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Facts & Logic About the Middle East

March 20, 2018

Is Donald Trump Good for Israel? It's Complicated—Yet So Clear

Dear Friend of FLAME:

Do you think President Trump is good for Israel? Do you think his recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel was a good thing?

To my surprise, when I've asked these questions over the last few weeks, many supporters of Israel—even many attending the big AIPAC Israel love-fest in Washington—answered equivocally.

On the Jerusalem question, many Democrats answered to the effect of, "Well, I don't know—the timing wasn't great." I got this answer about "timing" so often, it felt scripted. I started asking a follow-on: "How would you have felt if Barack Obama had recognized Jerusalem?" Then the answer was always something like, "Well, I would have felt a lot better."

It's no wonder: Feelings exert a major influence on people's political opinions. How we *feel* about a politician—our gut reaction to him or her—heavily affects our evaluation of that politician, regardless of the politician's actual deeds.

In Trump's case, this is bad news for Israel. Let's face it: For many Jews, no doubt most American Jews, President Obama was a prince—articulate, spoke inspiringly, well educated, intellectual, thoughtful, a humanist who seemed genuinely to *care*. Trump is quite different—many find him loutish, undisciplined, inarticulate, inconstant, careless about facts, impetuous—which makes him easy for many to disrespect, even hate.

Yet President Obama committed one of the most egregious betrayals ever against Israel, when the U.S.

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YOU DESERVE TO KNOW THE TRUTH...

Palestinian Mythology

Palestinian Arabs claim full ownership of the Holy Land, denying any Jewish connection or rights—all based on deceptive lies, all easily proven false.

In this one of "fake news," it is often hard to tell truth from fiction. Indeed, Palestinian Arab leaders have constructed an elaborate false mythology to justify their war against Israel and the Jewish people. It's time to lift the curtain on these myths—no respecter of persons allowed.

What are the facts?

Every ethnic group has the right to create its own narrative—but such a narrative should be based on truth, especially when it denies the rights of others. We may disagree on interpretation, but at least we should agree on the facts. So, let us consider five core tenets of the Palestinian narrative and judge their moral strength by adherence to the truth. We want fact that modern Palestinian myths are an unfair attempt to disintegrate the Jewish people from Israel—their ancestral homeland.

1. Palestinians are indigenous to the Holy Land:

False. President Mahmoud Abbas often claims Palestinians are related to the biblical Canaanites, a group that vanished 2,000 years ago. This claim has no basis in archeological or genetic research. Nearly all Palestinians trace their lineage to Arab lands. What's more, unlike the Jews, Palestinians have no unique language, culture or religion—essential markers of indigenous peoples. Indeed, historians, archeologists, biblical records, and the Bible itself affirm conclusively that Jews founded a kingdom in the Holy Land some 3,000 years ago—before arrival of the Arabs—and have lived in the lands of present-day Israel, Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) ever since.

2. Israel occupies Palestinian land: **False.** No Abbas and even mainstream media frequently refer to "Palestinian land." In truth, the Palestinians have never had a state, nor have they had sovereignty over any land in the Middle East. Aside from individual private holdings, there is no defined public Palestinian land in the disputed territories. Nonetheless, Israel has many times offered to turn over most of land it won after its independence war against Jordan in 1947 in exchange for peace, but the Palestinians have refused all these offers.

3. Jerusalem is the capital of the Palestinian people:

False. Palestinian leaders consistently demand Jerusalem as a Muslim and Christian capital—excluding 1,000 years of Jewish history and Jerusalem's continuity as Judaism. Indeed, history shows King David founded Jerusalem as the capital of the Jewish kingdom around 1000 BC, before the advent of Islam. Jerusalem is cited 609 times in the Hebrew Bible and has a single verse in the Quran. Moreover, Jerusalem has never been an Arab capital, and for most of the city's history, Jews have been the majority population.

4. Palestinians have a right of return to Israel: **False.** Having approximately 700,000 Arabs who left Israel in 1948, when five Arab armies attacked, only about 10,000 are still alive today. Some live in the disputed territories of Judea and Samaria, and many over the 70 years have made homes in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. Nonetheless, the Palestinians claim that 5.3 million descendants of these refugees—children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren—are also refugees. No other descendants in world history have ever been considered refugees. Indeed, no displaced refugees, in other circumstances, have retained legal rights to return to their original homes after a war. Any such returns have always been negotiated among the parties—and so they will be in a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians.

