

FLAME HOTLINE

Facts & Logic About the Middle East

February 6, 2019



Why do the Europeans still support Iran: It's the money, stupid.

Dear Friend of FLAME:

So threatened are members of the European Union by the U.S. exit from the Iran Nuclear Deal—and the re-imposition of harsh U.S. sanctions on the Islamic Republic—that last week Germany, France and Britain announced a new work-around: The [Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges \(INSTEX\)](#).

INSTEX is essentially a primitive barter system—enabling companies and countries to enter into trades of European goods for Iranian goods—thus bypassing the U.S.-dollar-dominated international banking system and [avoiding U.S. sanctions](#) on those who do business with Iran.

However, the objective of INSTEX is not to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons—the Iran Deal already *ensures* a smooth runway to such WMDs. Rather, the Europeans are threatened by the loss of [newly booming trade](#) with Iran that U.S. sanctions promise to shut down.

In other words, the E.U. is not concerned about the [safety of the world's people](#)—and regarding the safety of Israel, which Iran bellicosefully vows to destroy on a daily basis, forget about it.

Bill Clinton once famously analyzed the key issue in his presidential election with his pithy, "It's the economy, stupid." For the E.U., it's the money, stupid.

While concern about trade with Iran is clearly in the E.U.'s—and Iran's—rational self-interest, we should allow no mistake: Under the current Iran Deal, the Islamic Republic will acquire murderous nuclear weapons, it will continue to develop ballistic missiles that can carry those weapons to Europe (and Israel), and it will continue to pursue a [global imperialist strategy](#) via Islamist terrorism.

As if that weren't enough, Iran was just months ago caught red-handed by European intelligence as it engineered terror plots and [plans to assassinate Iranian opposition leaders](#)

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on European soil.

While the E.U. made small noises of protest to these violations of its sovereignty, the transgressions were not enough to dampen the allure of billions in new trade.

Indeed, trade opened up by the Iran Deal (formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA) has been substantial. Remember that the E.U., before JCPOA relieved sanctions, was Iran's largest trading partner.

For France, in 2017 alone, JCPOA relief has meant a deal to develop an Iranian gas field worth \$4.8 billion, and an Airbus agreement to build 100 aircraft for Iran to the tune of \$18 billion.

Germany, once Iran's largest trade partner, has rebuilt trade with Teheran from \$2 billion in 2013 to \$3.5 billion in 2017—and it continues to grow. Austria's trade with Iran grew 34% in 2017. Italy's trade during 2016-2017 grew 117%.

In 2016-2017, E.U. exports to Iran grew by 31.5%, and imports grew 83.9%—and the E.U. is now Iran's third largest trading partner, exceeded only by China and the United Arab Emirates. The E.U. is no doubt aiming to return to its number-one position.

No wonder that ever since President Trump announced his decision to leave the Iran Deal and reintroduce sanctions, the Europeans have been genuflecting to Ayatollah Khamenei, trying desperately to salvage their burgeoning billions in trade with the Iranian outlaws.

While President Trump campaigned on promoting U.S. interests above those of all other nations—and he encourages other countries to act with similar self-interest—in this notable case Trump is not pursuing financial gain for the U.S., but rather U.S. and global security (including that of Israel). Obviously, the Europeans have baser motivations.

Yet clearly, the European strategy is already backfiring. U.S. Secretary of State Pompeo has made clear that companies seeking to bypass U.S. sanctions by trading with Iran in any form will be held accountable. Iran has also recently been implicated in assassination and terror plots in Denmark, Albania, Austria, Belgium and France—even as the Europeans implement desperate machinations to help Teheran and themselves financially.

As the adult in the room, the U.S. should hold fast to its decision to harshly punish Iran and all those who would aid the Islamic Republic (even as they fill their own pockets).

But even more, E.U. members should heed Pompeo's October 2018 exhortation: "We are asking every nation who is sick and tired of the Islamic Republic's destructive behavior to join our pressure campaign. This especially goes for our allies in the Middle East and Europe, people who have themselves been terrorized by the violent regime's activity for decades."

For pro-Israel activists, our position is clear: We should support all U.S. efforts to block Iran's deadly global aggression, including, especially, its efforts to develop nuclear weapons. This includes measures to persuade E.U. members to shift their priorities from short-term business deals to long-term global security.

Please forward this FLAME Hotline to your friends, family and fellow congregants, so

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they, too, can help us tell the true story of Iran's evil intent and the E.U.'s complicity.

I hope you'll also quickly visit FLAME's lively [new Facebook page](#) and review the P.S. immediately below, which describes FLAME's recent *hasbarah* campaign asserting the need for Israel to maintain its sovereignty over the strategically critical Golan Heights on the border of Syria.

Best regards,

Ken Cohen

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

P.S. After Syria used its control over the Golan Heights to attack Israel with thousands of rockets and sniper bullets—then belligerently invaded Israel in 1967—the Jewish state defeated Syria and ejected it from the Heights. Syria has refused to negotiate peace in exchange for the Golan Heights for all these decades. No wonder Israel annexed this strategically important territory in 1981. Today, the Golan Heights gives Israel the ability to protect Middle East security against Iran, Hezbollah and Syria. It's time for the U.S. and the world community to affirm Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights. That's why FLAME has created a new *hasbarah* message called "[Recognize Israel's Golan Heights Rule.](#)" I hope you'll review this hard-hitting paid editorial, which began running last month—including in the *New York Times*. It supports efforts by bipartisan members of Congress to officially recognize the Golan Heights as Israeli territory. In addition to running in mainstream media, this editorial 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 Israel's critical role in protecting U.S. interests in the region—as well as protecting itself.

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PO Box 3460

Berkeley, CA 94703

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