

The Israel Op



by Lee Smith

Most people can't see evil until it touches them directly. Some who cheered as they watched Obama's spymasters split the country with Russiagate came to their senses only after COVID-19 protocols took the life of a loved one. Some supported attacks on the Second Amendment or unrestricted immigration, until they saw mobs on the streets of major cities and on college campuses calling for genocide. It's nearly impossible for most normal Americans to believe that what's happening in America is really happening, which is how these things usually go. No one can believe it until it's too late.

Information warfare campaigns designed by the U.S. government to target Americans with the aim of splitting them apart from

their countrymen through weaponized falsehoods are rooted in new methods of shaping and controlling the online communities that many Americans trust to interpret the world around them. From Russiagate to COVID-19 to Jan. 6, the newness and force of these campaigns has knocked the country senseless, with the left readily acclimating itself to third-world norms, and large parts of the right increasingly hopeless.

What the right has learned from a decade of information warfare targeting it is to distrust the media. Knowing, for instance, that the Justice Department interfered in the 2016, 2020, and now the 2024 elections, what else is phony? Was 9/11 an inside job after all? What about the moon landing? What haven't we been lied to about? Our families are real, our kids are real. But what else is there to hold on to? It's like reaching for a life raft and finding only splinters. Maybe America is fake all the way down.

But it's not, and the right can't afford to let itself be fooled into despair with so much at stake. The same U.S. government agencies and officials that pushed everything from Russiagate to the Russia bounty story and lied about the origins of COVID-19, Hunter Biden's laptop, and the character of Jan. 6 protests are now warning that Israel's war against Hamas is likely to drag U.S. forces into WWIII. It's another information operation designed to disorient and demoralize the America First camp. This time, however, there's a big difference—an influential segment of the right is amplifying the left's campaign against them.

The left claims that America is a fraud at its origins, a racist hoax perpetrated against nonwhites to this very day. The left tears down monuments, desecrates our heroes, replaces our holidays, and rewrites our history to suit their pathological grievances. It's a whole-of-party effort to force the middle class to our knees in despair, so that the country's ruling class and the oligarchs can continue running their high-tech monopolies while defunding police forces and

opening the borders to depress wages, impoverish communities, and terrorize families.

But now, the right is in danger of transitioning into the left. Maybe it shouldn't be surprising that amid the ruins, some of those capitalizing on the chaos and preying on the shell-shocked are themselves from the right. A year ago, for example, right-wing influencer Jackson Hinkle sounded like a normal Trump voter. After Biden delivered his infamous Philadelphia speech accusing his political opponents of terrorism, Hinkle called him a dictator, and said he was plunging us into fascism at the behest of George Soros and Klaus Schwab while using the intelligence agencies to target freedom-loving Americans. Most of that is true.

Today, however, Hinkle's Twitter feed looks like nothing more than a Soros-funded operation, pumping out reports every hour enticing clicks via the eternal threat that is antisemitism, and promoting actual America-hating terrorists in the process. Hinkle's business model? "Subscribe to my X Premium for \$3 to help me DEFEAT THE ZIONIST LIES."

There is no shortage of people on both the right and left who don't like Israel, or Jews—and Hinkle is giving them what they want. But he hardly stops there: He also posts pictures of Bashar Assad, proclaiming the murderous Syrian leader to be a "hero." That's deranged: Assad's intelligence apparatus ushered Sunni fighters across the Iraqi border to kill U.S. troops. One of Twitter's top influencers, Hinkle describes himself on his feed as a "Christian American Patriot." A small group of right-wing sectarians see Assad, a member of a Muslim minority sect, as a defender of Christians, and likely take as evidence the time Assad told Pope John Paul II that the Jews killed Christ. But Bashar, like his father Hafez before him, waged a relentless war on Lebanon's Christians. Moreover, Assad is a verified dictator who did what Hinkle said Biden wanted to do—namely, label his opponents as terrorists and then massacre them by the hundreds of thousands, maybe

millions.

