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# FLAME HOTLINE

Facts & Logic About the Middle East

August 15, 2017

## Iran Continues to Seize Territory—and Influence—Faster than the West Can Respond

Dear Friend of FLAME:

Iran is one of the most tenacious, most determined and—let’s admit it—shrewdest enemies the U.S. has ever faced. Like an unstoppable plague, the Islamic Republic continues to advance its interests in a many-tentacled global campaign—quietly, steadily aggrandizing territory and political control.

The U.S., led by our Congress and President Trump, seems intent on stopping—or at least slowing down—Iran’s march to worldwide hegemony. But it often seems like too little too late. Let’s quickly review Iran’s efforts and successes:

- Iran is currently conducting a campaign of harassment of U.S. ships and aircraft—most recently using an unmanned drone to close in on and distract a U.S. Navy F/A 18 Super Hornet fighter as the plane began its tricky landing pattern toward the deck of the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz. This is the 13th incidence of Iran’s interference with U.S. naval operations in the Persian Gulf, the previous being Iranian naval patrol boats shining laser beams at a U.S. helicopter in flight, creating a hazard for the helicopter crew.
- Iran helped foment violent demonstrations around Israel’s Temple Mount last month in the wake of Israel’s installation of metal detectors to prevent further smuggling of weapons into al Aksa Mosque. Palestinian sources confirm that Iran spent millions of shekels to provide boxed food for demonstrators, each box of which contained solidarity messages urging “liberation” of the holy site. This is just one example of Iran’s multi-fanged involvement in Palestinian politics. It’s heated diplomatic relations with the Palestinian terror group, Hamas, is another.
- In Afghanistan, as the U.S. draws down troops and investment, Iran is increasing political and financial support of the Taliban,

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### U.S. Funds Palestinian Terrorism

**Yens of millions of U.S. taxpayer dollars are spent annually to pay salaries to Palestinian terrorists who murder innocent civilians in Israel.**

*In prep for the virtually bankrupt Palestinian Authority (PA), the U.S. sends Palestinians more than \$400 million a year and the P.A. however spends some \$140 million annually to reward jihadists and their families for murderous acts that kill innocent Americans and Israelis.*

**What are the facts?**

In June 2016, 13-year-old **Hafid** tells his best friend was killed in death in his bed by a Palestinian terrorist who broke into his family's home. In March of this year, 28-year-old **Salim** Fares, a West Point graduate and honorably U.S. Army veteran from Texas, was killed as he walked with his wife to help in a traffic accident.

“You can't be a partner in peace when you are paying people to commit terrorist acts.”

**Senator Lindsey Graham**

For more than 20 years, the Palestinian government has openly used aid and donations from the U.S. and other countries to recruit and reward terrorists. Depending on the number of people murdered in a terrorist attack, salaries range from \$20k to \$2,500 per month. Terrorists with families and who die in the act are paid and sentenced to 20 years or more receive the highest allowance. These expenditures—a hefty \$140 million per year—make up an estimated 10% of the Palestinian Authority's total budget.

In addition to financial incentives for terror, jihadists also receive abundant moral support from the Palestinian government. Palestinian president **Mahmoud Abbas** has said: “We welcome every drop of blood spilled in Jerusalem. This is pure blood, clean blood... With the help of Allah, every martyr will be his hero, and every martyr will get his reward.”

**U.S. Funds to the Palestinian Authority.** According to a Congressional Research Service report, the U.S. since the mid-2010s has contributed more than \$3 billion in security assistance and bilateral economic aid to the P.A., and American taxpayers' current annual commitment is now some \$400 million. In fact, Palestinians are the world's largest per-capita recipients of international aid.

“While a 2015 State Department report praised the Palestinian Authority for making ‘terrorism financing a criminal offense,’” the P.A. still has time on its hands.

In order to achieve a serious and lasting peace between Israel and the Palestinians, convicted terrorists or other those who while committing terrorism must not compensated by the Palestinian government for their crimes. It is a travesty that American taxpayer dollars subsidize the heinous practices, and Congress should cease urgently its role in it.

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which is girding itself to retake territory it lost to American and Afghan forces. Since Iran shares a 400-mile border with Afghanistan, this will dramatically extend Iranian influence to its east.

- Since the 1980s, Iran has funded numerous Iranian preachers and local apparatchiks in Latin America and gained footholds in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico, and Peru. Let's also not forget the Iran-engineered bombing of the Jewish community center in Buenos Aires in 1994, which killed 85 people.
- Iran is actively funding radical Houthi rebels in Yemen, seeking to destabilize the Gulf nation that borders Saudi Arabia.
- And finally, of course, Iran has its own boots on the ground in Syria, as well as supporting an army of thousands of Hizbollah militants, attempting to defeat ISIS and Syrian rebels in order to create a land bridge from Iran westward to the Mediterranean Sea. This will effectively install a permanent enemy military presence within miles of Israel's border with Syria.

