

Israel's Zionist ideology the 'principal cause' of the war in the Middle East: eminent scholar

Dr. John Mearsheimer provides penetrating analysis including how US support for Israel is 'wrong in the extreme' making Americans 'complicit' in 'genocide,' and how the Western narrative of blaming Iran is 'nonsense' and 'opposite' of the truth.

By LifeSite

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([LifeSiteNews](#)) — In a comprehensive interview focused on the war in the Middle East, renowned foreign policy expert Dr. John Mearsheimer explained why he believed both Israel and the United States were acting irrationally,

against their own interests, and why, ironically, “the Iranians are being rational” in their approach to the regional tensions.

The distinguished political science professor at the University of Chicago also unpacked why “the Israelis are the principal cause” of the conflict, the dominant role the Israel lobby plays in maintaining such a destructive policy in the United States, and how America’s relationship with Israel makes the western superpower “complicit in this genocide” in Gaza.

Appearing [often](#) in especially alternative media, Mearsheimer is perhaps best known for co-authoring an impactful academic [paper](#) which turned into a *New York Times* best-seller titled [The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy](#) (with [Stephen M. Walt](#), 2007). The professors [argued](#) that the highly effective efforts of “a loose coalition of pro-Israel individuals and organizations” was a driving force for American foreign policy adopting “decades of unconditional U.S. support for Israel” as its centerpiece

with detrimental effects to the authentic interests of both nations.

During an [interview](#) with the Middle Eastern network [Al Jazeera](#) just before the U.S. election earlier this month, the hostess of the program, Rawaa Augé, asked Mearsheimer how the Israelis can simultaneously rationalize exercising widespread military power in the region for a stated purpose of increasing their security when these behaviors have been shown to make their nation far less secure.

The former West Point cadet said such an irrational posture is fueled by an ideology widely referred to as radical religious Zionism, which holds that self-identified Jews have a right from God to the land of Palestine, and therefore a corresponding right to even [ethnically cleanse](#) the Palestinian people, Christian and Muslim, from the lands where they have lived for many centuries.

READ: [Theologian explains why religious Zionism is 'heresy,' the Church is the 'true Israel'](#)

“Israel is ideologically committed to a ‘Greater Israel,’” said Mearsheimer. “The Israelis believe that the West Bank and the Gaza Strip belong to them, that this is sacred territory.” They thus believe the Palestinian people are “a roadblock to them creating a homogeneous Jewish state that includes Gaza and the West Bank.”

“So they think they are justified from an ideological point of view in removing the Palestinians from that territory,” he continued. “And they make an argument about security that goes along with that ideological argument.”

As the political scientist has explained [elsewhere](#), even before [October 7](#) of last year, when their retaliatory [assault](#) on the [people](#) of Gaza began, Israelis had previously “got away” with such massive crimes in the past. These included, first, in 1948 when Israelis “ethnically cleansed lots of Palestinians” (around 700,000, destroying hundreds of their villages) and again in 1967 when they captured the West Bank and began their military [occupation](#) of these regions.

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“So, they’ve done massive ethnic cleansing on two (previous) occasions, and they got away with it,” he said in May. And these crimes “played a key role in creating the state of Israel” itself.

Jordan and Egypt neutralized from intervention, Israel facing unconventional war with Iran

While populations in regional nations such as Jordan and Egypt are enraged by Israel’s current attack upon Gaza, which [many have judged to be a genocide](#), Mearsheimer told Augé these nations are neutralized from intervening due to a lack of military capability, and their being “heavily dependent on American economic aid for their survival. That gives the United States—and in effect, Israel—great leverage over both Jordan and Egypt.”

Instead, Israel is “fighting against resistance groups like Hamas and Hezbollah that are armed with missiles and rockets,” said the international relations scholar. This is markedly

different than the past when such conflicts were conducted in a conventional manner in which Israel was quite capable of winning without much help from the U.S. or others.

But now, as it also fights Iran, these current hostilities are not conventional. Instead, Israel is “dealing with rockets, missiles, and drones coming from Iran. The Israelis are now in a position where they have to depend heavily on the United States.”

Iranians ‘being rational,’ Israel & US provide no option but to ‘go up escalation ladder’

With regards to Iran, Mearsheimer said that neither they, nor the United States, want to fight each other. “It’s the Israelis who have been trying to pull the Iranians and the Americans into a fight.”

