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Facts & Logic About the Middle East

August 29, 2023

Biden's \$6 billion ransom payment to Iran teaches our enemies a lesson: Take more hostages

Dear Friend of Israel, Friend of FLAME:

Reports confirm the Biden administration will gift Iran a whopping \$6 billion in exchange for the release of five American hostages. This decision is a godsend for outcast regimes and terrorists around the world—starting with Iran itself—that will no doubt feel emboldened to pursue further acts of belligerence against America and its allies.

The decision reflects the President's naïve worldview that friendly diplomacy can subdue our enemies. Rather, Biden's policies have only encouraged rogue elements like Iran's Islamist regime to continue on the path of aggression and terrorism. At this point, those who wish to defeat the United States must be asking themselves, "With enemies like Biden, who needs friends?"

Biden's payment to Iran will be the biggest ransom paid in centuries. The U.S. will be paying the mullahs a total of \$6 billion for five prisoners—\$1.2 billion per prisoner. There are only two other instances in recorded history when a bigger ransom per hostage was paid.

In 1190, King Richard the Lionheart of England was kidnapped by the Duke of Austria. He was freed in exchange for the equivalent of \$3.3 billion in today's money. In 1532, Spanish Conquistador Francisco Pizarro kidnapped Atahualpa, the last Inca emperor. He freed the Inca leader in exchange for the equivalent of \$1.5 billion in today's money.

Thus, the Biden administration will be paying the biggest ransom in nearly five centuries and the third biggest ransom per hostage in history. And this is assuming that the total ransom payment to Iran will be just \$6 billion.

According to an article in the *New York Sun*, it is possible the ransom will also include recently unfrozen funds from Iraqi and other banks, which would raise the value of the total ransom to \$16 billion—\$3.2 billion per hostage.

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YOU DESERVE TO KNOW THE TRUTH...
Can Biden's Plan Beat Antisemitism?
President Biden's new strategy to Counter Antisemitism got good press. But now we need courageous action to fight rising Jew hatred on our streets and campuses.

The Administration's National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism cannot pass or survive against Jews—and especially Jewish students—are targets of our America. The question is whether Mr. Biden has the commitment to combat antisemitism from all corners of American society.

What are the facts?
A Jewish center in Oxford is vandalized. Colorado students may study antisemitic material after a Holocaust program. The Palestinian activists beat a Jewish man on a New York street. An Illinois state legislature passed antisemitic legislation. A congressional speaker at CUNY Law School denigrates the Jewish state—zionism and Jewish Jews.

Though Jews are only 2.4% of the U.S. population, they are the victims of 47% of religiously motivated hate crimes. Reported antisemitic incidents rose by 84% to a new high of 1,497 in 2022. Moreover, bullying and intimidation of Jewish students on college campuses spiked last year, while attempts to counter antisemitism declined 60%, according to ADL-USA Institute. Rising Jewish persecution in Israel, Germany, and the U.S. Jewish community has been their most serious concern according to a December survey.

Will the President back his National Strategy with courageous opposition—no matter who the offenders are?
The President's National Strategy promises four pillars of action to combat Jew hatred: 1) Increase awareness and understanding 2) Improve safety and security 3) Remove the antisemitic content from government 4) Fight antisemitism and Jew-hatred. In addition, the Biden Strategy adopts the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism—endorsed by 110 nations worldwide, including 60 U.S. states.

While these principles establish a foundation for fighting Jew hatred, the facts demand more than signaling words and good intentions. Will Mr. Biden have the courage to oppose antisemitism across the broad spectrum of those who practice it—whether publicly or in private, in subtle ways or overtly, regardless of President's back-and-forth actions with the true face of the President's commitment?

Aggressively prosecute and expel antisemitic campus antisemitism. Antisemitism on college campuses spans a range of tactics: from vandalism and "swastika" stickers, to Jew-hatred, to discrimination of Jewish and Arab students who support the Jewish state. Many of these offenses directly violate Title IV of the Civil Rights Act. Its increase awareness of these antisemitic trends, the Administration must prosecute them aggressively. In addition, where students are found guilty of antisemitic speech—such as sexual assault, sexual harassment, or sexual violence—must be expelled from campus.

Fight Jew hatred in all corners of American society. The majority of antisemitic acts and hate crimes are against Jews in the workplace. The Administration must aggressively oppose antisemitism where it simultaneously gives campus financial support to establish more Jewish children in Israel. According to the most recent research by the Anti-Defamation League, ADL Global 100 Index, some 47% of Palestinian-backed antisemitism beliefs, the highest rate of any people worldwide. No negative Palestinian member increased Jew hatred daily in Israel. Where the Biden Administration has given the Palestinians more than it follows—with no requirement they reduce Jew hatred. The Administration must back its commitment by identifying specific antisemitic groups.

