

## Gaza and the Politics of “Greater Israel”

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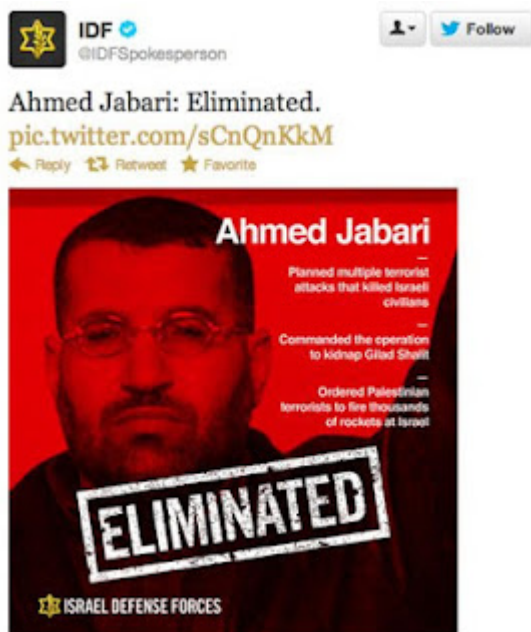
*“The Bible finds no worse image than this of the man from the desert. And why? Because he has no respect for any law. Because in the desert he can do as he pleases. The tendency towards conflict is in the essence of the Arab. He is an enemy by essence. His personality won’t allow him any compromise or agreement. It doesn’t matter what kind of resistance he will meet, what price he will pay. His existence is one of perpetual war. Israel’s must be the same. The two states solution doesn’t exist; there are no two people here. There is a Jewish people and an Arab population... there is no Palestinian people, so you don’t create a state for an imaginary nation... they only call themselves a people in order to fight the Jews.” [1]- **Benzion Netanyahu***

The Israeli bombardment of Gaza being perpetuated under ‘Operation Pillar of Defense’ comes at an interesting time. Under the leadership of Benjamin Netanyahu and Ehud Barak, the expansion of illegal Jewish settlements into Palestinian lands has increased at unprecedented rates. Netanyahu’s administration has approved the construction of 850 settler homes in the occupied West Bank in June 2012, even after the Israeli parliament rejected a bill to retroactively legalize some of the existing homes in the area. [2] The number of Jewish settlers in the West Bank has almost doubled in the past 12 years, with more than 350,000 residing illegally under international law. [3] While Israel’s Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman asserts Tel Aviv’s unwillingness to permit Palestinians any right to return to their lands, emphasizing, “*not even one refugee,*” apartheid enforced on ethnic and religious lines has become a ratified part of Israeli government policy. [4] Far-right political discourse that was once considered extremism is now the status quo in Israel.



While Netanyahu publically announced support for a Palestinian state on the West Bank, his government has threaten to end [the Oslo Accords](#) if the United Nations General Assembly granted Palestine with non-member observer state status. [5] A panel of Israeli jurists assembled by Netanyahu’s government to determine the legal status of the West Bank

concluded that there is “no occupation” of Palestinian lands and that the continued construction of settlement outposts are entirely legal under Israeli law, despite critical international opinion. Netanyahu’s far right-conservative Likud party was established on the philosophy of Ze’ev Jabotinsky, who called for the establishment of a ‘Greater Israel,’ a concept embraced by Israeli historian Benzion Netanyahu, the father of today’s Prime Minister. Under his father’s influence, Benjamin Netanyahu was indoctrinated in the ideological foundations of Revisionist Zionism, which promote Jewish settlement in Judea and Samaria (Palestine) and the full biblical land of Israel by contemporary Jews, an oil rich landmass extending from the banks of the Nile River in Egypt to the shores of the Euphrates.



As rocket fire hits Tel Aviv for the first time since the Gulf War, the ongoing siege of Gaza must be seen as what it is – a premeditated component of Israeli expansionism. Netanyahu was a zealous supporter of former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert’s 2008-2009 sieges on Gaza known as ‘Operation Cast Lead,’ which killed over 1,400 Palestinians, while Israel suffered only 13 casualties. [6] On November 14, 2012, Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) launched an offensive into the Hamas-controlled Gaza strip and began announcing their progress through an official Twitter account. IDF forces assassinated a prominent Hamas military commander, Ahmed Jabari, who was allegedly in possession of a draft copy of a permanent truce agreement with Israel. [7] The agreement included mechanisms for maintaining the cease-fire in the case of future military exchanges between Israel and the Hamas-led political factions of the Gaza Strip. Militants from the armed wing of Hamas in Gaza retaliated by firing rockets into Israeli territory, a large percentage of which were intercepted by Israel’s Iron Dome air defense system.

