

Levantine Déjà Vu

by [G. Murphy Donovan](#) (November 2023)



Israeli Merkava tanks

Terrorism is winning the hearts and minds of people.
–Imran Khan

I am having hot flashes of Levantine déjà vu as another war unfolds in the Middle East. My angst is not about, yet again, another massive Intelligence failure, but more about how little we have learned, or want to know, about Islam, terrorism, and the reactionary globalism that has allowed, indeed facilitated, the spread of toxic religious imperialism—better known now under a host of Islamic political monikers like the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas, ISIS, Hizb ut Tahir, Taliban, Islamic Jihad, Palestine Liberation Organization/Authority et al, and my favorite, Hezbollah

(literally means the party of god/Allah.)

Hezbollah is political yes, but surely not religious. Shiite and Sunni clerical blood sectarians are more appropriately called totalitarian cults rather than one of Abraham's three religious legacies. There is nothing remotely sacred about irredentists and social absolutists posing as God's foot soldiers whilst waging perennial, genocidal, now generational, *jihads*.

Post-mortem Pretense

In 1974, as a very junior USAF Intelligence officer, I was assigned to a special inter-agency task force to analyze the warning "failure" that preceded the 1973 Arab/Israeli War. The plan was to leaven the group with age, experience, and youth to insure a semblance of candor. I was one of two rookies from the Defense Intelligence Agency where I hung my hat in those days.

The study was commissioned by Henry Kissinger and hosted by CIA—which then, as now, is always the big dog in inter-agency Intelligence paper drills. A CIA mandarin chaired the special study group. Early CIA Intelligence analysts and agents were drawn from the OSS, often the best and brightest WWII veterans.

Not so much today. Politics is now the "trump" card in the Intelligence game. At the moment, national security clearly plays second banana to domestic politics at the CIA and in the Intelligence Community at large.

Kissinger in 1974, as I recall, was then both Secretary of State and National Security advisor, more than a bit of two-hatted hubris as I was to discover. Initially, I protested that I had no Arab or Israeli area expertise for the job. At the time I was a "talking dog," a DIA briefing officer.

My boss countered that DIA didn't need expertise so much at it needed someone "they could trust" if I were to be seconded to CIA. Intelligence agency parochialism was then, as now, an echo of inter-service biases and rivalries. I took the assignment anyway thinking that, if nothing else, working at CIA would be a *vitae* milestone. And it was.

At the one and only group meeting, to my knowledge, that Kissinger attended, I recall our CIA minder saying that we were still in the data phase and we hadn't done any analysis or come to any conclusions. Kissinger rudely snapped that he "didn't need our analysis or conclusions." We should stick to data and facts. He could do his own analysis.

In short, the Intelligence Community should gather the tea leaves and count the beans. Analysis was a policy, not an Intelligence prerogative. Political mandarins already know what they believe; know what they want their policy to be.

At that juncture, I was a naïve True Believer. I thought the mission of Intelligence Community was to, as James Clapper likes to claim, "speak truth to power," and to reason inductively from fact and data. In practice, the Intelligence lamb abides as the policy lion decides.

Deduction Construction

It was clear to me that Washington policy Czars, if they use Intelligence at all, use it to reinforce what they already know. Any so-called analysis is deductive. The intelligence mission now is to find the evidence to support what policy makers already believe. If Intelligence data challenges the Beltway narrative, he/she/it becomes a snack for the policy beast—and the media.

Draining the swamp is never a tool for national security apparatchiks. Stasis and 'business as usual' is what Beltway

barons do best.

And alas, all that Intelligence can ever say about their bean counts is what office or what administrator received a report; not who saw, read, believed, or ever acted on the Intelligence. The lamb may propose, but only the lion disposes. The chasms between knowing, understanding, believing, and acting on Intelligence are huge.

Monday morning critics like our small group of naïve analysts were largely irrelevant then as they are today. Few titans care about critics who come down from the hill, after the battle, to shoot the wounded.

Politicians seldom accept responsibility for their mistakes anyway and never take responsibility for what they *didn't* do. Political excuses always seem identify as “reasons,” not errors.