While the U.S. has recently ratcheted up sanctions on Iran for its ICBM missile tests and its sponsorship of terrorism, and while Iran indeed suffers under more than \$100 billion in foreign debt, the Islamic Republic is focused, fervent and willing to sacrifice its immediate economic welfare in order to promote its global Shiite revolution. Meanwhile, under the U.S.-Iran Nuclear Deal, Iran continues to slowly build up its nuclear capability, looking for a breakout in just 13 short years.

To help you understand the alarming dangers of the Iranian juggernaut and the urgency for responding with more forceful measures, I commend you to the brief, but powerful FLAME *Hotline* featured article, below, by Naftali Bennett, a member of Israel's Security Cabinet and its Education and Diaspora Affairs Minister.

Mr. Bennett makes clear that the current Syria ceasefire agreement brokered by the U.S. and Russia only serves Iran's drive to create a path to through Syria to the sea. He implores the U.S. to make a firm commitment to preventing this momentous advance in Iran's global hegemony—within easy shooting distance of Israel's northern border. Suffice it to say, we at FLAME share Mr. Bennett's alarm and support his exhortation that the U.S. stand firm against Iran on this critical front.

## 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, on an equally urgent note (there are so many during these troubled times!), I hope you'll also quickly review the P.S. immediately below, which describes FLAME's long-running *hasbarah* campaign to promote a Congressional bill that withdraws U.S. funding to the Palestinians as long as they use \$300 million a year of foreign aid to pay salaries as an incentive to terrorists.

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](#).

## Iran is Using Syria to Advance Toward the Mediterranean

By Naftali Bennett, *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 7, 2017

**Hezbollah announced last month that it had captured the Syrian-Lebanese border area** of Juroud Aarsal from Islamic State forces. Far from being a minor development in a violent and unstable region, this marks another Iranian success in its quest for power and dominance across the Middle East.

Since its 1979 revolution, Iran has sought to become a dominant world power capable of imposing Islamic rule on as many people as possible. The Iranian regime finances and supports armed militias in other countries and is the world's top exporter of terror. Hundreds if not thousands of Americans have died at the hands of Iran's terrorist proxies.

An essential part of Tehran's grand strategy is to control a land corridor from Iran to the Mediterranean Sea. Under the cover of Syria's bloody civil war, Hezbollah is helping to build such a highway. Hezbollah, trained and supported by Tehran, is classified as a terror group by the U.S., France and the Arab League, among others.

**Its effort endangers the entire Western world.** Controlling this corridor would directly connect Iran with its proxies in Syria and Lebanon, allowing it to transfer advanced weapons cheaply and quickly. The highway would let Iran build its military presence on the Mediterranean, bringing much of Europe into the range of its air force, navy and midrange missiles. Iran could even build arms factories outside its borders.

Iranian apologists frame Hezbollah's capture of the border area as a victory over ISIS, as if the U.S.-led coalition ought to be cheering. ISIS needs to be stopped, but Iran is a far greater problem in the long run. Tehran shouldn't be mistaken for part of the solution.

As Syria disintegrated through civil war, Iran acted swiftly. It broke international law and forcefully expelled the Sunni population and replaced it with Shiites. This changed the local demography to support Tehran's planned land corridor through Syria and Iraq. Iran also sent its generals to train Bashar Assad's troops. Hezbollah has effectively morphed from a terror group into a division of the Iranian army, working for Tehran not only in Lebanon and Syria, but also in Yemen and Iraq.

In the game of chess that Syria has become, Western leaders

are so focused on the knight attacking their pawns they cannot see the queen maneuvering to defeat them. Mistaking ISIS as the most serious threat has allowed Iran to move its pieces forward and gain better position. The nuclear deal Iran signed in 2015 demonstrates Tehran's patience, as it temporarily slows the country's preparations to acquire nuclear weapons without stopping them over the long term.

**I and others are concerned by the cease-fire in southern Syria** brokered by the U.S., Russia and Jordan last month. With American and allied forces present in the north, Iran has focused its efforts on the south. The hiatus from violence in that region only gives Tehran another piece of territory in its bid to build a highway to the coast.

It will take time and patience to stop Iran. The international community needs to defeat Tehran wherever its forces advance: in cyberspace, on the battlefields of Yemen and Iraq, and in advanced-weapons laboratories. This effort will be both public and covert, economic and technological. If it results in direct military confrontation, Iran's foes must be ready to win there too.

Iran must be made to pay a price every day its soldiers remain on Syrian soil helping the Assad regime kill its own people. Tehran's leaders must know that every violation of the nuclear deal will trigger harsh sanctions. They cannot direct terror attacks in Europe, Asia and America and expect the world to ignore their actions.

**There are many possible courses of action against Iran.** Yet the free world—led by the U.S.—has yet to take the first and most important step: declaring that it cannot abide an Iranian empire from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea.

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