

FLAME HOTLINE

Facts & Logic About the Middle East

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Israel Still Seeks True and Durable Peace with Egypt

Dear Friend of FLAME:

On March 26, Israel held a full-throated celebration of forty years of peace with Egypt. But ongoing Egyptian actions could endanger the Israel-Egypt treaty, plunging the entire region into conflict. After decades of peace, it is understandable that many take the peace with Egypt for granted. That dangerous complacency—especially in Washington—means that things could swiftly swing out of control with Egypt and throughout the Middle East.

As the 2011 Arab Spring made clear, things in Egypt can change rapidly and for the worse. War with Israel could result if Egypt's leadership changes its policies, personnel or priorities. That would be disastrous because Egyptian society, the media and popular sentiment is grotesquely anti-Israel and anti-Semitic. So is much of the Egyptian military establishment.

Even after those forty long years, Israeli-Egyptian relations remain in the wilderness. Despite Israel's efforts to normalize its relations with its southern neighbor, Egypt still holds its peace partner at arm's length.

No Egyptians participated in the fortieth-anniversary celebration, nor did Egypt mark the date in any way.

America is not without considerable influence in Egypt. Since 1948, Washington has sent over \$80 billion in foreign aid to Egypt—almost all of it for the military. This year we will send another \$1.4 billion to Cairo, making Egypt the second-largest aid recipient (after Israel). America can press Egypt to invigorate its cultural, educational and tourist exchanges with its Israeli counterparts—things that Egypt attempts to thwart and suppress.

True and durable peace between long-time enemies is not only defined by the absence of warfare. It also involves efforts to build lasting bridges between the former foes to ensure that occasional conflicts do not escalate to the point of endangering continued peace.

The United States was the catalyst for peace between Israel and Egypt in 1979, and must

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YOU DESERVE TO KNOW THE TRUTH...

What Does BDS Really Want?

Media often report that the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement is a "protest against Israeli occupation of the West Bank"—but facts prove otherwise.

Some mainstream press and politicians whitewash the BDS position, representing it as legitimate criticism of Israeli policy toward Palestinians. The truth is, BDS cannot openly oppose the very existence of Israel—and advocates anti-Semitic measures to destroy the Jewish state.

What are the facts?

The U.S. Senate recently passed a landmark bill—the Countering BDS Act—upholding the right of states to punish companies that discriminate commercially against Israel. While the ACLU, who usually defend presidential candidates opposed this Act, saying it violates free speech rights, the senators quote the fundamental tenets of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement. In fact, BDS has nothing to do with political speech and everything to do with commercial discrimination against a religious and ethnic group. BDS is not an opposition to Jewish national self-determination. Imagine these media and politicians objecting to an act of Congress meant to protect the existence of a religiously Jewish or racially black country that is supported by its citizens solely for religious or racial reasons.

Yes, an Israel dove—and despite media misrepresentation—this is precisely the intention of the BDS movement.

BDS doesn't just criticize Israeli policy, it opposes the state of Israel. BDS doesn't simply question Israeli "occupation" of its Jewish biblical homeland, Judea-Samaria (the "West Bank"). Rather, BDS opposes Israel's occupation of the entire Holy Land. The BDS slogan says it all: "Resistance shall be from the Jordan river to the Mediterranean sea"—meaning the entire state of Israel. Indeed, BDS founder, Omer Rabinovitch admits, "If the occupation would have ended in 1967, we, as Jews, would not exist." Why do the media neglect this damning fact?

