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Dear Friend of FLAME:

It was great fun, of course, but I also swelled unforgettably with pride to be part of the Jewish people, most of whom deeply love and support their homeland.

Last week, fulfilling a personal goal, I returned to Jerusalem for Yom Ha'atzmaut. This year was different for two reasons. First, because of Covid 19, the celebration was more subdued. Second, the contrast between Israelis' irrepressible, optimistic patriotism and the bitter cynicism of so many U.S. citizens has never been starker.

Israel's 73rd Independence Day celebrations last week were less boisterous due to the pandemic. Despite more than 55% of the Israeli population fully vaccinated, Israel's typical all-out events in town centers throughout the country—with music, dancing and fireworks—were limited or not held communally at all.

Nevertheless, the usual outpouring of pride and—patriotism with ubiquitous blue-and-white flags hanging from every building, car and hand—were on display. On this day in particular, the nation's people are united in celebrating their country, whether left or right, religious or secular, Jew or non-Jew.

In this generation of wokeness, with frequent emphasis on division and disdain for one's country and history—a tendency in many Western countries toward disavowing nationalism—it is refreshing how the State of Israel is bucking the trend.

Israel is unique in the world in that it commemorates Independence Day one day after its Memorial Day—actually “Memorial Day for the Fallen Soldiers of the Wars of Israel and Victims of Actions of Terrorism.” On this memorial day—

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Yom Hazikaron—sirens are sounded, and the whole country freezes in observance. The sight of highways and busy streets coming to a complete standstill—as Israel’s diverse citizens stood with heads bowed, unified in sadness and steely determination—was awe-inspiring.

As I joined them on a Jerusalem street last Wednesday morning, sadness, then tears welled up, and began streaming down my face. I wasn’t alone.

The nation’s military cemeteries were full—not just of friends and relatives of the fallen, but also of entire student bodies, who come and pay their respects to soldiers and civilians who made the ultimate sacrifice. Almost all normal TV and radio programming was replaced with somber songs about fallen soldiers and Israel’s wars, replete with personal stories of those who fought valiantly but fell in battle.

I was acutely aware that this was no American Memorial Day, where thoughts are more likely focused on where to pick up extra hot dogs for the BBQ. On Israel’s Yom Hazikaron—literally “Day of Remembrance”—most stores and restaurants are closed, reducing distractions, so we could actually *remember*.

The stories of Israel’s victories against the odds—fighting for its existence against implacable enemies who sought its destruction—are relayed from kindergartens through the entire education system. Politicians, artists, celebrities, workers, religious and atheists, attend and appear at events ripe with a sense of sacrifice and solemn Jewish destiny. This ensures Israel’s history and sacrifice are imbued into Independence Day the following day—which is energized by abject celebration.

These two days, back-to-back, infuse an understanding of the hard, miraculous work it took to build a country out of people whose ancestors spent 2,000 years dispersed and dispossessed, culminating in the Holocaust. Holocaust Day—Yom Hashoah—was commemorated in Israel exactly a week before. In these three events, Israelis are annually reminded of both the costs and the joy of their achievement—reestablishing their nation on its ancestral, indigenous soil.

On the eve of Israel’s 71st Independence Day, 82% of the Israeli public expressed pride in their country and its achievements. Both among the Jewish and the Arab interviewees, the overwhelming majority view their country extremely positively, though the positive majority among Jews is larger than among the Arabs (85% vs. 68%).

Still, over two thirds of a minority population expressing pride and positivity towards their country is a very welcome statistic. These statistics have remained steady over the last decade regardless of circumstance.

There is a sense of duty in Israel whereby when your country needs you, you step up. It is not unusual in the face of recent military threats for Israel Defense Forces army combat units to have over 100% capacity. It’s because many who are not even called up for reserve duty—because of their age or other reasons—still turn up ready and available to go into battle.

The IDF is the most trusted institution in Israel because its role in defending the country and its people is clearly understood. When asked which institutions the Israeli public trusts the most, 88% of respondents say they have full faith in 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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IDE.

Many of these emotions would be criticized in the U.S. and other parts of the world, where pride in one's country and its history is seen as regressive or naive. Some progressives want to break down the nation-state and borders, erasing national identities. However, in most of the world, the state is built around one identity, whether national, ethnic or religious.

That is not to say that minorities should not have full rights in nation states, but the state is built for a specific rationale. That rationale, whether it is to instill freedom for those escaping tyranny or persecution—including the opportunity for prosperity and success, as in the U.S.—or to provide a national home for the Jewish people, every nation has one.

That is why, in 2018, the Israeli Knesset passed the Basic Law: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People, which enshrines the Jewish nature of Israel. The law legalized the flag, 'Hatikvah' as the national anthem, Hebrew as the state's language, and Jerusalem, complete and united, as the capital of Israel.

This was necessary because of threats to redefine national character at the beginning of the twenty-first century. As everywhere, there are those in Israel who seek a different nation, bereft of any specific identifying ethnic or religious features, which would lead to the end of pride and patriotism.

Please remind friends, family, colleagues and elected officials that Israel's Independence Day exemplifies how valuable it is to show pride and appreciation for one's country. It instills patriotism in its citizens—ensuring that its legacy is preserved, and its mission and history are not forgotten. May this unifying spirit also soon return to the American people.

I hope you'll also take a minute, while you have this material front and center, to forward this message to friends, visit FLAME's lively [Facebook page](#) and review the P.S. immediately below. It describes FLAME's new hasbarah campaign—which exposes the dangerous folly of the U.S. trying to entice Iran back into the failed "Iran Deal" of 2015.

Best regards,

Jim Sinkinson

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

P.S. The Biden administration and many members of Congress seem determined to reengage with Iran over the coming year—and some reports indicate a willingness to return to the failed "Iran Nuclear Deal" without preconditions. As you know, this would be disastrous—for the U.S. and for Israel and our other allies in the Middle East. The Iran Deal gave the Islamic Republic a roadmap to nuclear weapons and did nothing to check their jihadi activities, including development of long-range ballistic missiles. To warn Americans of this danger, FLAME has created a new *hasbarah* message called "[No Fool's Deal with Iran](#)." I hope you'll review this convincing, fact-based paid editorial, which ran in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, and other media nationwide. It spells out specifically the protections any new Iran deal

must provide. This piece will also be sent to all members of Congress, Vice President Harris and President Biden. 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 Biden stay committed to realistic policies in relation to Iran, Israel and the entire Middle East.

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