

BRIEFING BOOK ISRAEL AND KENYA

08-16-09

Michael Oren is the new Israeli Ambassador to the United States.

[Full Biography of Michael Oren HERE](#)

To take the position he had to give up his U.S. citizenship.



Mentioned on the show this week:

Israel/Palestine

Oren said that [“Israel and the United States have agreed to differ about the issue of Jerusalem and the prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, during his first visit to this country as prime minister in this term met with the president, President Obama, in the White House.”](#)

Here is an article on the [Netanyahu position on Jerusalem](#)

Both Fareed and Michael Oren spoke about a specific speech made by Netanyahu. Fareed also mentioned this speech to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and we included her answer, a video of Netanyahu’s speech, and an analysis of the speech in last week’s briefing book. In case you missed it:

[Prime Minister Netanyahu made a speech in which he accepted a two-state solution, sort of, with some caveats.](#)

Netanyahu’s Speech

On the speech [\(available HERE\)](#), Oren said that it asked “the question of the American demand for a freeze in construction in Israeli settlements in the areas we call Judea and Samaria in America, known as the West Bank. And the Israeli government has agreed to examine the possibility of such a freeze, but there is no agreement just yet on the scope and duration of that freeze.

And more importantly from an Israeli perspective, what happens the day after the freeze? What happens if you go through the period of the freeze, and does it continue indefinitely? We feel that that is not just a political impossibility but physical impossibility. You're dealing with hundreds of thousands of people who have normal life requirements. They want to build a room for a baby. They want to build a nursery school for a neighborhood. You can't freeze them indefinitely. It's not proper (ph), inhuman. On the other side of the coin...”



[Watch the speech here](#) (in English).

Read an analysis of the speech: ["Decoding Netanyahu's Speech" The New Republic](#) (US)

Fareed asked Oren if the only state that Israel is offering the Palestinians is one that has no control over its borders. Oren distinguished that from [demilitarization](#), which Netanyahu is demanding.

Fareed mentions that [“Tom Friedman, the "New York Times" columnist, has written a couple of columns extolling the virtues of Salam Fayyad, the technocrat administrator who is running the West Bank.”](#)

Oren made a distinction between Israel as a Jewish state versus a theocracy. A distinction the “Prime Minister made in his speech as well.” Oren said that ["Israel as a Jewish state," some people immediately thought theocracy. Israel, of course, is not a theocracy. Israel does not even have an official religion, unlike many countries in the world, does not have an official religion.”](#)

Avigdor Lieberman, Hitler and the Mufti

Another point of contention was when Fareed asked Oren about Foreign Minister Lieberman. [“The Foreign Minister's attracted some attention because he has ordered diplomats to distribute an old photograph of the Mufti of Jerusalem sitting next to Hitler in 1941, in Berlin.”](#)

Fareed asked if Oren received those instructions, which Oren denies getting but says he has heard of it and that there is background to it. Oren said “the background to it was that one of the issues that came up in Jerusalem was a construction of a certain [hotel in East Jerusalem, which had been acquired by fully legal process by Israeli contractors. And who were transforming this old hotel complex into a modern apartment site.](#)

And there -- some people were claiming that this had -- this was Palestinian property and the fact of the matter was that it had been Palestinian property. Back in the 1940's, it belonged to the Grand Mufti. And the Grand Mufti, the Palestinian leader during much of the '30's into the '40's later left Palestine and became a close ally of Hitler.

And I think the prime minister's point was I wouldn't make -- I wouldn't be so proud about the former ownership of this property.

Fareed responded that the point that [Jeffrey Goldberg](#)-- a good friend of Oren’s, [says it is true that Mufti was an outrageous Nazi.](#) It is also true that he's dead. The Palestinians of the West Bank are not Nazis. Lieberman is going to have to get used to this idea. Oren said that Jeffrey Goldberg is entirely entitled to [this opinion.](#)

IRAN

[John Bolton has recently said that he believes that Israel is likely to attack Iran by the end of this year.](#) Oren says he doesn’t think this is true and that Israel is “far from even contemplating such things right now.... [But we were greatly confident during the prime minister's visit here in May, when the president told the prime minister, assured](#) him that there would be a serious reassessment of the engagement policy before the end of the year.

