

# As Israel Turns 75, “Foreign Affairs” Publishes a Call to Eliminate It

Foreign Affairs is supposed to be the leading American academic journal on American Foreign Relations. They have reverted to the world view of the State Department of 1930-1948, where the assumption that everyone, except the Jewish people, has a right to a national, sovereign homeland.

The State of Israel is a tough player in a tough neighbourhood and one day, may break free of American dependence. It can survive and thrive in what is fast becoming a multilateral world as America deserts its many allies and supports its enemies, such as Iran.



Elliott Abrams writes at the [Council on Foreign Relations](#):

The effort to prevent formation of the Jewish State, and then to eliminate it, has taken many forms over the years and continues even as Israel celebrates its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Sometimes the effort takes the form of war, as in 1948 or most recently 1973, or terrorism, as in the intifadas. Sometimes the form is diplomacy, such as the Arab League's "Three Nos" of 1967 ("No peace with Israel, no negotiation with Israel, no recognition of Israel") and the UN's 1975 resolution that "Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination." All have in common the belief that one Jewish State, one Jewish homeland, is one too many and cannot be tolerated.

These views are receiving new energy nowadays from academics and intellectuals whose hostility to Israel overcomes fairness in argumentation. An excellent example is a new article in *Foreign Affairs* entitled "Israel's One-State Reality," authored by four well-known professors: Michael Barnett, Nathan Brown, Marc Lynch, and Shibley Telhami.

Their argument is in a way simple. The two-state solution is dead because there is already a one-state reality, they say; Israel dominates the area from the Jordan River to the sea and there is no real prospect of negotiating a Palestinian state. The only question, then, is how Israel treats non-Jews living in that area, and the answer is that they are treated very badly in law and in reality. They live under "Jewish supremacy" with very limited rights. To defend Israel is "defending colonialist principles." The extremist views of Itamar Ben-Gvir can "plausibly claim a majority of Israeli society." The United States should acknowledge all this, denounce it, and begin punishing Israel for it with "sanctions on Israel and Israeli leaders." The way to treat Israel is the way the Biden administration has been defending "international laws and norms in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine."

All this was "unsayable," but today "the unsayable has become close to conventional wisdom." Much of this description of

Israel probably is conventional wisdom in the academic circles in which the authors travel, but it is also false.

Let us begin with the authors' description of those who live in this area between the river and the sea. To them, there are two groups: Jews and non-Jews. Arabs citizens of Israel are referred to in the article as "Palestinians" just as are those Arabs those living in the West Bank or Gaza. Thus the authors reject the usual formulation, which distinguishes "Israeli Arabs" who are citizens of Israel from Palestinians who are not citizens. And they refer to "Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel" –which, as we shall see in a moment, is the way only a very small minority of Israeli Arabs characterize themselves—rather than for example referring to "Jewish and Muslim citizens" or "Jewish and Arab citizens."

The authors suggest that these "Palestinians," wherever they live—inside Israel's 1967 borders or in the "occupied territories"—live under a system of apartheid, a point that is made repeatedly. Israel's "system of structural discrimination" is even worse than apartheid, they appear to argue: it is "more severe than those of even the most illiberal state," a judgment that groups such as Tibetans or Uighurs would find grotesque. Here, though, the authors do lose the courage of their convictions in an especially repellent way, for they never actually write the sentence "Israel is an apartheid state." What they say instead is that "apartheid is a crime against humanity;" "major human rights organizations" and "many academics" apply the term to Israel; while the term "may not be a perfect fit," "Israel resembles an apartheid state" and "the apartheid label accurately describes the facts on the ground." They conclude that "Israel's system may not technically be apartheid, but it rhymes."

This is a very clear example of the authors' ideology, and hostility to Israel, overcoming their responsibility to present facts fairly. A poll by the [Israel Democracy](#)

[Institute](#) (IDI), a left-of-center group, found that 77 percent of Arab Israelis “feel part of the state.” In that poll the great majority of Israeli Arabs believe they have a common destiny with other Israelis. Well they might, because in a country that is about 20 percent Arab, 48 percent of pharmacists are Arab, as are 24 percent of nurses, 47 percent of new doctors, and 18 percent of undergraduates. Does that “rhyme” with apartheid?

