

Amb. Gilad Erdan: On Holocaust Remembrance Day, the world must apply 'Never Again' to Iran

“The similarities between Iran and the Nazi regime are as striking as the path we are heading down nearly a century later.”

By Gilad Erdan

Israel's UN Ambassador

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It's true that it is impossible to predict the future, but that should not prevent the world from internalizing important lessons from the past. On January 27, as we observe Holocaust Remembrance Day - 76 years after the liberation of the hell that was the Nazi death camp, Auschwitz - I believe we should be casting our eyes slightly further back to the pre-war years.

British Prime Minister Winston Churchill called World War II "the Unnecessary War." In his seminal 1946 speech he said: "There never was a war in all history easier to prevent by timely action than the one which has just desolated such great areas of the globe. It could have been prevented in my belief without the firing of a single shot."

On this symbolic day, we have an obligation to examine more closely the global events that led to "the Unnecessary War" and the Holocaust, specifically the time it took for the international community to take action against the Nazi regime, which ultimately cost the world millions of lives. Then we should be asking ourselves if someday the same will be said about the international community's complacency in preventing Iran from fulfilling its goal of becoming a nuclear power and putting millions more lives at risk.

At this critical juncture in our collective history, the similarities between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Nazi regime are as striking as the path we are heading down nearly a century later.

Like the Nazis some 80 years ago, Iran is dominated by an irrational, extremist ideology, with a single totalitarian party that executes its opponents and has succeeded in controlling every aspect of life in its country.



Top: Gilad Erdan, Israel's United Nations Ambassador, at his desk in the UN General Assembly. Bottom: Ambassador Erdan delivers his address for the UN Holocaust Memorial Day: "The time to act is now. Never again should truly mean never again."

Its expansionist ambitions in the Middle East, and around the world, closely mirror the Nazi's takeover of Europe and, no different to its fanatical predecessor, the Iranian regime also embraces the sickness of anti-Semitism, with its leaders calling the world's only Jewish state a cancerous tumor that must be destroyed at all costs.

The main difference between the Nazis then and today's most tyrannical regime is that while the Nazis of the past had no access to a nuclear bomb, the new Nazis are growing dangerously close to possessing one.

The idea that today's most dangerous regime could soon possess today's most dangerous weapon should worry everyone. We must all do everything in our power to prevent that from becoming reality.

In the early 1930s, Hitler boldly withdrew Germany from both the League of Nations and the World Disarmament Conference. It soon became an open secret that the Nazis were violating the terms of the Versailles treaty and rearming themselves.

These steps are reminiscent of Iran's moves today. Earlier this month, the regime brazenly informed the world it was moving to increase levels of uranium enrichment to 20%.

Just recently, International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors revealed Iran's work on uranium metal-based fuel, a sensitive material that can be used in a nuclear warhead.

All these developments, just the latest of many, not only flout the 2015 nuclear deal Iran signed with world powers but they are further

proof of the regime's true intentions to become a nuclear power.

Why else would a country need to enrich its uranium to such high levels?

Five years after the signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, Iran poses a greater threat to the Middle East, and the entire world, than ever before. The deal was never meant to stop Iran's nuclear program, just to slow it down and now, the main parts of that deal will expire in less than a decade.

As we know from history, a decade is nothing for a cruel and calculating regime - just look at what the Nazis were able to achieve in that time.

In 1945, 12 years after Hitler came to power, the allies finally liberated Auschwitz. Among those set free were three of my grandparents.

Today the international community must ask itself, should it have taken 12 years? Did so many millions need to lose their lives? And, most importantly - can we risk making the same mistakes again?

The time to act is now.

Never again should truly mean never again.

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