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America can influence the outcome.

On October 7th, 2023 Israel was attacked all across its border with the Gaza Strip(News site here), this resulted in over a thousand dead, and 254 hostages according to Matthew Miller, Spokesperson for the U.S. State Department. What followed was a swift and strong response by the Israeli state, which has now become bogged down in brutal fighting, which has seen over 44,000 dead Gazans (According to the Gazan Health Ministry). America has continued its unwavering support of the Israeli war on Gaza, blocking U.N. attempts of condemnation and ceasefire demands (Cursino).

While America should continue its current humanitarian aid in Israel, it should support more assistance to the civilians in Gaza, and reduce non humanitarian aid to Israel, due to the United Nations ICJ designation of Israeli occupation Illegal, and due to the risk of continuing the current conflict provides to the region's stability, mainly through Israeli threat of expanding the conflict ("Experts hail ICJ declaration").

The origin of the conflict arises in two main historical factors: the context that the land of the current states of Israel and Palestine was originally promised to Arab populations during the First World War, and that the very same land was then given to create the Israeli state(Balfour declaration, Arthur Balfour), after the British Palestinian mandate ended, arab nations

immediately attacked Israel. Directly after the war, many Arabs within Israel land were displaced, and most fled into now Egyptian-occupied land, the Gaza Strip, and Jordan-occupied land, the West Bank. The results of the war, and a rise in anti-Semitic and Anti-Zionist sentiment, resulted in the exodus of many Jewish people from Arab countries into Israel. Israel, because of its situation, was one of the few democracies in the Middle East, the U.S. has created a very particular and strong relationship with Israel. Israel eventually occupied both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, relinquishing occupation of Gaza in 2005 but holding a nominally independent West Bank under its control.

A major argument to support humanitarian aid to Gaza whilst decreasing military aid for Israel is simply the toll Israel has inflicted upon the Gazan people. Just a month into the war, in November 2023, there were nearly 10 thousand dead Palestinian children (CNN Rachel Wilson, Rosa de Acosta, Alex Leeds Matthews and Alex Newman, “These charts show the scale of loss in the Israel-Hamas war.”)

Now, as stated by the Gazan Health Ministry, over 44,000 people have died, though people often point out that this statistic includes both military combatants and civilians. However, this statistic comes with the claim that more than half of all those dead are women and children. (AP Wafaa Shurafa “Death toll in Gaza from israel-Hamas war passes 44,000”) The reason why this statistic is important is because while there is absolutely no world where we should 100% believe the statistic provided by a Hamas run organization, it should be believed that there has been a humanitarian crisis, in particular with a potential famine spreading throughout the Gaza strip, caused by Israeli blockade of current aid. (AP Samy Magdy “Hungry Palestinians in north Gaza search for food, sealed off from aid for a month by Israeli siege”)

It is possible that the best way to respond to the threat of famine seen, is for a close ally of Israel to be the one administering aid rather than through nations and places Israel deems hostile, such as through passings. This would be the best way to conclude whether or not the Israeli blockade comes from a place of genuine fear, or harsh, and internationally illegal, tactics of war.

A main counterargument to defunding military aid to Israel is that Israel is currently in these areas due to terrorism and with a valid goal. Israel was not in these areas, the Gaza Strip specifically, for nearly 2 decades until the current conflict, started by a terrorist group Hamas which DeFacto ruled Gaza for a decade and a half before October 7th, 2023. Therefore the current response is more justifiable because they are directly responding to the government of an area, rather than simply invading a neighboring country. In their piece “Five reasons the events in Gaza are not genocide” The American Jewish Committee, or ACJ, cites “The Convention defines genocide as the commission of grave harm against members of a national, ethnic, racial or religious group ... Israel’s leaders have repeatedly asserted that their campaign in Gaza is solely against the terrorist organization Hamas. In fact, this type of military campaign is the exact opposite of reflecting an attempt to eliminate the Palestinian population.”

