

Norway's Foreign Minister Targets Israel – and Trump

By Bruce Bawer

Weird thing about Norway: on the one hand, the people, by Western European standards, are unusually patriotic and fiercely protective of their sovereignty, waving flags every year on Constitution Day (May 17) and voting twice (in 1972 and 1994) to keep their country out of the EU. On the other hand, these same people's government is, decades in and decades out, more slavishly devoted to international institutions than that of any other country on earth. Hence Norway, a member of the European Economic Area, is quicker to obey EU directives than are actual EU members. This is true when the "bourgeois" or "conservative" (i.e. socialist)



parties are in charge, and it's even truer when the "socialist" (i.e., really, really socialist) parties are in charge. But since the current Labor Party government took power three years ago, and especially since an absurdly self-regarding mediocrity named

Espen Barth Eide was named Foreign Minister a year ago, things have gone utterly haywire.

So last Thursday, when the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants for Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin

Netanyahu, and its former Defense Minister, Yoav Gallant, on the premise that they've been guilty of genocide in Gaza, Eide's ministry was quick to [announce](#) that if Netanyahu and Gallant set foot in Norway, they'll be arrested at once. Andreas Kravik, Eide's #2 man, explained that as a member of the ICC, Norway has no other choice than to take this drastic action. "The ICC plays a crucial role in ensuring accountability for serious crimes," [professed](#) Eide in a fatuous press release. "It is important that the ICC carries out its mandate in a judicious manner. I have confidence that the Court will proceed with the case based on the highest fair trial standards." Little tyrants! At the same time, the ICC issued an arrest warrant for Hamas leader Mohammed Deif. This is not quite equal treatment, given that Deif, having been killed in an airstrike in July, is no longer with us.

That's not Eide's only recent outrage. Earlier this month, after Turkey wrote a letter to the UN calling for an arms embargo of Israel, Norway, which is to say Eide, signed on – along with 52 other countries, including China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Indonesia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Venezuela, and Lula's Brazil, plus the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Norway, note well, was the only Western country to lend its support to this reprehensible document.

On November 20, *Aftenposten* ran an [op-ed](#) in which Skjalg Stokke Hougen and Torkel Brekke (both of Civita, an Oslo think tank) argued that it's "naive to believe that the heads of state" of those 52 countries that signed Turkey's letter were primarily concerned with alleviating Palestinian suffering. Rather, they wrote, the letter is just the latest tool "in a global conflict against the West" – in addition to which "states such as Russia, Iran, and China want to use the war in Gaza to divert attention from their own misdeeds. If Norway is to help dictatorships with this type of diversionary maneuver, there must at least be a hope of getting something valuable in

return....It is tempting to ask whether the Ministry of Foreign Affairs itself knows what they have agreed to. ... Does the government understand what Iran and Russia have as long-term goals here?"

On November 22, the website of Human Rights Service published an [article](#) in which Julie Dahle didn't sugarcoat her feelings about Norway's current foreign-policy *macher*. Having bad-mouthed Trump for years, Eide was now, wrote Dahle, in Washington, D.C., trying in his usual ham-handed fashion to make nice with Trump intimates. But not only hadn't he been able to arrange a sit-down with any GOP leaders; he hadn't even managed to secure an audience with his current counterpart and supposed ideological confrère, the equally feckless Antony Blinken. Dahle took Eide's failure on both of these fronts as "a strong hint that he's already weakened Norway's credibility, and that even the still governing Democrats are unimpressed." In what appeared to be a slight exaggeration for purposes of humor, Dahle said Eide had bragged that he "knows someone who knows someone who knows Rubio," but, she added, this "isn't good enough." Bottom line: Eide is a consummate fool "who wants both applause from a UN majority and access to the Trump White House" – but whose key accomplishment has been to imperil "Norway's long-term reputation and security."

Even Hanne Skartveit, editor of Norway's largest paper, VG – which, like all the country's legacy media, tends to be cozy with the government, especially when the left is running things – [accused](#) Eide of leading Norway down a self-destructive new path. Many of the signatories of Turkey's letter, she pointed out in an article on November 23, were motivated not so much by the Palestinian cause but by a hostility to the U.S., which not so long ago was considered Norway's most important ally.

Granted, the Norwegian government isn't alone in declaring its intention to arrest Netanyahu and Gallant should they set foot

on its nation's soil. Ireland – which, like Norway, recently rewarded Hamas for its October 7 atrocities by recognizing Palestinian sovereignty – has also said that it would put Netanyahu behind bars. So, shamefully, have Canada, Belgium, Austria, Finland, Portugal, the Netherlands, Slovenia, and Switzerland. Nor would the British government, now in the hands of the insipid Labourite Keir Starmer, rule out an arrest. At least the present U.S. regime was, at latest notice, on the right side, calling the ICC's decision "outrageous." The Czech Republic, along with Orban's Hungary and Milei's Argentina, joined the U.S. in siding with Netanyahu, with Orban calling the ICC's action "disgraceful." And Mike Waltz, Donald Trump's nominee for national security adviser, [tweeted](#) that Israel was defending itself from "genocidal terrorists" and promised "a strong response to the antisemitic bias of the ICC & UN" when Trump returns to the White House. Senator Tom Cotton, for his part, referred to the ICC's prosecutor, British lawyer Karim Khan, who'd called for the arrest warrants, as "a deranged fanatic" and commented: "Woe to him and anyone who tries to enforce these outlaw warrants."

Speaking of Britain, the *Guardian's* [response](#) to the ICC move was as predictable – and useful – as usual: all you needed to do to ensure that your moral compass was pointed in the right direction was to check that it was exactly 180 degrees off from the *Guardian's*. The editors of the British left's flagship rag called the ICC's move against Israel "unprecedented, necessary and impartial." Rejecting Netanyahu's statement that the ICC was driven by anti-Jewish bias, the *Guardian's* editors declared – risibly – that the case was "not remotely about antisemitism." The *Guardian* editors went on: "It's not about Israel's right to defend itself, which nobody disputes." *Nobody*? Much of the Islamic world disputes Israel's very right to exist – for heaven's sake, that's what's at the core of this whole business. "Netanyahu and Gallant," maintained

the *Guardian* editors, “should voluntarily surrender to the court and fight their case.” Yes, that’s gonna happen. How delightful to know that in less than two months Donald Trump will be back at the Resolute desk, and any U.S. ally that doesn’t distance itself pronto from this vile assault on Israel will get what it has coming to it. And one can only hope that that will go double for Espen Barth Eide, the Goofus in this story, and his clownish crew at the Norwegian Foreign Ministry.

First published in [Front Page magazine](#)