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Facts & Logic About the Middle East

April 25, 2017

Syria Is Tragic, North Korea Is a Loose Cannon— But Iran Is Imminently Deadly to the U.S., Israel and the World

Dear Friend of FLAME:

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson this past week reported that the U.S. will be conducting a “comprehensive review” of our policy toward Iran, noting that an “unchecked” Islamic Republic poses a threat to the entire world. He called Iran “the world’s leading state sponsor of terrorism.”

Tillerson also noted that the U.S. policy of “strategic patience” toward North Korea has been a failure, and that the Trump administration doesn’t want to wait for additional evidence that this approach will fail with Iran—which it surely would.

Indeed, also last week, Tillerson told Congress that the White House will evaluate the possibility of breaking the 2015 Iran Nuclear Deal based on Iran’s continued fomenting of terror around the globe—even though the administration has apparently verified that Iran is currently in compliance with the Deal.

Which is precisely the problem: Even if Iran obeys terms of the agreement to the letter, it still becomes more dangerous—and more nuclear enabled—every day. Just last Tuesday during a military parade in Teheran, Iran issued repeated threats of “death to Israel.” This follows warnings from the commander of Iran’s Revolutionary Guard in February that Teheran would soon give the U.S. “a strong slap in the face.”

Obviously, the last thing Israel—or the U.S. or the rest of the world—needs is a nuclear-armed Iran. At a minimum, we should trust them to do what they say they will do—and trust them to do more of what they’re already doing to destabilize the Middle East . . . in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, Afghanistan and Palestinian Gaza.

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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.S., 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's much greater obstacle to any permanent 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 withdrawal war by 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, producing Arab settlements by a 1000-year. Palestinians have never had a state nor possessed public land in the 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 19 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 on 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 deputy national security adviser Ben Rhodes complained to FOX's Holly Woodliffe of "tens of thousands of settlements being constructed" by Israel. In fact 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 220. 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, Judea, 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, Britain was settled by people into the British region, Turkey has settled Turks into Turkish-occupied Cyprus, and China has settled Chinese into occupied Tibet. The Israel 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—while allowing other nations to violate it liberally?

Myth #5: The Palestinians would make peace if settlement building stopped. In 2009, Israel gave new settlement activity for 10 months to entice the Palestinians to negotiations sponsored by the U.S. The Palestinians refused. Indeed, Israel has made numerous land-for-peace offers to the Palestinians, most recently in 2009 and in 2010, in which the Palestinians would have received more than 90 percent of the disputed territories, plus land swaps—plus a capital in Jerusalem. Yet the Arabs refused these offers. They refuse to accept Israel as a Jewish state and insist on "right" 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. Yet the Arabs refuse, citing Jewish settlements as an obstacle. One thing is certain: Settlements were never 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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IF YOU SUPPORT PUBLISHING FLAME'S BOLD PR MESSAGES,

This week's featured FLAME Hotline article, below, explains why Iran poses a greater threat than Syria and North Korea *combined*. Author of the article, Michael Oren, Israel's deputy minister for diplomacy and a Knesset member, also calls on the U.S. to get much tougher on Iran—by holding its feet to the fire on blatant disobedience of U.N. resolutions barring further testing of intercontinental ballistic missiles. Oren also urges the U.S. to extend the Nuclear Deal's prohibition of Iran's development of nuclear arms . . . *forever*.

I hope this short piece helps you articulate to friends, colleagues, and your representatives in Washington why we need President Trump to implement his campaign promises to replace the 2015 Nuclear Deal with an even tougher one—or at least to add much harsher restrictions on Iran's nuclear ambitions. The world, especially Israel and other threatened U.S. allies in the region would thank him heartily.

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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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.

