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Facts & Logic About the Middle East

November 12, 2019



Aid to Israel Keeps the United States Safer—Linking It to the Palestinian Conflict Is a Mistake

Dear Friend of FLAME:

Despite criticism from a few Americans, U.S. aid to Israel is not really *aid* as all, and it's certainly not done out of altruism. Indeed, the \$3.8 million provided annually to Israel by the U.S. is actually an *investment* made in our own security—one that delivers an incomparably high return.

In addition, several Presidential candidates recently proposed withholding these investments in Israel unless the Jewish state does more to support the U.S. goal of facilitating an independent state for the Palestinians. This commentary, too, mistakes the self-interested purpose of these funds and confuses their relationship to a Palestinian peace process.

Let's put the Israel investment in some context. Foreign aid is usually less than one percent of the U.S. federal budget. The U.S. currently spends about \$75 billion on military operations and aid for Afghanistan, \$65 billion for Iraq and \$3.25 billion for Pakistan. The value of this \$143.25 billion in spending certainly bears scrutiny, but few Americans complain about it.

Let's consider the value of the win-win U.S. investment in Israel.

First, U.S. funds do not support day-to-day operations of the Israeli Defense Forces, but rather are largely used to purchase world-class armaments, such as U.S.-manufactured F-35 stealth fighters and develop with the U.S. new advanced weapon systems, such as the Iron Dome, Arrow 3 and David's Sling missile defenses.

In short, 70% of the U.S. investment in Israel must be spent to purchase U.S. military equipment—which supports U.S. high-tech defense jobs and our industrial base.

Second, the nations and forces that threaten Israel are also those that threaten U.S. interests—Iran, Syria, U.S.-designated terror groups like Hizbollah and Hamas, and non-state actors like al Qaeda and ISIS.

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Is a Two-State Solution Still Possible?

While sympathy for Palestinian self-rule is understandable, proponents of the two-state solution must resolve seven tough questions before it can be realistic.

1. Who are the negotiators?
Major U.S. officials, including the State Department, the White House, and the CIA, are the primary negotiators. The Palestinian Authority (PA) is also involved, but its role is limited. The U.S. must ensure that the negotiators are credible and have the authority to negotiate.

2. What are the negotiators' mandates?
The negotiators must have clear mandates from their respective governments. The U.S. must ensure that the negotiators are not bound by any preconditions.

3. What are the negotiators' objectives?
The negotiators must have clear objectives. The U.S. must ensure that the negotiators are not bound by any preconditions.

4. What are the negotiators' timelines?
The negotiators must have clear timelines. The U.S. must ensure that the negotiators are not bound by any preconditions.

5. What are the negotiators' resources?
The negotiators must have clear resources. The U.S. must ensure that the negotiators are not bound by any preconditions.

6. What are the negotiators' risks?
The negotiators must have clear risks. The U.S. must ensure that the negotiators are not bound by any preconditions.

7. What are the negotiators' outcomes?
The negotiators must have clear outcomes. The U.S. must ensure that the negotiators are not bound by any preconditions.

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FLAME is the only organization that defends Israel with paid

Remember that Israel destroyed both a nuclear weapons factory of Saddam Hussein in 1981 and a Syrian nuclear facility under construction in 2007. Note that Israel has attacked proxies of America's number one enemy—Iran—in Syria and Lebanon more than 200 times in recent years. It assists Egypt in destroying al Qaeda cells in the Sinai Peninsula. No nation—anywhere—is more assertive in battling jihadist forces.

Third, Israel is ranked the 8th most powerful nation globally, based on economic influence, political influence, international alliances and military strength. It is not only America's strongest ally in the Middle East, it is also one of our strongest worldwide. Tellingly, the U.N. General Assembly, for the 28th consecutive year, voted to condemn the U.S. embargo on Cuba. Last year, only Israel joined the U.S. in opposing the vote, this year only Israel and Brazil supported the U.S.

Fourth, though no U.S. troops need to be stationed in Israel, we do collaborate on an American/Israeli co-designed X-band radar system, which helps both countries monitor Middle East threats. Indeed, Israel is also a world leader in cybersecurity and intelligence gathering, providing the U.S. a continuous feed of invaluable intelligence about Iran, Syria, Russia, al Qaeda, Hizbollah and Hamas. The value of this intelligence: Priceless.

Recall that Israel teamed up with the U.S. to wreak havoc on Iranian nuclear weapons operations using the Stuxnet virus. Last year, Israel agents penetrated Iran's secret nuclear warehouse in Teheran, taking documents that proved Iran's cheating on nuclear disarmament agreements with the U.S. and NATO allies.

Fifth, Israel serves as a port of call for U.S. troops, ships, aircraft and intelligence operations. It is strategically located on the Mediterranean and the Red Seas, enabling it to monitor (and guard) critical waterways used for international shipping and military activities.

In short, as U.S. Representative Steve Rothman (D-N.J.) puts it, "For about 2 percent of what the U.S. spends in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan this year, Americans can take pride in the return on our investment in aid to Israel." Indeed, it would be hard to find a higher return than the dollars we Americans invest in our relationship with the exceedingly friendly and staunchly democratic state of Israel.

Finally, as for linking the U.S. investment in Israel's security—and our own security—to some type of "progress" in the creation of a Palestinian state, this would be a major mistake on two counts:

First, the U.S. cannot afford to jeopardize the safety of our nation, or that of our valued ally, Israel, or that of our other friends in the Middle East, for the sake of an unrelated matter, such as Palestinian sovereignty.

Second, after the refusal by the Palestinians of three generous offers of land for peace by Israel since 2000, as well as the Palestinian's refusal to negotiate further with Israel since 2010, it hardly seems fair to hold Israel solely responsible for a Palestinian state. (See this list of the real [obstacles to Palestinian statehood](#).)

I hope in conversations with friends, family and colleagues, you'll point out that any linkage of the U.S. investment in Israel with a Palestinian state is misplaced

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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and a serious mistake. Emphasize that our support of Israel is an investment first and foremost in our own security, and secondly an investment in the safety of one of our greatest allies.

In addition, 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—outspokenly [questioning the validity and wisdom](#) of the so-called two-state solution.

Best regards,

Jim Sinkinson

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

P.S. Many politicians in the U.S., as well as in Western Europe, hold steadfastly to the notion of a two-state solution for resolving the Palestinians' conflict with Israel. However, it's become clear as stability in the Middle East deteriorates, power balances shift and the Palestinians themselves continue to reject peace initiatives, that a two-state solution may be no solution at all. That's why FLAME has created a new *hasbarah* message called "[Is a Two-State Solution Still Possible?](#)" I hope you'll review this hard-hitting paid editorial, which will run in coming months in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*. It lays out [seven tough questions](#) that must be answered before two states can seriously be considered. 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 realistic policies in relation to Israel, the Palestinians and the entire Middle East.

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