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December 21, 2020



## America's diplomatic failure with Iran may force Israel to fight for its life—again

Dear Friend of FLAME:

By all accounts, negotiations in Vienna trying to stop Iran's headlong drive to acquire nuclear weapons are proceeding poorly.

Unsurprisingly, Iran is backtracking on points already agreed upon and is posing new pre-conditions—like immediate suspension of all economic and trade sanctions against it by the U.S.-led international community.

Former U.S. Representative John Dingell once wisely observed that “War is failure of diplomacy.” His words accurately describe the stakes riding on the failure to prevent the Islamic Republic of Iran from achieving its nuclear ambitions.

Ever since the P5+1 (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States; plus, Germany) started negotiating with Iran for what eventually became the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Iran hasn't taken its eye off its goal.

Despite the positive spin President Obama put on the Iran nuclear deal, the JCPOA had three major flaws: First, it ultimately only *slowed* the Iranian path to nuclear weapons. Second, the agreement lacked deterrents sufficient to ensure Iran abided by its restrictions. Third, the Iranian mullahs, inveterate cheaters, had no intention in any case of complying with them.

As Dennis Ross, a former special assistant to President Obama for the Middle East and South Asia, and Gen. David H. Petraeus, former commander of U.S. and coalition forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, and director of the CIA, [wrote](#) in *The Washington Post* shortly after the signing: “Deterrence is the key to ensuring not just that the Iranians live up to the agreement but also to preventing them from developing nuclear weapons. Iran must know that we will not permit it to become a nuclear weapons state ever.”

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Ross and Petraeus were voicing another axiom of international negotiations: Your counterpart must believe you are ready to use force if diplomacy fails.

Unfortunately, while JCPOA offered a big carrot in sanctions relief for Iran, there was little stick to ensure they didn't breach the deal. Because of Iranian breaches—above all its secret intentions to create nuclear weapons and its failure to allow meaningful inspections—then-President Trump pulled the U.S. out of the deal.

At the time, Trump said: "We will not continue down a path whose predictable conclusion is more violence, more terror, and the very real threat of Iran's nuclear breakout."

Indeed, rather than prevent conflict and violence, the JCPOA was actually leading to it—whether the negotiating nations were ready or not.

Iran is now a nuclear threshold state. Though the JCPOA allowed them to enrich uranium no further than 3.67%, they are already enriching uranium at a 60% level—just a short step from the 90% needed for nuclear weapons. Clearly, the international community was not aware of many elements of Iran's program.

At a recent European press briefing, a senior Israel Defense Forces (IDF) official said that "according to our assessment, Iran is one month from being able to enrich enough uranium for a nuclear bomb, if they decide to."

The question is what happens now?

The U.S. has claimed frequently that "all options are on the table"—meaning military force has not been ruled out. However, this formulation has never motivated the Iranians because they sense U.S. reluctance.

Israeli officials have recently become frustrated with American response to the eventual need for military action. Despite its words about options, the U.S. seems to lack the stomach for them, even if current Iran talks fail—which they almost certainly will.

Israel's Defense Minister just returned from the U.S., where he made clear that he has directed Israel's military to prepare for a possible strike on Iran if it gets closer to acquiring nuclear weapons capability.

According to diplomatic sources reported in *The Jerusalem Post*: "When Defense Minister Benny Gantz was in Washington last week to implore the Americans to take a tougher stance against the Iranian nuclear threat, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken insisted they devote equal time to discussing settlements as they did to Iran, which Israeli diplomatic sources found baffling."

That the U.S. would waste valuable time talking about Israeli communities in Judea and Samaria when Israel is facing an existential threat from Iran is more than baffling—it is alarming, sending a dangerous message on priorities both to friends like Israel and enemies like Iran.

Moreover, the U.S. is not just rhetorically stymying Israel's ability to defend

FLAME is the only organization that defends Israel with paid 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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itself from nuclear-armed Iranian clerics who have repeatedly threatened to “wipe it off the map.” Israel recently asked the U.S. to speed up delivery of a Boeing refueling aircraft it has purchased to support a successful attack on Iran’s nuclear installations. The U.S., seemingly as a delaying tactic, told Israel the plane won’t be ready until 2024.

Clearly, if Israel assesses Iran’s ability to enrich weapons grade uranium as a matter of weeks or months, it certainly does not have three years to wait.

Thus, it seems that Israel—not for the first time in its history—is on its own, facing an arduous if not almost impossible task. The Iranians are not like Iraq and Syria, where Israel has already taken military measures against their nuclear weapons program in 1981 and 2007 respectively. Iran has multiple nuclear sites in various locations, most deep underground and some near civilian population centers.

Iran also retains a strong retaliation option, chiefly through its proxy Hezbollah in Lebanon. *The Tehran Times* recently published on its front page a map of all the places it believes it can reach and attack in Israel.

Unsurprisingly, Israel may soon conclude it has no good options—only bad and worse ones. Israel has long understood it cannot allow its enemies the ability to destroy it. It has also learned that when enemies say they will annihilate the Jewish people, it must take that threat seriously.

I hope you will point out to friends, family, colleagues and your elected representatives that the U.S. has reached this perilous point precisely because it relied too much on diplomacy without commensurate resolve to use force—and it failed. Even today many in Vienna persist in trying to resuscitate long-dead talks, while refusing to consider meaningful alternatives.

Unfortunately, while for some participants this is a challenge of diplomacy—for Israel it’s a matter of life or death. The Jewish State has always chosen life . . . and it no doubt will again.

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 “Ben & Jerry’s Bad Taste” and those who support boycotts of the Jewish state.

Best regards,

Jim Sinkinson

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

P.S. As you know, Ben & Jerry’s recently announced that it would cease its contract with its Israeli affiliate because the affiliate refused to stop selling the company’s ice cream in the ancient Jewish territories of Judea and Samaria. This move, championed by the company’s anti-Israel board chair, is just the latest attempt to boycott the Jewish state—

joining the BDS movement—which some 35 U.S. states consider illegal and anti-Semitic. To clarify this issue for the American people—including many Jews—FLAME has created a new *hasbarah* message called “[Ben & Jerry’s Bad Taste](#).” I hope you’ll review this convincing, fact-based paid editorial, which will run soon in the *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Chicago Tribune* and other media nationwide. It spells out why Ben & Jerry’s should be held to account for this attempt to delegitimize the State of Israel. 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 fighting anti-Semitic actions by individuals, politicians and commercial companies.

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