

# Obama Must Dispute Iran's Incitement to Terrorism

What is baffling in international affairs is the massive reality denial, by the international community including President Barack Obama and his administration, of the increasing threat of Islamic terrorism and of the ultimate responsibility of Iran for the recent terrorist outbreaks in Jerusalem and the West Bank.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the supreme leader of Iran, has made no secret of his support for terrorism, nor of his contempt for the United States, as shown when he posted an image of Obama pointing a gun at his own head. In many of his recent utterances, Khamenei has described Israel as a "cancerous tumor," as the world's most wicked terrorist that must be eliminated.

In a new 416-page book, *Palestine*, newly translated into English and published in August 2015, Khamenei praises the Iranian masses for demanding the destruction of Israel as well as the United States.

On September 23, 2015 (which happened to be Yom Kippur), Khamenei denounced Israel for its "repeated insults" regarding the sanctuary of Al Aqsa Mosque. He regards Israel's behavior toward it as the ultimate degree of ruthlessness and evil, with this behavior being the foremost problem for Muslims.

Three weeks earlier, he declared his support for anyone who strikes against Israel and the "Zionist regime." By such action, Islamic jihadi morale will leave no moment of serenity for Zionists.

Though Khamenei did not issue a fatwa, he did display a poster of the proper way to eliminate Israel. In his own book he was praised as the leader of the jihadist campaign to liberate

Jerusalem. His influence on, if not instigation of, the terrorist attacks by young Muslims in Jerusalem and the West Bank is evident. The puzzle is why it is not evident to political leaders in the United States and the United Nations.

No one can be amazed that the United Nations assistant secretary-general for political affairs, Taye Brook Zerihoun, on October 15, 2015 was "extremely concerned" about what he called the recent violence among Israelis and Palestinians.

He did note that a large group of Palestinians had set fire to the compound containing the Jewish holy site of Joseph's tomb in the city of Nablus and strongly condemned this reprehensible act. The compound, which is under Palestinian Authority administration, did not "catch fire." It was ignited by 150 Palestinians using homemade firebombs and Molotov cocktails.

Mr. Zerihoun, in spite of the one-sided desecration by Palestinians of respected religious places, called on all sides to respect the sanctity of all holy sites in the Old City of Jerusalem. Moreover, although he realized that social media and irresponsible rhetoric had played a dramatic role in the escalation of violence, he asserted that both sides should be blamed. He spoke of both the reckless statements made by Palestinians and Israeli extremist elements reinforced by some mainstream voices, and even more pointedly of the heavy-handed approach by the Israeli Security Services.

One has come to expect statements and resolutions from the United Nations at best allocating equal blame and expressing moral equivalence between the actions of Muslim Palestinians and Jewish Israelis, if not expressing unilateral condemnation of Israel. But one would have hoped that President Barack Obama and the members of his administration would finally, after the administration's blunders concerning Libya, Iran, and Syria, address the question of the violence in Jerusalem and elsewhere in a correct fashion.

Again, President Obama recognized that Israel had a right to maintain basic law and order and protect its citizens from knife attacks and violence on the streets. But, seemingly equating victim and perpetrator, he called on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas and other peoples in positions of power to tamp down rhetoric that may feed violence or anger or misunderstanding.

The problem with the Obama position, a non-policy line of virtual neutrality, is that the overblown rhetoric and the aggressive violence have come from one side. State Department spokesperson John Kirby even reversed reality when he accused Israel of using excessive force against Palestinians, the perpetrators.

Secretary of State John Kerry appeared to be more aware of reality than his spokesperson in saying, on October 15, 2015, that there was no excuse for the violence and that no amount of frustration is appropriate to license any violence anywhere. He said the Palestinians need to understand this and urged Abbas to condemn the violence loudly and clearly.

It is not clear whether Abbas added to the rhetoric. The Palestinian president did call for restraint of Palestinian rhetoric, but he took no action to end the terrorist actions. He also lied, or as his defenders explained, "misspoke," when he claimed that Israel had "executed" a 13-year-old Palestinian boy who was being treated in the Hadassah hospital in Jerusalem after stabbing a 13-year-old Israeli.

More certainly, Hamas, the rival of Abbas's Fatah movement and an ally of Iran, has played a major role in igniting the attacks. Those attacks have nothing to do with the alleged evils of Israel: denial of the rights of Palestinians who are supposed to be living under constant threat of losing their homes, lands, and income. There are in fact 300,000 Palestinians living and working in east Jerusalem, with permanent residence status, who receive the same social

benefits and health insurance as Israelis.

The real problem, unrecognized or reluctantly acknowledged by the U.N. hierarchy and Obama officials, is that Palestinian leaders, especially of Hamas, have instigated a holy war by their false accusations. They proclaim that Israel wants to restrict access to the compound in the Old City of Jerusalem that houses the Temple Mount (for Muslims, Haram al-Sharif) and the Al Aqsa Mosque. For Jews the Mount is the location where the Jewish Temple once stood and is the most sacred site of Judaism; for Muslims, the mosque is the third holiest site in Islam and is managed by a trust called the Waqf, controlled by Jordan. From the nearby Dome of the Rock, the Prophet Muhammad is believed to have ascended to heaven.

The Islamic incitement to wage holy war is not new. Most familiar is the fatwa issued in May 1941 by the notorious grand mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini, who among other things instigated riots in Palestine under the British Mandate and cooperated with Nazi Germany in the Holocaust in many ways, including the organization of the 13th Waffen SS Division (Hanjar) in 1943. In his fatwa, Husseini called on all "my Muslim brothers throughout the world to join in the Holy War for God, for the defense of Islam and her lands against her enemy."

The enemy for Husseini in the past, and for Iran and Hamas in the present, is the Jews, against whom the holy war must be waged. It is clear that Hamas, heavily influenced by Iran's supreme leader, and to some extent also Fatah, has used extravagant rhetoric in propounding falsehoods about Israeli intentions concerning the Al Aqsa Mosque.

Yet it must be admitted that neither Iran nor Hamas has centrally organized or coordinated the outburst of terrorism. They are random acts by youngsters who have been heavily influenced by social media, by YouTube, by Facebook, and by Twitter hashtags. Perhaps the strongest influence was videos

of hatred of Jews, especially the one showing a diagram of how to stab a Jew, that have been shown to youngsters and in schools.

It is ominous that, unlike past terrorists, the terrorist perpetrators were all young, from 13 to 20, but a number of them were also female. Since Abbas and the Palestinian Authority seem unable to change the behavior of these youngsters, one solution might be for President Obama to cancel the nuclear deal with Iran if it does not stop its threat of holy war and its incitement to violence against the State of Israel.

First published in the