

Trump's Golan Move Is Inconsistent with International Law. Virginian State Senator Richard H. Black

By [Richard H. Black](#) and [The Syria Times](#)
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*Virginian State **Senator Richard H. Black** has told the Syria Times e-newspaper that besides influencing Israeli elections, the United States is financially vested in controlling the occupied Syrian Golan because Halliburton, an American oil company, is actively engaged in exploring for oil and natural gas under the auspices of the Israeli government.*

He has asserted that this act is being done in clear violation of International law.

The Senator's remarks came in response to a question on the reasons behind US **President Donald Trump's** recognition of the occupied Syrian Golan as 'Israeli territory'.

"President Trump recognized the occupied Golan as Israeli territory because of the upcoming Israeli parliamentary elections on April 9. The Trump administration has done everything in its power to shift the election's outcome in favor of Netanyahu," Sen. Black said.

"Prime Minister Netanyahu faces a wide variety of indictments of criminal corruption. These have increased in substance and seriousness over time. In response, the Trump administration has done everything in its power to bolster Netanyahu, viewing him as an ally in the Middle East. It has reversed several long-standing U.S. policies in order to favor Netanyahu against his opposition in the pending elections. The recognition of Jerusalem was a similar attempt to bolster Netanyahu's political viability, in the face of his criminal corruption scandals," he added.

The US lawmaker made it clear that although President Trump has power, under domestic law, to recognize the annexation of the occupied Syrian Golan, the President's action is inconsistent with international law. Following the 1967 Israeli War, UN Resolution 242 called for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied territories. In 1981, Israel enacted legislation to annex the Syrian Golan, but the United Nations adopted Resolution 497, which said that their action was null and void.

"The domestic law was established by a United States Supreme Court decision in 2015. Ironically, the decision of *Zivotofsky v. Kerry* recognized President Obama's authority to disregard a federal statute requiring him to recognize Israeli sovereignty over Jerusalem," Sen. Black stated.

He referred to the fact that the Arab League condemned U.S. recognition of Israel's annexation of the Golan, while the 28 countries of the European Union unanimously affirmed that the Golan is occupied territories, which are not a part of Israel.

"Turkey, Iran, and Russia have all expressed disapproval of the U.S. recognition," the senator added, stressing that the recognition of Israeli control of the Golan will have little practical effect.

US is interfering in foreign elections today

Asked about benefits US can get from such move, the Senator replied:

"For the most part, President Trump's objective is to influence the elections of a foreign state. Ironically, President Trump was just exonerated by the Special Counsel on claims that he colluded with Russia to influence his own Presidential election. While no one can seriously believe that President Trump did so, there is no doubt that the United States is forcefully engaged in distorting the outcome of elections in many foreign countries."

He went on to say:

"There is great irony in the United States interfering in foreign elections today. We have just spent two years with the United States in turmoil, as Special Prosecutor Robert Muller worked to discover evidence that Russia had attempted to influence this country's elections. If the United States views interference in its own elections as a serious matter, it has no business subverting the electoral processes of other nations. The United States should not reverse long-standing Mideast policies simply to prevent Israel from conducting honest elections, free from foreign influence."

Peace

The senator concluded by saying:

"Peace will not come to the Middle East until its nations focus their efforts on developing their own nations and their domestic resources without seizing the lands and resources of their neighbors. Nations benefit by mutually agreed borders that are respected and not continually violated by airstrikes, outside support for terrorists, and sanctions which cause suffering among the poor."

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