

**DESPITE IMPROVING EGYPT-ISRAEL RELATIONS, MANY  
EGYPTIANS STILL HOSTILE TO JEWISH STATE**

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Isranet Daily Briefing, September 27, 2018

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**[Four Decades After Camp David, Egyptians Still Chilly Toward Israel](#): Mona Salem & Aziz El Massassi, *Times of Israel*, Sept. 16, 2018 — Forty years after signing the Camp David Accords, Egypt and Israel live in uneasy peace, as cool diplomatic ties have failed to unfreeze other relations.**

**[Help Egypt Help Israel On Middle East Peace](#): Kenneth Glueck, *Breaking Defense*, Sept. 14, 2018— Peace in the Middle East seems elusive as ever.**

**[Trump's Alliance Against Iran](#): Tom O'Connor, *Newsweek*, Sept. 25, 2018— While President Donald Trump condemned Iran in his address Tuesday to the United Nations General Assembly, a small but influential group of countries gathered elsewhere in New York City in an attempt to rally support for an increasingly controversial cause among the international community.**

**[Qatar is a Poor American Ally; Trump Should Leave its Airbase Upgrades Empty](#): Tom Rogan, *Washington Examiner*, Aug. 30, 2018 — President Trump should pick up the phone — or get on Twitter — and tell Qatari Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani that the U.S. won't use expanded base facilities in Qatar and will consider relocating the U.S. military out of Qatar entirely.**

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**FOUR DECADES AFTER CAMP DAVID,**

**EGYPTIANS STILL CHILLY TOWARD ISRAEL**

***Mona Salem & Aziz El Massassi***

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[\*Times of Israel\*](#), Sept. 16, 2018

Forty years after signing the Camp David Accords, Egypt and Israel live in uneasy peace, as cool diplomatic ties have failed to unfreeze other relations. “There is still a psychological barrier between us and the Israeli people,” said Egyptian ex-lawmaker Mohammed Anwar Sadat, nephew of former president Anwar Sadat.

Mohammed Sadat proudly keeps a photo of his late uncle in his Cairo office. Egypt’s then head of state risked everything in making peace with Israel at the US presidential retreat Camp David on September 17, 1978. The accords, cemented by a peace treaty in 1979, saw regional powerhouse Egypt temporarily shunned by the rest of the Arab World. Sadat himself was assassinated on October 6, 1981. The late president “had great courage and a vision for the future”, his nephew said. But the peace, he said, “has always been cold.”

While many Egyptians welcome the absence of war, they remain hostile to Israel. “Egypt’s acceptance of full diplomatic and political normalization” has not translated into “a cultural or popular normalization,” said Mustafa Kamal Sayed, professor of political sciences at Cairo University. This uneasy but stable status quo is reflected on Cairo’s streets, where many put their antipathy towards Israel down to their neighbor’s policies towards the Palestinians. “The normalization failed to gain popular support because of events linked to Palestinians,” said bank worker Mohammed Oussam.

He said he could not forget Israel’s bombing of “schools and refugee camps” during Lebanon’s 1975 to 1990 civil war. “The Israelis have not adhered to the principles of peace with the Palestinians or the Arabs,” said another Mohammed. It’s a sentiment also shared by Islam Emam. “We speak of peace, of normalization — then they kill our brothers and take their land,” he said, referring to the Palestinians. He blames Israel’s government, rather than its citizens. “In the end, nobody truly chooses his government,” he said.

Enmity towards Israel often crystallizes over sporting events. Egyptian and Liverpool football maestro Mohamed Salah has been criticized at home for appearing in a Champions League match in Israel in 2013, when he played for Switzerland’s FC Basel. Salah said he did not make political decisions. Three years later, Egyptian judo Olympian Islam El Shehaby refused to shake hands with Israeli rival Or Sasson at the Rio Games — a gesture that embarrassed Egyptian authorities. Writer and Hebrew translator Nael el-Toukhy said any Egyptian who

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reaches out to Israelis faces intense pressure.

Israel is a hot topic for Egyptian talk shows, guaranteed to stoke the kind of high feelings seen in debates on gay rights. More than 65 percent of Egyptians alive today were not yet born when the Camp David Summit took place, according to official figures. But Egyptian public rejection of Israel is a constant. National politics is also affected, despite decades of formal diplomatic ties.

In March 2016, Egyptian lawmaker Tawfiq Okasha paid a high price for inviting Israel's ambassador to dinner at his home. Accused of discussing issues linked to national security, he was ousted from parliament in a two-thirds majority vote. Even the country's all-important tourism industry is a victim of "cold peace" — of the 3.9 million tourists who visited Israel in 2017, only 7,200 were from neighboring Egypt.

