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FLAME HOTLINE

Facts & Logic About the Middle East

March 21, 2017

Time is Ripe for Trump to Pull the U.S. Out of the Anti-Israel U.N. Human Rights Council

Dear Friend of FLAME:

I suspect you're watching the Trump administration's treatment of Israel with as much curiosity and wariness as we at FLAME are.

On the one hand, Trump before election made many promises about providing unprecedented support to Israel—such as to kill the Iran deal, move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem and tell the Palestinians to get serious about peace (or shut up).

All good, except (as we have noted regularly since November 8) Mr. Trump has not yet fulfilled any of these specific promises. Over the last few days, however, the administration has provided tangible support to the Jewish state, particularly as regards the notoriously anti-Israel United Nations.

As we noted several weeks ago, U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley ripped into the Security Council for wasting its and her precious time on another of its regular Israel witch hunts. Just last week the Ambassador delivered explosive criticism of the U.N.'s Beirut-based *Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia* (ESCWA), whose 100%-Arab membership issued a "research" report, written by the venomous anti-Israel activist Richard Falk, which concluded Israel is "guilty of the crime of apartheid."

Haley immediately demanded that the U.N. retract the report, accompanied by a pointed condemnation of Falk. Shortly after Haley's blistering comments, U.N. Secretary General António Guterres denied any connection between his office and the ESCWA screed and disavowed its contents. Author Falk was perfunctorily dumped from his position on the ultra-left Human Rights Watch board of directors (a move that should have come years ago).

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YOU DESERVE TO KNOW THE TRUTH...

Israel's Settlements: Obstacle to Peace?

Arabs opposed the State of Israel before there were settlements—and they oppose it still today. It's time to clear up 5 false myths about settlements.

The U.N., as well as some American media and politicians, claim Israel doesn't want peace, since Jews build houses in disputed territories of Judea and Samaria (i.e. the West Bank). But the facts reveal settlements to be a misconception. What, such people think, are preventing peace?

What are the facts?

Palestinian Arabs have violently fought Israel's existence since the Jewish state's founding and only much later cited Israel's settlements as an obstacle to peace. When Israel relinquished its settlements in Gaza in 2005, it was rewarded with a condemnation from the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas. Five major misconceptions underlie criticism of Israeli settlements.

Myth #1: Palestinians "own" these lands. In fact, Jews are indisputably the indigenous people of Palestine (including Israel, Judea and Samaria), who have lived in the region for millennia and ruled it as a state, providing Arab settlement by a 1,000-year. Palestinians have never had a state nor possessed public land in this region. Thus, the idea of "Palestinian lands" is false. In fact, both people can live claim in Judea and Samaria (the West Bank). It is a disputed territory.

Myth #2: Jews have no right to live in the disputed territories. Jews and Arabs have lived together for hundreds of years in Palestine. The only exception is during 49 years of British rule, when Jews were evicted from the West Bank. Today, some two million Arabs live on full citizens of Israel, and some 400,000 Jews live in Judea and Samaria. Yet Palestinians insist that no peace with Israel is possible so long as Jews live among them. In 2013, Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas stated that "in the final resolution, we would not see the presence of a single Israeli—civilian or soldier—on our lands." Why should Abbas, who accuses Israel of "apartheid," issue a racist ban of Jews? Why should Arabs be welcomed in Israeli society—as they are—when Jews would be forbidden from living with Palestinians in the West Bank?

Myth #3: Israel is increasing new settlements in Judea and Samaria. In December 2014, President Obama's dispute resolution committee advised Ben Netanyahu to comply with PLO's holy Woodhead "of tens of thousands of settlements being constructed" by Israel. *But no new settlements are under construction in Israel, and Israel has created no new settlements in over 20 years.* The number of settlements, plus illegal outposts, now totals just 210. While the number of settlers on living in established settlements has increased by 355,000 since 2013, the number of settlers living out of Israel's anti-Arab separation barrier has since 2009 increased by only 20,000. Less than 1% of the population in the disputed territories, Israel, Israeli communities take up only 2% of the land of the West Bank. Almost all the settlements are located on land not previously occupied, used or privately owned by individual Palestinians.

