

Greater Men have Tried

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Open letter to John Kerry:

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Dear Secretary of State John Kerry:

Because of my respect for the United States, I will attempt to afford you the honor you think you so richly deserve. It's hard to speak to you with anything but anger, hard to feel the need, again, to start from the beginning because you clearly choose to ignore history in your quest for glory. It is a quest destined to fail but its outcome, even, or more accurately especially, in failure, will hurt Israel.

Greater men than you have tried to make, to force, peace on the Middle East. I promise you, you will fail too. You will fail because you are not addressing the root cause of the problem. You, like so many before you, take the easy way out. Blame Israel. It is so easy to do, and so stupid.

I could speak to you of history – a history longer and greater than you can imagine. I could speak to you of injustices – yes, our land is filled with the graves of those murdered for the unjust reason that they lived here, or traveled abroad, or ate in the wrong restaurant, or took the wrong bus.

I could speak to you of justice – of a population exchange similar to those that have taken place throughout history as nations settle between war and peace. They left their lands to go there, most voluntarily so that their invading brothers would have a clear path as they pushed the Jews into the sea. And our people, who left their homes and possessions in Arab lands, most forced, not voluntarily, and came here.

We fed our brothers, clothed them, gave them homes. And most importantly, we loved them and gave them the most precious of gifts – a future, a present, as integral parts of the land and people of this country. My neighbor, the family across the street – they live

in the same houses that I do, drive the same cars, attend the same schools. He is an engineer; he is a judge in the courts. She is a nurse; she is a lawyer. All my neighbors, though their grandparents came here with nothing.

And at the same time, across many borders, the Arabs put their “brothers” in refugee camps, all but starved them. They raised them to be embittered – not at those who kept them in squalor, but those they had hoped to defeat. They blame us and you are naive enough to blame us as well?

They chose war, John Kerry, while we chose compromise. And you would blame us for this horrible chain of the decades? They invaded – five Arab nations, in 1949. They attacked. Out of sheer desperation, we won enough of our land to give us a measure of security...it lasted only 7 years, until they attacked again. But oh what we did in those 7 years. We welcomed our refugees from Europe, from Arab lands. We built them tent cities and turned them into real cities. We conquered swamp land and made it habitable and we raised our children to dream that someday there would be peace. We created universities and schools and parks.

But the Arabs would have none of it. In 1948, in 1956, again in 1967 and again in 1973 and again and again, almost daily, we fight off their attempts to do in 2014 what they failed to do in 1948. They have not learned and amazingly enough, John Kerry, neither have you.

We have built and evacuated whole communities; we have withdrawn from land in exchange for nothing but the hope that we could appease the “unappeasable.” We have flown around the world to help others – from earthquakes, tsunamis, devastating storms, famine and more.

We have allowed the Arabs – yes, allowed them, to fire tens of thousands of missiles at our cities and we know they have more than 170,000 more rockets and missiles ready to try again. At any time and with no notice whatsoever, we have the power to flatten Gaza into the world’s largest, flattest parking lot. And each time they attack, we think of it and know we can’t do it, won’t do it. And you would blame us for the failure to make peace?

When we attempt to stop them, to push back their military capabilities, just a bit, we aim for the rocket launchers, the arsenals, the training camps while they aim for our cities – Beersheva, Shderot, Ashkelon, Netivot, Ashdod. And you would threaten us for the ongoing state of war?

There cannot be peace until you recognize your enemy. There cannot be successful negotiations if you fail to understand those you would bring to the table. You fail on both counts.

After hearing that you threatened Israel unless the peace talks succeed, I can only conclude that your ignorance is even greater than I thought. I knew, years ago, that you had no clue what the Arab world is thinking, feeling, dreaming of. Now I know the same

is true about Israel – you don't understand us any better than you understand the Arabs and that amazes me.

Unlike the Arab world, Israel is an open society – read our newspapers, speak to the people on the street. No one will stop you and we won't escort you with secret police to control your experience. Pick any town, city, village, settlement and you will hear the same thing. Pick any street, any person and ask them what they dream of, what they want for their children. We do not dream of glorious death and martyrdom for our sons. We dream that they will never have to even serve in the army.