Benjamin Netanyahu used this retaliation to claim the moral high ground by warning that he will take “whatever action is necessary” to stop further rocket fire from Gaza into Israel. [8] IDF officials have called on 30,000 reservists to prepare for a possible extended ground incursion into Gaza, as IDF forces indiscriminately kill civilians attempting to strike Palestinian aerial and naval targets. [9] The Obama administration has condemned Hamas for perpetuating violence, while Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood government led by Mohamed

Morsi recalled Egypt's ambassador from Tel Aviv. Egyptian Prime Minister Hesham Kandil arrived in Gaza after the second day of Israeli attacks in a show of support for Palestine. Through 'Operation Pillar of Defense,' Israel is targeting the military foundations of Hamas, while attempting to portray itself as a victim in the international media. IDF forces dropped thousands of Orwellian leaflets over Gaza, urging citizens to take responsibility for their own safety, due to Hamas *"once again dragging the region to violence and bloodshed."* [10]

Despite Israel targeting the elected Hamas government of Gaza, an article in the *Wall Street Journal* titled, "[How Israel Helped to Spawn Hamas](#)," cites a former Israeli official who claims that Israel encouraged the formation of Islamist groups to counterbalance secular nationalists affiliated with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The Israeli government even officially recognized a precursor to Hamas called Mujama Al-Islamiya as a charity group, allowing it to build mosques and an Islamic university. [11] Israel cooperated with the influential Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, who was opposed to secular Palestinian activists, as he spearheaded the Sunni Islamist movement that became Hamas. In late October 2012, Gaza's Hamas government received Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, the Emir of Qatar, for an official visit. As part of an aid development package, Al-Thani granted Hamas \$400 million, at least \$150 million of which will go towards a housing project in southern Gaza - it would be reasonable to assume that large portions of that aid would be invested in defense. [12]

The support given to Hamas by Qatar must be understood through the context of its engagement in Syria. The *New York Times* article titled, "[Rebel Arms Flow Is Said to Benefit Jihadists in Syria](#)," states that the arms being shipped to Syria by Saudi Arabia and Qatar are being used to bolster jihadists and al-Qaeda affiliated groups attempting to topple the government of Bashar al-Assad. [13] Qatar has held numerous meetings of US-backed Syrian opposition leaders and hosts a critical American military air base at Al-Udeid, west of the capital, Doha. Qatar has also allowed the establishment of a Brookings Institute center on its territory. Brookings' Saban Center for Middle East Policy published "[Saving Syria: Assessing Options for Regime Change](#)" in March 2012, and the directives described in the report have ostensibly become the policy of allied Western and Gulf countries aiming to topple the Syrian government. The Saban Center that published the report was established in 2002 when Israeli-American mogul Haim Saban pledged nearly \$13 million to the Brookings Institution in an attempt to influence pro-Israeli policy. [14]

Despite paying lip service to the Palestinian cause, Qatar is supporting policy engineered to give Israel a pretext to consolidate its power. Both Qatar and Saudi Arabia have cooperated with the United States and Israel by exporting the Salafist ideology that is so prominent among radical rebel fighters in Hamas and the Free Syrian Army, and using their enormous oil wealth to fund and arm these movements. An unapologetic Op-Ed written by Israeli columnist Guy Bechor titled, "[Dangers of a Palestinian state](#)," bemoans the possibility of an independent Palestine, in fear of the nation becoming a hub for extremist violence:

*"A sovereign Palestinian state will immediately absorb 700,000 Palestinians who are living in terrible conditions in Syria, another 750,000 Palestinians who currently live in Lebanon and hundreds of thousands of others who will flock to the new state from all over, because to them the West Bank and Israel are America - just ask the African infiltrators. Due to the 'Arab Spring,' Syria and Lebanon would gladly kick the*

*Palestinians out, and the Palestinian state would welcome them with open arms in order to change the demographic reality on the ground. Qatar and Saudi Arabia would fund the entire exodus.*

