.

If there is any conceivable reason to justify these soft retreatments, it may have to do with the unofficial understanding Israel now has with Egypt and Saudi Arabia, who are friends of convenience, for all three countries share an abiding fear of Iran. It may be that the Israelis were given to understand that those alliances would be endangered if the Arab "street" were to be whipped up by the manufactured hysteria of the "Palestinians," and that it was more important to maintain a common front against Iran than to insist on enhanced security at the Temple Mount. In any case, there may be other ways that the Israelis can enhance security without publicizing their methods. Who knows what the extremely clever Israelis may manage to come up with? Eyes in the sky, with ever-improving technology for eagle-eyed drones that neither slumber nor sleep.

The Israelis should now announce that should there ever be another attack on Israeli soldiers on the Temple Mount, soldiers who are there only to assure order, and to prevent projectiles being hurled on Jewish worshippers below, then the metal detectors will be reinstalled. And Prime Minister Netanyahu should make sure to add that those metal detectors will remain to provide security for everyone, Muslim, Christian and Jew, just as similar metal detectors now provide security all over the world, at the American Congress and the British Parliament and at Muslim sites, too, including the

Great Mosque in Mecca, the Mosque of ibn Tulun in Cairo, the Imam Reza Shrine in Mashad, etc. etc., and, of course, the munificent mausoleum of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini – gone but not forgotten – in Tehran.

I don't think the "Palestinians" will, even now, simmer down. They're exhibiting what Churchill famously attributed to Muslims in general, that is "a fanatical frenzy, which is as dangerous in a man as hydrophobia in a dog." So let the dogs bark, while the caravan moves on.

First published in