

# FLAME HOTLINE

Facts & Logic About the Middle East

April 24, 2018

## What is President Trump's strategy for stopping Iran in Syria? It's time to act.

Dear Friend of FLAME:

President Trump's foreign policy continues to earn good marks. His recent armed retaliation (again) in response to Bashar al Assad's use of chemical attacks against Syrian citizens delivers a clear message.

Additionally, of course, Mr. Trump has threatened to pull out of the Iran Deal, pending acceptance by European co-signers of new, stronger sanctions to address Iran's intercontinental missile testing and refusal to allow nuclear inspection of its military bases.

Just this week, the U.S. State Department issued its annual report on human rights, in which for the first time in 40 years the agency removed the term "occupied" from descriptions of Israel's activities in Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank"). Halleluyah to that.

On the other hand, the President has claimed the U.S. will "be coming out of Syria very soon"—this in the face of persistent, alarming moves by Iran to consolidate arms and territorial control within Syria, just miles from Israel's northern border.

This intention to withdraw, if true, could be disastrous for many reasons. Syrian oil fields would likely fall into Iranian hands, strengthening its faltering economy and its global terrorist ambitions. A U.S. departure will also clear the path for Iran's creation of a powerful strategic land bridge through Iraq and Syria to Lebanon and the Mediterranean. It could also open the door to a resurgence of ISIS and al Qaeda.

Perhaps most importantly, by leaving Iran unchecked in Syria, the U.S. would force on Israel the need to control the Islamic Republic's regional aggression singlehandedly.

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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 era of "fake news," it's 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 separate truth from fabrication.

**What are the facts?**

From asking groups for the right to create an area, narrative—their such a narrative should be based on truth, regardless when it denies the rights of others. We may disagree on interpretation, but at least we should agree on the facts. So, for a complete true perspective of the Palestinian narrative and judge their moral strength by reference to the truth. It is up to the modern Palestinian myth as well as arrangements to disintegrate the Jewish people from Israel—our 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 2,800 years ago. This claim has no basis in archaeological or genetic research. Nearly all Palestinians share 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, anthropologists, biblical records, and the Quran 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 ever since.

**2. Israel occupies Palestinian land:**

**False:** No, Israel and most mainstream media frequently refer to "Palestinian land" as if it were their own. In fact, they have never been there. They had sovereignty over the land in the Middle East, Arab lands, for centuries past and still do. This is the biblical truth. Palestinian land is the disputed territory, not the Holy Land. The Jews were never expelled from their land in 70 CE. It was after the Muslims took over against Israel in 637 CE that the Jews were expelled from the land.

**3. Jerusalem is the capital of the Palestinian people:**

**False:** Palestinian leaders commonly herald Jerusalem as a Jewish and Christian capital, recently including 1,000 years of Jewish history and Jerusalem's centrality to Judaism. Indeed, history shows King David founded Jerusalem as the capital of the Jewish kingdom around 1000 BCE, before the fall of the Jews. Jerusalem is a sacred site to the Hebrews and not a single site to the Muslims. 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:** Palestinians have a right of return to Israel. According to the UN, 700,000 Arabs who left Israel in 1948, when the Arab armies attacked, only about 30,000 are still alive today. Some live in the disputed territories of Judea and Samaria, and some over the 70 years have made homes in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. Nevertheless, the Palestinians claim that 7.5 million descendants of these refugees—children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren—are still refugees. No other descendants of world leaders have ever been considered refugees. Indeed, no displaced refugees, no other descendants, have obtained legal rights to return to their original homes after a war. They such returns have always been negotiated among the parties—and as 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 laws protect Arab citizens, ensure full civil rights and benefits—greater than those in Arab nations. Palestinians in the West Bank, on the other hand, are rightly self-governed, but administratively, economically and socially are under the dominion, and enjoy a higher standard of living than any of their Arab neighbors. Limitations on Palestinian movement within the West Bank exist, when necessary to protect Arab settlements against terrorism, which continues to this day. In other nations of predominantly Arab populations, Palestinians by Israel are false and unfair.

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

The Jews continuously requested "the Big Lie" to convince their people to wage an unprovoked, premeditated war. Indeed, Palestinians request falsehoods to convince the world that Jews are evil, unprovoked aggressors. Until the Palestinians agree to negotiate peace with Israel—based on the truth and good faith—they are self-conditioned to bitterness and distorted expectations for independence.

This message has been published and paid for by

**FLAME**

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FLAME is the only organization that defends Israel with paid

Does the President really believe that U.S. involvement Syria is only about defeating ISIS and preventing chemical weapons attacks? Is that a strategy that meets the complexity and magnitude of our interests in the Middle East?

These questions bring us to our FLAME *Hotline*-featured article by former U.S. Under Secretary of Defense Dov Zakheim, who believes Mr. Trump is making the same mistake in Syria that Mr. Obama made in Iraq—pulling out way too early. He warns that Iran's increasing boldness, backed by tens of thousands of Hizbollah missiles at the ready, create a tinderbox of epic proportions.

Should Israel be provoked into a major defensive response, the entire region could explode, drawing in not only Iran and Lebanon, but also Russia—before the U.S. has a chance to play a mediating or even a moderating role. Zakheim argues that this outcome would be extremely costly for American interests.

I hope you'll forward this frightening analysis to friends, family and fellow congregants to help them understand why it's critical that President Trump develop a sophisticated strategy for Syria and Iran and not allow the U.S. to become another victim of Iranian terror.

I hope you'll also quickly review the P.S. immediately below, which describes FLAME's latest hasbarah campaign to directly urge the President and U.S. Congress to back up their rhetoric on Iran with definitive action. I hope you agree with and will support this message.