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**HELP EGYPT HELP ISRAEL ON MIDDLE EAST PEACE**

*Kenneth Glueck*

[Breaking Defense](#), Sept. 14, 2018

Peace in the Middle East seems elusive as ever. Yet, even as the future of its own commitments to the region remains uncertain, the United States has a decided interest to prevent conflict from spreading to its key ally, Israel. That requires supporting Egypt's pivotal, intertwined roles of diplomatic mediator and counterterrorism partner in the region.

Currently, Gaza poses the greatest threat of rapid escalation on any of Israel's borders. Sporadic violence has been ongoing since Hamas exploited protests in March to attack Israeli soldiers. Since then, the terrorist organization that rules Gaza has continued exploiting protests to charge the border, while also decimating the southern Israeli countryside with incendiary kites and balloons and repeatedly lobbing rockets into Israel. This violence must be halted before it spirals into another war. Any attempt at peace will require Egypt's involvement. Indeed, Cairo

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already is mediating between the two sides and has engineered several short cease-fires. It can, and must, do more, with Washington's support.

As part of its effort to secure peace, Cairo has sought to deter Hamas aggression and curb its military power. Since Hamas seized Gaza in 2007, Egypt has acted in parallel with Israel to enforce a blockade against the terrorist group. After successfully helping end the 2014 conflict, Egypt sought to isolate Hamas and prevent its rearmament, expanding its buffer zone along the Egypt-Gaza border and destroying more than 1,000 tunnels for smuggling weapons and money. At the same time, Cairo was committed to helping the people of Gaza suffering under Hamas rule, raising \$4 billion from international donors for postwar reconstruction.

Given this successful record, U.S. policymakers should vocally endorse Egypt as a peace broker between Israel and Hamas and be prepared to support negotiations under its auspices. By the same token, the United States must support Egypt as a counterterrorism partner not only in Gaza but against ISIS in neighboring Sinai.

I traveled to Egypt recently as part of a delegation sponsored by the Jewish Institute for National Security of America (JINSA). We met with Egypt's President Abdel el-Sisi, Defense Minister General Mohamed Ahmed Zaki and Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry. They emphasized Egypt's critical role in maintaining and achieving regional stability and their readiness to continue that role. They also highlighted the importance of a strong bond with the United States and their desire to strengthen that bond.

Indeed, for decades Egypt has committed to fostering a broader Israel-Palestinian peace, including brokering ceasefires in recent conflicts between Israel and Hamas. Especially after the disastrous pro-Hamas policies of President Mohamed Morsi, Egypt under President Sisi has also played a crucial role in helping to isolate and pressure Hamas.

Egyptian mediation was critical to ending the 2014 Gaza War, one of the longest in Israeli history. Very early in that conflict, an Egyptian ceasefire proposal was accepted by both sides, with hostilities even being suspended temporarily, but ultimately Hamas reneged on the ceasefire. As American policymakers spent succeeding weeks criticizing Israel's conduct, Cairo was busy working with Israeli and Palestinian officials on a long-term solution. Essentially an identical ceasefire deal ended the conflict in August, after seven weeks of further fighting. As an

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anonymous Israeli government official stated at the time, “Israel has accepted an Egyptian proposal for a complete and unlimited-in-time ceasefire.” That held for nearly four years, the longest period of peace on Israel’s southern border in decades.

Already, Egypt has shown it can seek a longer-term arrangement to exchange quiet for quiet in Gaza. As violence flared up this spring, pressure from Cairo helped convince Hamas to curb its deadly “peaceful protests.” When Hamas recently launched incendiary kites and balloons, Egypt’s ultimatum helped defuse tensions. Cairo has also helped deter Hamas by communicating Israel’s intent to escalate hostilities if Hamas continued firing on the IDF and into Israel.

Now, Egypt is diligently trying for an even more ambitious goal: negotiating a 5-plus-year ceasefire - including prisoner exchanges and reconstruction programs - and having the Palestinian Authority assume control of Gaza under Egyptian auspices. The efficacy of these Egyptian efforts can only be increased if both sides know Cairo enjoys Washington’s full confidence.

Egypt needs U.S. support for its attempts to build peace at home. Since the November 2017 mosque attack by ISIS in Sinai that killed over 300 civilians, Egypt has stepped up its own counterterrorism efforts. Success is critical to the security of Egypt’s 80 million citizens and for peace in Gaza; restoring order to Sinai will help compel Hamas to distance itself further from ISIS. The recent decision to authorize the release of \$1.2 billion in US military assistance (Foreign Military Financing) is a step in the right direction toward ensuring peace. Often unappreciated, Egypt’s efforts to maintain regional stability and its commitment to countering Islamist extremism should be fully recognized and reinforced by American policymakers.

