

America the Unspeakable. Response to US Policies Turns Friends into Enemies

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Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#)

*Some commentators who bothered to watch the Trump-Harris debate **observed that both candidates adroitly maneuvered around saying anything that might be truly important. The issue of war and peace, meaning in this case nuclear war, appeared to be of no concern even though the Biden-Harris continuum and its British and French allies are reportedly [considering allowing](#) Ukraine to deploy NATO provided and possibly operated advanced missile systems that will enable devastating strikes deep into Russia. President Vladimir Putin has promised that he will respond appropriately to what he considers to be an actual war against NATO, a pledge that notably did not exclude the use of nuclear weapons.***

Harris appeared duty bound to endorse her boss Joe Biden's policy concerning Ukraine, but **Antony Blinken**, who might continue as Secretary of State if she is elected, has made clear in a separate speech that US support for Ukraine is nearly as ironclad as US support for America's "greatest ally and best friend" Israel, that Washington will be in Kiev's corner until the end, doing whatever it takes for victory.



Trump, ever the blowhard, instead promised to bring an end to the war in one day through his own personal intervention to convince the two sides to stop fighting. Unfortunately, he did not indicate exactly what he would do to bring that about beyond his own charisma and the *force majeure* inherent in the office of US president. In addition, though some have speculated that the trump commitment will serve as an inducement to bring about peace talks, there is nothing to suggest that his debate comment will bring the two sides together sooner rather than later as there appears to be no plan for achieving that and no incentives on offer.

Whoever is doing the war-planning for either Harris or Trump surely understands that the reality on the ground is what will drive whatever process develops and there Russia has achieved many of its objectives and will, according to most genuine experts, win the war before the end of the year. No amount of NATO weapons in the hands of untrained troops who are greatly outnumbered will reverse that conclusion. In other words, Trump is

bluviating with no real idea of how he would end the war while Harris is willing to have it continue forever without even an explanation of why the United States should be involved at all.

And the debate's assessment of Israel-Gaza was even worse because most of the world viewing the slaughter of the Palestinians has decided that if there were two nations in the "most evil" category at the present time they would surely be Israel and the US. Kamala had only this to say:

"What we know is that this war must end it and immediately, and the way it will end is we need a ceasefire deal, and we need the hostages out, and so we will continue to work around the clock on that, also understanding that we must chart a course for a two state solution, and in that solution, there must be security for the Israeli people and Israel, and an equal measure for the Palestinians. But the one thing I will assure you always, I will always give Israel the ability to defend itself, in particular, as it relates to as it relates to Iran, and any threat that Iran and its proxies pose to Israel."

Presumably Kamala's Harvard educated State Department wimp advisers have told her that the "two state solution" is a fiction, particularly as Washington continues to feed weapons and money to the monstrous war criminal Benjamin Netanyahu to exterminate that Palestinians. Trump for his part, chose instead to personalize the discussion by accusing Kamala of "hating Israel." He elaborated with this bit of total inanity that would have embarrassed anyone but Donald Trump:

"(Harris) she hates Israel. She wouldn't even meet with Netanyahu when he went to Congress to make a very important speech. She refused to be there because she was at a sorority party of hers. She went to go to the sorority party. She hates Israel. If she's president, I believe that Israel will not exist within two years from now, and I've been pretty good at predictions, and I hope I'm wrong about that one. She hates Israel at the same time, in her own way, she hates the Arab population because the whole place is going to get blown up, Arabs, Jewish people, Israel will be gone. It would have never happened. Iran was broke under Donald Trump."

As a consequence from what has become the current US foreign and national security policy, one observes that the big stories that the United States mainstream media have been disinclined to cover are the deteriorating relationships with many formerly friendly countries. This has occurred due to both the Israel and Ukraine issues, in which the US is seen as the key element in the continuation of the conflicts and all the killing. One such actual friend and ally is key NATO member Turkey. Turkey has been a member of the NATO alliance since 1952, when it was perceived as a key player in response to presumed expansionistic intentions on the part of the Soviet Union, which itself was recovering from the Second World War and seeking to establish a foreign security model in which it would dominate Eastern Europe as well as potential adversaries adjacent to its holdings in Central Asia.

Turkey bordered the Soviet Union itself and also had a regional presence, sharing borders as it did with Syria, Iraq, Azerbaijan and Iran. It was an attractive addition to NATO as it was Muslim and most of its land mass lay in Asia, breaking from the existing perception of the alliance as a Christian and European/American project. As a politically powerful Islamic majority country it also was looked up to relatively sympathetically by the other Muslim

states in the region, many of which regarded its fusion of strong and effective central government and the Islamic religion as a role model to follow.

Turkey, for its part, saw an alliance with Europe and the US as a benefit, precisely because it too considered Russia a historic threat. And Turkey in NATO did indeed help check further advances by the Soviets with Ankara contributing to the alliance the largest army second only to the United States, an army equipped with NATO weaponry that made the Turkish government the dominant power regionally.