Hinkle's an op, say his critics on social media. There's got to be a foreign power behind him. Why else, they add, would an American fly Qatar's flag on his Twitter feed because of its stance on Palestine? But really, who knows? What's clear is that he's picking up the loose change found in the path of devastation and delirium ploughed by the Obama faction. If no one believes anything anymore, why not monetize despair? What will viewers pay to rubberneck a fatal car crash?

The modality even has its own presidential candidate. "The Harvard student groups who co-signed the anti-Israel letter are simple fools," tweeted Vivek Ramaswamy. "But it's not productive for companies to blacklist kids for being members of student groups that make dumb political statements on campus. Colleges are spaces for students to experiment with ideas & sometimes kids join clubs that endorse boneheadedly wrong ideas. I've been as vocal as anyone in criticizing left-wing cancel culture (see my first book "Woke, Inc."), but it's bad no matter who practices it."

But left-wing activists don't get canceled. Maybe they lose an offer from a top firm but there's plenty of work at leftist NGOs funded by the billions of U.S. taxpayer dollars the Biden administration transferred to Democratic Party clients. Left elites pay left elites with middle-class money to do left elite things. As someone vying to represent the right, Ramaswamy could at least show he knows that getting canceled means not being able to get a job, get into college, get a loan, get credit, or get a lawyer. More importantly, his inability to discern the difference between canceling teenagers for misusing pronouns and holding them accountable for drawing on the prestige of a famous U.S. educational institution to promote a terror group that murdered 30 Americans and is holding dozens more hostage is evidence not of nuance but amorality. It suggests that Ramaswamy has unplugged himself from civilization in order to win the votes

to lead it.

Nor is Ramaswamy the only prominent media figure on the right to decide that the appropriate position for the defenders of American traditions and mores is alongside murderous terrorists who pledge to destroy them. "People are not accepting the media narrative about what is happening in the Middle East despite the insistent rhetoric from government officials," tweeted conservative media personality Candace Owens. The people it seems she was referring to were pro-Hamas activists demonstrating in London whose picture she posted along with her assessment.

Is this a social media problem? Partly. Once the news cycle moves out of their wheelhouse, big social media influencers are in danger of losing traffic, so they post edgy, on-brand takes on whatever everyone else is talking about. It's not Owens' fault that she doesn't know the mainstream Western media is no more pro-Israel than it is pro-Trump. It's not her subject. She doesn't know how famous U.S. press organizations collaborate with Arab terror groups to stage "war crimes" designed to grind Israeli maneuvers to a halt, or that Israeli civilian and military leaders plan operations knowing they have only a few days before the media narrative she claims to oppose drives world opinion against the Jewish state, regardless of the threats to her citizens.

No, what's unnerving about Owens' assessment is that she is linking the pro-Trump right to Hamas. Not by sympathizing with Palestinians caught in the crossfire, fearful for their homes and their families, but by likening protesters celebrating a group that throws infants into ovens to people like herself, people who do not accept the media narrative.

Hamas as well as Hezbollah have long seen the global left as their strategic depth. They know that by positioning a defensive line of Arab women and children between themselves and Israeli troops, it's only a matter of time before major

European and North American cities are braying “Israeli war crime” in chorus. Even if Western leaders were inclined to support Israel’s operations against terror, and they rarely do, their elites won’t let them, nor will their growing Muslim populations. These are crucial components of Hamas’ and Hezbollah’s, and Iran’s, war against Israel

But now the right is so out of joint that parts of it identify with the Islamic “resistance” because it, too, has been victimized by the media? This is madness. The Palestinians are funded and defended by the U.N. and their cause is promoted by princes, presidents, and publics throughout the world. In the U.S., meanwhile, lawyers are scared off from defending middle-class Americans in our struggle against a globalized oligarchy. African, Middle Eastern, Latin American, and Asian regimes are emptying their jails and trimming their rolls to mount a massive invasion force that will impoverish us and despoil our communities to the advantage of political and corporate U.S. elites. Unlike the Palestinians, there’s no Qatar waiting in the wings to write checks to rebuild our infrastructure. We are on our own.

