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European Languages

زبانهای اروپائی

MAY 14, 2018

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15.05.2018

High Alert for Palestinian Slaughter and Conflict with Iran

There will be a confluence of trigger events this week that could lead to an escalation of conflict. At the same time that the US has reneged on the nuclear agreement and Israeli missiles are attacking Iranians in Syria, the US embassy will be moved to Jerusalem and Palestinians will protest the 70th anniversary of the Nakba, capping six weeks of actions.

United States moves embassy to controversial site

On Monday, May 14, the United States will move its embassy to Jerusalem, even though the new US embassy is not yet built. Jerusalem is considered by both Israelis and Palestinians as their capital. This action is part of a 100-year history of Zionist colonization of Jerusalem.

When the announcement of the move was made, there was widespread anger. In Gaza, protesters took to the streets bearing Palestinian flags and denouncing the decision. Students held demonstrations in the West Bank. Bernard Smith of Al-Jazeera reported from Gaza, “People here compared the protests to a small ball of fire that would roll and turn into a much larger ball later on.” The decision unified Palestinians, putting aside their divisions to focus on Trump and Israel.

Arab governments issued statements of condemnation and emergency meetings of both the Arab League and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation were held while the UN voted 128-9 to reject the Trump administration’s decision and approve a resolution urging countries to not move their embassies to Jerusalem. Reuters reported that Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayeb, Imam of Egypt’s al-Azhar mosque, one of Islam’s most important institutions,

said the decision incites “anger among all Muslims and threatens world peace.” Sheikh added, “The gates of hell will be opened in the West before the East.” [Hamas](#) leader Ismail Haniya described it as a “flagrant aggression...that will know no limit to the Palestinian, Arab and Muslim reaction.”

[Thousands of people rallied in Turkey and Jordan](#) on Friday to protest against the decision to move the US embassy. [Tens of thousands of Muslims](#) gathered in Jakarta, Indonesia on Friday to protest the United States. [Israelis in Jerusalem are also protesting](#) the move.

The [Jerusalem Post reported](#) that Palestinians have called for a day of rage and that mass protests are being mobilized for the opening of the US embassy. Choosing to move on the day before the Nakba is a provocation by Israel and the United States.

Israel is illegitimate

The [Great March of Return](#) held its [seventh Friday of protests](#) last week. At least 49 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli snipers since the protest began on March 30, and 8,500 have been wounded (see e.g. [9 killed 780 wounded](#) and [violence continues 16 killed](#) 1,500 wounded). The protests will culminate May 15 on [the Nakba, or Catastrophe](#) when Palestinians memorialize being forced from their homes, their villages being destroyed, hundreds of thousands becoming refugees and scores being killed during the founding of Israel 70 years ago. Land theft and ethnic cleansing have continued, often [legalized by property law](#). Palestinian protesters are demanding the right to return to their homes and [marching after decades of Israeli violence and injustice](#). They [proclaim they will not wait another 70 years](#).

The reality is clear, as Miko Peled, whose grandfather signed the Declaration of Independence of Israel 70 years ago and whose father was an Israeli general, says — that [Israel has no legitimacy](#). Peled emphasizes that people in the US have a responsibility to take action to end the occupation of Palestine and outlines ways to do so, including an aggressive BDS campaign. Peled says “Israel” is an illegitimate state and “the area should be called Palestine.”

Peled is correct to focus on [the responsibility of the people of the United States](#). No other country has been more supportive of Israel. The US gave “more than 250 billion dollars in direct government aid to Israel, [and] the USA has used its veto more than 70 times in the Security Council to prevent passage of resolutions condemning Israeli policies.” [Alexander Haig](#), the former Secretary of State who served as chief of staff to Presidents Nixon and Ford and was a four-star general who served as the supreme commander of NATO, told the truth, saying, “Israel is the largest American aircraft carrier

in the world that cannot be sunk, does not carry even one American soldier, and is located in a critical region for American national security.”

[Protests against Israel and AIPAC](#), the DC-based Israeli lobby, consistently occur in the US, even though the [media hides the truth](#) about the Israeli lobby. Even [YouTube censors information](#) about Israel but people still [see the reality of Israeli violence](#). Israel works to inject pro-[Israel propaganda in the media](#) while US [universities censor speech](#) about Palestinian justice. The massacre of nonviolent Palestinians is leading to [calls for an arms embargo against Israel](#), a [BDS that includes a military embargo](#).

The combination of current events reveal [the true costs of the creation of Israel](#). Israel is a fortress-like apartheid state that practices ethnic cleansing and whose government applauds snipers using Palestinians as targets. Some of its [citizens watch the slaughter and cheer the death of Palestinians](#). Israel has created a humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza with a decade-long embargo with intermittent mass destructive bombings. Even people of Jewish faith who criticize the barbarism of Israel are characterized as traitors and threatened by the government.

[Press TV reports](#) the Israeli military will be doubling the number of forces around the Gaza Strip and in occupied West Bank territories ahead of the controversial opening of the US embassy in Jerusalem. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians are expected to hold massive protests along the Gaza fence.

Widespread attacks on Palestinians are expected. In preparation for the massacre, [people are urged to donate to help the wounded in Palestine](#).

Israel is provoking Iran in Syria

On May 4, military and intelligence analyst, [the Saker, described how Israel was attacking Iranian bases](#) in Syria in an attempt to get Iran to respond and pull the United States into a war with Iran.

On May 10, [Voice of America reported](#) that Israel launched an assault on more than 50 Iranian targets in Syria. Israel hit weapons depots, logistics sites and intelligence centers used by Iranian forces, many near Damascus.