Myth #4: Israel's settlements are illegal under international law. Most who assert Israeli settlements are illegal cite the Fourth Geneva Convention, which states "The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies." However, Russia has settled its people into the Baltic region, Turkey has settled Turks into Turkish-occupied Cyprus, and China has settled Chinese into occupied Tibet. *The Israeli has never transferred any of its people into the West Bank. All settlements in Judea and Samaria have been voluntary, undertaken by private Israeli citizens. Why does the world focus on Israel—which has not broken this law—while allowing other nations to violate it liberally?*

Myth #5: The Palestinians would make peace if settlement building stopped. "Israel has created no new settlements in some 20 years." In 2009, Israel froze new settlement activity for 10 months to allow the Palestinians to negotiations sponsored by the U.N. The Palestinians refused. Instead, Israel has made numerous land-for-peace offers to the Palestinians, most recently in 2009 and in 2016, in which the Palestinians would have received more than 90 percent of the disputed territories, rights land swap—plus a capital in Jerusalem. *But the Arabs turned these down. They refuse to accept Israel as a Jewish state and insist on "rights" of five million descendants of Arab refugees from 1948 to "resettle" in Israel, which would swamp Israel demographically.*

Israel has a standing offer to resume negotiations with the Palestinians with preconditions. *But the Arabs refuse, citing Israeli settlements as an excuse. One thing is certain: Settlements are not an obstacle to peace in 1948—when Israel was born and there were none—and they're not the obstacle today.*

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Facts and Logic About the Middle East

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IF YOU SUPPORT PUBLISHING FLAME'S BOLD PR MESSAGES,

Now comes pressure on the U.N.'s infamous Human Rights Council, whose membership is packed with human rights violators such as China, Egypt and Saudi Arabia and whose actions historically have focused predominantly on fantastical accusations against Israel, while virtually ignoring or soft-pedaling on the world's most vicious human rights abuses.

The latest attack on the U.N.H.R.C. comes from U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, who has written a letter to the Council warning of U.S. withdrawal from the group unless it substantially reforms itself—which seems highly unlikely. The (G.W.) Bush administration refused to join the group when it was founded in 2006, citing anti-Israel bias, but the Obama administration joined in 2009.

This week's *FLAME Hotline* featured article comes from Michael Oren, deputy minister for diplomacy in the Israeli Prime Minister's Office, who served as Israel's ambassador to the United States from 2009 to 2013. In it, Oren calls for just such a withdrawal from the U.N.H.R.C. and provides compelling reasons for this action.

This short, but compelling piece adds weight to the Trump administration's efforts to bring the U.N. to heel after decades of anti-American and anti-Israel initiatives. It will help you explain to your contacts how the outrageously one-sided U.N.H.R.C. makes life so difficult and unfair for Israel and why it needs to be defanged by U.S. withdrawal.

Finally, I hope you'll also quickly review the P.S. immediately below, which describes FLAME's current *hasbarah* campaign to expose five despicable media myths about Israel's settlements in Judea and Samaria.

Best regards,

Jim Sinkinson
President, Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME)

PLEASE HELP US!!

FLAME is the only organization that defends Israel with paid editorial *hasbarah* messages placed in media nationwide every month: The dire threats from Iran, Hamas and Hizbollah, the injustice of BDS, Palestinian anti-Semitism and more. If you support a bold voice that tells the truth about Israel in American media, please donate now.

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FLAME'S WEEKLY HOTLINE E- NEWSLETTER



FLAME's Hotline e-newsletter keeps you up to date on the most important pro-Israel advocacy issues and features our choice of the week's most informative and thought-provoking article on Israel and the Middle East. If you only subscribe to one pro-Israel news service, make it the FLAME Hotline.

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P.S. You've no doubt often read in the *N.Y. Times* and other mainstream media of "Israeli settlements on Palestinian land" or "settlements regarded as illegal by the international community." Yet these objective-sounding phrases represent malicious propaganda—disguised lies told so often that millions of Americans believe them. In order to make Americans—especially college and university students—aware of this media treachery, FLAME has just begun publishing a new position paper: "Israeli Settlements: Obstacle to Peace?" This paid editorial, exposing the five greatest myths about the settlements, is appearing in magazines and newspapers, including college newspapers, with a combined readership of some 10 million people. In addition, it is being sent to every member of the U.S. Congress and President Trump. If you agree that this kind of public relations effort on Israel's behalf is critical, I urge you to support us. Remember: FLAME's powerful ability to influence public opinion—and U.S. support of Israel—comes from individuals like you, one by one. I hope you'll consider giving a donation now, as you're able—with \$500, \$250, \$100, or even \$18. (Remember, your donation to FLAME is tax deductible.) To donate online, just go to donate now. Now more than ever we need your support to ensure that the American people and the U.S. Congress end our support of blatantly anti-Semitic, global jihadist organizations.