The authors’ insistence on calling Israeli Arabs “Palestinians” is a semantic trick, because IDI has also found (in [2020](#)) that “about a quarter of Israeli minorities (23%) define themselves primarily as ‘Israeli’ and half (51%) self-identify as ‘Israeli-Arab.’ The proportion of non-Jewish people who define themselves primarily as ‘Palestinian’ now stands at around 7%.”

Presumably Israeli Arabs have a better understanding of their own situation than American academics, whose hostility to the Jewish State appears far deeper. To take one example, in the IDI 2023 Pluralism Index 44 percent of Arab Israelis said they favored (9 percent) or were indifferent to (35 percent) Israel being a Jewish state, while 46 percent preferred that it not be or objected to it being a Jewish state. But the authors of the article appear to believe that they speak for every Israeli Arab in opposing what they call Israel’s “ethnic nationalism.”

There are many “tells” as to the authors’ hostility to Israel, where they bend facts that are inconvenient. Take for example Gaza, of which the authors say “Even after it withdrew forces from Gaza in 2005, the Israeli government retained control over the territory’s entry and exit points.” This is obviously false, because Gaza has a 7.5 mile border with Egypt with a major crossing point at Rafah. Egypt opens and closes Rafah at will to exercise pressure on Gaza’s Hamas rulers. There is no mention of this in the article.

The treatment of terrorism is equally misleading. The authors refer to Hamas as “an Islamist group.” In fact, Hamas is a terrorist group (so designated by the United States and the EU) which continues to kill Israeli civilians. The refusal to label Hamas as terrorist is striking, but no more so than the labeling of the intifadas as “sudden outbursts of violence and mass popular contestation.” The role of the Palestinian Authority and Yasser Arafat in calling for and sponsoring violence and terrorism, especially in the Second Intifada, is completely ignored.

This is not itself a “sudden outburst” from the authors but part of a pattern denying that Palestinians actually do anything. They are, in this article, entirely passive, and their past and future are linked by one common factor: only Israel and foreign governments matter. For example, the refusals by Arafat to accept Ehud Barak’s peace proposals or the “Clinton Parameters,” or of Mahmoud Abbas to accept the proposal from Ehud Olmert, and similarly to refuse peace efforts by President Obama, go unmentioned. So does the entire issue of Palestinian Authority (PA) corruption and malfeasance. The roles of the PA and PLO in leading to today’s Palestinian predicament are silently denied, because the authors wish to place every past and future decision in the hands of others. The entire issue of security is ignored. It’s obvious that Israel did not intend or wish that when its forces left south Lebanon the terrorist group Hezbollah would take over, nor that when those forces left Gaza Hamas would do so. Nowhere do the authors contend with what would happen to Israelis, Palestinians, and Jordanians were the West Bank to come under Hamas control—an entirely plausible outcome.

The authors land in some very nasty places. Their arguments against normalization with Israel in essence call for a new form of the old Arab boycott of Israel. They urge that “Although Washington cannot prevent normalization of relations between Israel and its Arab neighbors, the United States

should not lead such efforts.” The clear suggestion here is that if it were possible to “prevent normalization,” that would be a fine U.S. activity. They also urge that efforts against BDS come to an end: the United States “should not seek to stop or punish those who choose to peacefully boycott Israel...” Their claim that Israel, because it is a Jewish state, “fosters a form of ethnic nationalism” is akin to their claim about apartheid: they don’t quite have the courage of their convictions and do not say what their article logically leads to—the belief that Zionism is indeed a form of racism. Their goal is the only real “unsayable” here: eliminating Israel as a Jewish state, because in their view it is irredeemably evil. It is fundamentally racist and repressive, and it is time for U.S. policy to punish it for those traits.

The “two-state solution” has never seemed as elusive as it is now, and the future of Palestinian Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza is a subject worthy of much debate. But it is not a contribution to that debate to vilify Israel, treat Palestinians as inert objects with little or no influence over their own future, and gloss over terrorism and the entire issue of security (for Palestinians, Israelis, and Jordanians).

The article calls for the end of the State of Israel as it has existed since 1948. By publishing this article *Foreign Affairs* has served only one useful purpose: to show us the state of the debate in academia. There, the view that one Jewish state is one too many is widely and indeed increasingly popular. Those who believe otherwise are well-advised to learn from this article that the goal of many of today’s academic critics is not to reform the state of Israel. The goal is to eliminate it.