In between these reports, Israel claimed that Iran fired rockets into the Golan Heights (Israeli occupied territory, part of Syria). [Iran described the Israeli claims as “fabricated”](#) and “baseless.” Holly Dages, an Iran analyst for the Iranist [questions why Iran would conduct such an attack](#) “right after Trump’s decision and while Tehran is looking for European support to stay in the [nuclear deal]?” [Other analysts also doubt the Israeli claim](#), and Iran says [Syria fired into the Golan Heights](#), quoting a Syrian

official. [Hassan Nasrallah of Hezbollah describes](#) Syria responding to multiple Israeli attacks in Syria to set new rules of engagement and plans to retake the Golan Heights from Israeli occupation.

[Dr Roham Alvandi, a professor at the London School of Economics suggests](#) this is the United States and Israel “working hand in glove to escalate the military confrontation.” He adds, they seek to “provoke the Iranian leadership into taking action that will isolate and ultimately weaken the Islamic Republic.”

Israel is concerned about Iranian soldiers amassing in Syria close to its border. As Peled reports, the Israeli media and political leadership are [banging the drums for Israel’s own war with Syria and Iran](#).

[The Independent describes](#) the situation as “bringing two of the region’s major powers closer to the brink of direct confrontation than ever before.” While Russia and European countries urged de-escalation, the United States repeated their refrain, “Israel’s right to act in self-defense.”

US withdraws without cause from the Iran Agreement

All of this comes when Trump has decided to renege on The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the nuclear agreement between France, Britain, Germany, Russia, China, the United States and Iran. In [a belligerent speech filled with lies](#), Trump provided no evidence that Iran had violated the agreement and leaders of France, Britain, Germany, Russia, and China tried to convince the US to live up to the agreement.

[Israel urged Trump to leave the agreement](#), presenting an intelligence dossier that claimed Iran had violated it. However, the dossier contained information [weapons inspectors had already found to be false](#). Netanyahu made a big public relations presentation to urge Trump to get out of the agreement. [Telesur summarizes](#) the reaction, writing, “After Netanyahu’s speech the International Atomic Energy Agency said it has ‘no credible’ evidence Iran was developing nuclear arms since 2009.”

[US activists published an open letter apologizing to Iran](#). The letter described Trump’s decision as “reckless, baseless, and dangerous” and expressed that we are “ashamed that our government has broken a deal that was working.” The signers promised, “We will do everything in our power to stop Donald Trump from strangling your economy and taking us to war with you.” [People in Iran took to the streets to protest](#) the US’ decision.

The decision is part of the [long history](#) of the [US trying to dominate Iran](#) going back to the [1953 coup](#), continuing in recent years, during which the [US has spent tens of millions](#) of dollars annually [to build opposition](#) inside Iran, and to the US’ [involvement in](#)

recent protests. Activities today are consistent with a 2009 Brookings Institution report, “Which Path To Persia? Options For A New American Strategy For Iran,” which put forward various paths to regime change, including Israel taking the lead and the US and Israel falsely claiming that Iran is seeking nuclear weapons.

Richard Johnson, a top US nuclear expert, handed in his resignation after Trump’s unilateral withdrawal. And the chief inspector of the UN nuclear agency stepped down unexpectedly, a few days after the US withdrew from the nuclear agreement.

The decision may hurt the United States in many ways. The sanctions Trump will reintroduce do not just limit U.S. dealings with Iran, but will also penalize other countries, causing a riff with US allies. John Bolton threatened to enforce the sanctions against European corporations and countries. Iran is entering agreements with Russia and China, who are its protectors. Iran will seek to build its relationship with European and Latin American countries as well. The US may be left out, its credibility damaged. Given the failure of US military power in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria, traditional allies recognize the limitations of the US as a super power.

There are many reasons a war with Iran would be a disaster for the US and Israel. Moon of Alabama describes that the Bush administration considered it but war games ended badly for the US. This remains true. So, if the US is rational, war can be averted.

No war on Iran

While escalation makes no sense, the leaders of Israel and the US may see a political benefit. Prime Minister Netanyahu is facing charges of corruption. Prosecutors recently questioned him and his wife for five hours at the same time but at different locations, both as suspects. Trump’s lawyer, Michael Cohen, had his home and office searched and documents and tapes were seized by prosecutors. Trump’s legal team is a mess. Rudy Guiliani recently resigned from his law firm after making counterproductive comments in the media. Israeli and US leaders may seek to change the subject and play to their conservative political base; a military conflict could aid both.

The 2018 election, which currently looks like a potential Democratic sweep, is also a factor. Sheldon Adelson, a top donor to Trump and Republicans in 2016 who gave \$83 million to the campaigns and \$5 million to Trump’s inauguration, pushed for moving the US embassy to Jerusalem, even offering to finance the move, and for quitting the Iran nuclear pact. Adelson also urges a US nuclear attack on Iran.

The day after Trump left the pact, Adelson had lunch with him in the White House. Not long after, Paul Ryan went with former senator, Norm Coleman, who chairs the

Republican Jewish Committee, and others from a Republican PAC, to meet Adelson and his wife at the Venetian Hotel in Las Vegas. They urged support for keeping Republican control of the House. Ryan left the room (since he is not legally allowed to ask for seven-figure donations) and Coleman made the ask, with the [Adelsons donating \\$30 million](#) to the Congressional Leadership Fund, [doubling their cash on hand](#). Adelson's company recorded a [\\$670 million income tax windfall from the GOP tax law](#) in the first quarter.

The forces are aligning right now in a disastrous way. We must not allow the administration to lie us into another prolonged and costly war. We must oppose the slaughter of more Palestinians. We must be clear that we do not support war and that we do support the rights of Palestinians. Protests are being planned across the US. Join them or organize your own. And spread the truth to your neighbors and your community. You can also [support the 2018 Freedom Flotilla](#), which has left Norway, to bring supplies to Gaza.