As of today, more than 15,000 Israel supporters receive the FLAME Hotline at no charge every week. If you're not yet a subscriber, won't you join us in receiving these timely updates, so you can more effectively tell the truth about Israel? Just go to free subscription.

Why Trump Should Withdraw the U.S. from the U.N. Human Rights Council

The UNHRC has an inherent anti-Israel bias, says former Israeli ambassador to the United States.

By Michael Oren, *Newsweek*, March 10, 2017

Would the United States remain a member of an organization that condemned it for human rights abuses more frequently than it did Syria, North Korea, and Iran? Would it stay in a forum that denounced the U.S. more often than it did all other countries in the world?

The answer to these questions, irrespective of one's political affiliation, would certainly be "no." And yet, the United States is currently a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council that does precisely that to Israel, America's foremost democratic Middle Eastern ally. Eileen Chamberlain Donahoe, America's ambassador to UNHCR from 2010 to 2013, deplored its "biased and disproportionate focus on Israel." By example, she cited an anti-Israel resolution sponsored by Syria at a time when it was butchering its own people.

But the anti-Israel bias was built into the council from its founding in 2006. Item 7 of its agenda calls for reviewing "human rights violations and implications of the Israeli occupation of Palestine and other occupied Arab territories and the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people," at each of its three annual meetings. It also appoints a Special Rapporteur "on the situation of human rights in the territories occupied since 1967." Over the past nine years, the UNHRC has condemned Israel 61 times, as opposed to its 16 resolutions on Syria and five on Iran. Denunciations of Israel outnumber those of all other countries combined.

This imbalance is all the more obscene given Israel's extraordinary human rights record. Though situated in the world's most unstable and violent region, Israel maintains a universally-respected and independent judicial system. Its Declaration of Independence promises all citizens full equality irrespective of "religion, race, or sex." Along with the United States, Great Britain, Australia, and Canada, Israel is one of the few nations never to have known a moment of non-democratic rule—and the only one never to have known peace. In Israel's parliament, the Knesset, Jews, Muslims, Christians, and Druze freely—and loudly—debate all issues. More admirably still, such discussions take place only a few hours' drive from where hundreds of thousands of innocent people have been massacred.

Admittedly, Israel must grapple with discrimination and the moral challenges of defending itself against terrorists who hide behind civilian populations. Mistakes have been made, especially in the heat of battle. And there remains the complex issue of the West Bank and its Israeli communities, which can be resolved should the Palestinians agree to return to negotiations. Nevertheless, Israel has upheld its commitment to human rights and rigorously worked to guarantee freedom for minority groups and the LGBTQ community. Yet all of those achievements have been ignored by the UNHRC and replaced by libels.

Repelled by this bigotry, as well by the rights-violating regimes

that often chaired its sessions, the Bush Administration refrained from appointing an ambassador to the council. That decision was reversed by President Obama, however, who believed that a U.S. presence on the body could redress some of its injustices, including that toward Israel. The decision disheartened Israelis who believed that America's involvement would only legitimize the council's prejudice. Unfortunately, our concern proved justified. Throughout the Obama years, UNHRC denunciations of Israel only multiplied.

Now the United States is once again rethinking its position.

On March 1, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Organizations Erin Barclay said the U.S. remained “deeply troubled by the council's unfair and unbalanced focus on one democratic country, Israel.” Such a position, if it resulted in a return to America's previous boycott of the council, would be warmly welcomed by Israel.

Israel is, of course, the Jewish State, and throughout history, there has been a name for the singling out and demonization of Jews. It's call anti-Semitism. By fixating on Israel and its alleged abuses, UNHRC fits the definition of anti-Semitism. The fact that the United States not only helps fund this racist body but is formally represented on it, should be reprehensible to all Americans.

As a nation aspiring to the highest standards of human rights, Israel of course supports any organization seeking to preserve them. That organization is emphatically not the UNHRC. At a time when anti-Semitism is on the rise in Europe as well as in the United States, withdrawal from the council would reaffirm America's determination to stand up to hatred against Jews and any ethnic, racial, or religious groups. Quitting the UNHRC would send a moral message to the world.

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