

## Iran Is Not The Threat

Neither Iran, Hezbollah or Hamas pose a threat to Israel, they pose a threat to the Israeli occupation and oppression of Palestinians

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*Benjamin Netanyahu's name is in the headlines again, this time along with the news of the Iran deal. He rejects the agreement, he called it a disastrous historic mistake and he did not miss the opportunity to say that Israel will defend itself, etc. Two questions must be raised in light of Netanyahu's outrage: The first is why? And the second is why does anyone care?*

Netanyahu opposes the Iran deal because the Iran supports Hamas and Hizbollah. Both of these organizations were created in response to Israeli aggression and occupation, the former in Palestine, and the latter in South Lebanon. It was the dedicated resistance of Hezbollah that ended the twenty-year Israeli occupation of Southern Lebanon, and made it possible for Lebanese people to return to their homes in Southern Lebanon. Hamas was democratically elected to govern. It maintains some semblance of a government in the Gaza strip, something they would not be able to do without Iranian money because Israel imposed a siege on the strip, locking its 1.7 million people in an open air prison. Hamas is also committed to resistance to the brutal Israeli occupation of Palestine, resistance that is obvious particularly in Gaza. During a fifty-one day attack on Gaza in the summer of 2014 Israel murdered over two thousand Palestinians in cold blood and so in reality Israel is the problem and not Iran, Hamas or Hezbollah. Furthermore, neither Iran, Hezbollah or Hamas pose a threat to Israel, they pose a threat to the Israeli occupation and oppression of Palestinians.

Parallels can be made between the so-called Iran threat and the so called threat from Palestinians and Muslims in the US. The closure, prosecution, trial and convictions of the Holy Land Foundation and the five men who operated it is one of clearest cases of political persecution and injustice in the US. And just like Iran never posed a threat to Jewish people or to Israel, The Holy Land Foundation, as was made absolutely clear in their trial, didn't fund or support terrorism. They are a threat to the Israeli narrative that seeks to justify Israeli oppression of Palestinians.

Most news broadcasts of the Iran deal also include a statement that, "US allies in the region are worried." One ally is Saudi Arabia, a ruthless dictatorship run by a corrupt, male dominated family of so-called "kings" and "princes" as though we were still living in the dark ages. Another ally is Egypt's dictator Abdel Fatah Sissi who gained power through a coup, overthrowing and arresting Egypt's first democratically elected President, and the third is Israel, which maintains a violent, racist apartheid regime in Palestine. With allies like these, who needs enemies?

Now, why does anyone care what Netanyahu says? The answer has little to do with strategic

issues or nuclear proliferation. It has everything to do with the fact that American politicians are afraid of the Israeli lobby. The spineless politicians who stood and clapped as Netanyahu marched on Capitol Hill, his hands stained with Palestinian blood, are afraid that AIPAC will punish them.

AIPAC and the web of pro-Israel organizations it controls are in the business of selling and protecting Israeli interests. They tell a story that paints Israel as a symbol of democracy, freedom and tolerance, and the Palestinians as symbols of hatred, religious fanaticism and terror. American politicians who try to question this pretty picture, will find themselves out of a job.

President Obama did well not to bend to Israeli pressure on the Iran deal. Now, will he take an extra step? Will he demand that Israel unconditionally end the siege on Gaza or release Palestinian political prisoners?

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