BDS doesn't criticize any other nation for its treatment of Palestinians. While BDS attacks Israel exclusively for its offensive policies in the disputed territories and Gaza, the movement does not criticize any other nation or ethnic group. It ignores the plight of Palestinians in Syria. It voices no objection to brutal discrimination against Palestinians in Arab Lebanon, where for 70 years Palestinians have been prohibited from leaving their refugee camps, receiving their own professions and even owning land. This double standard proves that BDS is not a Palestinian support group—rather it is an anti-Semitic, anti-Israel group, bent on the destruction of the only Jewish state. Why do journalists fail to reveal that BDS doesn't criticize Hamas or the PLO for their brutal oppression of Palestinians, Israeli-Palestinian

enjoy full equality under law and more civil liberties and economic opportunity than Arab populations in the Middle East. By contrast, Palestinians living under the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in Jordan-Syria suffer make minimal contributions and the systematic discrimination of Mahmoud Abbas. Palestinians under the Hamas rule of Gaza enjoy Hamas in Gaza suffer even worse, living in a virtual police state, whose merger intentions are limited to conquering Israel.

Political criticism is legal. Commercial-based racial discrimination is not. Like any democracy, Israel welcomes valid criticism—especially since the country, at just 70 years old, is a thriving, dynamic, and a progress galloping nation. In fact, a program regarding Palestinians, Israel's legislative—including Arab citizens—vigilantly debates such issues, which are reported by a free press.

BDS doesn't seek policy changes—it seeks the end of the only Jewish state. But the BDS movement does not seek policy changes. As the BDS website, literature and public speeches make clear, its entire agenda is dedicated to turning the world's only Jewish state into the 51st Muslim-majority nation. While the U.S. countering protest the speech, it also prohibits discrimination against ethnic, religious and racial groups. For this reason, the Countering BDS Act is legal, ethical, and politically appropriate, especially since Israel is by far the United States' most-cherished Middle East ally.

The reason that the Countering BDS Act is a violation of the open speech requirements, was denied. The Countering BDS Act already has hundreds of Jews that prevent economic discrimination based on ethnic, religious, and racial identity. Indeed, this objection appears no more than a hypocritical accusation of Jews' failure to justify their opposition to the world's only Jewish state.

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renew its commitment to that peace and assure that Egypt's coolness to Israel doesn't undercut a true and durable peace between the two countries and peoples.

While security cooperation between the two sides has been good in the Sinai against al Qaeda units and other Islamist terrorist groups and at Gaza in the joint blockade of Hamas' terror dominion, that situation is hardly reliable: when the Muslim Brotherhood ruled Egypt for two years during President Morsi's tenure, relations and security cooperation with the hated Israel were, at best, tenuous.

Current Egyptian President al Sisi, a secular leader, primarily desires that the Islamist lawlessness in Sinai doesn't spread to the Egyptian heartland. He also views Hamas for what it ultimately is—a Muslim Brotherhood offshoot that wants access to Egypt to spread its violence.

As seemingly reliable as President al Sisi is, both Hosni Mubarak and Anwar Sadat could have assured you that stability in Egypt hangs by a thread in the face of Islamist threats.

If Egypt again slides into the Islamist camp, Hamas will have an open border with Egypt. Cross-border attacks into Israel will become a regular and tragic consequence, and the fuse will be lit for an Egyptian—and popular—rejection of the peace treaty with Israel.

A vast Egyptian majority remains passionately anti-Israel—and anti-Semitic—and it rallies behind terror attacks from Sinai and Gaza into Israel. The "Egyptian Street" has done so in the past—as in 2004, when Sinai terrorists bombed the Taba Hilton and killed 34, including many Israelis.

Lacking popular support for any peace with the hated Israelis, a new hardline Cairo government might decide to re-militarize its Israeli border, with potentially terrible consequences for all parties. Israel would be forced to respond, and an ugly blood-letting could ensue.

When Egyptian President Anwar Sadat visited Israel on November 20, 1977 and addressed Israel's Knesset, it was a diplomatic thunderbolt. A genial President Sadat held out more than an olive-branch of peace—he offered a peace including friendship and social engagement: a true and durable peace between neighbors.

The two nations, which had fought five bloody wars in the three decades after Israel's creation in 1948—including President Sadat's own 1973 Yom Kippur invasion of Israel—agreed to work diligently toward that true and durable peace.

