

the inexorable march of demographic destiny.

For this reason alone, Israel has no choice, it is argued, than to give the Palestinian Arabs their own state, if only to ensure that Israel retains both its Jewishness and its democracy.

The only teensy fly in this ointment, however, is that the census and projections that the PA provided were utter fictions. The PA's census numbers were far higher than the best Israeli government estimates—breathtakingly so. As Israeli demographers, such as Yoram Ettinger, looked into the details of the PA census, it quickly became clear that the census' methodology was fatally flawed. There were double-counts of many people, ludicrous birth and death statistics, immigration assumptions that bore no relationship to reality, violations of international census standards, and direct conflicts with publicly available data from other PA agencies and world bodies.

Here are just a few of the 1997 fraud's elements:

- The entire Arab population of Jerusalem of almost 300,000 souls was double-counted—they were included in both the Israeli and PA census figures.
- 400,000 Palestinian Arabs who live permanently abroad were counted by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). This is a major census no-no by all accepted world standards.
- Compared with birth and death records from the Palestine Central Election Commission and the Palestinian Departments of Health and Education, the PA's approved PCBS count simply invented babies and reanimated corpses by the tens of thousands. In some cities, the reported death rate was zero, and Palestinians born in 1847 were resurrected for census purposes.
- The PA census invented tens of thousands of immigrants *into* the territories, when in fact, there has been net emigration from the territories according to Israeli border control and immigration data. Emigration varies, but is typically between 10,000 and 25,000 per year. This means that the Palestinian territories actually lost at least 200,000 residents between the two alleged censuses.
- Between 1997 and 2003, Palestinian Arabs who wed Israeli Arabs won automatic Israeli citizenship. There were over 100,000 of them, and they and their (Israeli) children are also double-counted by the PCBS.
- The number of first-grade children and births tabulated in a World Bank study—as well as by the PA's own Department of Education—is tens of thousands fewer than the PCBS "counted."

In short, the PA's census bureau simply made it up as they went along to satisfy the pre-determined population figures that party bosses in Ramallah demanded.

The probable actual 1997 total of Arabs living in the disputed territories was inflated by approximately 50% for the census—about 1.2 million extra residents. The actual total of Palestinian Arabs back in 1997 was 2.6 million, and the likely total in the more recent study is little over 3.2 million—not the 4.7 million alleged by the PA.

Combined with Israeli Arabs, the touted demographic time-bomb simply

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disappears: Between the River and the Sea today, Israeli Jews out-number the Arabs by 6.7 million to 5.1 million.

But the demographic good news for Israel goes even deeper. Jewish Israelis' fertility rates have boomed in the past 20 years, while Palestinian fertility rates have plummeted: Palestinians have shifted from rural to urban settings, Palestinians have received far more education and access to birth control—thanks to Israel—and Palestinian women particularly are literate, better educated, and work-engaged.

It is tempting to attribute Israeli fecundity to the ultra-orthodox population boom, but the opposite is true. Orthodox women are producing smaller families, while Israel's secular families are growing more rapidly. In fact, the aggregate fertility rate for Israeli Jews is now 3.2, while it is 3.1 for Palestinian Arabs.

In other words, the favorable demographics for Jews are likely to accelerate, not slow down.

There may be many valid reasons for Israel and its friends to desire disengagement from the disputed territories. However, the demographic threat of an Arab majority has no legitimacy whatsoever.

As you discuss the future of Israel as a Jewish democracy with friends, family and colleagues, I urge you to explain the bogus statistics of Palestinian population claims. Population figures should play no role—and certainly not impose false urgency—for Israel and its supporters in seeking a just and peaceful resolution of the issues between the Jewish nation and its adversaries.

In addition to exposing falsehoods regarding the legality of Israel's settlements, I hope you'll also take a minute, while you have this material front and center, to visit FLAME's lively [new Facebook page](#) and review the P.S. immediately below. It describes FLAME's new *hasbarah* campaign—an expansion on the myth of the "Palestinian territories."

Best regards,

Ken Cohen

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

P.S. Critics of Israel, from *The New York Times* to BDS and the United Nations, usually base their condemnation of Israel on the accusation that Israel's settlements (or its "occupation of Palestinian territory") are illegal. These accusations are false and deserve to be exposed once and for all. That's why FLAME has created a new *hasbarah* message called "[What Is "Palestinian Territory"?](#)" I hope you'll review this hard-hitting paid editorial, which will begin running in national media this month. It provides a plain-English explanation of the legal issues surrounding Israel's historical and entirely legal presence in its Biblical homeland. This piece 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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