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Facts & Logic About the Middle East

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## False assumptions prevent resolution of the Israel-Palestinian conflict

Dear Friend of FLAME:

A 2016 clip of then-Secretary of State John Kerry claiming that, "There will be no separate peace between Israel and the Arab world" before an agreement with the Palestinians, has not aged well—especially in the wake of recent normalization agreements signed between Israel and the UAE and Bahrain.

The absolute certainty of Kerry's view—which has been shared for decades by many U.S. politicians and most Middle East diplomats and pundits—stands in stark contrast to the reality that has been bubbling beneath the surface for some time. With Kerry's theory now disproven, it is clear we have been fed many other false paradigms and slogans about the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

If the U.S., Israel, the Palestinians, the Europeans and the Arabs wish to resolve this conflict peacefully, it will pay to revisit and recalibrate many assumptions. Let's start with some of the most egregiously inaccurate claims and the real facts behind them.

### False Assumption #1: The primary Palestinian goal is self-determination and a state of their own.

This is the focal point of so much deceptive thinking about the conflict. Ironically, it does not pass even the simplest historical scrutiny. The Palestinians, or the Arabs of Mandatory of Palestine, were offered a state on several occasions over the past century, beginning in 1937 when the Peel Commission offered to create an Arab State on over four fifths of the territory of Mandatory Palestine, leaving the Jewish state with a tiny sliver of the coast around Haifa.

The Arabs were later offered a state in 1947, 1967, 2000, 2001 and most recently, in 2008, when then-Prime Minister Ehud Olmert offered 100% of Judea and Samaria and Gaza, with some minor land swaps. Each time the Palestinian leadership said no, because it would have necessitated recognizing Jewish national rights.

*In fact, all evidence indicates that the Palestinian leadership nurtures an*

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**What's Stopping a Palestinian State?**

Over 72 years, Israel has offered land for peace and a Palestinian state. The Palestinians have rejected all offers. How much longer should the world wait?

**What are the facts?**

Only a tiny fraction of the world's national groups have nation states. Both Kautsky and Theodor agree to establish, not based on blood or 1917, but on the fact of the land. The world is not a tabula rasa. The rest of the world requires powerful strategy, state and leadership. Sadly, these qualities have eluded the Palestinians, preventing them from seizing multiple opportunities for statehood.

**Palestinians embrace a "two-state" strategy.** As recalled in the 1948 Charter of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the Palestinian people are declared to be the "predecessors of the Jewish people" and "inheritors of the land of Palestine." The Charter states that "Actual struggle in the land of Palestine" is the primary goal. The PLO has never done it.

Like the Charter of Hamas, the Palestinian Charter group has other goals: "systemic Arab terrorism" and "fulfillment of a fully sovereign state established with Jerusalem as its capital" on the land from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River, encompassing all of Israel.

Clearly, a strategy focused solely on obtaining land in full, as is one that rejects negotiation. Palestinians leaders hold the double-edged sword of rejection on each separate, demand. Indeed, this all-or-nothing strategy is fully at odds with public knowledge in the United States, Europe, Asia, and increasingly in the Middle East. It's certainly not the path to peaceful resolution.

**Palestinians lack political unity.** Palestinian leaders and their people are not alone in a collective vision. While both their political groups support attack of Israel, Hamas, the International Islamic Front, and the Islamic Resistance Movement (IIRF) are not unified in their goals. The PLO pursues a more diplomatic approach—claiming to want peace—though it still reaches into Israel's territory with financial incentives. What's more, these two factions remain bitter enemies, unable to share governance. While many Palestinians embrace peace and cooperation with Israel, this view is not promoted or shared by their leaders. In short, Palestinian society is splintered with dissensions, incapable of forming a state.

**How can it be that the world is not for the Palestinians?**

Like many people who crave the state and nation state, the Palestinians have failed to master a viable strategy, national unity, or leadership. Had enough to see the disintegration of the Palestinian people, after 72 years of waiting, the world could have said "stop" after the right message finally formed most of the Palestinians still refuse to join in.

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*obsession with destroying Israel more than they seek a state of their own, and for this reason they are unable to accept a peace treaty that requires they give up this goal.*

### **False Assumption #2: The Palestinian issue is the crux of instability in the Middle East**

This myth is easy for many in the West to digest because of the massively disproportionate attention the Israel-Palestinian conflict receives in mainstream media. However, the facts simply do not tally with the theory. The Shiite-Sunni rivalry has been raging for centuries, with millions of casualties, and still remains a foundational point of so many regional conflicts, as in Yemen, Lebanon and Iraq. In fact, since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, more than 13 million Muslims have been killed in regional conflicts—90% by other Muslims—and fewer than one per cent in the context of the wider Israel-Arab conflict.

