

Bernie Sanders On “That Right Wing” and “Racist” Israeli Government

by Hugh Fitzgerald



At a town hall meeting in Nevada on February 18, Bernie Sanders delivered himself of some thoughts on what he described as Israel’s “right-wing” and “racist” government.

A report on that latest effort is [here](#):

Senator Bernie Sanders says the United States must be “pro-Palestinian” as much as “pro-Israeli” and described the Israeli government as “right-wing” and “racist.”

Speaking during a televised town hall meeting in Nevada on Tuesday, the Democratic frontrunner for the US presidency said: “To be for the Israeli people and to be for peace in the Middle East does not mean that we have to support right-wing, racist governments that currently exist in Israel.”

But the American government has been “pro-Palestinian” for years; it has contributed billions in aid to the Palestinians, only to see much of that aid stolen by the leaders of Hamas and the Palestinian Authority. It only stopped contributing to the Palestinians, and to UNRWA, when the Palestinians refused to end their “Pay-For-Slay” program, by which hundreds of millions of dollars have gone to the families of imprisoned or dead terrorists. And the U.S. also objected to UNRWA’s insistence that the descendants of the Palestinians who originally left Mandatory Palestine, and then Israel in the period 1947-1949, were also “refugees” and deserve international aid. Among the hundreds of millions of refugees since the beginning of World War II, only the Palestinians have been allowed to consider their refugee status as something that can be passed down through the generations.

The American government also objected to the extraordinary corruption and theft, whereby just two leaders of Hamas, Khaled Meshaal and Mousa Abu Marzouk, managed to make off with at least \$2.5 billion apiece from the Hamas treasury, while some 600 lesser figures in Hamas, living in Gaza, became millionaires living in seaside villas. Yasser Arafat, of the PLO, managed to amass – according to American sources – between one and three billion dollars. The President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas and his sons Tareq and Yasser, have amassed a fortune of \$400 million. Hanan Ashrawi, one of Abbas’s advisors, has a net worth of \$46 million. Lesser figures in the P.A. have had to make do with tens of millions, or sometimes even millions. Still, for Palestinian leaders, it beats working.

Sanders apparently thinks the Likud is “right-wing” – one of his two favorite epithets for Israel – even though the party supports a welfare state that, in American terms, would be considered to be on the left. He fails to understand, too, that there is a nearly universal consensus among Israeli Jews that the country was right to annex the Golan for defensive

purposes, and is justified in claiming an undivided Jerusalem as its capital. Israelis know, too, that control of the Jordan Valley is indispensable to the country's defense against an invasion from the east, and that 460,000 Jews living in towns in the West Bank have a perfect right to be there, according to the Mandate for Palestine, which assigned to the future Jewish National Home all the territory from the Jordan River to the sea. Sanders has never given any sign that he has read, much less understood, the Mandate for Palestine, has never acknowledged the continuing relevance of that Mandate for the recognition of Israel's rights today. He clearly has not read Article 80 of the U.N. Charter – known as the “Jewish People's article” – by which the U.N accepted its responsibility to put into effect the Palestine Mandate's provisions. Finally, Sanders has never mentioned U.N. Resolution 242, which established a second, independent justification for Israel holding onto those territories it won in the Six-Day War that Israel required for “secure and recognized boundaries.” Could it be that he doesn't think the Mandate for Palestine, Article 80 of the U.N. Charter, and U.N. Resolution 242, don't matter? How could he be so misinformed? Well, just look around at the political and media elites here and in Europe that appear, precisely, to ignore the Mandate, Article 80, and Resolution 242. Don't confuse them with facts. Just repeat endlessly, with them, that Israel “must withdraw from occupied territories” to something close to the “1949 borders” (in truth, there were no borders established, only armistice lines, on the demand of the Arab states themselves), in order to bring about the “two-state solution.”

As for Sanders' charge that the current Israeli government is “racist,” what is he talking about? Arab citizens of Israel have full equality with Jewish Israelis. They are members of the Knesset; they serve on the Supreme Court; they are high-ranking diplomats. They enjoy all the rights – freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, that other Israelis possess. The only difference is that they are not

required to serve in the military, although they may volunteer to do so; there are now Arab and Druze officers in the I.D.F. There is hideous "racism" in the Middle East, but it is found among, and promoted by, the Muslim Arabs, not the Jews. The Muslims, after all, know from the Qur'an that they are the "best of peoples"(3:110) while the Jews, and other Infidels, are the "most vile of created beings." (98:6).

The Qur'an contains many antisemitic verses, which have been usefully compiled by Robert Spencer: "The Qur'an depicts the Jews as inveterately evil and bent on destroying the wellbeing of the Muslims. They are the strongest of all people in enmity toward the Muslims (5:82); as fabricating things and falsely ascribing them to Allah (2:79; 3:75, 3:181); claiming that Allah's power is limited (5:64); loving to listen to lies (5:41); disobeying Allah and never observing his commands (5:13); disputing and quarreling (2:247); hiding the truth and misleading people (3:78); staging rebellion against the prophets and rejecting their guidance (2:55); being hypocritical (2:14, 2:44); giving preference to their own interests over the teachings of Muhammad (2:87); wishing evil for people and trying to mislead them (2:109); feeling pain when others are happy or fortunate (3:120); being arrogant about their being Allah's beloved people (5:18); devouring people's wealth by subterfuge (4:161); slandering the true religion and being cursed by Allah (4:46); killing the prophets (2:61); being merciless and heartless (2:74); never keeping their promises or fulfilling their words (2:100); being unrestrained in committing sins (5:79); being cowardly (59:13-14); being miserly (4:53); being transformed into apes and pigs for breaking the Sabbath (2:63-65; 5:59-60; 7:166); and more."

