

FLAME HOTLINE

Facts & Logic About the Middle East

October 9, 2018



Support of Israel must remain bipartisan: We praise politicians—Democrats or Republicans—who support Israel.

Dear Friend of FLAME:

I recently received an unsettling letter from a loyal FLAME donor advising that supporters of Israel cannot afford to praise President Trump for his actions related to Israel. I've kept it on the top of my desk for several weeks, because I found it deserving of a reply—but *how* to answer it? Rather than summarize, please read the donor's words yourself:

"While I agree with the need to fight the misinformation about Israel, its history and its future, on college campuses, in the United Nations, and even in the media, I've been an ardent critic of our current president from the moment he assumed office . . . His support of Israel is indeed 'fake news,' and if it serves his self-interest, he will turn on us all. I urge you to limit your comments referencing the actions of this man, and there will most likely be a change in Congress in November, and Israel needs friends in both political parties, regardless of which one is in the majority. Let us not put all our political eggs in one basket."

This position presents three serious problems for pro-Israel advocates. *First*, should we insist that Israel be a bi-partisan issue? *Second*, should we support members of either political party when they do good things for Israel? *Third*, if we support pro-Israel actions of the party in power, should we fear retribution from the opposition when they inevitably return to power?

As a non-profit organization, we at FLAME have long advocated a bi-partisan strategy to Israel advocacy—we don't choose a side in the elections and don't support any political party. We also believe the U.S. alliance with Israel serves both nations equally. Israel is one of

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YOU DESERVE TO KNOW THE TRUTH...

Peace with Palestinian Dictators?

Governments of the Palestinians' two ruling dictatorships are in shambles—and at war with each other. How can Israel possibly achieve peace with them at this time?

Neither the Palestinian Authority in Judea Samaria (the West Bank) nor the Islamic terror group Hamas in Gaza has held elections since 2006, and the two factions are battling one another in a vicious power struggle. How can we recognize the Jewish right to accept Israeli offers of peace?

What are the facts?

While Israel, with the United States, made generous land-for-peace offers to the Palestinians in 2001 and 2008—and left the entire Gaza Strip to the Arabs in 2005—neither of the two main Palestinian groups has accepted Israeli offers—or even its right to exist. What's more, both the Palestinian Authority and Hamas governments are in obvious, expanding processes of renegeing a better agreement was. Could these warring Arab factions reconcile—and accept Israel as their neighbor—if it's impossible to imagine a peace agreement among them?

International Palestinian Movement following Israel's repudiation of five attacking Arab armies in 1967, Arab is Palestine formed the autonomous Palestine Liberation Organization, under Egyptian Yasser Arafat. Arafat inspired the First Intifada, a terrorist guerrilla effort against Israel, which ended with the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords. Under these accords, the Palestinian Authority (PA) would rule over Arab parts of Gaza and Judea Samaria, while Israel would control the remaining parts until the Israeli-Arab conflict was resolved through peace negotiations. After Israel's complete withdrawal from Gaza, terror group Hamas was Palestinian legislative elections in 2006, then seized control of Gaza from the PA. Since 2007, Hamas has ruled Gaza as an Islamic fiefdom, and the PA and Hamas remain tense enemies to this day.

The Palestinian Authority-Secular Dictatorship. While grounded in Muslim values, the Palestinian Authority has always been secular. Following Arafat's death in 2004, Mahmoud Abbas was elected president of the PA for a five-year term, and he held the grip of power ever since. Today's Palestinian Authority is rife with corruption, its economy is virtually bankrupt, it suffers from unemployment of 20%, and without foreign subsidies it would collapse. Despite its charter under the Oslo Agreement to make peace with Israel, the PA has remained dedicated to warring all of the Holy Land from Jewish control. It has recognized Israel as a Jewish homeland and has demanded that all Arab refugees from Israel's War of Independence in 1948—as "returnees" to Israel, thus denying the Jewish state demographically by Israel—under the sponsorship of President Bill Clinton in 2001 and George W. Bush in 2004—claim the Palestinians about 90% of Judea Samaria, as well as a significant portion of Jerusalem, in return for peace.

Hamas-Islamist Dictatorship. An offshoot of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood—which also sponsored al-Qaeda in 2001, it has vowed to resist violence, and in fact took violent control of Gaza. Today Hamas rules Gaza heavily according to strict Sharia law. Hamas has benefited from war against Israel, most recently in 2014. Because of Hamas' allegiance to Gaza is normally under surveillance from Egypt, Israel said the Palestinian Authority. While the PA and Hamas have made some attempts at reconciliation, all have failed, and relations between them remain poisonous. The people of Gaza suffer an unemployment rate of 40%, just five hours of electricity daily and a dysfunctional economy. Hamas routinely threatens Israel's national support from Israel and Turkey, much of which is used to maintain the terror group's war against Israel.