With this posture in mind, he affirmed “the Iranians are being rational.” From their “point of view, the smart way to deal with Israel is indirectly. It’s to support Hezbollah, support Hamas, support the Houthis in Yemen,” along with “the militias in Iraq and in Syria” while avoiding getting directly involved in a

conflict themselves, unless it is
“absolutely” necessary.

Up until October 1, the Iranians thought
“they could get some sort of deal with
the Americans” and thus avoid “getting
pulled into the conflict.” The extended
time gap between Israel’s [assassination](#)
of Hamas’s political chief, Ismail
Haniyeh, in Tehran on July 31 and Iran’s
eventual retaliation on October 1,
suggests to Mearsheimer that “the
Iranians were looking for a way not to
have to retaliate.”

**READ: [Did the Israeli government help
establish Hamas to undermine a two-
state solution?](#)**

During this time American diplomats
were holding them off with promises of a
coming ceasefire between Hamas and
Israel, which never came. Then with the
September 27 [assassination](#) of Hassan
Nasrallah, the secretary-general of
Hezbollah, “the Iranians understood
enough is enough” and thus retaliated
four days later “with 180-plus ballistic
missiles aimed at Israel.”

With both sides threatening an ongoing volley of counterretaliations, it is now clear “the Iranians understand that they have to go up the escalation ladder because there is no cooperating with the Americans and the Israelis to shut down this conflict,” the professor observed.

Iran capable of causing catastrophe for world economy and nuclear proliferation in the region

Such escalation could include the Iranians causing “catastrophic consequences for the international economy” by using their ballistic missiles to destroy oil fields and refineries across the region, cutting off “the flow of much of the oil out of the Middle East to the rest of the world.”

They also have the capacity to easily enrich nuclear material for the manufacture of a few nuclear warheads, which would also trigger a proliferation of such weapons in the Middle East, first with Saudi Arabia, and then with Turkey, Iraq, and the Egypt, he speculated. This would make the region and the world much more dangerous.

“Can you imagine a crisis between a nuclear-armed Iran and a nuclear-armed Israel? That is really scary,” Mearsheimer commented.

With their “hardline in the extreme” ideology of [religious Zionism](#), which is likely to become more intense on the Palestinian issue with the passage of time, along with Iran’s promising to escalate, “Israel is in a deep hole. And what they’re doing is continuing to dig. And the belief is that they’re going to fix this problem. They’re going to create a new Middle East, where Israel lives happily ever after,” he explained. “I don’t think that’s going to happen.”

US complicit in Israel’s genocide, morally and strategically ‘wrong in the extreme’

Affirming the long-standing success of AIPAC (the American Israel Public Affairs Committee) and the Israel lobby in securing unconditional support from the U.S. government for “whatever Israel does,” the professor affirmed that whether a Democrat or Republican is president, they will “support Israel unconditionally because of the power of the lobby.”

READ: [Understanding how the Zionist lobby continues to shape US foreign policy](#)

When asked by Augé how he feels as an American knowing that his nation's foreign policy is controlled by the interests of another state, Mearsheimer conceded that "because of our relationship with Israel, we, the United States of America, are complicit in this genocide (in Gaza)."

"So I think from a moral point of view, as well as from a strategic point of view, America's unconditional support of Israel is wrong in the extreme. It's not in America's strategic interest to support Israel," he said.

And with this being the case, the fellow of the Council on Foreign Relations reaffirmed, "it's very important to understand that states do not always behave rationally. And in terms of the U.S. relationship with Israel over time, and certainly with regard to the U.S. relationship with Israel today, this is not an example of rational behavior. This is not strategic behavior."

'The Israelis have never offered the Palestinians a viable state'

When asked why he no longer believed a two-state solution was possible, Mearsheimer observed, "the Israelis have never had any interest in a two-state solution from the get-go."

Indeed, according to Israeli historian Benny Morris, the notion of [expelling](#) all Arabs from the land "is as old as modern Zionism and has accompanied its evolution and praxis during the past century." In fact, as early as the late 1930s, David Ben-Gurion, who became Israel's first prime minister, [stated](#), "After the formation of a large army in the wake of the establishment of the state, we shall abolish partition and expand to the whole of Palestine." He later projected in 1941, "it is impossible to imagine general evacuation [of the Arab population] without compulsion, and brutal compulsion."

As stated above, such compulsion began in 1948 and has been [documented](#) for decades now. [According](#) to the words of Colonel Douglas Macgregor last November, the Israelis have made this

goal of [expulsion](#)“abundantly clear off-and-on for many years. This is not a secret. Now it's happening.”

