

A NEW PARADIGM FOR IRAN AND THE MIDDLE EAST



After President Trump's landmark decision to decertify the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)—also known as the nuclear deal with Iran—the U.S. Administration has decided to implement a new policy on Iran and the entire Middle East. As a result, a new framework for the region is emerging and it initially appears more effective than the current one. Finally, after an appeasement era towards Iran led by the Obama Administration, which has not brought any good outcomes for the security and stability of the Middle East—it is actually quite the contrary, it boosted Iranian ambitions—the **U.S. has decided to deal with the problem.**

One of the most important steps taken by the Trump Administration has been **to classify the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a foreign terrorist organization.** The IRGC is Iran's main link to its terrorist proxies, which the regime uses to boost its global influence. The Basij militia and the Quds Force are within the IRGC. The Basij militia is a paramilitary organization charged with channeling popular support for the Iranian regime, that is to say that the militia is an internal corp for repression. For example, the Basij brutally quashed the protests in 2009. The Quds Force is the foreign branch of the Iranian regime. The Quds Force specializes in foreign missions, providing training, funding, and arms to extremist groups, including Iraqi insurgents, Hizballah, and Hamas. The Quds Force has also played a key role in support of Bashar al- Assad in Syria and leads Iran's expansionist efforts in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Yemen.

The IRGC is also one of the regime's main powers; it currently controls twenty percent of the Iranian economy, including strategic sectors such as energy, pharmaceuticals, infrastructures, and black-market enterprises.

In order to curb Iran's expansionism, the targeting of the IRGC is a key measure. **Western countries should take note and blacklist the entire organization** as the U.S. has done. However, there is still much to do.

Iran has become more powerful since the JCPOA was signed. In addition to breaching the nuclear deal, the ballistic-missiles tests, the involvement in conflicts throughout the Middle East, the promotion of terrorism and human rights violations—all of these pernicious activities enabled by the JCPOA—Iran has a global vocation. “It was born an empire” said recently the former Intelligence Minister and current top advisor of Iran’s President Rouhani. Iran is planing to create a Shia crescent, from Tehran to Beirut via Sana’a, Bagdad, and Damascus. **Iranian bases and strongholds have been established in Syria and Lebanon in order to threat and attack Israel at this very moment.** This Iranian strategy is only possible because of the framework created by the JCPOA.

Using its main foreign proxy, Hizballah, Iran is harassing Israel, winning the war in Syria and dominating Lebanon’s politics, as clearly demonstrated by Harari’s resignation as Lebanon’s PM. The West, and especially **the European Union, should also take note and blacklist the entire Hizballah organization and not just its political wing, as the U.S. Congress has suggested.**

Given this situation, the inevitable truth is that the Middle East is under the threat of a regional confrontation due to Iran’s behavior and the JCPOA has created this crisis.

In this regard, Saudi Arabia seems to be on the same page with the Trump Administration and the West’s interests in the Middle East. As a case in point, the visit to Ryadh by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, where he was told to follow the upcoming Peace Plan of the Trump Administration, is a clear signal of new alliances joining forces to stop Iran and its dangerous ambitions. As Israel understood from the very beginning of the Islamic revolution in 1979, all the actors in the region understand now that **Iran’s hegemonic desires need to be countered.**

This new paradigm for Iran and stability in the Middle East is a step in the right direction, but it will not be easy. As a key scenario for global security, all Western countries, not just the U.S. alone, should act and work towards the same goal. As noted, they could begin to fix the JCPOA and to blacklist the IRGC and Hizballah.

Spotlight

International Presentation of the High Level Military Group Report on Hizballah



The final report of the High Level Military Group “**Hizballah’s Terror Army: How to Prevent a Third War in Lebanon**” ([download here](#)) is an invaluable tool to help Israel internationally in case of a new war against Hizballah. The report not only raises awareness about Hizballah’s threat as part of Iran’s plan to dominate the Middle East and to destroy Israel., but also points to the viable military option the IDF must contemplate in order to achieve any victory over Hizballah. The report also offers recommendations for the international community to prevent the breakout of hostilities.

In order to present the major findings and engage those responsible in the region, the HLMG has planned a series of private and public presentations in the U.S. and Europe. On October 25, the report was presented to **the U.S. Congress and was discussed at the U.S. Administration. It was also presented in a public event hosted by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.**

HLMG members General Klaus von Naumann, General the Lord Richard Dannatt, General David A. Deptula, and Colonel Richard Kemp briefed **members of the U.S. Congress** about the HLMG findings on Hizballah. It was hosted by Rep. **Michael McCaul** (R-TX), Chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security; Rep. **Dutch Ruppersberger** (D-MD), member of the Committee on Appropriations; and Congressman Rep. **Joe Wilson** (R-SC), member of the Foreign Affairs and Armed Service Committees. The briefing was attended by a broad group of lawmakers such as Rep. **Scott Perry** (R-PA), **Rep. Ron Estes** (R-KS), **Rep. Will Hurd** (R-TX), **Rep. John Rutherford** (R-FL), **Rep. Jaqueline Walorski** (R-IN), **Rep. Mike Gallagher** (R-WI), **Rep. Randy Weber** (R-TX), **Rep. Vicky Hartzler** (R-MO), and **Rep. Clay Higgins** (R-LA).

The HLMG delegation warned Capitol Hill that a Third Lebanon War can still be avoided, raised awareness about Iran’s involvement in Lebanon, and highlighted how Israel is preparing for an eventual unconventional conflict. General Naumann stated that Hizballah is “the crown jewel in Iran’s strategy of regional warfare by terrorist proxy.” General the Lord Dannatt alerted the audience that “Hizballah’s massively expanded military capabilities are embedded among the civilian population of Lebanon in what amounts to a war crime. This is also a grave indictment of the inadequacy of the UNIFIL mechanism.”

