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Facts & Logic About the Middle East

June 27, 2017

Will President Trump’s Envoys—Kushner and Greenblatt—believe Palestinian Lies?

Dear Friend of FLAME:

Did you follow accounts last week of the Trump administration’s excellent adventures in the Middle East?

President Trump has sent two Jews—known for their negotiating prowess—to the Middle East to bring the Israelis and Palestinians together for peace talks.

Reports last week on progress of the envoys—Jared Kushner and Jason Greenblatt—indicate it’s not going that well with the Palestinians.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas already is said to be seething at Kushner for representing the “Israeli side.” Kushner apparently had the temerity to raise American objections to Palestinian salaries paid to convicted terrorist-murderers, which Abbas defends as a “social responsibility.”

It’s rumored also that the Palestinians are refusing outright to meet with U.S. Ambassador to Israel, David Friedman, known to strongly support moving the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, as well as expansion of Israeli settlements in Judea and Samaria.

In a briefing last week held by the Middle East Forum with Elliot Abrams, the former diplomat was asked why Trump & Co. seem so naïve when Arabs maintain they just want peace. You may recall that Mr. Trump upbraided Abbas last month in Bethlehem for lying to him about the Palestinian leadership a) preparing their people for a peace deal with Jews and b) *not* inciting them to violence against Jews.

Were you as incredulous as I was when I heard this story? How

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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, such people think is preventing peace.

What are the facts?

Palestinian Arabs have vociferously 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 regarded with a mixture of awe 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 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 of Jews? Why should Arabs be welcomed in Israel 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 national security adviser Ben Rhodes complained to PLO's Jibril Mubarak 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 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-terrorism separation barrier has since 2009 increased by only 20,000. And 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." Cyprus and China have neither Chinese nor 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 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.

settled in 2009, Israel has 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. But the Arabs turned them down. They refuse to accept Israel as a Jewish state and insist on "right" of the 5 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. In the Arabic region, citing Israeli settlements as an excuse. One thing is certain: Settlements were never made 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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could our President believe Abbas in the first place? We pro-Israel advocates know full well what Palestinian media and schools teach: All the Holy Land belongs to the Arabs, and killing Jews—violent religious jihad—is a glorious solution.

Abrams offered a plausible explanation for this gullibility: The people now representing the U.S.—Kushner, Friedman, Greenblatt—have never heard the Arab side of the argument. They've been sheltered by speaking only to people who agree with them about Israel. When these inexperienced envoys sit down with the king of Jordan, Saudi royalty or even Abbas, the Arabs make passionate, convincing arguments—for example, that moving the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem will spark violent upheaval in the Muslim Middle East.

While Abrams doesn't believe such Arab claims, he said it's understandable how someone hearing these positions for the first time from Arab leaders might be taken in

We hope President Trump—or at least Kushner and Greenblatt—have the chance to read this week's featured FLAME *Hotline* article, below. It provides a good outline of the Palestinians' intractable—and manifestly fantastical—negotiating positions over the past several decades.

More importantly, author Bassam Tawil, “a Muslim living in the Middle East,” gives Team Trump a concise diplomatic primer for dealing with the Palestinians, with a special emphasis on Arab mendacity. No matter what Mahmoud Abbas says to Trump in English, he neither wants to negotiate a realistic peace, nor will his people allow him to.

Finally, Tawil points out that President Trump's efforts to make peace could actually cause damage—in the form of dashed expectations—if the Palestinians actually believe Kushner and Greenblatt will strong-arm the Israelis into untenable positions. That disappointment has in the past turned into Palestinian intifadas or terrorist murder sprees.

In short, this week's *Hotline* makes you an expert in just a few minutes on why Mr. Trump's Middle East peace efforts are likely to fail and why it behooves his envoys to stop the folly now, before it actually makes matters worse.

For this reason, 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

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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.

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The Ongoing Drama of Palestinian Lies

By Bassam Tawil, Gatestone Institute, June 22, 2017

US envoys Jason Greenblatt and Jared Kushner, who met this week in Jerusalem and Ramallah with Israeli and Palestinian Authority (PA) officials to discuss reviving the peace process,

have discovered what previous US Middle East envoys learned in the past two decades -- that the PA has not, cannot, and will not change.

Abbas also made it clear that he has no intention to make concessions on the "right of return" for Palestinian "refugees." This means he wants a Palestinian state next to Israel while flooding Israel with millions of Palestinian "refugees" and turning it, too, into another Palestinian state.

At the meeting, Abbas also reiterated his demand that Israel release all Palestinian prisoners, including convicted murderers with Jewish blood on their hands, as part of any peace agreement. The release of terrorists in the past has only resulted in increased terrorism against Israel.

According to Abbas's spokesperson, Nabil Abu Rudaineh, the PA president told Kushner and Greenblatt that a "just and comprehensive peace should be based on all United Nations resolutions (pertaining to the Israeli-Arab conflict) and the (2002) Arab Peace Initiative." Translation: Israel must withdraw to the indefensible pre-1967 lines and allow armed Palestinian factions to sit on the hilltops overlooking Ben Gurion Airport and Tel Aviv.

Abbas's position reflects accurately the policy of the PA leadership over the past two decades -- a policy that has been regularly relayed to all previous US administrations, successive Israeli governments and the international community.

To his credit, Abbas has been nothing short of consistent. He has never, ever, displayed a willingness to offer any concessions to Israel. He misses no opportunity to reaffirm his demands to all world leaders and government officials, with whom he meets on a regular basis.

Nonetheless, some in the international community still believe that Abbas or any other Palestinian leader will be able to make concessions in return for peace with Israel.

Incredibly, Kushner and Greenblatt seem to believe that they can succeed where all others have failed. The two inexperienced US envoys are laboring under the illusion that they will persuade Abbas and the PA leadership to drop demands such as the "right of return," the release of imprisoned terrorists and a cessation of construction in settlements.