Mearsheimer continued to describe how “the conventional wisdom in the West” is that “the Israelis have generously offered the Palestinians a state of their own on a number of occasions. And on each one of those occasions, the Palestinians have rejected that generous offer.”

“This is simply not true. The Israelis have never offered the Palestinians a viable state of their own, and they have never had any interest in that,” he affirmed.

“Anyone who wants to thwart the establishment of a Palestinian state has to support bolstering Hamas and transferring money to Hamas,” Netanyahu told his Likud party's Knesset members in March 2019.

“This is part of our strategy”<https://t.co/7lTQs9E5Zf>

— Haaretz.com (@haaretzcom)

[October 9, 2023](#)

Given the dominant radical Zionist ideology in Israel and [power networks](#) in

the West, particularly the United States, the political scholar said at this point there are really only two practical possibilities for this conflict, 1.) “the continuation of apartheid Israel,” or 2.) “ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians in Gaza and in the West Bank.”

While Israel continues to prosecute what Mearsheimer judges to be the pronounced continuation of a [genocide](#) under international law, he takes consolation that since the heightened assault began over 13 months ago, “the Israelis have not been able to move large numbers of Palestinians out of Gaza or the West Bank. And hopefully they won’t be able to do that.”

Western narrative blaming Iran ‘opposite’ of the truth

Asked by Augé how anyone in the Biden administration can watch “this genocide unfolding” and continue to support Israel, the professor said “I wonder myself. They’re under tremendous pressure from the Israel lobby to support Israel no matter what. So if Israel commits a genocide, as it’s doing in Gaza, there’s no question that the lobby

is going to great lengths to pressure politicians and policymakers to support Israel completely.”

“I’m amazed at how few people have stood up and said that this is unacceptable, that this has to stop,” he continued. “You would just expect human beings who see things like this happening to stand up and say enough is enough.”

**READ: [The West cannot hide’:
Compelling documentary presents
Israel’s ‘live stream genocide’ in Gaza](#)**

Yet “there’s no question that the narrative (maintained by the media) matters” as well, the professor said, which makes it more difficult for westerners to see what is actually happening and respond in a logical moral fashion.

“The argument that the Iranians are the master puppeteers who are the principal cause of all of this trouble that we see today... is nonsense. The Iranians are not the principal cause of this problem. The Israelis are the principal cause of this problem. But there’s a narrative in the

West that tells you the opposite argument. It blames the Iranians,” Mearsheimer said.

Palestinians are ‘Bambi,’ Israel is ‘Godzilla’

The truth of the matter is “this is a conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis, and it’s an unfair fight. The Israelis are Godzilla and the Palestinians are Bambi.”

With the Palestinians having virtually exhausted attempts to have [recourse](#) to the international community, along with [decades](#) of [non-violent demonstrations](#) being brutally crushed by Israel, the political science scholar says “they are in an extremely difficult position.”

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“The only agency that the Palestinians have is to rebel, there’s not much else [they] can do. They can resist,” he said.

While the Houthis in Yemen and Hezbollah in Lebanon have been fighting against Israel and the United States, “the

Palestinians don't have many allies in the world, and they're really in a terrible situation."

"This is why I worry greatly about their future," Mearsheimer continued. "I mean, we're talking about a genocide in Gaza. Just think about that. The Israelis are bent on making Gaza unlivable. Well, if the Palestinians can't live in Gaza and they can't exit Gaza, that means they're going to die in Gaza."

"And of course, the Israelis are not just interested in cleansing Gaza, they're also interested in cleansing the West Bank," he said. "And the Palestinians in the West Bank are in good part defenseless, as are the Palestinians in Gaza, especially when they go up against Godzilla, which is the IDF (Israeli army)."

Israel lobby, elites drive policy supporting Gaza genocide in US, public opinion irrelevant

Addressing widespread university [protests](#) in the United States against Israel's execution of this genocide in Gaza, Mearsheimer lamented that "in the West, it's not clear that public opinion matters very much for how policymakers operate."

“If public opinion in the West governed how Western leaders dealt with Israel over Gaza and over the West Bank, we would have a fundamentally different policy. But up at the elite level, the elites remain almost 100% committed to supporting Israel no matter what,” he said.

