

Press Releases

**PM Netanyahu's Remarks at the Start of the Weekly Cabinet Meeting**

Government: The 34th Government, Benjamin Netanyahu

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PM Netanyahu, at the start of the weekly Cabinet meeting, made the following remarks:

"Over the weekend I had two important meetings with Jared Kushner and Jason Greenblatt. We discussed the diplomatic process and regional issues, and there was a special focus on the situation in Gaza. I must say that there was absolute support for our positions and our actions to ensure the security of the State of Israel and its citizens in the area adjacent to the Gaza Strip, which was expressed publicly by the American administration's envoys. The issue also came up of how it might be possible to resolve the humanitarian problem in Gaza without strengthening Hamas. These matters are clear – first of all how to ensure security and how to prevent a broader flare-up, if it is at all possible.

I expressed great appreciation for President Trump, Secretary of State Pompeo and of course for Ambassador Haley for the continual and strong support at the UN, which is very impressive.

Yesterday, after Shabbat was over, I spoke with my friend, Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borisov. He decided – after having visited here several days previously – as a first step, to open an honorary consulate here in Jerusalem. He made the effort to explain to me, in our conversation, that this consul will not deal only with Bulgarian affairs in Jerusalem, but with Bulgarian affairs in the entire State of Israel. I told him that this was a welcome step and that I hoped it will quickly lead to the opening of the official and complete Bulgarian Embassy in Jerusalem.

Today we will submit to the Cabinet an additional decision to strengthen the south. We will allocate NIS 21 million to Mitzpe Ramon. This will be in addition to the NIS 47 million that was already allocated to Mitzpe Ramon three years ago.

Last week I attended the officers' course graduation ceremony at IDF Training Base #1. It reminded me of the unforgettable. I was in the second group that finished officers' course there, a year after that beautiful base was opened. But since then there have been great changes in the Negev, in both the north and south, in the work that the Government is doing. In Mitzpe Ramon we are assisting with housing, industry, education, tourism and this is considerable. There are also many cultural events on the edge of the crater, an amazing place. This is part of our policy to develop the north and the south, I might say, to an extent beyond that which any previous government has done in the history of the state.

I would like to conclude on a personal note. Several days ago Charles Krauthammer passed away. Charles Krauthammer was among the greatest commentators and writers, and among the greatest supporters that State of Israel has ever had. He was a brilliant student of medicine, from Harvard University medical school. He jumped into the pool, which did not have enough water, and struck his neck on the bottom. He immediately understood what had happened to him and prayed that nobody should draw him out of the water. But they drew him out. Since then he received psychoanalytic care and was confined to a wheelchair with a severe disability. He eventually became a speech writer for Walter Mondale and from there he went to the New Republic weekly, which was and still is a very important weekly for expressing political and cultural views in the US.

I met him there in 1982 when I came to serve as an Israeli diplomat at the embassy in Washington. I met him and a very deep friendship sprang up between us. Eventually Charles became known as one of America's great writers. He won a Pulitzer Prize and many other prizes as well. Moreover, he won a huge crowd of admirers for his writings which never pulled any punches, were always original, and always reflected the great depth of his learning and his ability to focus on the main thing, which many did not see. He defended Israel in a way that is difficult to describe – methodically, with great creativity and with very great daring. He did not care what was written about him and what was said about him. He also did not toady. He simply wrote the truth, the deepest truth. During the Israeli Embassy in Washington's celebrations for Israel's 70th year, 70 people were chosen, American Jews, who had contributed more than others and more than anything to the State of Israel. Charles Krauthammer was one of them and rightly so.

I read the letter that he published two weeks before his death, when his time was running out and he had no more hope. He wrote in his noble and brave way. The Charles that I knew never spoke about his physical disability and there was no malice in him. He had a great sharpness, a completeness that was without peer and deep Jewish sources that he was always very proud of and which he drew on.

When I read his letter, I sent him one. His son Daniel, read my letter to him and he managed to listen to it and respond before he lost consciousness. He had two words: Goodbye brother.

Remember Charles Krauthammer. I will never forget him. The State of Israel and the Jewish people owe him an extraordinary debt of gratitude. We will remember him.