Why President Trump's envoys are creating the dangerously misleading impression that peace is possible under the current

PA leadership is nothing short of a mystery.

Creating such an impression is likely to boomerang with a vengeance; the higher the expectations, the greater the disappointment. Giving the Palestinians the feeling that the Trump administration holds a magic wand for solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will eventually increase Palestinian bitterness and hostility towards both the Americans and Israel. When the Palestinians wake up to the fact that the Trump administration will not strong-arm Israel to its knees, they will resume their rhetorical attacks against Washington, accusing it once again of being "biased" in favor of Israel.

This was precisely the fate of previous US administrations and presidents who disappointed the Palestinians by failing to impose dictates on Israel. The Palestinians are still dreaming of the day that the US or any other superpower would force Israel to comply with all their demands.

When Israel does not comply with their list of demands, the Palestinians will accuse it of "destroying" the peace process.

Worse still, the Palestinians will use this charge as an excuse to redouble their terror attacks against Israelis. The Palestinian claim, as always, will be that they are being forced to resort to terrorism in light of the failure of yet another US-sponsored peace process.

The Trump administration is making a colossal mistake in thinking that Abbas or any of his Palestinian Authority cronies can exhibit any flexibility whatsoever toward Israel, particularly concerning Jerusalem, settlements and the "right of return."

No doubt, Abbas cannot find it within himself to clarify to the American envoys that he lacks a mandate from his people to make any step toward peace with Israel. Abbas knows, even if the American representatives do not, that any move in that direction would end his career, and very possibly his life. Abbas also does not wish to go down in Palestinian history as the treacherous leader who "sold out to the Jews."

Despite the best intentions of the US envoys and others in the international community, Abbas knows full well the fate of any Palestinian leader who even considers "collaboration" with the "Zionist entity." Abbas, whose term in office expired in 2009 and is seen as an illegitimate president by many Palestinians, is not even in a position to offer Israel any concessions for peace. First, someone can come along later and say, quite correctly,

that as Abbas has exceeded his legitimate term in office, any deal he makes is illegal and illegitimate.

Abbas also cannot halt anti-Israel incitement; he cannot stop payments to convicted murderers and their families and he cannot accept Jewish sovereignty over the Western Wall in Jerusalem. Even if some of his aides sometimes come out with statements suggesting that the PA leadership is prepared to consider some concessions on these issues, these remarks should not be taken seriously: they are only intended for Western audiences.

The PA's declared position is that it has already made enough concessions by merely recognizing Israel's right to exist and dropping Palestinian claims to "all of Palestine." This position argues that it is Israel, and not the Palestinians, that needs to make concessions for peace.

"We have reached the red line with regards to making concessions [to Israel]," explained Ashraf al-Ajrami, a former PA cabinet minister. "We have already made a series of concessions on the core issues, while Israel has not presented us with anything."

It might be recalled that this statement by the former PA official is a staggering lie, given the generous offers, gestures and concessions made by successive Israeli prime ministers and governments over the past two decades.

Again and again, all Israeli initiatives have been met with Palestinian rejectionism and stepped-up violence.

The offer made by Prime Minister Ehud Barak at Camp David in 2000 to withdraw from most of the territories Israel captured in 1967 was met with the Second Intifada.

The Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip five years later was misinterpreted by Palestinians as a sign of weakness and retreat, and resulted in thousands of rockets and missiles being fired at Israel. Another generous and unprecedented offer by Prime Minister Ehud Olmert fell on deaf ears.

The current policy of the Palestinian Authority leadership is to avoid alienating the Trump administration by continuing to pretend that Abbas and his cronies are serious about achieving peace with Israel. This is why Abbas's representatives are careful not to criticize Trump or his envoys.

Abbas wants to deceive the Trump administration into believing that he has the courage, will and mandate to make peace with Israel, the same way he lied to previous Israeli prime ministers. This is the same Abbas who, for the past 10 years, has not been able to even go back to his private residence in the Gaza Strip, which remains under Hamas control.

But in private, some senior Palestinian officials have been criticizing the Trump administration for simply daring to make demands of the PA leadership, such as halting anti-Israel incitement and the payment of salaries to imprisoned terrorists and their families. In other words, what the Palestinian officials are saying is that either Trump accepts our demands or he can go to hell.

"The Americans have actually endorsed the Israeli position," complained Hanna Amireh, a senior PLO official.

"The Palestinian leadership rejects the demand to stop financial aid to the prisoners and their families... Instead of setting preconditions for the Palestinians, the Americans must demand an end to Israeli settlement construction and incitement."

In the twisted world of the Palestinian Authority leadership, Israeli demands for an end to the Palestinian glorification of murderers is itself an act of "incitement."

How dare Israel demand that the PA leadership halt funds to imprisoned terrorists and their families? How dare Israel expose incitement and glorification of murderers and terrorists?

The PA leadership simply cannot fathom the problem with naming streets, public squares and youth and women's centers after murderers of Jews.

It is only a matter of time before the PA leadership begins openly to accuse the Trump administration of being biased in favor of Israel. In the world of Abbas and his cronies, any US administration that does not swallow their lies and fabrications is a "hostile" party that is controlled by Jews and Zionists.

This is precisely what the Palestinians said about Trump and his team during the US presidential election campaign.

The PA leadership has indeed softened its tone against Trump and his advisors since they won the election. Yet this modified tone has one goal: for the PA to avoid accusations of being anti-

peace.

In fact, the PA leadership has changed its tone, not its tune. We are witnessing a tactical and temporary move on the part of the Palestinians. This play-acting will end soon enough. The question remains, will the West notice that the curtain has gone down on the show?



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