In order to bring an Israel-Palestinian peace, all parties must sincerely want it and the capability of carrying out a plan for reconciliation. It's clear that today's Palestinian dictatorships lack the ability to make peace among themselves. Humanity's greatest hope for peace with Israel, while Israelis pray for peace, Palestinian leaders pray for Israel's destruction.

FLAME
Facts and Logic About the Middle East
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Gordon Jaffe, Founder and President Emeritus
FLAME is a non-profit, secular, non-partisan organization. It supports the peace and stability of the Middle East and maintains the principle that Israel has the right to exist in peace, and that the Palestinians should accept Israel as their neighbor.

To receive free FLAME updates, visit our website: www.factsandlogic.org

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IF YOU SUPPORT PUBLISHING FLAME'S BOLD PR MESSAGES, PLEASE HELP US!!

FLAME is the only organization that defends Israel with paid

America's most steadfast supporters on global issues, it's our strongest military ally in the Middle East by far, and Israel is a champion of Western democratic, cultural and economic values in its almost exclusively repressive, dictatorial neighborhood.

For this reason, in its nearly 30-year history, FLAME has advocated consistent positions on Israel regardless of the party in control of Congress or the White House. Likewise, we have supported legislation and actions helpful to Israel and the U.S.-Israel relationship regardless of which party or President initiated the good deed.

We must admit that this support—especially of Presidential actions—has consistently drawn the ire of FLAME donors affiliated with the opposition party. Thus we've been told variously to "stop supporting" presidents Clinton, Bush, Obama and Trump—not because we praised (or criticized) them for the wrong things, but because we praised (or criticized) their actions *at all*.

To this, we can only return to first principles: We will support—and laud—any politician who supports Israel and does right by the Jewish state, regardless of political party. That doesn't mean we support that person's political party or that we recommend you vote for them. But it does mean, emphatically, that that politician is doing the right thing for Israel. (Likewise, we will continue to criticize anyone who does *damage* to the Jewish state.)

Let's finally address the question of whether we should praise President Trump when he takes actions supporting Israel and the U.S.-Israel relationship—or whether we should withhold approval—for fear of the Democrats' return to power.

The issue here is frankly not President Trump, no matter what you think of him or his presidency—though certainly the hate that many Democrats harbor for Trump makes them shut down at the mere mention of the man's name, let alone every single action he takes. Rather it's that the Democratic party is leaving Israel.

According to a Pew poll earlier this year, some 79 percent of Republicans support Israel against the Palestinians. Only 27% of Democrats do. The correction to this problem is, frankly, not to stop praising Mr. Trump for his many helpful actions regarding Israel, but rather to let the Democratic party know that our votes depend on their support of Israel.

Doing the right thing for Israel should not be a partisan issue. If the Democrats make it one, it will be their loss.

Which brings us to this week's featured FLAME *Hotline* article (see below), a typically no-holds-barred analysis by *Jerusalem Post* columnist Caroline Glick. She offers insightful reasons for the

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
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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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Democrats' straying from Israel's cause, as well as addressing the contradictions inherent in keeping Trump at arm's length.

Finally Glick recommends a strategy for Israel—and its advocates—during this, the most Israel-supportive administration in memory. In short, she advises, Israel should seize the day—this opportunity may not come again under either political party anytime soon.

Please pass this issue on to friends, family and fellow congregants to help them understand why—no matter what your party affiliation or even personal animus toward Trump—if you support Israel, you must support his administration's actions to support the Jewish state.

I hope you'll also join the fray at FLAME's lively [new Facebook page](#) and review the P.S. immediately below, which describes FLAME's recent *hasbarah* campaigns exposing another source of Palestinian failure—their dueling dictatorships in Gaza and the West Bank. 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. You've probably read about the new peace plan expected from the Trump administration, possibly coming in the next few months. We at FLAME believe such a proposal—no matter what its tenets—will be a mistake, if for no other reason than that the autocratic governments of both Palestinian factions are currently unequipped and unsuited to be Israel's partners in peace. That's why FLAME has created a new editorial message—"[Peace with Palestinian Dictators?](#)"—which is running in mainstream magazines and newspapers, including college newspapers. In addition, it will be 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 the true obstacle to peace, which is the lack of a credible Palestinian peace partner.

