# **UN Prepares for new anti-Israel conference**

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By: Anne Bayefsky

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Here we go again. The United Nations is planning Durban III, one more racist “anti-racism” event, this time to take place in New York City in September 2011. The original conference, and the non-governmental forum which preceded it, were held in Durban, South Africa in 2001. That notorious platform for violent, pro-terrorist and antisemitic rhetoric included such speakers as Yasser Arafat and Fidel Castro, and it ended just three days before 9/11.  Now the UN is going to mark the 10th anniversary of its historical gathering of hatemongers to coincide with the 10th anniversary of the death and destruction that such hatemongering has wrought.

Durban I produced the infamous Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA), which charges Israel with racism and names no other state in the world.  Durban II, known officially as the Durban Review Conference, was held in Geneva in April 2009. It was headlined by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who saw the occasion as ideal for issuing another denial of the Holocaust and an endorsement of genocide against the Jewish state.  Timing Durban III for the annual opening of the General Assembly is meant to guarantee the extensive involvement of presidents and prime ministers, their association having eluded organizers of Durban I and II.

The intergovernmental working group charged with preparing next year’s commemoration session just wrapped up its first planning meeting in Geneva.  It adopted a series of conclusions and recommendations” and indicated that Durban III is intended to “reaffirm that the DDPA provides the most comprehensive UN framework for combating racism.”  The UN General Assembly is now occupied with the delicate matter of finalizing “the modalities” of Durban III, and New York-based diplomats are hard at work negotiating the details.

As with all failed UN processes, the UN response is to wear down opposition with repeated follow-up measures. Durban III is a classic example of such a strategy.  The United States and Israel walked out of Durban I in disgust, while Australia, Canada, the Czech Republic, Germany, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland and the United States boycotted Durban II.  So there was no genuine consensus among UN members either for the Durban Declaration or for the final product of the Durban Review Conference, which reaffirmed the Declaration.  But at October’s Geneva planning session, the European Union walked backwards. It agreed as a whole to recommend to the General Assembly that Durban III produce an “outcome,” knowing full well that the pressure will now be on to manufacture a new statement of support for the Declaration and to isolate Israel in the process.

The Libyan representative in Geneva let slip a few more details about the intentions behind the 10th anniversary event, including drawing attention to the alleged “escalation of Islamophobia,” citing such affronts as the Danish cartoons and threats to burn books in Florida.

Though the Obama administration did not send a formal representative to the Geneva planning meeting, the administration’s ideological embrace of the UN has fueled speculation that the UN process of attrition may also affect U.S. attitudes towards Durban III. The Bush Administration, represented by Congressman Tom Lantos, not only left Durban I –  it consistently voted against the twelve General Assembly and Human Rights Commission resolutions dedicated to Durban follow-up that it confronted over the years. When Durban II was in the planning stages, the Bush administration refused to participate.

By contrast, the Obama administration sent a delegation to Geneva to figure out how to get into the Durban II act, and didn’t pull the plug on U.S. participation until a mere 48 hours before the conference.  American fence-sitting was the key stumbling block in efforts to build a large coalition of democracies prepared to boycott Durban II, a dangerous tool for tolerating the intolerant.  And last June at the Human Rights Council, the United States decided for the first time not to cast a vote against the Durban follow-up resolution, even though the resolution promoted two celebrations of the 10th anniversary of the original conference: in June at the Council and in September at the General Assembly.  The resolution also urged widespread participation by civil society in the festivities.

The role of “civil” society in Durban I is best remembered for producing out-of-control NGO mobs.  These gangs broke into the one NGO session on combating antisemitism, forcing it to end.  After threats of violence, they necessitated the closure of the Durban Jewish Community Center, which had been the meeting place for Jewish NGOs attending the conference.  They disrupted a press conference of Jewish NGOs who were seeking to raise alarm bells.  They required Jewish representatives from all over the world to flee the final session with a police escort because their safety couldn’t be guaranteed if they remained.  In the end, the alleged “anti-racism” NGO community deleted from their declaration multiple references to combating antisemitism and added that the self-determination of the Jewish people, or Zionism, was a form of racism.

The conclusions of October’s intergovernmental working group appear to be setting the stage for another NGO debacle.  They read:  “The Working Group…invites…NGOs to participate fully in the commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the DDPA [and] invites…civil society…to organize various initiatives to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the DDPA with high visibility…”

In the next three weeks, governments will have to vote on the General Assembly resolution containing the “modalities” for September’s New York City UN bash.  Those states that object to encouraging antisemitism under the pretense of combating racism should not only vote no, but their leadership should signal clearly and unequivocally that they will not attend and legitimize Durban III.