

Tough Love

Israel must be made to stand down

Based upon recent statements delivered before the 2010 AIPAC Conference by the US Secretary of State, Hillary Rodham Clinton¹, and the Quartet's Representative, former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair², the world appears doomed to many more years of stalemate in the Middle East. Accordingly, the United States had been condemned to relentless military struggle far beyond its borders, and the personal freedoms of the American public are destined to erode still further while ever more numerous and sophisticated controls that restrict our freedom of movement and increase the cost of doing business are introduced. All of this will continue in the name of America's war on terror, the defense of personal security and the preservation of political democracy. Meanwhile, the basic rights of the Palestinian people are trampled upon daily by the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

More simply, the United States and Europe appear determined to pretend diplomatic equality where political and economic asymmetry prevail, to insist that their view of the world is shared by everyone but the most intransigent of the unfortunate, and to disclaim the only tool of defense that an impoverished, occupied, Islamic nation can successfully muster against such unforgivable odds. Strategically speaking, neither the US, nor the EU appear ready to compel the Israeli security machine to stand down, withdraw from the occupied territories, and

relinquish its siege of Gaza. Quite to the contrary, the Secretary of State assured AIPAC's attendees, among whom the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, was by far the most prominent, that the Obama administration would do everything in its power to insure that the State of Israel would receive in 2011 more than its current nearly three-billion dollar-a-year handout in financial and military aid.

For some reason the leadership of the United States and the European Union continue to believe that they can offer hope to those who consider them an enemy, agreement in the absence of a need for real friendship, and a change in the status quo with no change in the support that has maintained it for decades.

HOPE: Telling the Palestinian people that they should surrender their only weapon of defense in order to earn a seat at a negotiation table whose host provides their enemy with annual arms shipment to the tune of billions of dollars a year is ludicrous.

FRIENDSHIP: You can only agree to be good friends and neighbors when the need for friendship and neighborliness appears valuable. Although it is obvious that the Palestinians could benefit from Israeli kindness, it is not at all clear that the Israelis have very much to gain from making friends with those whose destiny they effectively control.

CHANGE: For the past several decades the world community has poured billions of dollars of human relief into the occupied Palestinian territories and many more billions into military aid to the Israeli government. These weapons are regularly used by the Israeli government, not merely to oppose armed resistance against an occupation deemed unlawful under international law, but also to sys-

1 Hillary Rodham Clinton. 2010. Address to the 2010 Annual AIPAC Conference in Washington D.C. [[online document](#) | [reserve copy](#)] (downloaded on 28 March 2010).

2 Tony Blair. 2010. Check Against Delivery. Office of the Quartet Representative. Address to the 2010 Annual AIPAC Conference in Washington D.C. [[online document](#) | [reserve copy](#)] (downloaded on 28 March 2010).

A New Beginning

tematically destroy the economy and infrastructure of those whom the US and the EU would like the Israelis to become friends. This weapons flow must stop

For the moment, both the Arab community and Israel depend on the United States for their security. This is especially true for the oil producing Arab states who, like Israel, depend on US arms for their security and Egypt whose national coffers are filled with revenue from the maintenance and operation of the Suez Canal. So long as this dependence continues, the Israelis will never find a need for friendship with the Palestinian people, and the Arab countries who have the potential to threaten Israeli existence will not do so. Smaller states like Syria and Lebanon may threaten the existence of individual Israelis, but they no more threaten the existence of the Israeli state than do the Palestinians who are held hostage to the whims of internal Israeli politics.

Taming the Addiction

The United States government insists that US-Israeli friendship is important. This is often difficult to understand, as the United States is seriously hurt by the bad PR it receives in the Muslim world and elsewhere in the non-Christian world for maintaining this friendship. Nevertheless, US-Israeli friendship is about being Jewish and as such a large number of Americans would be hurt, if the friendship between the US and Israeli governments were ever to fail.

This said, when your best friend or spouse is addicted to alcohol -- in this case Israel to US dollars and weapons, and the US to Arab oil --, then one must take a stand against the alcoholic's addiction, not the alcoholic. Although Secretary Clinton hinted at this strategy in her speech by insisting that important concessions would be necessary, if peace were ever to be achieved, she provided zero indication about how these concessions would be

brought about. In fact, she clearly indicated that the source of the addiction would continue -- more money, more weapons.

If tough love is to work then two things must occur, the US government must temporarily withdraw its military and financial aid from Israel, and the American people must withdraw their votes from US Congressman who do not support a draw-down in aid to the Israeli government. In effect, the addiction can be stopped, but the American people are the sole force that can effectuate it.

No, Israel will not be pushed into the sea by the Hezbollah, the Hamas, or even Iran, but it does mean that many more an Israeli citizen will come to the sobering conclusion that his own way of life could be seriously threatened, if he does not take action vis-à-vis his own government's obsession vis-à-vis the Palestinian people and the world's Arab community.

In conclusion, what is needed is a transfer of political momentum from the American to the Israeli people via action taken by the US Congress and White House against the Israeli government's occupation of Palestine. By the way, many Jews, both American and Israeli, are already struggling to make this happen.³ So, you do not have to feel anti-semitic for taking action..

³ Video from End The Violence in Gaza Now! Onsite protest held during the Mayor of Jerusalem Mayor visit to London on 22 March 2010. [[online document](#)] (downloaded on 29 March 2010).