At the **Washington Institute for Near East Policy**, General Klaus von Naumann, General the Lord Richard Dannatt, and Colonel Richard Kemp explained the key findings of the High Level Military Group. The panel was moderated by world expert on Hizballah Mathew Levitt. During the presentation, the HLMG members outlined urgent steps in order to avoid a highly destructive new conflict with Israel. General the Lord Dannatt highlighted that Hizballah's firepower is centered on its rocket force of 100,000 rockets, some with accurate range up to 200 kms. and large payloads. General Naumann warned that Hizballah is rearming in plain sight and preparing to commit serious war crimes in any conflict with Israel. Colonel Kemp asserted that **the West has the opportunity to stop a war before it starts**. The entire event was streamed live and it can be watched [here](#).

The HLMG delegation also discussed the report and its key conclusions to Defense and Middle East top advisors in the **U.S. Administration, concretely at the National Security Council.**

The event at the Washington Institute was streamed live (watch [here](#)). Both General Dannatt and General Naumann published the same day an [op-ed](#) on *The Hill*, detailing the principal findings of the report. The launch of the report and its main conclusions found echo on such publications as *The Jerusalem Post*, *The Times of Israel*, and the *Baltimore Post-Examiner*, among other outlets.

New articles will be found on European publications around the dates of the events presently scheduled in London, Paris, and Berlin.

Thanks to this project, the Friends of Israel Initiative has been able to provide information to decision makers and experts on the dangers of a third Lebanon War and to alert that the time to prevent it is running out. Considering the difficult international position of the IDF in case of a war against Hizballah, **these actions will help Israel’s case in support of its right to self-defense in the international arena.**

FOII'S ACTIVITIES

EVENTS

Jose Maria Aznar Receives the Shalom Peace Award

On November 10, the Jewish National Fund of the USA gave the Shalom Peace Award to the Friends of Israel Initiative Chairman José María Aznar for his dedication to peace, humanity, and efforts on behalf of the State of Israel. Past recipients of this prestigious award include Colin Powell; Jehan Sadat, the widow of Egyptian president Anwar Sadat; UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher; Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel, and Israeli Ambassador Michael Oren.



In his thank-you speech, Aznar highlighted that he believes in Israel, "in the vibrant, young, democratic, and prosperous Israel that is behind major innovations and technical solutions that will help to solve many problems across the globe." He also asserted that he "decided to create the Friends of Israel Initiative because I felt that Israel was going through a very delicate situation."

At the end of his intervention, Aznar remarked that he defends Israel "because is the best form to defend the Western world, my security and prosperity."

Watch Aznar's thank-you speech [here](#).

OP-EDS AND MEDIA

"Iran Wants America to Ignore Its Nuclear Ambitions", **Emily Landau**, *The National Interest*, September 30 ([Read](#))

"Trump Not Expected to Certify Iranian Compliance with the Nuclear Deal", **Lee Smith**, *The Weekly Standard*, October 4 ([Read](#))

"Thanks to Obama, America is two steps behind Iran in Middle East", **Ambassador John Bolton**, *The Hill*, October 23 ([Read](#))

"A Third Lebanon War Looms: To Stop It, US Must Curtail Iran, Sanction Hizballah", **General the Lord Richard Dannatt and General Klaus Naumann**, *The Hill*, October 24 ([Read](#))

"Declaration Was the Best Thing Lord Balfour Ever Did", **Professor Andrew Roberts**, *Jewish News*, October 31 ([Read](#))

"Iran is the Greatest Threat to World Peace", Interview with **Colonel Richard Kemp**, *Majalla*, November 4, ([Read](#))

"The Historical Paths to the Balfour Declaration", **Professor Andrew Roberts**, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, November 5, ([Read](#))

"Israel as a Strategic Asset of the West", **Colonel Richard Kemp**, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, November 7 ([Read](#))

SPECIAL REPORT

Why the Allen Plan is Detrimental to Israel

Friends of Israel Initiative has gathered a series of studies on the Allen Plan, that was debated by the Obama Administration during its last attempt to restart the peace process, which aimed to implement a new security regime in the West Bank upon establishing a Palestinian State. The Allen Plan seems to have some traction within the current one that the Trump Administration is drafting.

Although some parts of the Allen Plan are interesting and novel, **it does not have any reference to the real main obstacle to peace**, which is the Palestinian narrative that denies the existence of a Jewish people and the right of the Jews to have a state of their own on any grain of soil of mandatory Palestine and the difficulty of trusting them after 24 years of deceit and terror. The Allen Plan also ignores the inherent weakness of the Palestinian entity in case of an eventual establishment of a State; it underestimates the strategic security value of the Jordan Valley; it does not address properly the main threat to the stability of a future Palestinian State -the Islamist groups of the Middle East, and especially those under Iranian influence-; it poses the idea that the US will be actively involved as an ongoing mediator and as a force responsible for operational missions, which is a recipe for creating tensions between Israel and the United States; and it does not deal with the arrangements concerning Jerusalem, among other key problems of the Allen Plan.

Therefore, **this report ([download](#)) is a detailed analysis and critique of the Allen Plan and why its application, in our view, will not fulfil the security requirements of Israel.**



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"It is time for the entire world to join us in demanding that Iran's government end its pursuit of death and destruction."

Donald Trump

Help us now

Your contribution is all the more welcome now that the Friends of Israel Initiative is up and running. You can rest assured that it will be put to effective use to further the cause.

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