Al Jazeera a highly credentialed news network, Western legacy media ‘skewed by a systemic and institutional bias’ toward Israel

While some Western influencers may challenge the credibility of the [Al Jazeera](#) news network, in 2018 the National Press Club [came](#) to their defense highlighting their winning “several Emmys, a Peabody and the Overseas Press Association’s Edward R. Murrow award,” along with [many other honors](#) over the years. “The accolades received by *Al Jazeera* from respected American professional organizations attest to the quality of their news coverage.”

Additionally, even *The New York Times* editorial board [affirmed](#) in 2017 that the network’s “reporting hews to international journalistic standards and provides a unique view on events in the Middle East.”

The current unprecedented Israeli assault on the people and civil infrastructure of Gaza has also elevated the [degree](#) to which many Western media organizations' heavy [bias](#) towards Israel has been clearly [exposed](#).

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Last February, several employees at CNN [told](#) *The Guardian* that there was a “growing [internal] backlash against the leadership’s pro-Israel slant” in its war coverage which is “skewed by a systemic and institutional bias” toward Israel and thus amounts to “journalistic malpractice.” Similar internal [disquiet](#) over the BBC’s “skewed” coverage happened in January.

And while CNN is happy to employ an anchor like Wolf Blitzer, who is a [former employee](#) of [AIPAC](#), a flagship of the [Israel lobby](#), *Fox News* owner Rupert Murdoch also has a tight [attachment](#) to Israel, including a close family [relationship](#) with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, perhaps due in part

to his mother reportedly [being](#) an Orthodox Jew.

In fact, Jewish scholar Norman Finkelstein has [stated](#) that the “ethnic element” relating to “a large Jewish presence” in the western mainstream media and a resulting “sense of Jewish ethnic solidarity [with Israel]... plays a role” in the presentation of a broad media bias in favor of the Jewish state.

As it stands, prior to his being fired by Murdoch's Fox News, [Tucker Carlson](#), the most popular cable news host [in history](#), was [feared](#) as being “a Big Problem for pro-Israel Conservatives” and “a threat to the pro-Israel community” due to “his lack of enthusiasm for the Jewish state,” not to mention his overt opposition to the [neocon](#) supported [war](#) in Ukraine, all of which may have contributed to his [ouster](#).

Something similar happened when now Catholic commentator [Candace Owens](#) was separated from the Zionist Daily Wire last March due to her [opposing](#) American taxpayer dollars funding Israel's [genocidal attack](#) upon the

virtually [helpless civilian](#) population in Gaza.

US should change relationship with Israel, use leverage for a one or two-state solution

While quipping that “hardly anybody in the West” responsible for making policy listens to him, Mearsheimer later shared what advice he would offer if asked by a U.S. president.

“I would argue that the United States should go to great length to alter its relationship with Israel in fundamental ways,” he said. “When Israel’s interests line up with America’s interests, the United States should support Israel. And when they don’t, we should put enormous pressure on Israel to change its behavior.”

And looking toward a solution to the [root](#) cause of the conflict and the ending of the Israeli military occupation and colonization of internationally recognized Palestinian territory, the renowned scholar said, “the United States clearly has the leverage to tell Israel that it has two choices: 1.) it can have a greater Israel, but that greater Israel will have to be a democracy (meaning) one person,

one vote” with equal rights for the Palestinian population. Or, 2.) “We can have a two-state solution, which will mean putting an end to the settlement enterprise, moving the settlers back into green-line Israel, and giving the Palestinians a viable state of their own.”

And, finally, he would advise the U.S. “try to change relations with Iran, because that will foster stability in the greater Middle East. And it is in our interest, in America’s interest, to have more stability in the broader Middle East, in addition to putting an end to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.”

Though massacres by the Israeli army against the decimated Palestinian people have been [routine occurrences](#) for decades, [reliable reports](#) of Palestinian deaths since October 7 of last year includes at least 44,631 ([43,847](#) in Gaza, [69% children](#) and women) with [10,000](#) more buried [under the rubble](#) (est. 4,900 women and [children](#)), and at least 785 in the West Bank (~167 children), with 345,000 facing catastrophic levels of food insecurity.

Additionally, 108,320 Palestinians are [reported](#) as injured, including “over 10,000 children losing at least one leg” with [ongoing atrocities continuing](#) on an essentially [daily](#) basis.

INFOGRAPHIC| 404 Days of Devastation: Key statistics on the toll of Israeli genocide on [#Gaza](#)'s population and infrastructure. [pic.twitter.-com/Dhn0N2sBC1](https://pic.twitter.com/Dhn0N2sBC1)

— Euro-Med Monitor (@EuroMedHR)
[November 13, 2024](#)

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