Nobody advances in Washington either by telling a political partisan, including IC general officers, what they do not want to hear.

The most important analytical tool inside the Beltway is a wet finger in the political winds. Knowing what your political betters already believe and stroking those hobby horses is the key to Beltway success.

Classification Conundrum

The 1973-4 crisis and my short tenure at CIA had more than one *eureka* moment. Our group had “all access tickets” which was supposed to allow us to see all the “LIMDIS” and “EYES ONLY” Intelligence traffic that preceded the 1973 war.

In short, there are classifications of special Intelligence “compartments” above TOP SECRET, not available to the work-a-

day analyst across the IC.

And much of that Intelligence is not just probative for warning, but the data is stunning in its clinical detail. Technology is now the big reaper.

One slack morning over coffee, I asked our CIA keeper how the hundreds of analysts in the Intelligence Community were supposed to do their jobs, early warning in particular, if the juicy bits beyond TOP SECRET were sent only to a few policy titans and not to cognizant area specialists. How were the lion and lamb to meet productively at the action merge? Our mentor, ever the gentleman, smiled wryly and said "welcome to Washington, son. Welcome to Intelligence."

Indeed, we are more adept at keeping secrets from our colleagues and the voters, than from the enemy. The entire IC classification and secrecy charade is designed, not to protect national security, but to "cover bureaucratic asses." Hence, over classification, that security *Charlie Foxtrot* is with us always. Every nitwit in the Intelligence Community has a TOP SECRET cover sheet or rubber stamp at their disposal.

CYA, like deductive threat analyses, are now axioms within the Intelligence Community and the larger partisan Beltway political culture.

The Anti-Semitic Worm

The most enlightening take away from my experience with the 1973 war study was what could only honestly be called pervasive soft or closet anti-Semitism. Of course, as it is today, bias is worded or dressed in burkas like; anti-Zionist, anti-Israeli, or “humanitarian” concerns. In those days, the Israeli Prime Minister was Golda Meier who had no illusions about American, Arab, or Muslim politics.



Israeli PM Bibi Netanyahu suffers the same slings and arrows today simply because he is not a knee-jerk globalist or liberal. In 1974, I was surprised to learn that many of the usual racist suspects thought that it wasn't such a bad idea for Arabs to settle the Israeli or Jewish question for once and for all.

As we hear today, the reasoning was based on realpolitik numbers and money. The Israelis were thought to be a troublesome lot awash in a sea of Arabs and Muslim fanaticism. Washington had few fiscal ties to Israel, but American and EU/NATO energy and debt dependencies on Arabs and Muslims were huge in 1973—as they are today.

When money talks inside the Beltway, virtue signals and bullshit often walk. Just a few decades after the Holocaust, the bias towards and cynicism about Israel in that inter-agency Intelligence forum was a stunning revelation.

Moral Equivalence

So, it's no surprise today that legacy media and team Biden are pleading for Israeli "proportionality," to which the best response might be "nonsense!" Arab and Muslim nihilists and sponsor states can lose a hundred wars & survive. If Israel loses one, it's one and done.

The moral high ground is useless in defeat.

The so-called two-state solution is now an oxymoron too because one of the two solutions is now a pariah, not just a fake state. As long as Hamas, the PLA, Hezbollah, and the Islamic Jihad rule in the West Bank & Gaza, Arabs who like to call themselves "Palestinians" will never be a country.

Beheading Jewish children and eviscerating Jewish mothers is not fungible, even in New York, Davos, and Brussels.

Team Biden's tilt towards Islamism in general, and financing Hamas and Hezbollah in particular, is a kind of slow motion death wish. America and Israel have no more in common with religious fascism than they do with totalitarian Communism in China. Zealots often lose wars—badly. And yes, they put their "innocents," —their so-called civilians—at risk.

When you believe that the biggest threats to the West are Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin, you really don't have much time or inclination to worry about real threats like Mecca, Muslims, or Beijing—or another 9/11.

The fact that Arab and Muslim countries will not accept Palestinian refugees today, even on humanitarian grounds, tells you everything you need to know about who is the threat to whom. Arab/Muslim theocrats hope surrogate Palestinians will solve the Jewish question—or the IDF will solve the Hamas, PLO, Islamic Jihad problem. Win/win, for Arabia & Islam either way.