Best regards,

Jim Sinkinson

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

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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P.S. As you know, Iran has become the largest state sponsor of global terrorism and the most dangerous enemy of the U.S. What's worse, the Islamic Republic continues to spread its jihadist tentacles throughout the Middle East, and now has armed forces on Israel's borders in Syria and Lebanon. No wonder FLAME has created a new editorial message —"[We Must Stop Iran Now](#)"—which is now running 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.

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## **Trump Needs a Plan for Israel's Confrontation with Iran**

**Tehran and Moscow are becoming the arbiters of the Middle East—and Israel's relationship with both is growing increasingly tense.**

By Dov Zakheim, *Foreign Policy*, April 18, 2018

**The ongoing debate among experts as to whether Washington** has a strategy for dealing with the Syrian civil war in the wake of missile strikes by U.S., British, and French forces on alleged Syrian chemical weapons facilities masks a far more urgent strategic need: a coherent approach to the increasingly volatile confrontation between Israel and

Iran. Israel's downing of an armed drone, its loss of an F-16 fighter jet—the first such loss in years—and its strike on Iranian targets in Syria are only part of the challenge that confronts the United States in particular.

The Israeli-Russian relationship is becoming increasingly tense. The possibility that Iran might establish one or more bases in Syria, as Russia already has done, poses as much of a threat to Jordan as it does to Israel. And the possibility that Israel might face a three-front war with Hamas and Hezbollah, both of which receive Iranian support, and Syrian-based Iranian forces could well result in the United States being called in to Israel's rescue, as it was during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War.

Ever since the civil war began seven years ago, Israel has pursued a policy of what might be termed cautious intervention. It has only launched operations into Syria when it determined that Iran was shipping increasingly sophisticated weapons to Hezbollah, when it was responding to artillery attacks by one or another jihadi militias based in Syria, or, as was recently the case, when it attacked Iranian forces on a Syrian air base in retaliation for the launching of an armed drone into Israeli territory.

**Israel has never taken sides in the civil war itself—**indeed, for several years, the Israelis appeared to prefer that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad survive in power, fearing that any alternative would be far worse. Israel therefore avoided appearing to be at odds with Russia, Assad's great-power backer. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was a regular visitor to Moscow, while his defense minister, Avigdor Lieberman, whose native language is Russian, had an even longer-standing relationship with the Kremlin leadership. Moreover, despite the overt hostility between it and Iran, Israel did not attempt to undermine the Iranians in Syria as long as they confined themselves to supporting Assad.

All that has now changed. Iran has increasingly entrenched itself inside Syria and is not about to depart anytime soon. On the contrary, Iran may already be laying the groundwork for a permanent presence on its Syrian client's territory. Moreover, the Israelis are increasingly concerned that the Russians, whom Israel previously—and perhaps quixotically—hoped would counterbalance and restrain Tehran, now appear either unwilling or unable to do so.

Israel's public position remains that Moscow understands its predicament and will not interfere with Israeli operations,

whose objective is to secure its own territory. The Israelis have also signaled to Russia, however, that they will not allow it to constrain their operations. As Lieberman has asserted, "We will not allow Iranian consolidation in Syria. We won't allow any restriction when it comes to Israel's security interests."

**These are brave words. In fact, the Israelis fear both "Iranian consolidation,"** as Lieberman puts it, and Russian interference in their operations. Coupled with Hezbollah's growing strength, and the weekly Hamas-inspired protests in Gaza, Israel faces the specter of a three-front war for the first time since 1967. Moreover, the immediate Iranian threat may not affect Israel at all. A powerful and permanent Iranian presence in Syria would actually be a far greater threat to Jordan. If an Iranian-inspired insurrection, along the lines of what Tehran has been attempting in Bahrain for some years, were to topple Jordan's King Abdullah, Israel could then face a threat on four fronts.

Where might Washington fit into this picture? In one sense, it does not. Russia and Iran are increasingly becoming the arbiters of the Middle East, while U.S. President Donald Trump, by pushing for the withdrawal of all U.S. forces in Syria, is on the verge of repeating in that country the very same mistake his predecessor committed in Iraq. Yet the consequences of a U.S. withdrawal from Syria would be far greater than those of former President Barack Obama's withdrawal, because Russia was not a factor in Iraq and the Israelis did not see Iran's heavy presence there as a direct threat to their security.

A complete U.S. withdrawal from Syria could result in two outcomes: one bad, the other worse.

**The bad outcome would be an Israeli preemptive strike** on all Iranian forces in Syria. Hezbollah would certainly retaliate on behalf of Iran, and the Iranians would certainly fire a missile barrage at Israel as well. Whether Israel's vaunted missile defense system could cope with missile attacks on two fronts is open to question. America's own missile defenses would be called in to assist Israel. Since the most likely anti-missile systems would be sea-based, U.S. naval forces would run the risk of themselves becoming a target for Iranian or Hezbollah missiles.

An even worse outcome would be a preemptive strike on Israel by Hezbollah and the Iranians, in coordination with Hamas, with Moscow's support. In this case, the possibility of a great-power confrontation, along the lines of the U.S.-

Soviet standoff in 1973, would be very real. Yet another possibility could be the above-noted Iranian-inspired coup against King Abdullah, which would itself be a preliminary to an all-out conflict with Israel.

Trump's senior defense and military advisors no doubt have thought through these and other bad scenarios. They are the ones arguing for a residual U.S. presence in Syria. Trump, on the other hand, would not recognize a strategy if it ran him over—he is completely transactional. All he sees is an American presence in Syria that he wants to bring to an end, come what may. Unless his Defense Department advisors can bring him around, the United States may well come to rue the day that it found itself not only once again rushing to the aid of Israel but fully engaged in yet another war in the Middle East, this time with both Russia and Iran on the other side.

## **FLAME**

Facts and Logic

About the Middle East

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