

We Are All Palestinians

Some in congress are beginning to see the light

By [Philip Giraldi](#)

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In spite of the fact that Israeli snipers continue to shoot scores of unarmed protesting Gazans every Friday with virtually no coverage from the media, there are some signs that the ability of Israel and its friends to control the narrative regarding the Jewish state's appalling human rights violations is beginning to weaken. To be sure, The Lobby still has sharp teeth and is prepared to use them as in [last week's report](#) of a Florida high school principal with 26 years of experience and an otherwise impeccable record who was fired because he said that "Not everyone believes in the holocaust."

Questioning the established view of Israel is long overdue. It was first challenged by Illinois ex-congressman Paul Findley in his [1985 book](#) *They Dare to Speak: People and Institutions Confront Israel's Lobby*, but received a considerable boost when two leading academics John Mearsheimer of the University of Chicago and Stephen Walt of Harvard [wrote](#) *The Israel Lobby And U.S. Foreign Policy* in 2006. Virtually overnight it became acceptable in some circles to begin to discuss the powerful influence that the Israel Lobby has over foreign policy formulation in the United States. More recently, the final taboo was broken when two junior congresswomen began to talk about Israel's baleful influence and linked it to its obvious source: the Benjamins. Jews and money and political power exercised on behalf of Israel, something that had been clear for many years but forbidden territory, suddenly became a hotly debated issue, even in some of the mainstream media.

Talking about money and Israel has also freed up some other lines of inquiry. Liberal Democratic critics of the Jewish state's human rights record, who were shut out by the party leadership at the 2016 nominating convention, have started to speak out and, surprisingly, some of the candidates for the 2020 nomination have begun to test the waters by suggesting that Israel's behavior just might be a whole lot better.

The recently concluded J Street conference demonstrated that loving Israel and all its works is hardly a rock-solid bipartisan issue any more, at least for many Democrats who actually believe in principles like freedom of speech and democracy. J Street is a relatively liberal Jewish group that promotes itself as being pro-Israeli, pro-Palestinian and pro-American. It keeps pushing a two-state solution for Palestine-Israel, a ship that has sailed long ago because expanding Israeli settlements have made such an outcome inconceivable. Many, including myself, regard J Street as a gatekeeper for Israel as it is frequently rather timid in its criticisms, but it is useful to have its voice out there.

This year's J Street conference actually considered cutting U.S. military aid to Israel to force it to take steps to end its occupation of the Palestinian West Bank. It's president Jeremy Ben-Ami led the discussion by observing that "Our aid is not intended to be a blank check." Some Democratic Party speaker/participants like Senator Amy Klobuchar predictably dodged

the issue by saying “I think we are at this moment and time where it is not a good idea to negotiate these things right now,” but Senator Michael Bennet and Julian Castro said that they would consider such a step. Castro noted that it might be used if Israel sought to annex the West Bank.

South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg agreed and was also open to cutting aid to stop settlement expansion, but to no one’s surprise the most powerful endorsement of a shift in policy came from Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, who also reportedly received the loudest cheers from the mostly young audience. Sanders suggested that part of the current U.S. assistance should immediately go to help alleviate Gaza’s humanitarian crisis.

“My solution is to say to Israel: you get \$3.8 billion every year, if you want military aid you’re going to have to fundamentally change your relationship to the people of Gaza, in fact I think it is fair to say that some of that should go right now into humanitarian aid.”

There have also been suggestions of possible funding options made by other Democrats who were not at the J Street conference. Last week presidential candidate and Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren [said that](#)

“Right now, Netanyahu says he is going to take Israel in a direction of increasing settlements, [but] that does not move us in the direction of a two-state solution. It is the official policy of the United States of America to support a two-state solution, and if Israel is moving in the opposite direction, then everything is on the table...Everything is on the table.”

Some Democrats who have benefited particularly from the Benjamins remain unconvinced, however, believing as they do that Israel has a permanent license to tap the U.S. treasury. Reliable Zionist toady Joe Biden, who was also not at J Street and probably would not be caught dead near it, responded to a question on cutting aid [by saying that](#)

“...the idea that we would draw military assistance from Israel, on the condition that they change a specific policy, I find it to be absolutely outrageous. Anyway, no I wouldn’t condition it and I think it’s a gigantic mistake.”

Coming at the Israel human rights issue from another direction is [H.R.2407](#), a bill introduced by Congresswoman Betty McCollum (D-MN) in April. The legislation would amend the Foreign Assistance Act to ensure that none of the aid given to Israel could be used to arrest and detain children. An earlier version of McCollum’s bill in 2017 died at the end of that congressional session and this year’s bill will likely suffer a similar fate, but it is a sign that perceptions are changing, even in a largely bought and subservient Congress.

Unfortunately the Trump Administration continues to embrace Israel ever more tightly and it is hard to find a Republican politician who will in any way criticize the special relationship even when it manifestly serves no U.S. interest. The White House continues to promote its completely dead peace plan, though it is on hold until the upcoming Israeli election in December. In any event, everyone involved in the planning process as part of the team assembled by presidential son-in-law Jared Kushner is both Jewish and Zionist, as are most

of the relevant players at the state department like Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs David Schenker. The U.S. Ambassador to Israel David Friedman works harder at being an apologist for the Jewish state's many crimes more than as a representative for American interests. Gentiles who are at least peripherally engaged in Middle Eastern developments like Mike Pompeo and Mike Pence tend to be Christian Zionists, meaning that there is little room for dissenting views and a disengaged Donald Trump often seems to be going along for the ride, though he understands that pandering to Israel is certainly a lot easier than opposing it.

One might reasonably suggest that even though change is in the air, the process of disencumbering from the Israeli grip will be both long and painful. For the present, the U.S. government policy on the Middle East is both shaped and managed by Zionists working on behalf of Israel both from inside and outside the system. That is one compelling reason why the handling of the Palestinian issue since President Trump took office is best described as both driven by Israeli interests alone and morally shameful.

The Trump administration has been unusually effective in working to systematically dismantle the Palestinian state and make the Palestinians a non-people, something that many Israeli leaders have been urging for decades. This push to make the Palestinians go away has been achieved through a variety of actions: taking Jerusalem off the table; removing settlements from any discussion; changing U.S. policy as it relates to assistance provided to Palestinian refugees; supporting Congress in changing U.S. law related to families of Palestinians killed or imprisoned by Israel; and, acting to delegitimize and shut down the offices of both the Palestine Liberation Office and Palestinian Authority. Moreover, the Trump Administration's endorsement of Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights suggests that a similar move by the Jewish state over the West Bank would also meet with White House approval.

America's support of Israel is both morally wrong and, worse, contrary to actual U.S. interests. It behooves all of us who care about the well-being of the United States to speak up and support those brave individuals in the Democratic Party who are pushing for change. Those of us who actually believe that Palestinians are "endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights" should be particularly active since our country's endorsement of Israel's inhumanity makes us Americans complicit in the war crimes. In this struggle, we are all Palestinians.

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