

“Israel Is Losing This War”

No, that headline was not written by Brian Green but by Tony Karon from Al Jazeera and Daniel Levy a former Israeli chief negotiator. [Their article](#) is a must read.

We Marxists are often disparaging even condescending towards bourgeois intellectuals. They, we insist, do not have the materialist theory nor the grasp of dialectics to analyse social processes dynamically. Well this article, by way of exception, proves that supposition to be wrong. It is more perceptive, consequential and braver than most articles on the Palestinian Question written by those on the left. I leave it up to the reader to make up their own mind.

Politics is about power, with war its acute phase. An acute or tactical phase can either be lethal or it can pass. But politics is generally a chronic condition, it is strategic, it endures and ultimately weakens the protagonists unless it is resolved through consent. *Israel Is Losing This War* examines the chronic condition besetting Zionism. Its objective is to investigate the long-term prospects for the Zionist state and explain Hamas’ adaptation to the changing balance of power.

All of this can be summed up in this quote taken from the above article. It was made by Kissinger following the 1968 Tet offensive, which like October the 7th, shook the US to its core: *“We fought a military war; our opponents fought a political one. We sought physical attrition; our opponents aimed for our psychological exhaustion. In the process we lost sight of one of the cardinal maxims of guerrilla war: The guerrilla wins if he does not lose. The conventional army loses if it does not win.”*

Interestingly, Levy an Israeli, does not treat Hamas as a terrorist organisation but respectfully as a legitimate leader of the Palestinian resistance. Many on the left, intimidated by imperialism, should take a leaf out of Levy’s book.

What this article lacks is an analysis of the ebbing of US imperialism. While it is true the US State Department did not champion the emergence of the State of Israel at the outset in the 1940s, it soon came to value the role Israel could play as its hammer against pan-Arabism championed by the likes of Gamal Abdel Nasser who led the Egyptian revolution in 1952, which should it have united the Gulf Region, now called Western Asia, would have threatened the burgeoning US economic interests in the region. From them on Israel was to become the US’s armed and disruptive agent in the region.

Thus the future of Israel came to be locked into the future of the US empire and as the sun sets on the US Empire, Israel will be exposed to the resulting chilly winds as well. No doubt this was one of the motivations for Israel to strengthen its ties with the autocrats in the region from Saudi Arabia to the UEA to reduce its dependency on the USA. All of this now lies in ruins. These precarious regimes, now turning to China, fear their populations, and their populations have now come out in support of Hamas and the Palestinians.

The article also points to the damage this war has done to the Israeli economy. Total economic losses from the disruption caused by this war, including the cost of munitions and soldier salaries, the relocation of populations from the North and adjacent to Gaza, is running at around \$200 million per day or \$6 billion per month. This is before calculating the loss of inward investment, and in the longer run the cost of divestments and the implicit boycott of Israeli goods. Given the monthly GDP figure of >\$40 billion, this is a significant loss. The \$14 billion in financial aid Biden is asking from Congress seeks to make up this loss.

But there is potentially a bigger loss on the horizon, one which not only has economic consequences, but social consequences as well, and that is emigration. Already before the war, 28% of the Israeli population desired to emigrate, no doubt influenced by the rise of the right-wing theocratic parties and the threat they posed to the lifestyle and rights of the secular jews. Again, no doubt, this figure has risen considerably since the war. And it is likely that not only do jews want to vacate Israel but far fewer will now be attracted to it. The schism in world Jewry has grown, and grown actively with tens of thousands of liberal Jews around the world joining protests in support of Gaza and the West Bank.

But this is not only about quantity, it is also about quality, because this is the emigration of the brains and skills which built the modern economy in Israel. The departure of skilled secular jews also accelerates the demographic trends in play, with the religious Jews and their feudal strictures against birth control, outproducing babies. Little by little Israel is coming to resemble its arch enemy Iran with its theocratic state, as more and more members of parliament are drawn from religious parties.

