

Introduction

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Seventy-five years after its establishment by an internationally recognized act of self-determination, Israel has been an extraordinary success story by any conceivable standard: national rebirth in the ancestral homeland after millennia of exile and dispersal; defeat of a concerted attempt to destroy it at birth; the creation of a modern, highly educated, technologically advanced, and culturally and economically thriving society. It is a vibrant liberal democracy in one of the world's least democratic regions; a global leader in agricultural, medical, military, and solar energy technologies, among others; a "startup nation" attracting more venture capital investment per capita than the United States and Europe; home to one of the world's best health systems and philharmonic orchestras, as well as to 13 Nobel Prize laureates. And so on and so forth.

How, then, is one to understand the hordes of hateful, violent "demonstrators" flocking onto the streets of western cities throughout the world whenever Israel responds in strength to indiscriminate terrorist attacks? Why do citizens of Western democracies fighting jihadist terror organizations thousands of miles away from their shores vilify and demonize a fellow democracy fighting several such organizations on its own doorstep, organizations that are not only committed to its destruction but also to the subordination of Western values and ways of life to global Islamic hegemony? Why does the United Nations display greater empathy to genocidal terrorist organizations, which make mockery of anything it represents, than to a longstanding UN member state they seek to destroy?

Not out of empathy with the Palestinians. For while the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has attracted extraordinary world attention at the expense of far worse international calamities, this has never reflected genuine concern for Palestinian wellbeing. Not by the Palestinian leaders, who have repeatedly immersed their hapless constituents in disastrous conflicts that have culminated in their collective undoing and continued statelessness. Not by the Arab and Muslim states, which have brazenly manipulated the Palestinian cause to their self-serving ends for decades. And not by the self-righteous Western do-gooders who jump up and down over any Israeli act of self-defense while willfully ignoring countless Palestinian-perpetrated atrocities.

The truth of the matter is that the Palestinians have been universally lionized because they serve as the latest lightning rod against the Jews, their supposed victimization reaffirming the latter's millenarian demonization. Had the Palestinians' dispute been with an Arab, Muslim, or any other adversary, it would have attracted a fraction of the interest that it presently does.

Few, if any, in the international community pay any attention to the ongoing abuse of Palestinians across the Arab world from Kuwait to Lebanon, which deprives its 500,000-strong Palestinian population of the most basic human rights, from property ownership, to employment in numerous professions, to free movement. Nor has there been any international outcry when Arab states expelled and/or massacred their Palestinian populations on a grand scale. The fact that the thoroughly westernized King Hussein of Jordan slaughtered more Palestinians in the course of a single month than Israel had in decades was never held against him or dented his widely held perception as a man of peace.

Kuwait's 1991 slaughter of thousands of innocent Palestinians who lived and worked in the emirate, and the expulsion of most of its 400,000-strong Palestinian population—two thirds the magnitude of the 1948 exodus (or *al-Nakba*, the “catastrophe,” as it has come to be known in Palestinian discourse)—passed virtually unnoticed by the international media. So has the murder of thousands of Palestinians in the ongoing Syrian civil war and the displacement of countless others, with refugee camps subjected to military attacks and prolonged sieges that reduced their inhabitants to destitution and starvation.

By contrast, not only does Israel come under immediate scrutiny and criticism for any casualty it inflicts on the Palestinians, but its century-long subjugation to genocidal attacks by its Palestinian and Arab neighbors has been routinely ignored, minimized, whitewashed, or even excused and justified. And why shouldn't it be so? The massacring of Jews and the destruction or seizure of their worldly properties is hardly news. For millennia, Jewish blood has been cheap, if not costless, throughout the Christian and Muslim worlds where Jews became the epitome of powerlessness, a perpetual punching bag and a scapegoat for whatever ills befell society. There is no reason, therefore, why Israel should not follow in the footsteps of these past generations, avoid antagonizing its Arab enemies and exercise restraint whenever attacked. But no, instead of knowing its place, the insolent Jewish state has forfeited this historic role by exacting a price for Jewish blood and beating the genocidal bullies who had hitherto been able to torment the Jews with impunity. This dramatic reversal of the millenarian Jewish condition of dispersal, minority status and powerlessness cannot but be immoral and unacceptable. Hence the global community outrage and the insistence that Israel be held to impossible moral and political standards, most starkly illustrated by the “disproportionate force” calumny—never directed against any other Western democracy but evocative of the classic anti-Semitic stereotype of Jews as both domineering and wretched, both helpless and bloodthirsty.

A profoundly depressing state of affairs indeed. But so long as Israel continues to attract the full brunt of anti-Jewish bigotry and hatred that has hitherto been reserved for Jewish individuals and communities, it will remain the only state in the world that not only incurs the most outlandish blood libels and conspiracy theories, but its right to self-defense, indeed to national existence, is constantly challenged while far less successful countries, including numerous “failed states,” are considered legitimate and incontestable members of the international community.