Bernie Sanders has never uttered a word about Muslim antisemitism. Is he afraid to confront the subject? Does he think it will go away if he refuses to discuss it? Has he not noticed the rise in antisemitism in Europe, largely

attributable to the influx of millions of Muslims who bring with them, undeclared in their mental baggage, a deep and visceral hatred for Jews? Could it really be that he remains unaware of Muslim antisemitism? He never mentions the Palestinian (and other Arab) schoolbooks that drip with antisemitic venom, nor does he discuss those Palestinian children's programs where sweet-faced Palestinian children, still in elementary school, chant their hatred for, and desire to kill, all Jews. Why not? Is it ignorance, or a desire by Bernie Sanders to protect the image of the Palestinians?

Sanders also spoke [at the town hall in Nevada] about the humanitarian crisis in the besieged Gaza Strip, where the youth unemployment rate is about 70 percent.

"Take a look at what's going on in Gaza right now. You got youth unemployment, 70 percent, you know people can't even leave the area," he said.

Youth unemployment in Gaza is high for several reasons.

Mainly, there is the colossal corruption and mismanagement of the economy. Grasping Hamas leaders have been fixated on stealing money for themselves, money that was meant to improve the lives of all the Palestinians. A total of at least ten billion dollars has gone into the pockets of the late Yasser Arafat, Hamas leaders Khaled Meshaal, Mousa Abu Marzouk, Ismail Haniyeh, and 600 other second-tier leaders of Hamas, and in the P.A. gone to President Mahmoud Abbas and his two sons, Hanan Ashrawi, Saeb Erekat and others high up in the Palestinian Authority.

That money could have gone to vocational and professional training for young Gazans. It could have been used as seed money, too, to help the Gazans set up small businesses, or to invest in those that already exist but are starved for capital, so that they might expand. That would make a considerable dent in the numbers of those young Gaza's who are

currently unemployed. Sanders notes the 70% youth unemployment rate in Gaza, but has nothing to say about the reasons – which have to do with the grand theft by Hamas rulers uninterested in the plight of the people they presume to represent, as long as they and their families get theirs. The Hamas rulers have little ability to analyze and ameliorate the Strip's economic problems. Government posts are distributed not to those who are the most capable economists and administrators, but to those whose loyalty to the leaders is assured. No wonder the Gazans have lost hope that their own Hamas-run government will help them.

Much of the aid money, too, both in Gaza and the West Bank, has gone into paying for weaponry of all kinds, and for the building of expensive terror tunnels. Those tunnels running from Gaza into Israel were built by Hamas, while those running from Lebanon into northern Israel were built by Hezbollah. These were enormously expensive to build and outfit with living quarters. All these terror tunnels have been located, and blown up, by the Israelis. A terrific waste of money that could have been used to build the Palestinian economy. Israel has tried to help the Palestinians – it left hundreds of greenhouses intact for the Palestinians of Gaza to take over once the Israelis left in 2005 – but the Gazans chose instead to destroy the greenhouses, stripping them of anything of value.

Bernie Sanders knows that the economy in Gaza is wretched, but does not see that wretchedness as the result of many bad decisions by the Palestinians themselves. It was a bad decision for Gazans ever to have allowed Hamas to be voted into power. This allowed the stupendous thefts by the new rulers, nearly seven billion dollars in aid money that was siphoned off for private gain by leaders of Hamas. In the West Bank, the Palestinian Authority, rulers also helped themselves to a total of several billion – they weren't quite as adept as Hamas leaders at diverting aid money to themselves. It was a

bad decision to spend so much of what aid money remained on arms, including rockets, and terror tunnels. Sanders should publicly recognize that the economic mess in Gaza is not the fault of Israel, but of the choices the Palestinians themselves have made.

If Hamas would stop firing its rockets into Israel, the Israelis have indicated they would lessen restrictions on the movement of Gazan workers into Israel, where even now tens of thousands of jobs in construction and agriculture remain to be filled. The Israelis are even more keen than Bernie Sanders is to relieve unemployment among Gazan youth, because they know that many of those unemployed young men listen to the siren songs of terrorist recruiters, and furnish the cannon fodder for terror attacks on Jewish civilians.

“What American foreign policy has got to be about in the Middle East is bringing the Israelis, bringing the Palestinians together under the banner of justice.”

Sanders said: “It cannot just simply be that we’re just pro-Israel and we ignore the needs of the Palestinian people.”

The American government, Sanders needs to be reminded, has not been “just pro-Israel.” It was not “just pro-Israel” when, in 1956, President Eisenhower threatened to cut aid if Israeli troops did not withdraw from the Sinai. It was not “just pro-Israel” – in fact, was distinctly anti-Israel – when President Carter and National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski praised Sadat to the skies and exhibited a visceral dislike of Prime Minister Begin during the negotiations over the Camp David Accords; Carter always supported Sadat’s demands and belittled Begin’s attempts to explain Israel’s security needs; the result was the Camp David Accords, with Sadat – who was the one getting back all of the Sinai, territory Egypt had lost in its 1967 war of aggression – being heralded as a veritable Prince of Peace. Meanwhile, poor Begin, who was the

one giving up "land for peace," that is, tangible assets in exchange for a promise of peace, from Muslims who regard Muhammad's Treaty of Al-Hudaibiyya, and subsequent breach of that treaty concluded with the Meccans in 628 A.D., as the model for all subsequent treaty-making, was depicted by Carter, Brzezinski, and much of the mainstream press as being "unreasonable" in his own modest demands, none of which were met. Nor was America "just pro-Israel" when Barack Obama was president. He repeatedly demonstrated his palpable want of sympathy for the Jewish state, especially when, at the U.N.'s Security Council, the American ambassador, Samantha Power, abstained for the first time, instead of voting against, a resolution calling Israeli settlements "illegal."

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