

# Only a Failing US Empire Would be So Blind as to Cheer Netanyahu and His Genocide

Every empire falls. Its collapse becomes inevitable once its rulers lose all sense of how absurd and abhorrent they have become

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*There is only one country in the world right now, in the midst of [Israel's slaughter in Gaza](#), where Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is guaranteed dozens of standing ovations from the vast majority of its elected representatives.*

That country is not Israel, where he has been a hugely divisive figure for many years. It is the [United States](#).

On Wednesday, Netanyahu was back-slapped, glad-handed, whooped and cheered as he slowly made his way – hailed at every step as a conquering hero – to the podium of the US Congress.

This was the same Netanyahu who has overseen during the past 10 months the [slaughter](#) – so far – of some 40,000 Palestinians, [around half](#) of them women and children. More than [21,000](#) other children are reported missing, most of them likely dead under rubble.

It was the same Netanyahu who levelled a strip of territory – originally home to 2.3 million Palestinians – that is expected to take [80 years](#) to rebuild, at a cost of at least \$50bn.

It was the same Netanyahu who has [destroyed](#) every hospital and university in Gaza, and bombed almost all of its schools that were serving as shelters for families made homeless by other Israeli bombs.

It was the same Netanyahu whose arrest is being sought by the chief prosecutor of the [International Criminal Court](#) for crimes against humanity, accused of using starvation as a weapon of war by imposing an aid blockade that has engineered a famine across Gaza.

It was the same Netanyahu whose government [was found](#) last week by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to have been intensifying Israel's apartheid rule over the Palestinian people in an act of long-term aggression.

It was the same Netanyahu whose government is standing trial for committing what the ICJ, the world's highest judicial body, has termed a "plausible genocide".

And yet, there was just one visible protester in the congressional chamber. Rashida Tlaib, the only US legislator of Palestinian heritage, sat silently grasping a small black sign. On one side it said: "War criminal". On the other: "Guilty of genocide."

One person among hundreds mutely trying to point out that the emperor was naked.

## Cocooned From Horror

Indeed, the optics were stark.

This looked less like a visit by a foreign leader than a decorated elder general being welcomed back to the Senate in ancient Rome, or a grey-haired British viceroy from [India](#) embraced in the motherland's parliament, after brutally subduing the "barbarians" on the fringes of empire.

This was a scene familiar from history books: of imperial brutality and colonial savagery, recast by the seat of the imperium as valour, honour, civilisation. And it looked every bit as absurd, and abhorrent, as it does when we look back on what happened 200 or 2,000 years ago.

It was a reminder that, despite our self-serving claims of progress and humanitarianism, our world is not very different from the way it has been for thousands of years.

It was a reminder that power elites like to celebrate the demonstration of their power, cocooned both from the horrors faced by those crushed by their might, and from the clamour of protest of those horrified by the infliction of so much suffering.

It was a reminder that this is not a "war" between Israel and Hamas - let alone, as Netanyahu would have us believe, a battle for civilisation between the Judeo-Christian world and the Islamic world.

This is a US imperial war - part of its military campaign for "global, full-spectrum dominance" - carried out by Washington's most favoured client state.

The genocide is fully a US genocide, armed by Washington, paid for by Washington, given diplomatic cover by Washington, and - as the scenes in Congress underlined - cheered on by Washington.



Palestinians line up to fetch some water in a refugee camp in Gaza. (Photo: Mahmoud Ajjour, The Palestine Chronicle)

Or as [Netanyahu stated](#) in a moment of unintentional candour to Congress:

“Our enemies are your enemy, our fight is your fight, and our victory will be your victory.”

Israel is Washington’s largest military outpost in the oil-rich Middle East. The Israeli army is the Pentagon’s main battalion in that strategically important region. And Netanyahu is the outpost’s commander in chief.

What is vital to Washington elites is that the outpost is supported at all costs; that it doesn’t fall to the “barbarians”.

## Outpouring of Lies

There was another small moment of inadvertent truth amid Netanyahu’s outpouring of lies. The Israeli prime minister stated that what was happening in Gaza was “a clash between barbarism and civilisation”. He was not wrong.

On the one side, there is the barbarism of the current joint Israeli-US genocide against the people of Gaza, a dramatic escalation of the 17-year Israeli siege of the enclave that preceded it, and the decades of belligerent rule under an Israeli system of apartheid before that.

And on the other side, there are the embattled few desperately trying to safeguard the West’s professed values of “civilisation”, of international humanitarian law, of the protection of the weak and vulnerable, of the rights of children.

The US Congress decisively showed where it stood: with barbarism.

Netanyahu has become the most feted foreign leader in US history, invited to speak to Congress [four times](#), surpassing even [Britain's](#) wartime leader, Winston Churchill.