5. Israel is guilty of apartheid against the Palestinians: **False.** Palestinian leaders frequently accuse Israel of committing genocide, ethnic cleansing and apartheid. In fact, Israel's two million Arab citizens enjoy full civil rights and freedom—greater than those in Arab nations. Palestinians in the West Bank, on the other hand, are largely self-governing but increasingly dramatically so by being free from any of their Arab neighbors. Limitations on Palestinian movement within the West Bank exist only when necessary to prevent Arab terrorism against Israelis, which continues to this day. In short, accusations of discriminatory subjugation of Palestinians by Israel are false and malign.

Peace between Israel and the Palestinians must be based on the truth and good faith.

The Nazis consistently repeated "the Big Lie" to convince their people to wage an unprecedented, genocidal war. Indeed, Palestinians repeat falsehoods to convince the world that Jews are evil, unfeeling conquerors. I urge the Palestinians agree to negotiate peace with Israel—based on the truth and good faith. They are badly misled and are hurting themselves and Israel's reputation for independence.

This message has been published and paid for by

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FLAME is the only organization that defends

failed for the first time to veto a blatantly anti-Israel United Nations Security Council resolution. Resolution 2334 passed on December 23, 2016, disavowing Israeli sovereignty over much of Jerusalem, including the Jewish quarter and the Western Wall. Many Jewish Democrats who loved Mr. Obama still have difficulty condemning him for this treachery.

Likewise, many Jewish Democrats who find Donald Trump repugnant have difficulty praising him for his bold, brave—and manifestly beneficial—commitment to relocate the American Embassy to Jerusalem, despite the fact that the majority of Americans support this move and that Congress passed a law to that effect in 1995.

Those who follow FLAME's positions know that we are "administration agnostic." We loved Obama when he supported Israel, hated him when he didn't. Likewise, Trump: So far, on support of Israel, we have to give him an "A."

However, should the Trump administration issue terms of a peace deal in the coming weeks that calls for Israel to divide Jerusalem or relinquish all rights to Judea and Samaria, we will oppose him fiercely. We don't play partisan political games when it comes to supporting the Jewish state.

We recommend that you, too, set aside emotional responses to your party or candidate of choice when it comes to Israel. Always support politicians who support Israel—whenever they support Israel, no matter how much you "like" them or not. In other words, we always like them when they support Israel.

Which brings us to this week's FLAME *Hotline*-featured article, by firebrand Israeli commentator Caroline Glick. She asks and answers the question: Was just-fired Secretary of State Rex Tillerson good for Israel? Glick concludes that he was *not*. Trump will not countenance advisors who are reluctant to support his policies—and Tillerson was not onboard vis a vis Israel.

As usual, Glick pulls no punches. She clarifies why President Trump's refusal to indulge the politically and morally bankrupt Palestinian Authority—unlike so many administrations before—is the best possible strategy for achieving peace.

I hope you'll forward this article to friends, family and

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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fellow congregants to help them understand why we should support President Trump's Jerusalem policy and why the firing of Tillerson is a net gain for Israel.

I hope you'll also quickly review the P.S. immediately below, which describes FLAME's latest hasbarah campaign—exposing Palestinian lies intended to dispossess Israel of its rights to a state in the Holy Land. I hope you agree with and will support this message.

Best regards,

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

P.S. As you may have read, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and other Palestinian leaders spread blatant lies in the U.N. and other forums almost daily—about Jewish history in Jerusalem and the Holy Land in general, about Palestinian origins, Palestinian refugees and many other factual matters. No wonder FLAME has created a new editorial message —"[Palestinian Mythology](#)"—which is about to run in mainstream 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, the U.S. Congress and President Trump stay focused on—and take actions against—Iran's threat to our country, Israel and the entire world.

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](#).

Firing Tillerson removed an obstacle to peace

By Caroline Glick, *Breitbart.com*, March 16, 2018

As Secretary of State Rex Tillerson was being fired on Tuesday, his central assumptions about the Palestinian conflict with Israel, which are shared by the entire Washington foreign policy establishment, literally blew up in Gaza.