Identifying with the Palestinian cause means death. Dispossession and resistance are only its leitmotifs. Its major themes are failure in war, rejection of peace, and the sacralization of terror. It is not a nationalist narrative about a proud people fighting for independence against an imperial juggernaut. It’s an account of clans and warlords paid by international and regional powers to toss the inhabitants of Gaza and the West Bank into an industrial-scale meat grinder to advance the interests of everyone from the Soviet Union and the global left to Syria and Iran.

Against the democracy-promoting neoconservatives who staffed the George W. Bush administration, the pro-Trump right has wisely adopted George Washington’s counsel to avoid foreign entanglements and thereby reduce the opportunities for foreigners to influence our affairs. Yet it’s true American

leadership's relations with a foreign power have shaped the battle space in the eastern Mediterranean. But fighting Israel's wars is not why U.S. troops are sitting off the coast of Lebanon. They've been dispatched to protect what Barack Obama called Iran's equities, namely Hamas' bigger brother Hezbollah. Because Israel is keenly aware that the U.S. has the power to limit its operations to defend her people, it is in no position to challenge the narrative spun by the Biden administration to unite America against it by stupefying the American right with millenarian fear.



Col. Douglas Macgregor

"Mr. Netanyahu is on the path to Armageddon," military analyst (ret) Col. Douglas Macgregor writes on X. "We must protect Israel from itself." What worries the combat veteran is that "in Washington [there is almost a non-stop drum beat](#) for war with Iran," Hamas' patron. Accordingly, he sees the current conflict as a gateway through which U.S. troops are likely to be fed into the war prophesied in the Bible.

“For the first time in 1,000 years you have the Shiites and Sunnis who are united with one purpose, to STOP Israel,” writes Macgregor. “Instead of responding to this the President as he always does is escalating. Netanyahu is betting on this very heavily and believes that Israel together with our military power can prevail.”

Now a staple on conservative media, Macgregor sees himself as the lone voice opposing Netanyahu’s double-time march to WWII. “There is no one in Washington currently interested in dialing anything back in Israel,” writes Macgregor. “No one is saying emotions are running hot, this is not good time to make these decisions or we need to look at the consequences.”

In reality, virtually every top Democrat in Washington is saying the same thing, starting with Biden himself. According to [recent leaks](#) from the White House, during Biden’s trip to Jerusalem last month he told Netanyahu not to widen the war, to prioritize a two-state solution, and consider the “scenario he was leaving for his successor.” In other words, the Biden administration sees Israel’s war as an opportunity to topple Netanyahu.

Behind Biden, there are, among others: Obama, his former lieutenant Ben Rhodes, and Thomas Friedman, all of whom have been beating the same drum about Israel’s campaign to eliminate Hamas being a big mistake—the same mistake America made after 9/11, and therefore Netanyahu should listen to the voice of reason as well as experience and stand down.

Parts of the right seem unaware, or unconcerned, they’ve enlisted themselves in a left-wing messaging campaign that ties them also to foreign actors. Pro-Hamas and pro-Iran influencers inside the U.S. Department of Defense are targeting the right with fear tactics. “Pentagon source privately tells me there is a growing sentiment that Israel is manipulating the US into a war with Iran,” journalist Sharmine Narwani [posted](#) on X. “The Israelis say they don’t want a

regional war on multiple fronts, but then keep striking Iranian allies everywhere, and leave us to deal with the fallout.”

That’s a tantalizing leak coming out of a Pentagon that employs Ariane Tabatabai, a senior DOD official who was part of an Iranian intelligence operation that tasked second-generation Iranians in the West to influence the U.S. and European governments in the lead-up to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal. In 2021, Biden’s former Iran envoy Robert Malley brought Tabatabai into the State Department before she joined the Pentagon, where she is now chief of staff to the assistant secretary of defense for special operations, an office that oversees hostage recovery, including presumably the dozens of U.S. citizens now held hostage by Hamas.