If the Biden Administration is truly serious about combating antisemitism, it must act today against the most visible Jew-hatred. That means support of prosecution on campus and in our streets, expulsion of all who commit antisemitism—no matter what, and in particular identity, plus immediate expulsions of groups that actively engage in antisemitic propaganda and behavior.

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According to the *Washington Examiner*, Qatar “will supposedly supervise the account holding the \$6 billion to ensure funds are not diverted to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps or other such organizations.” Seriously!? Qatar is already Iran’s unofficial partner in crime. The two countries both support Islamist terrorist groups in the region, including Hamas and Hezbollah.

Even if Iran does use the \$6 billion for humanitarian needs, it can reallocate money already used for humanitarian causes to its bigger priority—financing terrorism.

Indeed, the ransom payment will allow Iran to dramatically increase funding to its proxy terrorist organizations. Consider, for example, that Iran currently funds Hamas to the tune of an estimated \$150 million annually, while it gives Hezbollah about \$700 million per year. This means that Iran spends just under a billion dollars funding these two terrorist organizations. Add \$6 billion to the Islamic state’s coffers and there’s no telling how much more funding the mullahs will give their terrorist proxies, not to mention the possibility that the Iranians will spend the extra money on advancing their nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

Furthermore, Biden’s ransom will only encourage Iran and other rogue regimes to pursue the strategy of holding hostages in exchange for big rewards from the U.S. Consider that in December last year, Russia freed WNBA star Brittney Griner in exchange for convicted arms dealer Viktor Bout. Barely three months later, Russia imprisoned American journalist Evan Gershkovich. And now that the Russians know the Biden administration is willing to part with \$1.2 billion for one hostage, the price to free Gershkovich will likely be very high, if not higher than the ransom given to the Iranians.

Consider, also, that after Israel freed one thousand Palestinian prisoners—many of them with the blood of innocent Israelis on their hands—in exchange for kidnapped soldier Gilad Shalit in 2011, Palestinian terrorists have repeatedly attempted to take more Israelis hostage—and they have succeeded, twice.

Hamas took one Israeli hostage in 2014 and another a year later. They also still hold the bodies of two Israeli soldiers killed in the 2014 Gaza war. The Palestinian terrorists will surely be emboldened to try and extract a very heavy price from Israel in exchange for these individuals—or at least their bodies—after seeing what Iran is getting for the release of five U.S. hostages.

Biden’s ransom deal with Iran is part of his administration’s naïve strategy of appeasement—the same failed approach British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain tried with Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler.

Nevertheless, the *New York Times* put a positive spin on the deal with a headline that reads, “Prisoner Deal Could Smooth Effort to Contain Iran’s Nuclear Program.” Indeed, there are reports that Biden will try to include a freeze on Iran’s nuclear enrichment as part of his deal with the Islamist dictatorship. The *Times* goes on to say, “The announcement of a prisoner exchange deal between the United States and Iran could increase prospects for further diplomatic cooperation.” Obviously, the *Times* supports Biden’s naïve strategy of

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appeasement.

No surprise: Eighty-five years ago, the *Times* also spoke positively of Chamberlain's Munich Agreement with Hitler, proclaiming on October 1st, 1938, that "the peace of Europe seems assured for a generation at least." World War II broke out less than a year later. So much for appeasement.

Please make the point when speaking with family, friends, colleagues—or in letters to the editor—that if Biden believes he can offer America's enemies a mere finger without them taking the whole hand, he is sorely mistaken. Emphasize that if history is any measure, America's enemies will not only take the hand, but the rest of the body as well.

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—"Can Biden's Plan Beat Antisemitism?"—which boldly challenges the Administration to use its new Strategy to Counter Antisemitism courageously, prosecuting and condemning all antisemitism [from every corner of American society](#)—including Congressional members, ethnic studies programs, and attacks on Jews by minority groups.

Best regards,
Jason Shvili, Contributing Editor
Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME))

P.S. You've surely seen headlines describing skyrocketing attacks on Jews in recent years and months—and you probably heard about the President's new National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism. But all evidence indicates that the Administration is *not* committed to fighting antisemites among its own voters and party officials. I hope you'll agree that we opponents of antisemitism [across all sectors](#) of American society need to speak out. FLAME's new *hasbarah*—explanatory message—"Can Biden's Plan Beat Antisemitism?"—enumerates some of the antisemitic offenders most damaging to American Jews . . . and most likely to be *ignored* by the Administration. I hope you'll review this convincing, fact-based editorial, which FLAME intends to publish in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *New York Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Houston Chronicle*, *Star Tribune* and *Los Angeles Times*. 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](#).

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