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**TRUMP’S ALLIANCE AGAINST IRAN**

*Tom O’Connor*

[Newsweek](#), Sept. 25, 2018

While President Donald Trump condemned Iran in his address Tuesday to the United Nations General Assembly, a small but influential group of countries

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gathered elsewhere in New York City in an attempt to rally support for an increasingly controversial cause among the international community.

The foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia and Yemen, the ambassadors of Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates to Washington and the director of Israel's Mossad spy agency were among those who spoke alongside two of President Donald Trump's most senior officials at the 2018 United Against Nuclear Iran summit. These five U.S.-backed countries have accused Iran of interfering in their respective internal affairs and were among the few world powers to welcome Trump's decision to unilaterally abandon a 2015 multinational deal by which Iran agreed to denuclearize in exchange for a lifting of sanctions.

At a time when traditional U.S. allies France, Germany and the U.K.-all of which also signed the nuclear deal-were working alongside China and Russia to counter U.S. sanctions against Iran, this Middle Eastern quintet has formed the core of foreign support for Trump's hardline stance against the revolutionary Shiite Muslim power. UAE ambassador to the U.S. Yousef al-Otaiba said Tuesday that the Iranian threat was existential. "We have paid the price more than anyone else in our part of the world," Otaiba said, sitting on a panel beside State Department director of policy planning Brian Hook and Saudi Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed al-Jubeir. "The Gulf countries, Israel and the countries in the immediate vicinity are the ones at immediate risk."

While the four Arabian Peninsula states do not recognize or maintain relations with Israel, their mutual enmity for the leadership in Tehran has forged an informal coalition. Otaiba himself reportedly met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during a chance encounter in Washington in May, during which both men discussed their country's positions on Iran, according to the Associated Press.

Bahrain, a majority-Shiite Muslim island state ruled by a Sunni Muslim monarchy with close ties to neighboring Saudi Arabia, went so far as to publicly back Israel's right to defend itself via a social media statement by its top diplomat in March. Having accused Iran of funding a Shiite Muslim insurgency in his country, Bahraini envoy to the U.S. Sheikh Abdullah bin Rashed bin Abdullah Al Khalifa reaffirmed this statement on Tuesday. "Some of you might recall our foreign minister tweeted a few months ago and said that every country has the right to defend itself, including Israel," Sheikh Abdullah said.

Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution that ousted a CIA-reinstalled absolute monarchy,

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Iran's growing presence in the region has created major concerns for Saudi Arabia and Israel. The staunch U.S. allies have been at odds since Israel's 1948 creation, which prompted the mass displacement of Palestinians and a series of Arab-Israeli wars, but reports have suggested that two have become increasingly close in the face of a common foe, especially as Riyadh's regional clout has fallen in Iran's favor in countries such as Lebanon, Iraq, Syria and Yemen.

"This is a regime the only way one can deal with them is by pressuring them and by forcing them to change," Jubeir told the conference Tuesday, accusing Tehran of sponsoring terrorism, cyber attacks, ethnic cleansing projects and of supporting a group of Zaidi Shiite Muslim rebels, known as Ansar Allah or the Houthi movement, which he said have fired up to 197 ballistic missiles at Saudi Arabia. Jubeir left the event without taking questions and Israeli Mossad Director Yossi Cohen's comments at the following panel were off the record.

As a Saudi-led coalition—which includes Bahrain and the UAE—bombs the Houthis in Yemen, Israeli warplanes blast alleged Iranian and pro-Iran positions fighting on behalf of resurgent government forces in Syria. Both Saudi Arabia and Israel have backed Syrian rebels attempting to topple Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, an ally of Iran and Russia. Israeli officials have called for Saudi Arabia and its regional allies to openly work together with their country against Iran. Last month, a report surfaced suggesting Saudi Arabia acquired the Iron Dome missile defense system, which Israel uses to block rocket attacks from Palestinian and Lebanese groups sponsored by Iran. The Israeli Defense Ministry reportedly denied the report.

While the true extent of their alignment remains the source of reports and speculation, Israel and Saudi Arabia's anti-Iran postures have been emboldened by the Trump administration. The U.S. leader followed up his fiery debut at the U.N. General Assembly last year with another verbal assault on Tehran, calling it a "corrupt dictatorship" whose leaders "sow chaos, death, and disruption." "They do not respect their neighbors or borders, or the sovereign rights of nations. Instead, Iran's leaders plunder the nation's resources to enrich themselves and to spread mayhem across the Middle East and far beyond," he said. "The Iranian people are rightly outraged that their leaders have embezzled billions of dollars from Iran's treasury, seized valuable portions of the economy, and looted the religious endowments, all to line their own pockets and send their proxies to wage war."