Narwani, herself a pro-Iran activist, told Tablet she does not recognize the name Ariane Tabatabai. It’s certainly true that many other pro-Iranian influencers now make their homes inside the Pentagon. Maybe the source is [Yousra Fazili](#), the chief of staff to the Pentagon’s controller. Fazili was former adviser to the Qatari ambassador to the U.S. before joining DOD. “Let Gaza live,” she wrote on her Instagram page. Attaching a picture of what appears to be a rubble area of Gaza, she wrote, “Who in their right mind can see this and not believe in a ceasefire?” The Pentagon is hosting a pro-Hamas propaganda campaign; it’s not supporting Israel.

No one wants to send U.S. troops to fight for Israel, and Israel doesn’t want the Americans there. Historically, the U.S. officials who want to deploy troops to Israel are anti-Israel leftists, like Samantha Power, who once imagined a scenario in which the U.S. would have to dispatch troops to prevent an Israeli “genocide” of Palestinians. When Biden sent a Marine general to consult with Israeli brass two weeks ago it was to stall the ground invasion, not to assist the Israelis. That Hezbollah has repeatedly fired on Israel is further evidence the aircraft carrier groups Biden deployed to

the eastern Mediterranean are there not to deter Hezbollah, but rather Israel.

Contrary to Macgregor's assessment, Biden is not escalating. In demanding that Israel allow aid trucks across the Egyptian border uninspected, and restore Gaza's electricity, water, and internet, the president is dismantling Israel's blockade. With Israeli troops on the verge of bisecting Gaza Wednesday, Biden called for a ceasefire. These are actions characteristic not of an ally but an adversary. And offering Iran negotiations for the purpose of legalizing its nuclear weapons program and giving it access to hundreds of billions of dollars are signs of friendship, not enmity.

Which is why, of course, Iranian allies are shooting at U.S. troops in Syria and Iraq: not because they're escalating war with the U.S., but to encourage Biden to pressure the Israelis. And it's working. The Biden administration has even prohibited U.S. small arms manufacturers from exporting rifles and handguns for Israelis to defend themselves against another Oct. 7 massacre.

Macgregor worked briefly in Trump's administration, and thought he, too, was headed for war with Iran after the president killed Qassem Soleimani, commander of Iran's external terror unit, the Quds Force. Soleimani was behind an attack on an Iraqi airbase that killed one American contractor and then an attack on the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. He was plotting more operations against Americans, and had been responsible for the deaths of thousands of U.S. servicemen in Iraq. It wasn't complicated for Trump: If you kill Americans, you die.

Some of Trump's base don't like that about him. They praise him for starting no new wars but that was an effect of his being good at foreign policy: He had a clear vision of the national interest, he supported allies, and he was unpredictably violent, and sometimes emotional. He wanted to

kill Bashar Assad, too, after he'd seen pictures of children murdered by the Syrian president, until Defense Secretary James Mattis talked him out of it.

Trump's assessment of the Oct. 7 massacre shows that the man who was the immediate target of every information operation over the last seven years nonetheless sees the world clearly. "This is a fight between civilization and savagery, decency and depravity, and between good and evil," Trump [told](#) a Jewish organization recently. "There is no comparison between a group that worships death and a group that cherishes life." He added that every death in the conflict was on Hamas alone, and then seemed to go off script for a moment. "I think you really have to add in the word 'Iran'—Iran, people don't want to talk about it."

Trump was referring primarily to the Biden White House, but he might also have been referring to some of his supporters. Trump is right. The best way for America to avoid entering foreign wars is to get the details straight, or else relaying White House and Iranian talking points will obscure the factor most likely to lead to Armageddon—that the Biden administration is determined to give Iran's murderous regime the bomb.

It's nearly impossible to believe it and most people won't until it's too late. The American right can't afford self-pity and self-delusion.

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