

“Palestine is Entirely Wiped Out”: Netanyahu’s Skewed Map of Israel Includes the West Bank and Gaza

Double Standards Should Have No Place in International Relations

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The verbal battle for Palestine erupted once again during the opening session of the UN General Assembly, with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu presenting his skewed version of the current situation and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas describing the reality.

Once again, Netanyahu projected an image to impress the few in the vast auditorium who were prepared to listen to him.

In 2012, he presented a cartoon of a bomb to justify military action against Iran’s civilian nuclear programme. He claims Iran intends to build an atomic bomb to drop on Israel. He adopted this ploy to instruct ignorant US citizens to adopt aggressive lines toward Iran and exert pressure on the then Obama administration to follow his lead.

This did not impress Obama administration officials who were negotiating with Iran on a deal for limiting its nuclear programme in exchange for lifting punitive sanctions. The agreement, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPOA, was signed in mid-2015 and implemented in January 2016. Iran complied fully with the terms of the JCPOA and derived some benefit from sanctions relief until Israel’s pal and patron Donald Trump exited the JCPOA in May 2018. This has given Netanyahu no end of opportunities to castigate Iran, kill its scientists, and threaten war. Tehran has not obliged Netanyahu by drawing up plans for a nuclear bomb and has repeatedly urged the Biden administration to restart negotiations on US re-entry to the JCOPA.

This time, Netanyahu presented a fantasy map of Israel which included in its territory 1967 occupied East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza.

Netanyahu brandishes map of Israel that includes West Bank and Gaza at UN speech

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Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu uses a red marker on a map of 'The New Middle East' as he addresses the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly, September 22, 2023. (AP/Richard Drew)

Make no mistake, this is the map Israel intends to impose on the land between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River. Israel has already illegally annexed East Jerusalem, which the Palestinians demand for their state, and is in the process of ingesting the West Bank.

It is interesting that in his map he included Gaza, which Israel controls from land, sea, and air but does not seek to possess through colonisation.

It is unclear how Netanyahu and his right-wing extremist coalition partners plan to deal with the 3 million Palestinians in East Jerusalem and the West Bank or the 2.2 million Palestinians trapped in Gaza, which Israeli colonialists have already annexed in their minds. For Israeli imperialists, Palestinians simply are an inconvenience which they must remedy by emptying Palestine of its natives. They have not obliged.

In his address, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas reminded the world that Palestinians are not inconvenient nobodies but a people who cannot be denied their identity, history and homeland. He warned that there will be no peace in this region until and unless Palestinians are granted their "full, legitimate national rights". He did not display a cartoon or a map.

Instead, he called upon the UN to convene an international peace conference to create a Palestinian state in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza although claimed by Netanyahu on behalf of Israel. Abbas said this could be the “last opportunity to salvage the two-state solution” which has been adopted and legitimised by the international community.

He also demanded the UN to provide protection for Palestinians living under Israeli occupation. They suffer from constant raids by the Israeli armed forces and attacks by Israeli colonists. At least 222 Palestinians have been killed this year while 31 Israelis and visitors have been killed in Israel. He complained that Israel’s actions take place “in full view of the world, and without any deterrence, punishment, or accountability, and the leaders and ministers of [Netanyahu’s] government have even been bragging about their apartheid policies”. Apartheid being banned by the UN.

He pointed out that Israel should be expelled from the UN as Israel was admitted on condition that it would implement two General Assembly resolutions. The November 1947 resolution for the partition of Palestine which gave Israel 55 per cent of the country and the Palestinians 45 per cent although they accounted for two-thirds of its inhabitants at the time. During its 1948 war of establishment Israel conquered 78 per cent of Palestine and was not told by the UN to retreat to the areas allocated to Israel by the partition plan.

The second was the resolution adopted that December which called on Israel to permit the return of Palestinian refugees to their home cities, towns and villages “at the earliest practicable date” and to pay compensation for their losses.

For Israel there was no “practicable date” for repatriation and Israel was not compelled to pay compensation. Instead, Israel was allowed to get away with permanent ethnic cleansing and with bulldozing 530 Palestinian villages. Since Israel’s establishment in 1948, Israel has violated far more UN resolutions than all other nations combined. Tolerated by the West whatever it does, Israel is never held accountable for its actions.

Other states are promptly held accountable when they commit aggression or a breach of international law. Take the example of Iraq which invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990. Four days later, the UN Security Council clamped a stiff sanctions regime on Iraq and called for the use of “all necessary means” if Iraq did not withdraw from Kuwait by January 15, 1991. Sanctions remained in force until the US illegally committed aggression by invading Iraq in 2003 without UN Security Council authorisation.

On February 27, 2022, three days after Russia invaded Ukraine, the UN Security Council, incapacitated by Russia’s veto, called an emergency General Assembly session for the 28th to deal with this violation of international law.

On March 2nd, the Assembly adopted a resolution entitled “Aggression against Ukraine”, which deplored the invasion and demanded full Russian withdrawal from Ukraine.

Sanctions were imposed on the 21st before Russian troops entered Ukraine. Double standards should have no place in international relations if the UN Charter and respect for the rule of law are observed.

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