

Orthodox Jew in Israel: Let Dead Terrorist Groups Lie

There have been recent reports that the Biden administration is planning to remove five groups from the U.S.' foreign terrorist blacklist. Each of these groups is now considered defunct.

But it's strange: If they are defunct anyway, why would anyone worry about delisting them? It's better to let dead terror groups lie.

The groups include Basque Fatherland and Liberty, Aum Shinrikyo, a Japanese cult; Kach, an Israeli/nationalist Jewish group, and two Islamic groups: the Mujahideen Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem, and Gama'a al-Islamiyya.

When I read the reports, I asked myself why, and why now? A Christian friend reached out to me to get an understanding from an Israeli perspective, and whether it was something for which she needs to pray. I explained to my friend that it seems the delisting of these groups is connected with ongoing reports that the Biden administration is considering removing Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) from the U.S. terror blacklist as part of wooing Iran to renew the Obama-era nuclear deal.

Just to be clear, the IRGC is directly responsible for the killing of some 600 U.S. military members and is far from defunct. A group of 46 retired U.S. generals and a growing number of Democrats and Republicans are on record urging the Biden administration not to remove the IRGC from the terrorist blacklist.

In this context, I explained to my friend that not only does it not make sense to delist defunct terror groups, but doing so is very deliberate. Typically, when members of a board,

alumni of an institution or other notables die, they are not removed but are identified by a note that they are now deceased.

Why not just leave the list of terror groups as-is, and make a note that they are defunct? Listing those that are no longer active actually shows success in the war on terror.

I told my friend that delisting the defunct organizations is a smokescreen for plans to delist the very active IRGC. Anyone who cares about the threats of Islamic terror in general, and to Israel in particular, will be uncomfortable with the delisting of two Islamic terror groups. However, it seems like a clear diversion, tossing a bone to extreme leftists in Congress. Adding the Jewish/nationalist group Kach will make others celebrate, thinking that the administration is being equitable. There's no reason to delist any of these. It's also offensive to those who were the victims of these and other terror groups.

My friend is a Hispanic pastor. She explained that it creates trauma for Hispanics who suffered from taking FARC, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, off the U.S.' list of terrorist organizations. I had not heard of FARC before. She explained that it's a terrorist and drug trafficking group that raped and destroyed and kidnapped poor Colombians for decades.

The similarities are astounding. It was reported that the Biden administration removing FARC from the list of foreign terrorist organizations was to support a tenuous peace agreement with the terrorists in Colombia. As a rule, wooing terrorists with promises of turning a blind eye rather than confronting and defeating them is not good policy. Not with FARC in Colombia, and not with the IRGC in Iran.

Like many Biden administration policies, delisting the IRGC from the U.S. terrorism list is essential to reverse a policy

of the Trump administration which put the IRGC on the list. It's become both an end in itself to undo another Trump policy for the sake of undoing Trump policies, and a means to an end, to bring Iran to sign a new/revised nuclear agreement which has become a pillar of U.S. foreign policy. Seeing the Biden administration's weakness in its eagerness to be the anti-Trump administration and renew an agreement at any cost, the Iranians have used this issue as a make-or-break negotiating tactic.

The IRGC is on the terrorist list as a central part of Iran's military. However, it operates far beyond a typical military unit simply preparing for combat. Since the 1979 Iranian revolution, the IRGC has become a quasi-governmental institution, with vast independent power and actual oversight and control over key elements of Iran's economy, industry and energy sectors. It regularly calls for Israel's destruction, and materially supports other terrorist groups around the world with money, training and equipment.

In all this, President Biden is referred to as foreign policy moderate. Reports to mitigate the looming disaster of delisting the IRGC and a new Iran deal suggest he's personally resistant to delisting it. However, Biden has made a new Iran deal a key point of his foreign policy since before coming into office.

These conflicting agendas suggest a healthy dose of schizophrenia, deliberate disinformation, incompetence or a combination of all three which I discuss with my friend here. Delisting IRGC might help achieve his foreign policy goal of an Iranian agreement, but Biden looks weak regarding international terrorism, something that he and other Democrats don't need as another foreign policy failure. With mid-term elections in just six months, that's part of the reason that even some moderate Democrats, already resistant to rejoin a nuclear deal that goes too easy on Iran, are urging Biden to stand firm on keeping the IRGC on the terrorist list.

These issues will no doubt be top on the agenda when Biden is expected to visit Israel at the end of June, particularly in light of recent reports that Iran may be days away from enough material for one nuclear bomb. Prime Minister Bennett cannot afford to look weak with his government in disarray, and diminishing his role to protect Israel from the Iranian threat.

Is this a good cop/bad cop quasi-negotiating tactic with Iran, or just the dress rehearsal for another Biden administration foreign policy failure? The implications of delisting these terror groups now, along with FARC, opens old wounds of their victims, brings Jews, Hispanics and all people of conscience closer together, and makes us all less safe. {eo}

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 Charisma's Standing With Israel and is the host of the Inspiration from Zion podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network. He can be reached at firstpersonisrael@.

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