On Tuesday morning, Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah's convoy was attacked by a roadside bomb during an official visit in Hamas-controlled Gaza.

Hamdallah was in Gaza to inaugurate a wastewater treatment facility sponsored by the World Bank. The facility was approved 14 years ago, but infighting between Hamas, which runs Gaza, and Fatah, the PLO ruling faction which controls the Palestinian Authority (PA), blocked its operation time after time.

The shuttered water treatment facility in northern Gaza has long been a monument to the Palestinian leadership's incompetence and indifference to the plight of the people it is supposed to be serving. As the plant gathered dust, Gaza plunged deeper and deeper into a water crisis.

As the Times of Israel reported, Gaza has two water problems: insufficient ground water, and massive pollution of the existing supply due to the absence of sufficient sewage treatment facilities.

Untreated sewage is dumped directly into the Mediterranean Sea, and then seeps back into Gaza's groundwater.

Gaza's polluted acquifiers only produce a quarter of its water needs, and due to insufficient water treatment facilities, 97 percent of Gaza's natural water sources are unsafe for human consumption.

Hamdallah's visit to Hamas-controlled Gaza was supposed to show that the Fatah-Hamas unity deal Egypt brokered between the two terror groups last year was finally enabling them to solve Gaza's humanitarian needs.

And then Hamdallah's convoy was bombed, and the

whole charade of Palestinian governing competence and responsibility was put to rest.

Later in the day, the White House held a Middle East [summit](#) that demonstrated Tillerson's basic assumptions have the problems of the Middle East precisely backwards.

Under the leadership of Jared Kushner, President Donald Trump's son-in-law, along with Jason Greenblatt, Trump's senior negotiator, Israeli officials sat in the White House for the first time with Arab officials from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Oman, and Qatar. Representatives from Egypt and Jordan, with which Israel enjoys open diplomatic relations, were also in attendance. Canadian and European officials participated as well.

Although they were invited, the Palestinians chose to boycott the conference. Their boycott was telling. The PA claimed it was boycotting the conference in retaliation for America's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and President Trump's plan to move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem on Israel's 70th Independence Day in May.

But anger over Jerusalem doesn't justify the snub. The purpose of the summit wasn't to reach "the ultimate deal." The summit was called to formulate the means to contend with the humanitarian crises emanating from Hamas-controlled Gaza. The Palestinians boycotted a summit whose sole purpose was to help them.

As Palestinian commentator Bassam Tawil noted, the PA's boycott while appalling, was unsurprising.

The White House summit was a threat to both rival Palestinian factions. It showed that the Trump administration, which both Fatah and Hamas hate passionately, cares more about the Palestinians than they do.

The humanitarian crisis in Gaza is entirely the product of Hamas and Fatah actions. In an op-ed in the Washington Post last week, Greenblatt laid the blame on Hamas. "Hamas's utter failure to fulfill any of the most basic functions of governance has brought Gaza to the brink of collapse, which has necessitated the response of the international community."

Fatah, Tawil noted, is just as responsible. The Fatah-controlled PA has used the Palestinians of Gaza as a pawn in its power struggle against Hamas. Rather than work to

decontaminate Gaza's water supply and provide for the basic needs of the population, for the past year the PA has imposed economic sanctions on the Gaza Strip.

Ostensibly imposed to induce the population of Gaza to rise up against Hamas, they have simply served to increase the misery of the residents of Gaza. Hamas's power remains unchallenged as Qatar, Turkey, and Iran shower the terror group with cash and arms.

As Tawil noted, Hamas and Fatah are willing to fight one another until the last Palestinian in Gaza.

The conference showed that the attack on Hamdallah's convoy was not a freak episode. The bombing was emblematic of the Fatah-Hamas leadership's obsession with their own power, to the detriment of the people they claim to represent.

The events in Gaza and the White House on Tuesday tell us two important things.

First, they reveal that the primary obstacle to both peace and regional stability in the Middle East is the Palestinian leadership—both from Fatah and Hamas.

