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Facts & Logic About the Middle East

June 11, 2019



Four Reasons Israel Should Consider Annexing Part of Judea-Samaria (the West Bank)

Dear Friend of FLAME:

In an interview with the *New York Times* last week, U.S. Ambassador to Israel David Friedman boldly made the claim that Israel has a right to annex some, but "unlikely all" of Judea-Samaria (aka, the West Bank). Annexation of settlements in the West Bank is also the official policy of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud Party and other right-leaning parties.

Friedman's statement breaks sharply with a long-standing U.S. policy, which has unquestioningly regarded Judea-Samaria as the future home of a Palestinian state. Indeed, the Obama administration stood aside, abstaining as the U.N. Security Council in December 2016 passed Resolution 2334 stating that Israel's settlements in Judea-Samaria constitute a "flagrant violation" of international law.

In its coverage of Friedman's statement, the *Times* also noted that Israel's annexation "would violate international law."

However, it should be noted that, the opinion of the U.N. Security Council and *The New York Times* notwithstanding, many legal scholars hold that Israel's settlements are not illegal at all. Indeed, there are at least four reasons why Israel's annexation of settlements would be both permissible and make compelling sense.

1. Israel's settlements do not violate international law. While issues of international law are both complex and fuzzy, suffice it to say that according to international legal expert Eugene Kontorovich, the U.N. Security Council