Iran Is a Bigger Threat Than Syria and North Korea Combined

Damascus and Pyongyang violated their agreements. Tehran can comply and still threaten millions

By Michael Oren, *Wall Street Journal*, April 14, 2017

The U.S. has signed agreements with three rogue regimes strictly limiting their unconventional military capacities. Two of those regimes—Syria and North Korea—brazenly violated the agreements, provoking game-changing responses from President Trump. But the third agreement—with Iran—is so inherently

flawed that Tehran doesn't even have to break it. Honoring it will be enough to endanger millions of lives.

The framework agreements with North Korea and Syria, concluded respectively in 1994 and 2013, were similar in many ways. Both recognized that the regimes already possessed weapons of mass destruction or at least the means to produce them. Both assumed that the regimes would surrender their arsenals under an international treaty and open their facilities to inspectors. And both believed that these repressive states, if properly engaged, could be brought into the community of nations.

All those assumptions were wrong. After withdrawing from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Pyongyang tested five atomic weapons and developed intercontinental missiles capable of carrying them. Syrian dictator Bashar Assad, less than a year after signing the framework, reverted to gassing his own people. Bolstered by the inaction of the U.S. and backed by other powers, North Korea and Syria broke their commitments with impunity.

Or so it seemed. By ordering a Tomahawk missile attack on a Syrian air base, and a U.S. Navy strike force to patrol near North Korea's coast, the Trump administration has upheld the frameworks and placed their violators on notice. This reassertion of power is welcomed by all of America's allies, Israel among them. But for us, the most dangerous agreement of all is the one that may never need military enforcement. For us, the existential threat looms in a decade, when the agreement with Iran expires.

Like the frameworks with North Korea and Syria, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action of 2015 assumed that Iran would fulfill its obligations and open its facilities to inspectors. The JCPOA assumed that Iran would moderate its behavior and join the international community. Yet unlike its North Korean and Syrian allies, Iran was the largest state sponsor of terror and openly vowed to destroy another state—Israel. Unlike them, Iran systematically lied about its unconventional weapons program for 30 years. And unlike Damascus and Pyongyang, which are permanently barred from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, Tehran can look forward to building them swiftly and legitimately in the late 2020s, once the JCPOA expires.

This, for Israel and our neighboring Sunni states, is the appalling flaw of the JCPOA. The regime most committed to our destruction has been granted a free pass to develop military nuclear capabilities. Iran could follow the Syrian and North

Korean examples and cheat. Or, while enjoying hundreds of billions of dollars in sanctions relief, it can adhere to the agreement and deactivate parts of its nuclear facilities rather than dismantle them. It can develop new technologies for producing atomic bombs while testing intercontinental ballistic missiles. It can continue massacring Syrians, Iraqis and Yemenis, and bankrolling Hamas and Hezbollah. The JCPOA enables Iran to do all that merely by complying.

A nuclear-armed Iran would be as dangerous as “50 North Koreas,” Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told the U.N. in 2013, and Iran is certainly many times more dangerous than Syria. Yet Iran alone has been granted immunity for butchering civilians and threatening genocide. Iran alone has been guaranteed a future nuclear capability. And the Iranian regime—which brutally crushed a popular uprising in 2009—has amassed a million-man force to suppress any future opposition. Rather than moderating, the current regime promises to be more radical yet in another 10 years.

How can the U.S. and its allies pre-empt catastrophe? Many steps are possible, but they begin with penalizing Iran for the conventions it already violates, such as U.N. restrictions on missile development. The remaining American sanctions on Iran must stay staunchly in place and Congress must pass further punitive legislation. Above all, a strong link must be established between the JCPOA and Iran’s support for terror, its pledges to annihilate Israel and overthrow pro-American Arab governments, and its complicity in massacres. As long as the ayatollahs oppress their own population and export their tyranny abroad, no restrictions on their nuclear program can ever be allowed to expire.

In responding forcibly to North Korean and Syrian outrages, President Trump has made a major step toward restoring America’s deterrence power. His determination to redress the flaws in the JCPOA and to stand up to Iran will greatly accelerate that process. The U.S., Israel and the world will all be safer.

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Facts and Logic

About the Middle East

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