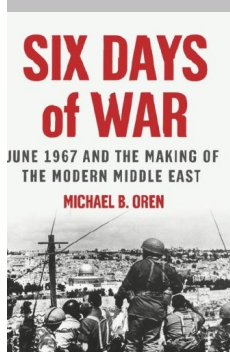
Here is an analysis of the Ahmadinejad [statement controversy.](#)

NUCLEAR UMBRELLA

Fareed mentioned the possibility of the US extending "a nuclear umbrella to Israel and potentially other countries in the Gulf." Fareed spoke to Hillary Clinton about this and mentioned it to Oren again this week. Here is more on the idea of extending a "defense umbrella" in the region and what Clinton has said, or hasn't said about it.

["Clinton mum on Mideast defense umbrella"](#) *The Associated Press*

["Hillary Clinton's Iran Indiscretion"](#) *Washington Post*, Op-ed



Michael Oren's book is entitled [Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East](#). According to Fareed, it is "an intricate history of a war and that brought significant changes to the landscape of the Middle East - both literally and figuratively. While many Arabs may disagree, it is about as fair a book as you can expect from one side of the conflict - he interviewed many Arabs for his research, and talks frankly about Israel's shortcomings. It's a great way to understand one of the critical turning points in this conflict"

BRIEFING BOOK: KENYA

08-16-09

Last week we brought you my one-on-one interview with Hillary Clinton from Nairobi, Kenya. While there, Fareed also moderated a town hall with the Secretary of State that was hosted by the University of Nairobi. The audience was filled with 800 people...students and citizens. They were all free to ask this top American official anything that was on their mind. The topic that dominated was how to build a better Africa -- democratic, prosperous, honest -- and what America could do to help.



After the formal meeting ended, the room got even more interesting, as the gloves came off and people became more candid with Secretary Clinton.

Also present in the room: [Wangari Maathai](#), the first African woman -- and the first environmentalist -- to win the Nobel Peace Prize. I asked her if she had a question for Hillary Clinton.

Maathai is well known for saying "Save the World -- plant a tree". And after the town hall meeting at the

University in Nairobi ended, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton went outside -- and planted a tree.

Wangari Maathai was awarded the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize, for her Green Belt Movement. Click here for her [biography](#) at the Nobel Prize site. [Click HERE](#) for a speech she gave on fighting poverty with sustainability.



Prime Minister Raila Odinga



Raila Odinga recently said that "in Africa, elections are never won. They are rigged. The loser does not accept the results, and then we move on." Odinga is a well-known dissident whose struggles for democracy in his country have led to years of imprisonment. Odinga ran for President of Kenya, taking on the incumbent, Mwai Kibaki in 2007. It was, by all accounts, a close election, but the "official" tally indicated that Odinga had lost. Those results were widely disputed -- and almost everyone agrees that some kind of fraud went on.

In December 2007, both he and Mwai Kibaki, the president in power at that time, claimed to have won the Kenyan presidential election in December 2007. When Kibaki was sworn in for his second term in office, it prompted a wave of unrest in the country resulting in months of negotiations and eventually a power sharing agreement with Odinga as Prime Minister.

Raila Odinga was sworn in as Kenya's Prime Minister in April 2008 after the violent political crisis that displaced almost 300,000 people. After he was sworn in, 20 cabinet ministers from each party took up positions in the coalition cabinet. Since then tensions have grown. Odinga accused Kibaki of undermining the coalition deal and bypassing ministers from his Orange Democratic Movement in decision-making.

In April 2009, Odinga announced a boycott of cabinet meetings amid a further dispute over control of the committee that sets parliament's legislative agenda. There is also much controversy over [a filing by former Secretary General Kofi Annan with the International Criminal Court proceedings](#), which may give rise to a formal prosecution.

Here is a book about Odinga:
[Raila Odinga. An Enigma in Kenya](#)
by [Babafemi A. Badejo](#)

[Raila Odinga's Blog HERE](#)