While this is partially true, and the action of fighting against a terrorist group in DeFacto-controlled land is something America has done and supported in the past which provides a unique understanding in support of the conflict, the unique situation in this context is the extent of the Israeli Military force used in the current conflict. This has resulted in the United Nations Human Rights Office classifying Israeli Military actions as war crimes, and the U.N has urged for a ceasefire in the conflict. It is, therefore, because of this international pressure, not viable for America to continue its current level of support for the conflict with military aid. It

looks bad and has already been internationally condemned, making America look worse. The ruling by the ICJ (International Court of Justice) Has been described by Amnesty International as “Vindication.” All of this to say, for the ACJ to not only to deny evidence provided, by unbiased sources such as the U.N/ICJ but also by independent media such as the Associated Press, is gravely concerning for the reality thousands upon thousands are facing in Gaza. The best thing we can do in this case is demand a safer, larer guarantee, like the rest of the world, of a long lasitng peace, and at the very least a tempary ceasefire for a war which has tarnished the viewpoint of much the world against Isreal.

A major counterarugment is America should still defend Israel because of its interest in the nation. Israel is a defense against nations and groups who threaten American interests (Iran, Hezbollah, Hamas, etc), Israel is one of the few democratic nations in the region and therefore should be protected because of America’s goal to preserve freedom and democracy in other nations. In “What Every American Should Know About U.S. Aid to Israel” the ACJ states “Israel—along with Egypt, Jordan, and the Gulf States—is a U.S. military ally against the onslaught of Iran-backed terror groups and proxies who happen to live next door to the Jewish state...Furthermore, arming Israelis with American weapons to fight terrorism spares American servicemen and women from doing it.”

While it is absolutely true that America can and should support Israel against hostile forces such as Iran, forces which have extreme anti American viewpoints, America can and should also acknowledge the struggles of a truly democratic and free nation that Israel faces. There is much anti-arab sentiment and behavior in Israel, and while Israel is one of the few democratic nations in the Middle East, that may be changing. Syria has just recently overthrown its dictatorship, and the group now in charge has promised a more free and fair government.

Meanwhile as these promises and events unfolded, Israel has continued its occupation of the Palestinian territory, not allowing the people of the area to . As written in the U.N news “Israel ‘must be held to account for any violations’ of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including of international humanitarian and human rights laws.” It is absolutely valid and understandable for American politicians and leaders to defend American interests, however the practice of using proxies like Israel is becoming old, similar to sending our own men and women to war. The ACJ saying we should let Israel continue its conflict because it should rather by Israeli’s doing what Israel is currently doing (Fighting, dying, blockading aid, etc) is dehumanizing to the Israeli people. We must support and aid Palestinian and Arab people who have longed for a fully independent state, in order to guarantee no one has to be killed in war.

Perhaps the most tragic, and important factor to consider when it comes to losing the support for the conflict, is the real possibility that it may lead into more and more deadly conflicts in the future. The U.N in a press release titled “Cycle of Violence, Bloodshed between Israelis, Palestinians Untenable, Delegate Stresses at Security Council Briefing on Middle East,” the U.N stressed the importance of reducing the cycle of violence , such as the violence we see currently happening in Gaza. In particular they emphasized the dangers of radicalization, the desperate situation , with many dead or at the brink of death with famine(AP Edith Lederer “Famine is likely imminent in northern Gaza, hunger experts say”). The paper specifically states “In the meantime, the mass killing of Palestinians in Gaza by Israeli dumb bombs is creating more radicals in the region than it is taking out. Violence begetting radicalization should not be a surprise; most Hamas and Islamic Jihad fighters today lost their parents and families during the 2014 war on Gaza—a conflict which created an army of orphans who lost their families to Israeli airstrikes.”

We have already seen this happen before, so why should we be so surprised when it may happen again? America should at the very least reduce its role and vocal support for the Gazan war if we intend to avoid continuing the turmoil now tragically synonymous with the middle east. It is clear with the evidence provided that we are in dire need of supporting genuine change. Not through the violence of deadly weapons to potentially harm civilians-Civilians who could become radicalized by the many deaths of men, women, children- but through aiding those men, women, and children. This is not a matter of reaching an arm out to a snake, ready to bite, but reaching an arm out to a person who needs your help. There are many reasons- practical, selfish, and genuine- that our leaders can and should take to support those suffering.

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