The mutual interests of Turkey and the US and NATO that combined to address the Soviet threat did not mean that there were never disagreements and tension over specific issues. Turkey's fundamental national security objective was to not rock the boat in its own backyard as it recognized that regional stability was essential if one sought to avoid a series of minor wars and conflicts that could have a huge impact on economic and social development.

Famously, Turkey [slammed the door shut](#) on what Washington perceived as its own interests when it prepared to invade Iraq in 2003. Prime Minister Abdullah Gul was concerned over the destabilization of the region that would result from the Sunni-Shia balance obtained by having Iraq and Iran as two powerful armed neighbors facing each other. At the end of February 2003 and beginning of March, the country's parliament voted twice against allowing the United States to use its Turkish/NATO bases to allow the transit of more than 60,000 US troops in the event of an actual war with Iraq, which would have made Turkey the northern front in the war. The proposal had little popular support in Turkey with hundreds of thousands of protesters rallying against it in downtown Ankara. Public opinion polls indicated that more than 90 percent of Turks opposed the US-led war. As negotiations proceeded, the US troop ships were waiting offshore and out of sight of the Turkish port of Iskenderun, expecting orders to go ashore and form up for the invasion which never came.



The current Turkish **President Recep Tayyip Erdogan** is a deeply religious conservative nationalist possessing autocratic tendencies who has toyed with the possibility of leaving NATO altogether. He has sought to buy Russian made air defense systems and Turkey is a likely candidate to join BRICS and cease linking its energy purchases to US dollar accounts. If the Turkish army were to become dissociated from NATO it would mean a large hole in the alliance's order of battle for the Middle East and Central Asia.

A recent incident has demonstrated how all of that and some other US policies are becoming hot button issues for the Turks, culminating in [violence directed against several American Marines](#) on shore leave in the port of Izmir. Izmir is an ancient city on the Aegean Sea that has long had a large NATO base and a multinational presence of sailors and Marines. The Marines were assigned to the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, based on the USS Wasp

carrier, and were on liberty in Izmir when the assault occurred on September 2nd. Liberty for military and naval personnel attached to NATO was considered routine and non-threatening prior to the attack and many sailors and Marines took advantage of the bars and restaurants along the waterfront.

A video of the assault shows several people holding two American Marines by force with a speaker on the street screaming loudly in Turkish. One of the Marines shouted “Help!” several times as the crowd placed a bag over the head of the second Marine. The crowd then starts chanting, “Yankee, go home!” in English. The Marines were able to break away from the crowd with the help of several other Marines who happened to be in the area. All US personnel were screened at a local hospital and were reported to be uninjured. They then returned to the safety of the USS Wasp and all shore leave was cancelled.

Turkish authorities subsequently reported that the Marines had been assaulted by members of the Turkish Youth Union, a nationalist anti-American organization that has staged attacks against US service members before. The group is regarded as highly critical of Israel and its actions and also targets US policy in the Middle East. It has condemned the USS Wasp visit as part of the plan to “defend Israel.” In 2021, authorities in Turkey arrested 17 members of the group for [putting a hood](#) over the head of a US Navy civilian employee in Istanbul. In a [similar incident in 2014](#), members of the organization had attacked three US sailors on leave from their ship in Istanbul, also placing bags over their heads. The assailants also chanted in English “Yankee, go home!” during the attack.

The placing of the bags over heads in all the incidents involving US personnel is in reference to an encounter in 2003 known by the Turks as the “hood incident.” Shortly after the invasion of Iraq, US troops captured a number of Turkish soldiers who had crossed over the border with Iraq and sought to humiliate them by placing bags over their heads, afterwards detaining them for 60 hours.

Local Izmir police working with the US Naval Criminal Investigative Service are reported to be actively investigating the incident. Fifteen members of the Youth Union were taken into custody afterwards and questioned. They reportedly have been held for additional interrogation by Turkish national counterintelligence representatives.

The US and Turkey continue to benefit from being NATO allies, but, as noted above, relations between the two have often been fraught, mostly over Iraq and more recently due to the US enhancement of the Kurdish role in Syria. Turkey regards the emergence of a Kurdish state of some kind in parts of Syria and Iraq, as well as along the Turkish southern border, as a major security threat. Not surprisingly, in addition, since the start of Israel’s war in Gaza, there has been the Palestine issue. Erdogan has vociferously criticized Israel, accusing the country of carrying out a genocide and warning that if the killing of the Palestinians continues he might be forced to intervene. In that view, the President is fully supported by the Turkish public which is strongly behind the Gazans and also the under siege Palestinians on the West Bank as well.



Turkey has also endorsed the International Criminal Court (ICC) proposed arrest warrant on Israeli **Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu** and **Defense Minister Yoav Gallant** and favors a possible war crimes trial of the two men.

In April, Erdogan hosted Hamas' recently assassinated political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Istanbul.

The assault on the Marines should rightly be seen in that context. What the US government does in enabling the Israeli slaughter of the Palestinians is blowing back on all the American relationships in the Middle East region and that is particularly true with key ally Turkey, but it all goes beyond that with much of the world watching and worrying over what is wrong with the crazy folks in Washington.

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Featured image: TGB put sacks on American soldiers, Izmir, Sep. 2, 2024 via X

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