I have friends who agonized over their sons going into the army. I could understand my agony, as I grew up in the United States where all my friends promised they would run away from the US before they would ever be drafted. I knew nothing of army and war and guns. But my friends here in Israel? They had served in the army; why did they suffer so when their sons were drafted.

“We served so that they wouldn't have to,” I've been told over and over again. They never believed, 20+ years later that their sons and daughters would have to sacrifice three years of their lives, that we'd still be at war.

You won't hear that in the Arab world. Oh, they'll tell you that they dream of peace because they know that is what you want to hear, but in Arabic, they will talk of a time when there will be no Jews in the entire Middle East, never mind no Jews in the Palestine they envision. Their religious leaders will whip them up to the glory of Allah and jihad. But still you would expect us to make peace with them?

Theirs is a culture built on a dream – a dream that they will own the world...my corner, John Kerry, and even yours. Theirs is a society that believes in a heaven earned by causing the deaths of others and so when their sons blow themselves up and kill those Jews, they celebrate. And yes, they celebrated on 9/11 when they killed your people just as they celebrated when we released their terrorists and killers in yet another attempt to appease them...and you.

If you don't understand their ability to celebrate, I will confess that neither do I. I have seen the mothers hugging their sons in a video, made the night before they killed themselves...and the innocent men, women, and children, of their enemies who happened to be on that bus, in that mall, or asleep in their homes. It doesn't matter to them if they kill a soldier, a man with a gun, a pregnant woman, or a helpless child. The more, the better, in their twisted interpretation of what their God wants. You don't understand this and I can see where it is hard, given your western mentality. But not understanding it doesn't give you the right to ignore it.

You won't fail in your goal of ramming peace down our throats because of this, however. You will fail because, amazingly enough, you don't even understand Israel. We are the easiest to get, the easiest, honestly. All you have to do is listen and see – but even that is beyond you.

Listen to our national anthem – it does not speak of war. It is called, “The Hope” and speaks of a dream of 2,000 years to be a free people. We value that – the ability to protect ourselves, to be free in the land of our forefathers. Even the most right wing among us would be willing to compromise for a real peace, a peace where our children and grandchildren could live without the fears we deal with daily. We do not interfere in how they raise their children; we are stupid enough to even fund some of their text books – all in our own misguided belief that we can make peace with those who do not yet want it.

You threaten us with economic sanctions, with international isolation. This is your latest blunder, and it is a big one. Israel is laughing at you this morning. Economic sanctions?

They gassed us, beat us, bombed us, burned us. They haunted us, hunted us, hated us through the centuries across many lands and through this land in the last several decades. They burned the synagogue where my grandmother was hiding; they gassed my great grandmother to death.

International isolation? They put us in ghettos, they exploded our buses and shot our babies in the head. They lynched my neighbor, attacked the buses on which my friends travel. They shot my daughter’s teacher (and his infant son) and ambushed and killed a colleague of mine.

We are fighting for our lives, John Kerry – no less today than we were in 1948. The ONLY difference is that through the greed and stupidity of the Arab nations, we are stronger than we ever were, not weaker. You will fail, John Kerry, because you are fool enough to think you can come here, wave your American flag, look at your watch and tell us you’d like to finish these peace negotiations by 5:00 p.m. because you have a date at the opera or a baseball game to go to.

For a long time now, the Arabs have fooled you. They’ll speak to you of peace over the coffee they serve you and then when you leave the room, they slap each other on the backs and laugh – another successful day at making the US look stupid.

Now, this time, we will have that in common with the Arabs; we are laughing at you too. Naftali Bennet has tried to explain it to you, “There has not yet been a nation that has given up its land due to economic threats, and nor will we. Only security will bring economic stability, not a terrorist state near Ben-Gurion Airport.”

Greater men have failed, John Kerry – and I promise you, until you know Israel and until you understand the Arabs, you don’t have a prayer of succeeding. Go watch the Superbowl, at least then, maybe you’ll have done something worthwhile.

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