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Facts & Logic About the Middle East

June 9, 2020



Palestinians Issue a “Cry for Help”—Why Won’t Concerned Politicians and Nations Step Up?

Dear Friend of FLAME:

We all know the fable of the foolish child who threatens that if he doesn’t get what he wants, he will hold his breath until he dies.

This is the level of desperation—and immaturity—to which the Palestinian Authority (PA) has sunk (not for the first time).

Once again, 85-year-old Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas—now in his 16th year of a five-year term—has refused to accept a transfer of tax revenues collected by Israel on the PA’s behalf.

In addition, Abbas has announced a cessation of all agreements with Israel, most notably cooperation between the Palestinian and Israeli security forces in Palestinian-controlled regions of Judea-Samaria (aka the West Bank).

Both these measures are essentially suicide threats—or as psychologists would term them, “cries for help.” The question is, who can help . . . how . . . and how quickly?

Financially, the Palestinian economy has been in shambles for years. Its internal commercial engines fall far short in generating tax revenues to support the society. Despite billions in international aid over the decades, the PA has failed to apply these funds effectively to develop sustainable industries.

What’s more, international donor support for the PA has fallen from \$1.24 billion in 2013 to just \$516 million in 2018.

In 2018, the U.S. also ceased funding of \$100 million for the corrupt U.N. Relief and Works Administration—dedicated exclusively to supporting the myth that millions of descendants of Palestinian Arab refugees from Israel’s 1948 War of Independence will someday “return” to the homes of their forefathers.

Later in 2018, the U.S. slashed another approximately \$300 million in aid packages to the PA tied to its funding for terrorists (“pay for slay”) and its

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Iran is the greatest enemy of the United States. Iran seeks to overthrow the U.S. and has been a major threat to the U.S. since the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Iran has been a major sponsor of terrorism, and has been a major threat to the U.S. since the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Iran has been a major sponsor of terrorism, and has been a major threat to the U.S. since the 1979 Iranian Revolution.

Iran's human rights record is deplorable. It sponsors terrorism, and is a major threat to the U.S. since the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Iran has been a major sponsor of terrorism, and has been a major threat to the U.S. since the 1979 Iranian Revolution.

Iran has failed to accept the peaceful resolution of its nuclear program. Iran has been a major threat to the U.S. since the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Iran has been a major sponsor of terrorism, and has been a major threat to the U.S. since the 1979 Iranian Revolution.

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generally belligerent behavior toward the current administration.

In addition, in 2019 Israel's parliament also passed a law to withhold some \$140 million annually from the Palestinians as punishment for rewarding terrorism against Israeli citizens. Nonetheless, the PA has refused to cease these payments to its "heroes" and "martyrs."

The Palestinian government currently runs a deficit of about \$1 billion a year. GDP and per-capita income are falling. About one in three Palestinians in the labor market is unemployed—in Gaza unemployment is estimated at 50%. The PA frequently cannot pay government employees or its electricity bill to Israel.

Now, as part of the Palestinian Authority's fit of pique at Israel's *discussions* to extend its legal sovereignty into parts of Judea-Samaria, the PA asserts it is "absolved of all understandings and agreements with Israel." One of those agreements is Israel's collection of taxes from Palestinian exports, which total about \$600 million a year—some 60% of the Palestinian budget.

If the PA sticks to its resolve, the resulting shortfall could effectively shut the doors of the organization, making it insolvent — unable to fund operations.

We should note that the PA has made such threats in the past and reneged some months later when its financial position became impossible.

In addition, the PA is entirely dependent on security cooperation with Israel to prevent the takeover of its government by Hamas—the Islamist terror group that rules about two million Palestinians in Gaza—and to assist in keeping law and order generally in Judea-Samaria.

No surprise that Palestinian government officials have already indicated that despite Abbas' claims, security coordination between the PA and Israel would continue.

Nonetheless, it's clear that the viability of Palestinian society is diminishing by the month. In addition to reductions in cash flow from the U.S. and Israel, Arab nations are increasingly impatient with Palestinian recalcitrance and have reduced their donations and political support. Norway just announced it is cutting funding for Palestinian textbooks because they promote terrorism and hate.

The nagging question is, why is no one trying to help the Palestinian Arabs snap out of their downward spiral? Why are concerned nations, politicians and pundits so quiet on Palestinians' refusal to act in their own best interests?

The E.U. and dozens of European NGOs continue to pour millions of dollars into building illegal Palestinian settlements in Judea-Samaria in an attempt to create "facts on the ground"—a futile opposition to expanding Jewish communities in their indigenous territories.

American and European politicians continue to issue wild predictions and stern condemnations at the new Israeli government's intention to extend sovereignty to parts of Judea-Samaria, where some 400,000 Israelis live as the majority population in their ancient homeland.

Yet, if the Palestinians had accepted peace, a state and true economic

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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development assistance, Israel would not have the option of expanding into the land granted it in 1920 at the San Remo Conference and ratified by the League of Nations and the United Nations. This territory would long ago have been ceded to the Palestinians in a peace deal.

But despite at least five offers of land for peace—independence, a state, a capital in Jerusalem—the Palestinian Authority has refused them all.

Now as the Palestinian Arabs continue sinking deeper into economic, political and social desperation—due entirely to their refusal to negotiate—they are “crying for help.” Yet none of these concerned nations, politicians or NGOs seems dedicated to urging the Palestinians to the negotiating table.

Since Palestinians’ stubbornness has proven to be the perpetual obstacle to peace between them and Israel, those who claim to care about the future of the Middle East and the plight of Palestinian people would be more effective if they were to focus on this strategic linchpin.

I hope as you discuss the prospects for peace in the Middle East, you’ll point out—to friends, family, colleagues and in letters to the editor—that politicians, nations and organizations truly concerned about the plight of the Palestinians should urgently focus on persuading the Palestinian Authority to seize peace . . . before it’s too late.

History is moving on, and as we have seen, further procrastination in seeking peace will only diminish the rewards to the Palestinian people.

I hope you’ll also take a minute, while you have this material front and center, to visit FLAME’s lively [Facebook page](#) and review the P.S. immediately below. It describes FLAME’s new *hasbarah* campaign—which provides powerful arguments for maintaining strong sanctions against our enemy, Iran.

Best regards,

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

P.S. Some leftist European and American politicians have recently proposed easing sanctions on Iran as a humanitarian gesture in the face of Covid-19’s devastating attack on the Islamic Republic. However, this would be an egregious mistake, just as tough U.S. sanctions are pressuring Iran to back off its imperialistic adventures across the Middle East—especially since U.S. sanctions do not restrict Iran from acquiring humanitarian medical supplies. That’s why FLAME has created a new *hasbarah* message called “[Keep the Pressure on Iran](#)” I hope you’ll review this convincing, fact-based paid editorial, which ran in the *Sunday New York Times* and *Washington Post*. It lays out the many dangers that Iran poses to the U.S., Israel and our other allies in the region and spells out why in fact we should consider *increasing* sanctions on Iran. 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 committed to realistic policies in relation to Israel, Iran and the entire Middle East.

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The logo for FLAME, featuring the word "FLAME" in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The letter "A" is stylized with a flame shape above it.

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