

“It’s 1938”

Netanyahu's slogans to scare Americans into supporting the bombing of Iran

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Former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is making the rounds in the media with his “new” slogan designed to scare American Jews and Christians into supporting the bombing of Iran. Netanyahu has a simple message consisting of three reductionist falsehoods:

- 1) It’s 1938
- 2) Iran = Nazi Germany

therefore:

- 3) Ahmadinejad = Hitler

Indeed according to his last few speeches, 2006=1938 and Iran=Nazi Germany. Except that 2003 was also 1938, when Netanyahu said the same thing about Iraq.

Before that 2002, 1999 were 1938, as 2007 will be. If we were to believe him back in 1996 when he made the same claim, then we’d be celebrating New Year 1949, not 2007 right now. And while he’s calling Mahmoud Ahmadinejad Hitler these days, in the past he had bestowed that honor on Saddam Hussein and Yasser Arafat.

This canard was repeated in front of 3000 cheering fans at the General Assembly of the United Jewish Communities in Los Angeles last November.

Repeating such lines over and over again, Netanyahu hopes to build enough public pressure to justify bombing Iran, or at least forcing the US Congress not to stand in the way, when Israel tries to do it. Or is it simple Israeli politics as the hardliner Likud’s Netanyahu hopes to make Kadima’s Olmert suffer for his weakness exposed by the Lebanon fiasco? Whatever it is, fear-mongering is the tool of choice.

The far-right wing TV host Glenn Beck broadcasted an hour-long hate-fest of himself and Netanyahu talking mostly about how evil Iran is.

Netanyahu hammered home his talking points and for good measure, topped them off with a bunch of outright lies and distortions.

He said Iran wants to “take over the world” and “annihilate America.” He said Ahmadinejad hates Israel only because Israel represents “the West.” Israel “is only an obstacle before Europe and America.” He urged people to listen to Ahmadinejad’s words.

With a straight face, he told the CNN audience this:

Netanyahu: You know, normally, if he wasn’t as fanatic as he is, he’d say, “Well, you know, yes, I think we could recognize Israel if it made the right concessions to the Palestinians.” He’d play along; he’d play the game. He’d say, “We’re not really developing nuclear weapons. We just want nuclear energy for peace.” You know, he’d say all that.

Netanyahu is a former prime minister of a country with access to top secret intelligence. Surely he knows about Iran’s numerous statements on the record that Iran is not seeking nuclear weapons. Surely the former PM knows that Iran’s stated position via Palestine is whatever the Palestinians want. No matter what one thinks of Ahmadinejad, we can agree on what he’s said on record. Perhaps Netanyahu could read the Spiegel interview with Ahmadinejad from May 30, 2006 where Ahmadinejad said:

“Our stance with respect to Palestine is clear. We say: Allow those to whom this country belongs to express their opinion. Let Jews, Christians and Muslims say what they think.”

and he also said:

“We argue that neither you nor we should claim to speak for the Palestinian people. The Palestinians themselves should say what they want.”

and again from the same Interview, Ahmadinejad said:

“We’re fundamentally opposed to the expansion of nuclear-weapons arsenals. This is why we have proposed the formation of an unbiased organization and the disarmament of the nuclear powers. We don’t need any weapons.”

And again, as if he knows people like Netanyahu will not remember it, he said:

“I stress once again, we don’t need any nuclear weapons. We stand by our statements because we’re honest and act legally. We’re no fraudsters. We only want to claim our legitimate right.”

So here we have two direct contradictions. Not that I’m saying Ahmadinejad’s words are necessarily truthful, but Netanyahu’s argument is that he never said them. He’s building his entire case out of the fact that Ahmadinejad is such a fanatic that we should believe his outrageous statements literally. Well, only the uncensored ones, I guess...

Netanyahu is a liar and a willful manipulator. He’s actively banking on the ignorance of his audience to paint Iran as an irrational, unpredictable force. Once people accept this, his work is almost done. People will naturally conclude that you can’t negotiate with a “suicidal

maniac,” therefore, we must use force.

He, in fact goes one step further and “pre-emptively” blames America for failing to prevent a second holocaust upon the Jewish nation when he says: “Hitler started with the annihilation of the Jews, but pretty quickly moved on to threaten the entire world. And America woke up late, after 6 million Jews died.”

Elsewhere Netanyahu openly equates any attack on Iran as defense of Israel. He speculates that Israel would bomb Iran “because we have a right to live.”

Such reductionist fear-mongering leads one to believe this person has stock in weapons companies or something. Has Benjamin forgotten about the tens of thousands of Jews inside Iran to whom this “Hitler,” – as the Persian saying goes – hasn’t even said “above your eye, there’s eyebrow” let alone put them in concentration camps? Today in Iran there’s almost no hate crime and no threat of terrorism against Jews. While Iran’s religious government has some restrictions on non-Muslims, Jews are more likely to face anti-Semitism in the US than in Iran. Regardless of what Ahmadinejad may have opined about the Holocaust, he has taken no steps against Iranian Jews in any way.

From Netanyahu’s perspective this is a problem. You can’t have a Hitler that doesn’t seem to be interested in killing Jews. One can say – as Netanyahu frequently implies – that Ahmadinejad wants a nuclear weapon to kill Jews in Israel, but what’s holding him back from harming those in Iran? That’s why Benjamin and his neocon buddies completely ignore the Iranian Jews.

Fortunately, not everyone at the LA Jewish gathering was buying it. Professor and Journalist Murray Fromson saw right through the propaganda when he said:

“How could anyone think Netanyahu’s absurd comparison between Nazi Germany in 1938 and the whacko leaders in Tehran today had any merit whatsoever? “

Let’s hope there are more people like Fromson who are able to distinguish BS from reality.

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