

Jonathan Feldstein: Pink Bathing Suits and the Iran Nuclear Arms Deal

Recently I shared an inspiring and emotional event on Facebook recounting something I witnessed on the Tel Aviv beach:

“On the beach in Tel Aviv today the noise of people playing in the crashing waves, life guards calling people to come back to the area under their view, and people playing “matkot,” was interrupted by an announcement in Hebrew, English and French about a missing four-year-old girl in a pink bathing suit. The announcement was repeated in an urgent tone.

The lifeguard who made the announcement forgot to turn off the microphone so his remarks underscoring the urgency were broadcast to the whole beach.

A moment later he was heard saying “You have the girl? Ma’am, you have the girl? She has the girl! Thank God.” And then he went on to praise the woman who found the missing girl until the girl’s mother arrived.

This all took no more than 2 or 3 minutes. The beach wasn’t silent, but outside the crashing waves that couldn’t be stopped, background noise dropped by some 80 percent.

Then, suddenly and spontaneously, the beach erupted into applause. It wasn’t simply polite clapping; but a standing ovation.

I’m not an expert in beaches of the world, but this was one of those “only in Israel moments.” Jews of all ages, from multiple countries, speaking different languages, expressing the unique brotherhood that Israel is known for.

It didn’t matter whose girl it was—at that moment she was all

of ours. And in a city known for its secular nature, the lifeguard expressed it all. Thank God!"

I was impressed that within 24 hours, dozens commented or sent me private messages and friend requests, hundreds shared it, and over 1,200 "liked" it.

The story was inspiring and it didn't take much imagination to feel the range of emotions from worry and fear, to joy and relief. It's nice to share something positive and unique about Israel, and meaningful that so many "liked" and shared it.

I guess we all like to feel good. And when it comes to Israel, which is so frequently beaten up in the media and among Israel haters and anti-Semites, we latch on to such positive stories with enthusiasm.

The truth is events like this take place in Israel daily, and are among the special aspects of living here. It's made me realize that I should go out of my way to recount these as often as possible in order to leave others feeling good, and to combat the slander that's so common.

However, if you look at my Facebook wall, there are a disproportionate number of posts that are political and address many of the issues raised by Israel haters, to expose, challenge, and debunk them. As much as it's important to get positive stories out, it's no less important to challenge those who defame and discredit Israel at every turn, often based on lies.

However, if the number of "likes" and shares is a fair measure, I've always been puzzled by how few read, much less comment on, or even go out of their way to "like" such a post.

While not a scientific poll, a vivid example of this reality was the post I made following the warm and fuzzy post above. It derived 14 "likes" and one comment.

I shared an article about 200 retired U.S. generals coming out against the Iran deal. Other than the ratio of retired military leaders against the deal dwarfing the number of those supporting the deal by a ratio of nearly 10:1, this highlights an issue that's of deep concern to me as an American Israeli, living and raising my family in Israel. Arguably this is one of the most important global issues of this generation, if not *the* most important. The consequences of the Iran deal are vast globally but deeply personal to me.

In case you are wondering, I am against the deal. It is a very bad deal. Not only does it not prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, but it paves the path guaranteeing that they will, or at least can if they want to. It's bad for Israel and it's bad for the U.S. That arguments for the deal have become personal and veiled in anti-Semitic innuendo discredits both the deal, and the honesty and integrity of those trying to push it through.

Simply, it enables Iran to do to Israel and the Jewish people in 10 minutes what took the Nazis 10 years to do. The Jewish people have been slaughtered and incinerated once. Never again.

Does the relative lack of interest in my second post indicate a lack of concern about the Iran deal? Does it indicate that most people think I'm wrong despite polls showing the majority of Americans and Israelis being against the deal? Does it indicate that most people don't want to be bothered by issues of life and death?

Does it indicate that Facebook is just a forum for relatively meaningless comments such as "*When I woke up this morning it was raining*"? Does it indicate that I need new friends?

Maybe people just don't want to relate to a nuclear weapon in the hands of evil Islamic extremists. Maybe the image of a lost four-year-old girl in a pink bathing suit is that much

more vivid and gripping.

But here's the thing. If we don't care about and respond to the very real threats of the Iran deal, (and then address the anti-Semitic innuendo that's been allowed to take place after defeating the deal), the happy image of a four-year-old girl in a pink bathing suit being returned to her mother before hundreds of clapping Israelis won't be what we remember.

Rather, it will be the fear of the little girl and her mother taking cover in the bomb shelter of their apartment building moments before a deafening explosion and the incineration of them, their friends and neighbors, and most of Israel, including Arabs and Jews.

If the substance of how we care about things is measured in "likes" and shares, please like and share this as if there's no tomorrow. Because if this deal is signed, there might not be one. If you really do care, take a moment to write your elected leaders, letters to the editor, and anyone else you can think of to get them to understand that this deal must be defeated.

Thank God the little girl in the pink bathing suit went home safe and sound with her family. I pray we will all have as happy an ending with the threats Iran poses.

Jonathan Feldstein *was born and educated in the U.S. and immigrated to Israel in 2004. He is married and the father of six. Throughout his life and career, he has been blessed by the calling to fellowship with Christian supporters of Israel and shares experiences of living as an Orthodox Jew in Israel. He writes a regular column for 's Standing With Israel.*