*Thus, the Palestinian state would become one of the most densely populated areas in the world and pose a direct security and demographic threat to Israel. In other words, in the near future we may see hundreds of thousands of Palestinians settling in the West Bank. Some of them are among the most dangerous people in the Middle East: Salafis, members of armed Syrian and Lebanese militias, as well as members of various jihadi groups. They will settle in places that overlook Haifa, Tel Aviv, Ben Gurion Airport and Jerusalem. The demographic balance in this region will be changed forever. Our lives will become a Syrian-style nightmare.” [15]*

In 1952, Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Dayan spoke ardently of Tel Aviv’s ultimate goal, the creation of ‘an Israeli empire’ – today, Netanyahu has led his administration with megalomaniacal hubris, and has emphasized a messianic-catastrophic worldview where Israel is “the eternal nation.” [16] Indeed, a Salafist-dominated Palestine would cause troubles for Israel, and it provides a much-needed pretext for Israel to militarily engage with Palestine groups, with the eventual goal of recapturing their land for Jewish settlement. ‘Operation Pillar of Defense,’ launched just months away from Israel’s elections, is a calculated component of the Netanyahu government’s strategy to topple Hamas and continue absorbing Palestinian territory. Decades of occupation and apartheid have shaped the current scenario; Israel has dehumanized an entire people by seizing their land and forcing them into prison-like ghettos. Adherents to political Zionism have shown contempt for a genuine political solution to the Palestinian conflict, and the Netanyahu administration is poised to crush all opposition to the Jewish state.

Amid reports of rocket fire striking Jerusalem, it is clear that the Israeli response will be swift and unforgiving. While the historic plight of the Palestinian people cannot be ignored, the conduct of Hamas is counter-productive and radical, despite the Israeli firepower being exponentially more destructive. The siege on Gaza is an impetus to consider Henry Kissinger’s prediction, “*In 10 years, there will be no more Israel.*” Sixteen US intelligence agencies that collectively issued an 82-page analysis titled, “Preparing for a Post-Israel Middle East,” concluded that Netanyahu’s Likud coalition has enthusiastically condoned and supported illegal settlements, while enforcing an apartheid-style infrastructure upon Palestinians. [17] Israel, the only nuclear-armed country in the Middle East, has all the attributes of an international pariah state and its current path is unsustainable. If Israel devastates Gaza, the backlash would create momentum that threatens the very existence of the Jewish state. Under Bibi’s watch, Israel will either continue to enforce the ideological tenants of political Zionism on its neighbors, or die trying.

## Notes

[1] [Received Wisdom? How the Ideology of Netanyahu’s Late Father Influenced the Son](#), TIME, May 02, 2012

[2] [Israel to build more West Bank homes](#), Al-Jazeera, June 07, 2012

[3] [Population of Jewish settlements in West Bank up 15,000 in a year](#), The Guardian, July 26, 2012

[4] [Lieberman: Netanyahu's stance on 1967 borders reflects viewpoint of most Israelis](#), Haaretz, May 23, 2011

[5] [Israel: We will annul Oslo Accords if Palestinians seek upgraded UN status](#), Haaretz, November 14, 2012

[6] [Israel to take 'whatever action necessary' to stop Gaza rocket fire](#), The Telegraph, November 12, 2012

[7] [Israeli peace activist: Hamas leader Jabari killed amid talks on long-term truce](#), Haaretz, November 15, 2012

[8] [Israel to take 'whatever action necessary' to stop Gaza rocket fire](#), The Telegraph, November 12, 2012

[9] [IDF calling up 30,000 reserves ahead of possible Gaza ground operation](#), The Times of Israel

[10] [Operation Pillar of Defense: IDF Disperses Leaflets Above Gaza Strip](#), IDF Blog, November 15, 2012

[11] [How Israel Helped to Spawn Hamas](#), The Wall Street Journal, January 24, 2009

[12] [Qatari ruler uses historic Gaza visit to call on Palestinian factions to unite](#), The Times of Israel, October 23, 2012

[13] [Rebel Arms Flow Is Said to Benefit Jihadists in Syria](#), The New York Times, October 14, 2012

[14] [Humanitarian Buffer Zones in Syria: How Misinformation Obscures the Israel Lobby's Influence on U.S. Foreign Policy](#), Dissident Voice, October 16, 2012

[15] [Dangers of a Palestinian state](#), YNet, November 13, 2012

[16] [As Netanyahu pushes Israel closer to war with Iran, Israelis cannot...](#) Haaretz, August 03, 2012

[17] [Kissinger, US intelligence community endorse "World Without Israel,"](#) PressTV, September 30, 2012

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