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](#).

Heeding Democratic Warnings

Israel must support its supporters and oppose its opponents, without regard to their political affiliation.

(Editor's note: This article originally appeared some four months ago, so some of the events it refers to occurred well in the past. The situation it addresses is still very much with us.)

By Caroline Glick, *Jerusalem Post*, May 24, 2018

Every day Israel is subjected to a torrent of warnings from Democrats.

"You will pay a price for your support of President Donald Trump," we are told.

"He won't be president forever, and when he's gone, watch out!" The

basic notion, repeated over and over again is clear enough. If Israel doesn't want to be punished by the next Democratic White House—which we are warned will make us long for Barack Obama—then we'd better stop talking about the fact that Trump is the best ally and friend Israel has ever had in the White House.

These warnings are not baseless. The data are unmistakable. Republicans are more supportive of Israel than they ever have been. Democrats are abandoning Israel in droves. In January, Pew reported that liberal Democrats side with the Palestinians over Israel by a margin of nearly two to one. Conservative Republicans support Israel over the Palestinians by a margin of more than 16 to 1.

The yawning gap in support plays out in multiple ways. This week, 70 House Democrats sent a letter to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu demanding that Israel not destroy illegal Palestinian construction in the south Hebron hills.

Last week, no serving Democratic lawmakers attended the opening of the US Embassy in Jerusalem.

Democrats also boycotted the Israeli Embassy in Washington's party celebrating the move.

How is Israel supposed to deal with this wide and growing gap in partisan support? Before taking a stab at the answer, we first must understand what is causing the Democrats to turn against the Jewish state.

There are two primary causes for the current trend.

The first has to do with President Trump.

Never in US history has a president been demonized and delegitimized by his political opponents as Trump has been by Democrats. Since the day he was elected, Democrats have sought to overturn the election results.

Every policy Trump enacts is subjected to immediate delegitimization. Democrats attack every position Trump adopts as morally defective, somehow treacherous and utterly illegitimate.

Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem and move the US Embassy to Israel's capital is case in point. In 1995, Democrats and Republicans joined together to overwhelmingly pass the Jerusalem Embassy Act mandating the transfer of the US Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem. It passed the Senate 93-5.

Every year since lopsided majorities in both houses have voted in favor of resolutions enjoining successive administrations to follow

the law and move the embassy. In the past four presidential elections, the Democrats' party platform has recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital and supported moving the embassy to Jerusalem.

Given this background, the obvious move for Democrats would have been to applaud Trump for finally doing what none of his predecessors did.

Given this background, dozens of Democratic lawmakers could have been expected to come to Jerusalem for the embassy opening last week and still more could have been expected to put in an appearance at the Israeli Embassy's bash in Washington.

Instead, with some notable if constrained exceptions, Trump's move was met with stony silence by the vast majority of Democrats. And several powerful lawmakers, including House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, and prominent senators Dianne Feinstein, Dick Durbin, Chris Murphy and Bernie Sanders condemned the move.

The only possible explanation for their abrupt abandonment of a policy they had dutifully followed for 23 years is Trump. They revile him and reject him to such a degree that they prefer to abandon long-held positions than admit that he did exactly what they have wanted the president to do for the past 23 years.

The second cause of the Democrats' abandonment of Israel is the rise of identity politics within the party.

For the past decade or so, a struggle for the soul of the Democratic Party has been going on between moderate Democrats, in the Bill Clinton mold and the far Left. The Clinton Democrats ascribe to traditional liberal democratic values and views of America and its role in world affairs. They believe that the protection of liberty and civil rights are the beating heart of American identity and that America has an indispensable and uniquely moral role to play as a superpower in world affairs.

Opposing them are lawmakers and activists from the far Left who believe identity politics should govern the party's positions and policies. Identity politics reject the notion that people should be judged by their achievements and character.

Instead its subscribers assert that people should be judged, pushed ahead or kept back, supported or opposed based on their membership in various ethnic, racial, gender and sexual identity groups.

Perhaps the best encapsulation of identity politics was given this week by a *New York Times* editor on the paper's twitter feed. In a

post reporting the results of the gubernatorial primaries in Georgia, the editor wrote, "History in Georgia: Stacey Abrams became the first black woman to be a major party's nominee for governor after winning her Democratic primary."