He is fully Washington's creature. His savagery, his monstrosity is entirely made in America. As he [implored](#) his US handlers: "Give us the tools faster and we'll finish the job faster."

Finish the job of genocide.

## Performative Dissent



Some Democrats preferred to stay away, including party power broker [Nancy Pelosi](#). Instead, she met families of Israeli hostages held in Gaza - not, of course, Palestinian families whose loved ones in Gaza had been slaughtered by Israel.

Vice President Kamala Harris explained her own absence as a scheduling conflict. She met the Israeli prime minister, as did President Joe Biden, [on Thursday](#).

Afterwards, she [claimed](#) to have pressed Netanyahu on the "dire" humanitarian situation in Gaza but stressed too that Israel "had a right to defend itself" - a right that Israel specifically does not have, as the ICJ pointed out last week, because Israel is the one permanently violating the rights of the Palestinians through its prolonged occupation, apartheid rule and ethnic cleansing.

But the dissent of Pelosi - and of Harris, if that is what it was - was purely performative. True, they have no personal love for Netanyahu, who has so closely allied himself and his government with the US Republican right and former president Donald Trump.

But Netanyahu simply serves as an alibi. Both Pelosi and Harris are stalwart supporters of Israel - a state that, according to the ICJ's judgment last week, decades ago instituted apartheid rule in the Palestinian territories, using an illegal [occupation](#) as cover to ethnically cleanse the population there.

Their political agenda is not about ending the annihilation of the people of Gaza. It is acting as a safety valve for popular dissatisfaction among traditional Democratic voters shocked by the scenes from Gaza.

It is to deceive them into imagining that behind closed doors, there is some sort of policy fight over Israel's handling of the Palestinian issue. That voting Democrat will one day - one very distant day - lead to an undefined "peace", a fabled "two-state solution" where

Palestinian children won't keep dying in the interests of preserving the security of Israel's illegal settler-militias.

US policy towards Israel has not changed in any meaningful sense for decades, whether the president has been red or blue, whether Trump has been in the White House or Barack Obama.

And if Harris becomes president – admittedly, a big if – US arms and money will continue flowing to Israel, while Israel will get to decide if US aid to Gaza is ever allowed in.

Why? Because Israel is the lynchpin in a US imperial project for global full-spectrum dominance. Because for Washington to change course on Israel, it would also have to do other unthinkable things.

It would have to begin dismantling its [800 military bases](#) around the planet, just as Israel was told by the ICJ last week to dismantle its dozens of illegal [settlements](#) on Palestinian territory.

The US would need to agree a shared global security architecture with [China](#) and [Russia](#), rather than seek to bully and batter these great powers into submission with bloody proxy wars, such as the one [in Ukraine](#).

## The Coming Fall

Pelosi, remember, smeared students on US campuses protesting Israel's plausible [genocide in Gaza](#) as being linked to Russia. She urged the FBI to investigate them for pressuring the Biden administration to support a ceasefire.

Netanyahu, in his address to Congress, similarly demonised the demonstrators – in his case, by accusing them of being “useful idiots” of Israel's main foe, [Iran](#).

Neither can afford to recognise that millions of ordinary people across the US think it is wrong to bomb and starve children – and to use a war with an unachievable aim as the cover story.

Hamas [cannot be](#) “eliminated” through Israel's current bout of horrifying violence for a very obvious reason: the group is a product, a symptom, of earlier bouts of horrifying Israeli violence.

As even western counter-terrorism experts have had to concede, Israel's genocidal policies in Gaza are strengthening Hamas, not weakening it. Men and boys who lose their family to Israeli bombs are Hamas's most fervent [new recruits](#).

That's why Netanyahu insisted Israel's military offensive – the genocide – in Gaza could not end soon. He demanded weapons and money to keep his soldiers in the enclave indefinitely, in an operation he termed as “demilitarisation and deradicalisation”.

Decoded, that means a continuing horror show for the Palestinians there, as they are forced to continue living and dying with an Israeli aid blockade, starvation, bombs and unmarked [“kill zones”](#).

It means, too, an indefinite risk of Israel's war on Gaza spilling over into a regional war, and

potentially a global one, as tripwires towards escalation continue to grow in number.

The US Congress, however, is too blinded by championing its small fortified state in the Middle East to think about such complexities. Its members roared "USA!" to their satrap from Israel, just as Roman senators once roared "Glory!" to generals whose victories they assumed would continue forever.

The rulers of the Roman empire no more saw the coming fall than their modern counterparts in Washington can. But every empire falls. And its collapse becomes inevitable once its rulers lose all sense of how absurd and abhorrent they have become.

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*Featured image: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addresses a joint meeting of Congress at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, U.S., July 24, 2024. (Reuters Photo)*

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