

## **Rep. Barr's writing on Israel-Hamas conflict ignores both facts and history**

BY TODD KELLY DECEMBER 05, 2023

At last, Representative Andy Barr holds forth on Gaza in the Herald-Leader. His words are a balm to the shrill. Imagine considering Gaza, Israel, Palestine, and Hamas and not using the words or phrases “occupation”, “military blockade”, “Operation Cast Lead” or “Operation Protective Edge”. Imagine writing a piece on Hamas and Israel and omitting that Israel is a warehouse for U.S. arms and is second only to Turkey as the region's most lethal military.

Rep. Barr writes. “Israel, in contrast, has continued to provide innocent Palestinians with humanitarian assistance and uphold the laws of armed conflict even as it fights an enemy who deliberately breaks them.” Sounding like someone who needs an AIPAC check, Rep. Barr divides Palestinians into guilty and innocent. The documentary record describes that the deepest chasm can't hold the vastness that is Israel's permanent punishment of Gazans in proportion to what it suffers in periodic Hamas attacks. Compare Rep. Barr's claims to the painstaking scholarship of Norman Finkelstein's [Gaza: An Inquest Into Its Martyrdom](#). Finkelstein's record of intentional Israeli savagery is damning.

No legitimate discussion of Palestine, Israel, and Gaza starts on October 7, 2023. You can jump in there if you like.

The current state of Israel is the embodied 1917 dream of British Jews and Christians, for a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The dream, the Balfour Declaration, was a requirement of the Mandate for Palestine, a League of Nations mandate, that saw Britain assume Palestine from the Ottoman Turks. At the time of the Declaration, Jewish people were a minority in Palestine.

After the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel won Gaza from Egypt and the West Bank from Jordan. Israel sieged Gaza with a blockade after Hamas defeated the Fatah party in the 2006 Palestinian elections. Refugees from the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, and their descendants, make up most of the population of Gaza. Half of Gazans are under the age of 18.

Today, Gazans live as they have since 1967; either solely or with a combination of occupation, siege, or war. Israel divides Palestine from Haifa to Egypt in the south. Gaza is starved for resources and the siege has prevented the establishment of any but the barest of institutional structure sufficient for the public interest. Israel has

destroyed agriculture in Palestine. During Operation Cast Lead, Israeli Defense Forces razed thousands of acres of farmland in retaliation for Hamas' electoral victory. Israel bombs Gazan utility infrastructure and scores of buildings that housed what Palestinian institutions did operate. Clean water is rare and healthy food is restricted via siege or not grown because of danger.

Hamas has no air force, army, or navy and uses an arsenal of rockets primitive in comparison to Israel's responsive arms. The arrows that Hamas fires into Israel prove the resource starvation that Israel imposes. Meager is the restraint IDF uses in their Gaza wars. Compare the Palestinian and Israeli dead, the incidence of disease, the life span, the infrastructure loss, the unemployment rate, or GDP. British Prime Minister David Cameron described Gaza as an open-air prison. Baruch Kimmerling [described](#) Gaza as history's largest concentration camp. The weakness of Gaza seems to attract Israel.

Rep. Barr writes, "Moral clarity is required in (sic) this moment." According to the Intercept, "Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is advocating the US Congress for the funds to "thin" the Palestinian population in the Gaza Strip "to a minimum,". Does Rep. Barr's moral clarity see Gaza as a game preserve or as part of an independent Palestine safe from Israel?

### **'Simply indefensible.' Rep. Barr responds on the Israel-Hamas conflict.**

DECEMBER 08, 2023

I don't usually engage in back-and-forth debates, but the current rise in antisemitism demands a response to Todd Kelly's Opinion piece on 12/5/2023. 'Evil prevails when good people do nothing.' I won't remain silent.

In his letter, Mr. Kelly employs several antisemitic tropes:

- His use of the phrase "Sounds like someone who needs an AIPAC check" or, it's all about the Benjamins, is an egregious excuse to perpetuate the stereotype of Jewish influence on American politics and is deeply offensive.
- ■ He glosses over the fact that it was Hamas that broke the ceasefire and attacked Israel. Hamas is globally recognized as a terrorist organization, and we cannot

mainstream terrorists into polite conversation as if they are a legitimate political faction.

- ■ The claim that Israel is an occupier, with statements like “Israel divides Palestine from Haifa to Egypt,” disregards Israel’s internationally recognized sovereignty since 1948.
- ■ Suggesting that Israel’s actions are the reason for Hamas’ aggression is a gross misinterpretation of the conflict and its underlying causes. “The arrows that Hamas fires into Israel prove the resource starvation that Israel imposes.” Is he really saying if Israel provided more aid to Gaza, then Hamas would have better weapons to attack?
- Hamas’ actions, marked by violence and terror, pose a significant threat to peace and security in the region. The complete dismantling of Hamas is necessary to protect innocent lives and to pave the way for lasting peace. This is not just about retaliatory measures; it’s about taking decisive action against a cancer that – if not confronted and destroyed – will metastasize and undermine safety and stability in the region. It is one thing to draw different opinions from historical events or espouse competing territorial claims within the region — but embracing evil, spouting antisemitic hate, and excusing genocide is simply indefensible.

### **Rebuttal to Andy Barr on Gaza**

In a recent op-ed on Gaza, I wrote that a lobbying outfit, AIPAC, pays for political influence. Four sentences into his 12/05 response Letter to the Editor, Rep. Barr threw antisemitism at me. He missed the polemic and twisted a financial observation into an indirect libel. A primary theme of his Letter is that to criticize him is to criticize Israel and that to criticize Israel is antisemitic. Now, that *is* nice work if you can get it. Ask the lobbyists of AIPAC, Exxon Mobile, and Bank of America why they do what they do and they’ll confirm what Rep. Barr publicly denies. Is it antisemitic to repeat an Open Records line item? In 2022 Rep. Barr received +\$75K from pro-Israeli entities.

Congress might draw from AIPAC's competing Gazan firm were it not for the skies full of Israeli bombs that make Gazan corpses one with the debris that buries them.

There’s much more to say about the Gaza death camp and how to render it, but I’ve exceeded my 200 words.

