

Netanyahu vaporizes the nonsense surrounding Israel's war with Hamas

By Conrad Black

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's [address](#) to a joint session of the United States Congress on Wednesday was one of the most powerful and significant speeches given by any national government leader in an important forum in some years. It was a forcefully delivered vaporization of the cant and bigotry and (literally) the philistinism of much of the current debate about the war in Gaza and the Middle East generally. The prime minister was only stating the obvious for anyone who thinks clearheadedly about it for a few moments, but he effortlessly and eloquently swept away a great deal of fatuous and malicious nonsense that enshrouds much of the current conflict.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaks to a joint meeting of Congress at the U.S. Capitol on July 24, 2024, in Washington, DC. PHOTO BY ROBERTO SCHMIDT / AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Any dispute that the land of Israel is not legitimately for the Jews is unfounded in international law and in historical fact. The Jews were in Israel

in the antiquarian times of Abraham and Isaiah, centuries before the arrival of the Philistines by sea, apparently from the Aegean islands, and David and Solomon ruled in the land of Israel more than 1,500 years before the birth of the Prophet of Islam and the arrival of the Arabs on the banks of the Jordan River and in sight of the Mediterranean Sea. The borders of the contending populations in the area have shifted dramatically and almost constantly but the argument that the Jews do not belong there and that their entire presence is an illicit occupation are scandalously untrue. There is ample room for strenuous debate about the demarcation of the borders between the different ethnicities in and around what is now Israel, but there is no conceivable, legitimate dispute over the right of the Jews to be there. It is only occupied territory in the same sense that Indians occupied the Taj Mahal, Chinese occupy the forbidden city, Russians occupy the Kremlin, the British occupy the Tower of London, the Americans occupy the Lincoln Memorial and Canadians occupy the Parliament buildings in Ottawa: a traditional and rightful occupation.

Netanyahu spoke nothing but the truth when he said that antisemitism is the most ancient of all group-hatreds, the most tenacious, and the most despicable, and when he said that antisemitism is now primarily propagated by Iran, a hatred that is first of all Iranian hatred of America as "the guardian of western civilization and the world's greatest power ... That's why the mobs in Tehran chant 'Death to Israel' before they chant 'Death to America.'" He said that those who would side with the murderers of children and women in Israel over those who would defend civilian populations and legitimate sovereign nations against terrorism "should be ashamed of themselves." He completely demolished the theory that Israel had been anything other than meticulous and self-sacrificing in the lengths that it had gone to in avoiding civilian casualties in Gaza, and he established that Israel had admitted to Gaza enough food to provide 3,000 calories a day for every man, woman and child and that the problem was "not that food had not been allowed into Gaza but that Hamas had stolen it."

He also established that the Israel Defense Forces had achieved one of the most humane ratios of civilian to combatant deaths ever accomplished in the history of urban warfare and that the attitude to casualties of the Hamas leadership was that they were useful in promoting anti-Israel propaganda, and that "Palestinian women and children excel at being human shields." He denied that Israel had any ambition to govern Gaza, only a determination that the security of Israel and its population would not be threatened again from Gaza and that Israel's vision of a postwar Gaza was of a self-governing, non-militarized land of peaceful coexistence and steadily rising prosperity. In all of this and in much else, the Israeli prime minister dismembered the antisemitic lies that have been bandied about in the media and the academies of the West, in many circles that not only should but do know better. And he made it incandescently clear that after these more than 4,000 years, the Jewish people of Israel will never

yield in defending their homeland and destroying those who would destroy them.

Most timely was the Israeli prime minister's assertion that when Israel destroys Iran's nuclear military capacity, it will not be doing so for the benefit of one civilization against another, but for civilization against barbarism. Almost completely unnoticed by the media was the implicit implication that Israel will conduct such a mission alone, if it must. Any such measure would be among the greatest and most benign developments that can be imagined, though once again, the Jewish state would be delegated by the abstention of all other civilized peoples to do the civilized world's dirty work for it. Netanyahu made it clear that all of the Arab powers are now reasonably comfortable with the Jewish state and that those individuals who protested him at the U.S. Capitol and around Washington, including a number of members of the Houses of the Congress, are "Iran's useful idiots." Yet to be explained was the absence of Sen. J.D. Vance, the Republican vice-presidential nominee. If he has had even a sip of the anti-Israel Kool-Aid, he will need a total immersion debriefing from his chief to be a presentable candidate, especially with the horrendously irresolute Kamala Harris as the presumptive successor to the Joe Biden shambles in America.

The most important single point of Netanyahu's speech was to drive a silver stake through the heart of moral relativism and the absurd insinuation that there is any aspect of the Israel-Hamas War that is mere skirmishing of a kind that Israel must simply resign itself to being inevitable. On instructions from Iran, Hamas committed a grievous act of war against Israel that in its relative consequences vastly exceeded the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, which was at least confined to military targets, and the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in 2001. This wasn't a border incident; it was a deliberate attempt to provoke Israel to

conduct a war in Gaza on the overconfident supposition that soft and under-informed western opinion could be mobilized to apply irresistible pressures on Israel to avoid becoming too “disproportionate” in its response.

The land of Israel belongs to the Israelis: the rest of the territory between the Mediterranean and Israel’s borders belongs to those who now describe themselves as Palestinians, with the possibility of some enhancements of territory for Palestine that have often been negotiated and offered by Israel in the past. The Palestinian leaders have never sought peace because that would confine them to another dusty little Middle Eastern country and they would stop being among the most prominent personalities in the world, and more recently, because they are puppets of the Iranians, a country governed by a psychopathic theocracy that wants war as long as other people die fighting it. Israel seeks peace, but it cannot make peace with a regime that denies the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish state, which the United Nations declared to be Israel’s *raison d’être* when it was established in 1948. Peace will require the complete destruction of Hamas as a terrorist organization. History will see it as fortunate that the Iranians required Hamas to give Israel the justification it needed to exterminate its enemy and that Israel possessed the political leadership and the national will to do so.

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