And the more Israel veers to the right the more it embraces a final solution for the Palestinians, that is ethnic cleansing, driving the Palestinians from Gaza into the Sinai by making Gaza uninhabitable and driving the Palestinians in the West Bank into Jordan by arming the Israeli settlers. Israel has given up on a political solution which makes it an increasingly dysfunctional agent for the USA.

This presents an intractable problem for the Biden Administration. This has now spilled out into the open. *“Speaking to Democratic donors in Washington, Biden voiced criticism of Israel’s hardline government and said Netanyahu needed to alter his approach.”* Of course this has not yet progressed to holding back financial and military aid for Israel, but that cannot be ruled out. Israel is turning into a liability; one which straddles the dividing line in what is becoming a bi-polar world.

Biden is feeling the political heat. He is not only becoming isolated globally but internally as more and more shocked North Americans, particularly in the Democratic Party, reconsider their previous unwavering support for Israel. Globally this could be seen in the UN during the recent ceasefire vote and internally via dismal polling numbers.

Worse, the other side, Russia and China are vigorously pushing for a two-state solution based on contiguous land between Gaza and the West Bank. Russia which previously had friendly relations with Israel is now opportunistically tilting against Israel as evidenced by the treatment Putin received during his recent trip to Western Asian capitals. The same applies to China. Given that the two richest nations in the region, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, will soon be joining the BRICS, and given the hardening of the BRICS position on the Palestinian question due to pressure from below, Israel’s diplomatic isolation can only deepen. It is becoming a pariah state.

This presents a predicament for the USA. Whether to align with a state intent on ethnic cleansing or to cleave a more independent path to minimise the fall out to its own reputation. This predicament has been deepened by the failure of the barbarism in Gaza to draw in the Iranians, This was the grand plan, to bait Iran with atrocious attacks on Gaza. It has not worked. Had Iran taken the bait allowing Israel and Washington to claim Iran provoked a broadening of the war, then Washington would have achieved its goal of securing the Middle East via regime change in Tehran. It would have been worth the gruesome TV coverage from Gaza.

But instead the neo-cons in Washington have walked away empty handed and out of pocket. With its reputation in tatters, the US may have to restructure its relationship with Israel. Israel may have become unaffordable. With the growing collapse of the Ukrainian army, its grand plan of surrounding China via regime-change in Moscow, while protecting its back in the Middle East via regime-change in Tehran, has come unstuck. Instead of tilting the balance of power in its favour, US machinations have only succeeded in tilting the balance against the USA and the rest of western imperialism. It has accelerated rather than retarded the loss of hegemony.

Hence the panic and the growing attack on the right to criticise Zionism. **Freedom of speech is only for the unheard.** When voices become louder and heard, the state seeks to clamp down on freedom of speech. Marches become more circumscribed, activists are hauled in under spurious charges, laws are changed to equate anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism in order to make criticism of Israel a hate crime. But this is not born out of strength but out of weakness. Gal Gadot, she who rose to fame posing in a bikini while in the IDF, and who hosted an epic produced by the IDF about the 7th of October, but one which cannot be seen a second time and is only open to journalists and social media influencers, is a sign of this weakness. Zionist propaganda can be compared to dead leaves blown away by the wind of global disapproval over the conduct of Zionism and the revelation of its inhuman essence.

Many on the left draw the wrong conclusions about the clampdown. What is better, to have a weak voice which can be ignored by the establishment and treated with silence, or an effective and increasingly loud voice forcing a response? I know which option I prefer because the latter option is the prelude to real change.

All of this will weaken Zionism in the long run. No doubt that is what Hamas is counting on. The IDF may emerge victorious in Gaza, but it will have cost the Zionist State of Israel its economic and social future, and in the end, that is what will be decisive. Which is why the alternative headline could well be: *Israel Will Eventually Lose The War.*

Brian Green, 13th December 2023.