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Netanyahu: Fidel Castro has a deep understanding of Jewish history

PM, President Peres voice appreciation for remarks by former Cuban president, who said that Israel 'undoubtedly' has a right to exist.

By Barak Ravid and Haaretz Service | Sep. 25, 2010 | 5:03 PM

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Fidel Castro Photo by AP

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Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu expressed his appreciation on Saturday over remarks by Cuban leader Fidel Castro, who said that Israel has a right to exist in an interview earlier this month.

"The remarks attributed to Castro demonstrate his deep understanding of the history of the Jewish people and the State of Israel," Netanyahu said.

In an interview published on Wednesday, the former Cuban president told The Atlantic reporter Jeffery Goldberg, when asked whether Israel has a right to exist as a Jewish state, "Yes, without a doubt."

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Subsequently, Goldberg asked Castro whether Raul Castro, the current president of Cuba and Fidel's brother, would reestablish relations with Israel, the 84-year-old leader replied that "these things take time."

Castro referenced the Holocaust in the interview, saying "Now, let's imagine that I were Netanyahu," Castro said, "that I were there and I sat down to reason through [the issues facing Israel], I would remember that six million Jewish men and women, of all ages were exterminated in the concentration camps."

President Shimon Peres also addressed Castro's remarks, saying that the Cuban leader's support of Israel had "moved me very much."

"I must confess that your remarks were, in my opinion, unexpected and rife with unique intellectual depth," the president wrote in a message addressed to Castro.

Peres went on to compare Israel to Cuba in expressing his desire for peace, saying that "Cuba is an island, surrounded by water. Israel is a political island, surrounded by threats. You tried to sail to bigger seas, to show that a small geographical size doesn't have to reflect human smallness, and we are trying to prove that small political size doesn't have to reflect the size of our values. Therefore, we want to see our neighbors as friends, and the better things are for them, the better things will be for us."

"Your words presented a surprising bridge between a harsh reality and a new horizon," Peres continued. "I thank you from the bottom of my heart. You proved that even those who are distant from each other can be close."

In an earlier installment of the Goldberg interview, [Castro urged Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad](#) to stop slandering the Jews, devoting much of a five-hour conversation to the issue of anti-Semitism.

THIS STORY IS BY

Barak Ravid



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Fidel is a senile old man, bored and nothing to do

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Now have a good look at his big head, ... now

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FIDEL CASTRO HAS A DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF JEWISH HISTORY

Byainsleyjaikaran | 25 Sep 2010 | 05:40 PM

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03

In the same article Castro also expressed his admiration for the historian Ben Zion Netanyahu, the father of the Israeli PM and one of the leading specialist in the Spanish Inquisition in the world. The Cuban leader acknowledged he is "impressed by his character, his knowledge and his past." So he'd like to meet in person. As Goldberg says, a meeting of Ben Zion, who just turned 100 years, and Castro, 84, would be a meeting to remember.

Byhenrik | 25 Sep 2010 | 05:37 PM

48 0

02

of course , Israel has the right to exist....Palestine also !

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Bibi don't suck up to Castro

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