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From: Deyo, Justin A
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Subject: (Reuters) Israel angered by Palestinian report on Western Wall

JERUSALEM (Reuters) - Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called on the Palestinian leadership to renounce an official Palestinian report asserting the Western Wall, one of Judaism's holiest sites, is not Jewish. Al-Mutawakil Taha, deputy information minister in the Palestinian Authority, published a five-page study disputing Jews' reverence of the shrine as a retaining wall of the compound of Biblical Jewish Temples destroyed centuries ago. "Denial of the connection between the Jewish people and the Western Wall by the Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Information is baseless and scandalous," Netanyahu said in a statement issued by the prime minister's office. "The Israeli government expects the leaders of the Palestinian Authority to renounce the document and condemn it, and to stop twisting historical facts," he said. In the report, Taha wrote the Western wall is a "Muslim wall and an integral part of al-Aqsa mosque and Haram al-Sharif," a position echoing past statements by the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. Taha issued the document after Israel approved five-year renovation plan for the Western Wall area.

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