Early on in the war ongoing, Shiite apostates in Iraq already had a surrogate victory, derailing Israeli/Saudi rapprochement. Hezbollah solidarity with Hamas is paying off, whilst Team Biden is busy praying, paying, and trying to play both sides, financing Hamas and Hezbollah through Qatar.

You can not make this stuff up. "Having Israel's back" seems to be a plan to reassure Israel by honing the Islamist knife.

Bigoted religious fanatics who start wars put "civilians" at risk. Civil and human rights abuses, like those in Palestinian, are all too common throughout the *Ummah*.

Today there are Arabs who are Israeli citizens. In contrast there are damn few, to zero Jews, who are afforded the same respect or dignity anywhere in Arabia or the global *Ummah*.

Supporting Israel unequivocally is not just the right thing to do, it's the only thing to do. Pandering to Arab oil and money or theocratic fascism, as we do in Qatar, Iran, Arabia, and elsewhere, is a great leap backwards.

There are no "both sides" in Gaza, no "however," no moral equivalence that enables another Holocaust. When civilians are used as shields in combat, blood is on the defensive, not the offensive hand. "Proportionality" is a bogus argument—as if Islamists could spell justice or restraint.



Cynthia Strand



Rick Ledgett



Michael Morell



Stephen Slick



Nada Bakos



James Bruce



Chris Savos



Don Hepburn



Ronald Marks



Patty Brandmeier

SPIES WHO LIE

The intelligence 'experts' who falsely discredited Hunter Biden's laptop — and still won't say sorry



Glenn Gerstell



Jeremy Bash



Doug Wise



Michael Hayden



Leon Panetta



John McLaughlin



David Cariens



Steven Hall



John Brennan



James Clapper

CNN pundit James Clapper headed a letter by 51 former intelligence officials in October 2020 to cast doubt that Hunter Biden's laptop was "Russian disinformation." Even as the laptop has been confirmed again and again, none of them will apologize or admit they were wrong.

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Strategic Vacuity

James Angleton, former head of CIA counterintelligence, once said that the Intelligence business is a "wilderness of mirrors." Surely he was speaking about Intelligence and policy at the merge, a junction now obscured by secrecy, bigotry, war, and abject incompetence.

Policy is ill-served by intelligence bias and partisanship. The country, in turn, is ill-served by policy that gets lost in the tactical weeds at the expense of coherent strategy. The American approach to terror and Islamism is a wilderness of contradictions, piecemeal at best.

American Intelligence knows the name and nationality of every Islamist terror group and also knows the names and nationalities of every state supporter of Islamism. Still, even after 9/11, America does not have a coherent policy or a plan to take out the Mohammedan or Islamist threat.

The real enemy is the collective Arab and/or Muslim tolerance of terror and support to Islamist haters, gunmen, and bombers. The real enemy is *Ummah* indifference, active and soft support to the shooters. Ironically, authoritarian countries like Russia, China, and Egypt have successfully crushed their Islamic jihads. Every authoritarian state in the *Ummah* could do the same if they chose to.

Collectively, Arab and Muslim states could end religious terror tomorrow, just as Egypt did. The fact that the *Ummah* does not, tells the world everything it needs to know about Islam's toxic fetish with ultimate supremacy.

Israel is a keystone state for civilization as we know it. If Israel goes, so does America. If Douglas Murray is correct, the EU is already on the ropes.

After 9/11, team Bush, attacked Iraq; a war that made as much sense as crushing a roach to obscure a rat problem. America didn't have the courage to neutralize the real sponsors in Saudi Arabia and the Emirates.

And now we have October 7, 2023 as Israel's 9/11. The October surprise in the Middle East is not just another warning, data, or evidence failure. The perennial failure to act at *all* against *all* of Mohamed's bad actors is the fail.

American policy pathology guaranteed Israel would have their version 9/11 on 7 October 2023.

If we cut through all the blather, smoke, and mirrors; Israel is clearly expendable. When “little Satan” is gone, “big Satan” will be next–again.

We never learn.

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