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Facts & Logic About the Middle East

June 13, 2017

To achieve an Israeli-Palestinian peace, President Trump should be realistic—and honest.

Dear Friend of FLAME:

Do you believe President Trump will make peace between Israel and the Palestinians?

If you're like most of us at FLAME—and most anybody who has studied and observed the region—your quick answer is probably “no.” For lots of powerful reasons, chances are very high that you're correct.

But that's because no U.S. President has yet had the courage to break the mold, to visualize the problem in a completely different way—or as the academics would say, to change the paradigm.

A key problem that has derailed all our Presidents over the last 50 years is their insistence on infantilizing the Palestinians. In other words, our diplomats—not just Presidents, but the State Department as well—believe the Palestinians lack the emotional or intellectual capability to handle reality.

One example: The Palestinians cannot have a state because they have no economy—they are 100% dependent on international handouts. Though the Palestinians have received many billions of dollars in foreign aid, they've failed absolutely to create sustainable economic engines. (They have, however, paid more than \$1 billion to Palestinian terrorists and their families over the last four years.) Shouldn't someone tell these people to get real—that the world doesn't work this way?

Another example: The Palestinians have insisted for some 20 years that in order for there to be peace with Israel some five million descendants of Palestinians who fled Israel in 1948 (which they erroneously call “refugees”) must be permitted to settle in Israel.

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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 such a positive obstacle to 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 mushroom 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, providing Arab settlement by 1,000 years. 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 Jordanian rule, when Jews were expelled 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—where 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 dignitary national security adviser Ben Rhodes complained to FOX's Kelly Rowland of "tens of thousands of settlements being constructed" by Israel. *But just no new settlements are under construction in Israel, and Israel has created no new settlements in some 20 years.* The number of settlements, plus illegal outposts, now stands near 200. While the number of settlers on living in established settlements has increased by 355,000 since 2013, the number of settlers living east of Israel's anti-army separation barrier has since 2009 increased by only 20,000. Less than 1% of the population in the disputed territories. In fact, 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 has settled its people into the Middle East, Turkey has settled Turks into Turkish-occupied Cyprus, and China has settled Chinese into occupied Tibet. *But 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 only Israel would stop building settlements.

"Israel has created no new settlements in some 20 years."

settled, in 2009, Israel's new settlement activity for 10 months to entice the Palestinians to negotiations sponsored by the U.S. 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, plus land swaps—plus a capital for 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 never a barrier to peace in 1948—when Israel was born and there were none—and they're not the obstacle today.*

This message has been published and paid for by

FLAME

Facts and Logic About the Middle East

PO Box 500, Jerusalem, 9100101
James Horowitz, President
Shoshie Wolf, Executive and President Emerita

FLAME is a tax-exempt, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. Its purpose is the research and publication of facts regarding international relations in the Middle East and surrounding areas in the region. No charitable contributions are accepted.

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Such a demand is absurd on its face, since such an influx of Arabs into the Jewish state would destroy the Israel's Jewish majority. Shouldn't someone tell the Palestinians to drop it, that this is not up for discussion?

Most importantly, shouldn't someone tell the Palestinians that the Arabs have waged and lost three wars against Israel—and lost a lot of land in the process—and that therefore they have virtually zero leverage in negotiating a peace deal? While it should go without saying—but clearly the Palestinians need a reminder—that they are now dealing with the strongest economic and military power in the Middle East: Israel.

Finally, someone should look the Palestinians in the eyes and inform them that the longer they resist making peace, the more settlements will have expanded (*there were none in 1967*), and worse their final deal will be.

George W. Bush called this tendency to protect people—like the Palestinians—from the obvious, glaring truth “the soft bigotry of low expectations.” More than unproductive, it's insulting—above all to the Palestinians, but also to the Israelis, who are dragged into nonsensical, time-wasting, “peace negotiations” every 7-10 years by the Americans and Europeans.

However, to his everlasting credit, while in Bethlehem President Trump at least yelled at Mahmoud Abbas for lying to him in Washington. The Palestinian president had sworn that his government is not inciting his people to terror and is preparing them for peace. Someone in Israel apparently had the guts to show Mr. Trump the disgraceful truth about the Palestinian Authority—its schools and media teach anti-Semitism and terror, and its leaders lie whenever speaking English.

But scolding Mr. Abbas is not enough. The author of this week's article, Dr. Mitchell Bard, offers a new way to deal with the Arabs on the Middle East—giving them the cold, unvarnished truth and nothing but. Bard is the author/editor of 24 books including “Myths and Facts: A Guide to the Arab-Israeli Conflict” and “The Arab Lobby.”

I hope this week's *Hotline* gives you a new way of thinking about how best to deal with the Arabs and especially the Palestinians. While it may take the President a few years to realize the wisdom of articulating these truths, with your help, FLAME will continue to hammer them home in mainstream and college media and to our supporters.

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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Finally, I hope you'll also quickly review the P.S. immediately below, which describes FLAME's recent *hasbarah* campaign to expose the Palestinians' funding of Islamic terrorists using U.S. taxpayer dollars.

