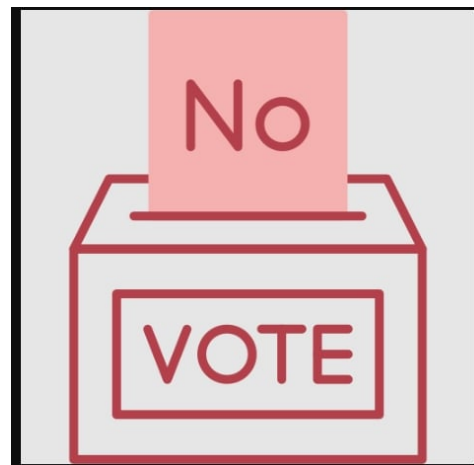


Israel's "no" vote on UN Ukraine resolution

By Lev Tsitrin



Two back-to-back articles in the *Jerusalem Post* express the unease felt in Israel over the country's "no" vote in UN General Assembly on resolution condemning Russia's war on Ukraine. "Israel has voted against an "advanced, comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in Ukraine" at the United Nations General Assembly" reads the [opening line of the initial report](#) – which further adds that this vote places Israel "alongside nations such as Russia, North Korea, and the United States."

The inclusion of the latter in the list of 18 countries that voted "no" (93 countries voted "yes" while 65 abstained) should, I would argue, easily explain Israel's vote. Israel voted "no" not because it is as bad as North Korea, and not because it does not sympathize with the plight of Ukraine – but because it followed America's lead. Had the US voted "yes," Israel would have had no hesitation to vote "yes," too.

Put simply, Israel voted not its conscience, but its interests – and those demand that Israel listens to the US, its major diplomatic backer and supplier of arms. Israel is facing the hostage crisis, and threats of Iran breaking the nuclear threshold – so why on Earth would it cross the US, especially

when it comes to impotent rhetorical exercises in the General Assembly? Would Russia stop attacking Ukraine if Israel voted “yes”? Obviously, not. So what’s there for Israel to gain?

This seems obvious, yet, as the [title of the second piece](#) on the subject, “‘*Hard to comprehend*’ Israel’s vote against Ukraine, says country’s ambassador,” it is not obvious to everyone – and certainly, not to the Ukraine’s ambassador to Israel Yevhen Korniychuk and those “Israeli ministers, Members of Knesset, and ordinary citizens that are saying how ashamed they feel because of this voting” he praises.

Unfortunately, statecraft is an exercise in survival – at the expense of truth, if needs be,. As Machiavelli famously observed, “How we live is so different from how we ought to live that he who studies what ought to be done rather than what is done will learn the way to his downfall rather than to his preservation.” Just like Ukraine’s, Israel’s prime concern is indeed its self-preservation. Hence, its seemingly cynical vote that, to quote Ambassador Korniychuk, “opposed supporting basic principles of truth and democracy,” on top of being hypocritical given that, as the Ambassador further explained, “Israel [is] the state that is at war after being unprovokedly attacked, the state that, like Ukraine, is fighting for its right to exist.”

The *Jerusalem Post* explains Israel’s vote as a result of “massive American pressure,” but I very much doubt that there was much resistance to US wishes that Israel voted the way it did. It made no sense at all to vote differently.

And Trump’s own explanation of a US “no” vote was rather characteristic – “I would rather not explain it now, but it’s sort of self-evident.” And so it is indeed – Trump is trying to stop the war through negotiations, and tries to cajole Putin into talks – and because he does not want to give Putin any excuse to say “no” to talks, Trump repeats Putin’s lines that it was Ukraine that started the war, and that Zelenski is

a dictator. Hence, US' "no" vote on UN resolution that blames Russia and holds it accountable – instead of Trump-suggested one that merely "called for a "swift end to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine" but did not specifically condemn Russia."

To somehow alleviate the discomfort caused by Israel's vote, and to provide at least some moral relief, the *Jerusalem Post* provided the reciprocal stats of Ukrainian votes in UN – finding that "In the ten years between 2015-2025, Ukraine did not vote in favor of a single 'pro-Israel' resolution. It voted against Israel in 75% of the votes, and abstained for the other 25%." To be honest, I do not see the need for such face-saving excuses for Israel's "no" vote. The interests of state absolutely demanded it. This was not the vote for Russia or against Ukraine – this was a vote for continued US support of Israel that is in the country's core interest. This should not be particularly "hard to comprehend," Ambassador Korniychuk, and others.