At this point, American President Jimmy Carter stepped in to offer the United States as the facilitator and guarantor of a true and durable peace. The 1979 Camp David Accords validated the American role as defender of the peace, and solidified American financial support for the two countries taking the risks for peace.

After the deal was signed in Washington, D. C. forty years ago, Israel and Egypt exchanged ambassadors—the first Arab-Israeli diplomatic exchange in history—and began cultivating economic and social ties. Egypt, for example, agreed to favorable terms for exporting Sinai oil to Israel. Israel turned over the vast Sinai territory, including massive new tourist infrastructure built by Israel during its decade-plus occupation. Academic and cultural exchanges multiplied—until the bullets were fired that ended

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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President Sadat's life.

His successor, military man Hosni Mubarak, sharply curtailed the cultural exchanges and took on a generally more hostile relationship with his Israeli peace-partners. Several times, he withdrew Egypt's ambassador to Israel over the latter's conflicts with Lebanon and its Palestinian Arab adversaries. Trade slowed—although Israel is now selling Egypt large volumes of natural gas from its Mediterranean reserves. Reciprocal tourism dropped. Cultural and educational relations declined.

Mubarak was overthrown in the Arab Spring in 2011, ushering in the brief ascendance of the virulently anti-Semitic Muslim Brotherhood. Recently, Egypt-Israel relations are comparatively more amicable under President al-Sisi, but are still far from the visions of Sadat and Begin.

Thankfully for all parties—and the world community—the peace between Egypt and Israel has held through all the turmoil in that part of the world. But its endurance is constantly tested by Egypt's policy of keeping Israel at a distance. Cairo's press and other media vilify Israel at all times. During Ramadan last year, its state-directed TV network featured a series about a sinister Mossad agent acting undercover—as an al-Qaeda operative, no less—to subvert Egypt's government. Elements of the anti-Semitic *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* pervade discussions and dramas about Israel throughout Egypt's tightly controlled media.

After forty years of financing a cold peace between Egypt and Israel, the United States must bring Israeli and Egyptian leaders together to forge stronger and more durable popular support for the deal on the ground.

America can facilitate—through its vast and generous aid and trade agreements with Egypt—greater academic, cultural, tourist, and economic ties between the nations. Israel has much to offer its Egyptian partners—water technologies, applied medical breakthroughs, and other technical triumphs.

Egypt is now largely, by choice, insulated from all these benefits that its partnership with Israel can offer. America, uniquely, can benefit the cause of a just and durable peace between Israelis and Egyptians by insisting that Egypt and Israel become true partners in the future.

In talking with friends, family and colleagues, I urge you to tell them about the critical importance of a true and durable peace between Israel and Egypt. The good will that existed in Sadat and Begin's day has corroded badly. Make known to your elected representatives that America must renew its push on Egypt to cultivate its ties with Israel and Israelis. America played a crucial role in making peace possible. It must re-double its efforts to assure that the amazing peace that it facilitated is not just "no-war peace," but durable peace as well.

I hope you'll also quickly visit FLAME's lively new Facebook page and review the P.S. immediately below. It describes FLAME's most recent hasbarah campaign—on whitewashing misrepresentations made by the media and, alarmingly, by some politicians, about the insidious Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement.

Best regards,

Ken Cohen

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

P.S. While the Combating BDS Act overwhelmingly passed the Senate (by a vote of 77-23) in February—*without support from any Democratic Senator running for President*—some media and politicians, as well as the ACLU, opposed the bill based on its alleged infringement on free speech. Yet this representation is a lie, since BDS does not merely criticize Israel's policies toward Palestinians, but rather opposes Israel's very existence. This is not a free speech issue, but a thinly veiled hate speech issue. That's why FLAME has created a new *hasbarah* message called "[What Does BDS Really Want?](#)" I hope you'll review this hard-hitting paid editorial, which began running this month. It exposes the true motives of BDS supporters and explains why they are anti-Semitic at heart. It will also be sent to all members of Congress, Vice President Pence 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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