The paper applauded Abrams for being born a certain race and a certain gender. It told us nothing about her qualifications for office. It told us nothing about her past achievements or plans for governing if elected. All the Times thinks we need to know is that Abrams is black and a woman. This is why she should be governor.

Unfortunately for Israel and its supporters, the same forces who determined that black women should be supported determined that Israeli Jews and their American supporters should be opposed and the Palestinians, including Hamas, should be supported.

This position is unmovable. Identity politics imposes a pecking order of victimhood that is impervious to reason and closed to argument.

People are judged only by their placement on the ladder of victimhood. During Obama's presidency, the dispute between the two warring factions was swept under the rug as everyone joined together in supporting him.

But even as he was supported by moderate and radical Democrats alike, Obama advanced policies and positions that empowered the radicals at the expense of the moderates.

Obama's hostility towards Israel, his repeated intimations that Israel is a colonialist outpost while the Palestinians are the indigenous people of the land of Israel were part and parcel of his across-the-board effort to enable the radical Left to take over the party. Obama's efforts laid the groundwork for socialist Sen. Bernie Sanders' surprisingly strong challenge to Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton in the party's presidential primaries. It also set the stage for the rise of radical leaders like Congressman Keith Ellison and Sen. Elizabeth Warren in the post-Obama Democratic party. Feinstein, who supported a bipartisan Senate resolution just last year calling for the implementation of the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995, is now facing a far-Left primary challenger.

To fend off the challenge, she is embracing identity.

Her outspoken condemnation of the embassy move no doubt is an expression of her political pivot to the far Left.

When the causes of the Democrats' alienation from Israel are properly understood, it becomes self-evident that Israel did nothing to precipitate the current situation. It is equally clear that Israel is powerless to reverse the current trends. Only the Democrats can do

that.

And so we return to the question: What can Israel do to minimize the partisan divide over support for the Jewish state in America? Democrats advise Israel to do two things. First, they say, the government, and the public more generally, should keep Trump at arm's length. We should stop supporting him and applauding and thanking him for his support for Israel.

Second, they say, the government should maintain faith with Obama's pro-Palestinian, anti-Israel policies. Among other things, this means that Israel should permanently deny Jews the right to exercise their property rights in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria. Israel should also prop up Hamas and the PLO.

If Israel does these things, the Democrats say, then a future Democratic president will be more likely to develop a constructive relationship with Jerusalem than he or she otherwise would be.

There are two problems with this advice. First, it involves abandoning the proverbial bird in the hand for a bird that not only flew out of the tree but is swiftly vanishing over the horizon. If present trends in the Democratic party continue, there is little chance that a future Democratic president will be supportive of Israel. The party's rank and file would revolt.

The second problem with the advice that Democrats are providing is that if Israel listens to them, it will be at even greater risk of being harmed by a hostile administration in the future. Given the ascendancy of the radical Left in the party, and its intractable, impermeable hatred of Israel, Israel needs to secure as many of its long-term strategic interests as it can with the friendly Trump administration lest those interests are imperiled by a hostile Democratic White House in the future.

Among other things, this means securing Israel's long-term strategic interests in Judea and Samaria by applying Israeli law to Area C.

It means diminishing Israel's strategic dependence on the US by vastly diminishing with the short term goal of eliminating US military assistance to Israel. That aid should be replaced with US-Israeli joint projects to jointly develop weapons systems and advance other common strategic goals.

Securing Israel's long-term strategic interests means vastly diminishing Hezbollah's capacity to wage war against Israel from Lebanon.

And it means destabilizing with the goal of overthrowing the Iranian regime.

The Democrats who are saying that by supporting Trump, Israel is turning itself into a partisan issue, are themselves responsible for turning support for the Jewish state into a partisan issue. By denying that Israel has a right and a legitimate interest in standing with a president that is supportive of and takes concerted steps to advance the US-Israel alliance,

The Democrats are right that Israel has a vested interest in preserving and expanding bipartisan support. But contrary to their position, there is only one way for Israel to achieve this goal, and happily, the government's policies indicate that this is the path that Israel is following today.

Israel must support its supporters and oppose its opponents, without regard to their political affiliation. Israelis support Trump because Trump supports Israel not because he is a Republican. By the same token, Israelis support Senate Minority leader Charles Schumer not because he is a Democrat, but because he supports Israel.

Democrats are right that Trump won't be president forever. Israel needs to heed their warnings not by distancing itself from the administration, but by working with the Trump administration to secure its long-term strategic interests and goals.

Democratic and Republican supporters of Israel will certainly support our efforts.



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