Iran has been keen to point out the perceived growing ties between the U.S., Israel

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and Saudi Arabia and dismissed their accusations, accusing them of conspiring to destabilize the country and the region. The Iranian position has been reinforced by its success in tackling the Islamic State militant group (ISIS) alongside Iraqi government forces backed by the U.S. and Syrian government forces opposed by Washington. In Syria, Iran-backed militias have deployed alongside Syria's armed forces around Idlib, the final province under the control of an Islamist-led insurgency.

France, Germany and the U.K. have joined the U.S. in cautioning Syria and its Iranian and Russian allies from pursuing an all-out offensive in Idlib, but have split with the Trump administration on punishing Iran economically for its involvement in the Middle East and development of ballistic missiles. France, the EU, Germany and the U.K. have been deeply critical of the U.S. decision to leave the Iran deal, which came after the International Atomic Energy Agency affirmed Tehran's adherence on multiple occasions and followed U.S. exits from other international agreements. A day before Trump's U.N. address and the United Against Nuclear Iran conference, the foreign ministers of these transatlantic powers met with their Russian, Chinese and Iranian counterparts to discuss saving a nuclear deal that no longer protects the beleaguered Iranian economy from heavy U.S. sanctions...

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**QATAR IS A POOR AMERICAN ALLY;**

**TRUMP SHOULD LEAVE ITS AIRBASE UPGRADES EMPTY**

*Tom Rogan*

[Washington Examiner](#), Aug. 30, 2018

President Trump should pick up the phone — or get on Twitter — and tell Qatari Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani that the U.S. won't use expanded base facilities in Qatar and will consider relocating the U.S. military out of Qatar entirely. Unless, that is, Qatar realigns its foreign policy towards greater support for regional stability and counterterrorism.



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The need for Trump's action bears consideration in light of a Qatari government official's announcement on Sunday that it intends to expand the Al-Udeid airbase. That base hosts the forward command elements for the Pentagon's U.S. Central Command and has played an integral role in U.S. strike operations against Bashar Assad and the Islamic State. Yet, Qatar's intent in constructing new facilities at Al-Udeid is about locking the U.S. into a long-term formal military presence in that nation. It's all part of Qatar's patronage policy of buying Western military equipment and thus buying Western political acquiescence to Qatar's broader foreign policy.

But it's time for this waltz to end. The simple problem is that Qatar continues to act in ways that are fundamentally counter to American interests. Take Qatar's close friendship with Iran. Qatar is happy to support Iranian foreign policy interests against regional stability. Maintaining growing commercial ties with Iran, the Qatari government has also allowed the Iranian revolutionary guard-aligned hardliners to insulate their business interests from U.S. sanctions pressure. Other recent reports suggest that Qatar may be helping Iran to manipulate the outcome of ongoing government formation talks in Iraq (which would be very bad for America).

Still, the real measure of why Trump should challenge Qatar is its ongoing and outrageous support for Salafi-Jihadist terrorists. The divorce between Qatari words and actions here is defining. While the Qatari ambassador writes Washington Post op-eds attacking Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates for their ( admittedly flawed) campaign in Yemen, his prime minister flirts with terrorist fundraisers in Doha. The ruling Al Thani family allows such conduct because of its own ardent ideological support for the most conservative strains of Sunni political Islam. More importantly, they do so in full awareness that the groups associated with these ideological movements are often defined by violent fanaticism and the pursuit of exclusionary societies that prejudice against other religious ( including Muslim) and social groups.

These activities run fundamentally counter to the national security interests of the United States. While Saudi Arabia and the UAE are imperfect allies, they are actively pursuing political reforms aligned with U.S. interests. Qatar absolutely is not doing this, and Trump should mark this divergence in developing policy. Fortunately, in this case at least, the Pentagon is bucking its usual penchant for filling up buildings without regard for cost or efficiency. In a statement a U.S. Navy press officer noted that "It is premature to discuss aspects of a potential base

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expansion at Al-Udeid air base in Qatar.” Good. If Qatar doesn’t change, the U.S. could always relocate its Al-Udeid operations to the UAE’s Al-Dhafra Air Base.

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**[Fighting Terrorism, a Human Right](#): Mike Evans, *Jerusalem Post*, Aug. 28, 2018—President Abdel Fatah al-Sisi of Egypt deserves a Nobel Peace Prize, along with the Presidential Medal of Freedom award, for saving Egypt from a human rights catastrophe.**

**[Death as Punishment “for Disbelief”: Extremist Persecution of Christians, February 2018](#): Raymond Ibrahim, *Gatestone Institute*, Sept. 9, 2018—The jihadi assault on, and massacre of, Christians continued unabated throughout the Muslim world.**

**[Qatar and Turkey: Toxic Allies in the Gulf](#): Richard Minter, *Gatestone Institute*, Aug. 28, 2018—These days, America has more trouble with its allies than its enemies.**