Best regards,

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

P.S. Did you know: By subsidizing the corrupt Palestinian Authority (P.A.) with aid of some \$400 million taxpayer dollars a year, the U.S. is also funding the P.A.'s program of paying salaries to Palestinian terrorists who have killed innocent Americans and Israelis? In order to make Americans—especially college and university students—aware of this Palestinian practice of rewarding jihadi assailants and murderers with U.S. funds, FLAME has recently been publishing a new position paper: "[U.S. Funds Palestinian Terrorism](#)" This paid editorial has appeared 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](#).

What Trump Should Say About Israel

By Mitchell Bard, *The Allgemeiner*, May 21, 2017

FLAME Editor's Note: This article was written before President Trump's recent Middle East trip, but the points it makes are enduring, serving as a kind of manifesto for the positions and values the United States should adopt and articulate—both in the Middle East and worldwide, and most importantly in the U.S. itself.

I'm not sure if the media will take time out from discussing Donald Trump's alleged collusion with the Russians to focus on the very important foreign policy meetings that he will have this week with Arab leaders, Israel's prime minister and the Palestinian Authority president.

Regardless of his personal political imbroglios, what Trump says during his visit to the Middle East could have a profound impact on the future of US relations in the region, and the prospects for advancing an Arab-Israeli peace.

While a lot will be written about whether Trump goes to the Western Wall and who accompanies him, what he says at Yad Vashem and whether he gives a speech at Masada, the optics of the trip are far less important than the substance. For this trip to be successful, Trump must show the people of Israel that they can take risks for peace because they have the full support of the United States.

Trump must make clear to the Palestinians that the United States will no longer exert or tolerate the one-sided pressure placed on Israel, and that the Palestinian people must make concessions if they hope to obtain American support for the establishment of their own state. Toward those ends, Trump should make the following key points:

- The United States and Israel have an unshakeable alliance based on shared values and interests, and the US intends to strengthen this special relationship.
- The United States calls for direct negotiations between Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas to begin immediately, without any preconditions. The United States stands ready to facilitate and participate in these talks.
- The United States will not impose terms on Israel.
- The United States does not believe that the 1949 Armistice Line should demarcate the borders of Israel and a future Palestinian state.

- The United States recognizes the change in the demography of the region, and does not expect Israel to evacuate all settlements in the West Bank.
- The United States supports the idea of a land swap that would involve the annexation of some Jewish settlements by Israel, and Israel's withdrawal from part of the West Bank.
- The United States recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of the state of Israel, and will move the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem at the earliest practicable date.
- The United States recognizes the Western Wall as a holy site of the Jewish people, and part of Israel's capital in Jerusalem—and believes that the Wall should remain under the full control of Israel. The United States also recognizes that the Al-Aqsa Mosque is holy to the Muslims, and should remain under the administration of the Waqf, and that the Christian holy sites should remain under the supervision of Christian authorities.
- The United States expects Israel to show restraint in settlement construction, and to limit new building to the settlement blocs that will be part of Israel in the future. The US does not consider buildings in Jerusalem to be settlements, and does not expect Israel to freeze all construction in the West Bank as a condition for resuming peace negotiations.
- The United States believes that Palestinian refugees should be given the option of living in a future Palestinian state, but do not have a right to live in Israel.
- The United States insists that the Palestinian Authority immediately end its “pay for slay” policy of providing salaries to terrorists in Israeli jails, and to the families of those terrorists and other “martyrs.”
- The United States also insists on an immediate end to all Palestinian incitement, and a review of the Palestinian educational system and media to ensure that they do not promote hatred of Jews or violence against Israelis.
- The United States is prepared to provide generous aid directly to social and welfare programs benefitting the Palestinian people, but will withhold or cut aid if the PA fails to meet the aforementioned demands.

- The United States will not negotiate with Hamas unless it meets the conditions set by the international community of recognizing Israel's right to exist, ceasing terrorism and agreeing to abide by Israeli-Palestinian agreements.
- The United States expects the Gulf Arab nations to normalize relations with Israel as part of negotiations that will lead to a comprehensive peace agreement.
- The United States will oppose or veto anti-Israel resolutions proposed by any UN body, and will consider withdrawing and/or cutting funds from UN agencies that condemn Israel.
- The United States opposes any and all efforts to delegitimize Israel, and will work with other countries to preempt and defeat Boycott, Divestment and Sanction (BDS) campaigns against Israel.
- The United States will fight Islamic extremists, including Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Hezbollah, side by side with Israel and our Arab allies.
- The United States will ensure that Israel maintains its qualitative military edge, and will renegotiate the 10-year military aid deal signed by President Obama to provide additional funds, allow Israel to spend some of the aid in Israel and to eliminate the conditions penalizing Israel for seeking assistance from the US Congress.
- The United States will not allow Iran to obtain nuclear weapons, will ensure that it fulfills its obligations under the agreement negotiated by President Obama and will impose additional sanctions to punish Iran if it continues to develop ballistic missiles, sponsor terrorism and destabilize the region.

It is unlikely that Trump will express many of these sentiments (Editor's note: He did not.), but doing so would enhance his credibility in the region, and lay the groundwork for a possible comprehensive peace agreement.

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About the Middle East

PO Box 3460

Berkeley, CA 94703

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