Not only did the PA refuse to participate in a summit dedicated solely to helping the Palestinians, but also the very day the summit took place, PA-controlled Voice of Palestine Radio reported that the PA intends to file a complaint against President Trump at the International Criminal Court. Trump's recognition of Jerusalem, the PA insists, "violated all international laws and resolutions."

The report also said the PA intends to sue Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman for "crimes against the Palestinian people."

Tuesday's second lesson is that while the PA is the primary obstacle to peace and regional stability, it is easily surmountable.

Tuesday's conference was a diplomatic triumph for the Trump administration. For the first time, official representatives of five Arab states that have no diplomatic relations with Israel sat publicly in the White House with Israeli officials. They were brought together due to their common concern for the Palestinians in Gaza, and for the instability that the plight of the Palestinians in Hamas-controlled Gaza might encourage.

Although it is still unknown whether anything

discussed at the conference will turn into concrete improvements on the ground, the summit itself was a concrete achievement. It showed that the Arabs are willing publicly to bypass the Palestinians to work with Israel. The fact that the conference was devoted to helping the Palestinians served to transform the PA from the critical partner in any peace deal to an irritating irrelevance.

And that brings us to Tillerson, and the foreign policy establishment whose positions he channeled.

During his 14 months in office, Tillerson insisted on maintaining the establishment's view that the Fatah-controlled PA is the be-all-and-end-all of Middle East peace efforts. The view that there can be no Arab-Israeli peace without the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) compelled successive U.S. administrations to continue to embrace it despite its support for terrorism, and despite its refusal to accept or even respond to any offer of peace by either Israel or the U.S.

The belief that there can be no peace without Fatah convinced successive American administrations to pour billions of dollars in aid money down the black hole of PA treasury accounts. Since the Israeli-PLO peace process began in 1993, the Palestinians have received [more international aid per capita than any nation on earth](#) has received in world history. And all they produced are an impoverished, sewage-filled terror state in Gaza, and a jihadist hub in Judea and Samaria that would explode in violence if Israel did not control security.

The view that the U.S. needs the PLO and its PA to achieve peace gave the Palestinian leadership an effective veto over every U.S. policy towards Israel and towards the peace process.

Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and move the embassy to Jerusalem was the first time any American leader since Bill Clinton had dared to reject the Palestinian veto on US Middle East policy.

Tillerson supported maintaining the PA's veto. As a result, he all but openly opposed Trump's decision. So too, last June, in a bid to protect U.S. funding to the PA—despite the fact that fully 7 percent of its donor-funded budget is used to pay salaries to terrorists in Israeli prisons and their families—Tillerson falsely told the Senate Foreign Relations committee that the PA had agreed to end the payments. After the Palestinians themselves denied his statement, he only partially walked it back. The next day,

he told the House Foreign Affairs Committee that the U.S. was in "active discussions" with the Palestinians regarding halting the payments.

In the event, the PA raised its payments to terrorists in 2017 to \$403 million. In 2016, the PA spent \$347 million to pay salaries to terrorist murderers and their families.

In other words, Tillerson is so committed to the view that there can be no peace without the PA, that he willingly misled U.S. lawmakers.

Trump administration officials keep insisting that they are almost ready to present their peace plan for the Palestinians and Israel. But whatever the plan may entail, the steps the White House has already taken-Tuesday's summit, Trump's move on Jerusalem, and his determination to sign the Taylor Force Act to end U.S. support for the PA if it maintains its payments to terrorists-have already advanced the cause of peace more than any American peace proposal ever has and likely ever will.

Those moves removed the principle blockage to all peace deals -namely, the Palestinian leadership from Fatah and Hamas alike. By bypassing the PA, the White House has focused its efforts on expanding the already burgeoning bilateral ties between Israel and the Arab states. It has encouraged the expansion of cooperation between these regional actors. That cooperation is the key to diminishing Iranian power in the region; defeating Sunni jihadists from the Muslim Brotherhood and its spinoffs; and to improving the lives and prospects for peace of Palestinians, Israelis and all the nations of the region.

Tillerson opposed all of these actions. Like the foreign policy establishment he represented, Tillerson refused to abandon the false belief that nothing can be done without PLO approval. By removing him from office, President Trump took yet another step towards advancing prospects for peace in the Middle East.

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