The circumstances that created the Arab Spring—namely that the people of this region are oppressed by their autocratic governments and suffer crushing poverty—has no relationship to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In fact, tension in the Holy Land has long been used to distract the region's people from their daily political and economic plight.

*In fact, historical evidence over the last century, even up until this last month, indicates that the Israel-Palestinian conflict is low on the list of causes of discontent in the Middle East, and serves to swerve attention from the region's many ills.*

### **False Assumption #3: The conflict is territorial and not ideological.**

In 2008, when PM Olmert offered Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas 100% of the territory, half of Jerusalem, the holy basin and a solution for refugees, the Palestinian leader balked at the offer—because he would have to sign an end to all claims and conflict clauses. Abbas has further stated on numerous occasions that he will never recognize the Jewish people's right to self-determination, and has refused to enter negotiations because of this one simple demand.

Moreover, despite repeated UN and Palestinian protestations, as well as volumes of media criticism, Jewish settlements have never been an impediment to an agreement, because they sit on less than 2% of all Judea and Samaria. Even when Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu placed a complete moratorium on building in settlements in 2009—specifically to demonstrate that this is indeed a “red herring” issue—Abbas still refused to enter negotiations, thus proving the point.

*In fact, borders and territorial issues have never been a sticking point during any negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority—rather it's the Palestinian obsession with expelling Jews from “Muslim land” that sustains the conflict.*

### **False Assumption #4: The Palestinian leadership is ready for negotiations and compromise.**

Despite Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's frequent declarations that he is ready for negotiations at any time in any place, and that all issues remain on the

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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table, Palestinian leaders have not even responded to this offer. Regardless of whether there is a more or less friendly incumbent in the White House—or in the Israeli parliament—the Palestinians have retained their all-or-nothing position.

In fact, since 1993, when the peace process officially began, the State of Israel's position has evolved and progressed massively towards the Palestinian position. Compromises and concessions have been provided, such as Israel's disengagement from Gaza in 2005, recognition of Palestinian national rights and full autonomy for the Palestinian people. Nevertheless, the Palestinian position has not moved one inch in over 27 years, and has arguably regressed to a more militant one.

*In fact, there is absolutely no evidence that the current Palestinian leadership has any interest in or willingness to end the conflict—they have refused all local and international attempts to bring them to the negotiating table.*

**False Assumption #5: Israel's presence in Judea and Samaria—the so-called “occupation”—is the cause of the conflict.**

For this reasoning to be accurate, it must follow that before 1967, when Israel first liberated Judea and Samaria and started to rebuild communities in the Jewish people's historic homeland, there was no conflict. We know from history that this is blatantly false. The conflict began at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the rise of practical Zionism—the movement to reestablish Jewish sovereignty in its ancestral, indigenous homeland.

The war by Arabs against this justified, moral and legal cause predated not only Israel's presence over the Green Line, but also Israel's establishment in 1948. Jews were brutally attacked and murdered *en masse* beginning in the 1920s, half a century before a single settlement was built.

*In fact, groups like the Palestinian Liberation Organization and Hamas state openly in Arabic that the conflict has nothing to do with Israel's presence in Judea and Samaria. They oppose Jewish sovereignty itself, or in the case of Hamas, they are waging a war against Jews everywhere.*

I hope in conversations with friends, family, colleagues and your elected representatives—and in letters to the editor—you'll emphasize that any solutions to the Israel-Palestinian conflict will have to be based on new realities.

The myths that Israel is blocking peace, that “occupation” or “settlements” are core to the problem or that Middle East peace depends on resolution between Jews and Palestinians have all thankfully been laid to rest in the wake of recent peace breakthroughs.

In fact, the Palestinians' leverage has been dramatically reduced. At a minimum they will have to recognize the Jewish state. They should also consider stepping up to the negotiating table soon in the hopes of harnessing the region's new appetite for peace with Israel. It may be their only chance for an independent state.

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 explains the sad, but true

reasons Palestinians continue to fail at forming their own nation state.

Best regards,

Jim Sinkinson

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

P.S. Some American and European politicians argue that Israel's intention to apply sovereignty to the militarily critical Jordan Valley would inhibit formation of a Palestinian state. Nothing is further from the truth. The Palestinians don't have a state—despite numerous offers of land for peace by Israel—because the Arab group simply hasn't mustered an adequate strategy, political unity or leadership. They're simply unable to say yes. To clarify this point, FLAME has created a new *hasbarah* message called "[What's Stopping a Palestinian State?](#)" I hope you'll review this convincing, fact-based paid editorial, which will run in *USA Today*, the *Washington Post*, and other media nationwide. It spells out specific reasons the Palestinians have failed to create a sovereign state and why it's time for the world—and Israel—to move on. 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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