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OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Israel's Legitimacy...

Israel's Legitimacy Is Not Up for Debate

By Yonatan Hamburger and Tzali Reicher

Despite suffering the most devastating terror assault on a sovereign nation since September 11, Israel continues to face relentless condemnation from the media, international political bodies, and public opinion over the past twelve months as it undertakes the necessary work of neutralizing the multiple genocidal threats on its borders and recovering its hostages. Rather than supporting Israel's efforts to protect its citizens and combat terrorism, international bodies with a history of bias against the world's only Jewish state – such as the United Nations, UNRWA, and the International Criminal Court – have slandered the nation with absurd accusations. They hold Israel to impossible standards that no other country is expected to meet while issuing resolutions and rulings that shield terrorist groups from accountability. They insist that Israel must conform to their flawed directives, because Israel was, according to them, established through a United Nations resolution and therefore must listen to them forever more. French President Emmanuel Macron recently repeated this pernicious claim, the latest in a long line.

This argument suggests that Israel's legitimacy is still up for discussion and exposes a dangerous double standard. India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Ukraine, and Lithuania are only some of the countries that, along with Israel, declared independence in the last 100 years and were warmly received by the international community. Yet only Israel's legitimacy is questioned by its critics, who suggest it should be "dismantled," "revisited," or flat-out replaced.

Israel and her friends should not remain silent in the face of this hypocrisy, and it is critical to push back against such distortions.

Firstly, Israel's history with the land did not begin in 1948, or even a few decades prior when the people that led to the modern-day Palestinians began living there.

The legitimacy of Israel is grounded in a history that predates the formation of most modern nations. The modern-day State of Israel's Declaration of Independence only confirmed these historical facts: the land of Israel has always been the homeland of the Jewish people. Yes, other civilizations have occupied the land at different times, but they came and went. From its earliest days, the land was intended for the Jewish people, as promised in the Bible. G-d's covenant with Abraham ensured that the Jewish people would inherit this land, as it states, "To your offspring, I will give this land" (Genesis 12:7). This promise was realized when the Jewish forefathers began to live in the land, and despite centuries of exile, they always returned.

The Jewish presence in the land of Israel is not only a matter of faith but also of historical and archaeological record. The first formal Jewish statehood of Israel emerged in the 13th century BCE, flourishing for over a millennium. Although the Jewish people endured exile and hardship during the Roman conquest, the era of the Crusades, and Muslim invasions and rule, a Jewish presence persisted in the land throughout from time immemorial. Even in the diaspora, Jews longed for the day they could return home. When colonialism began to decline in the mid-20th century, the international community supported the revival of the modern Jewish state – recognizing that the Jewish people's connection to the land was undeniable and unbroken.

To say Israel was "born" in 1948 is to ignore 3,800 years of Jewish history. The establishment of the modern State of Israel was not a gift from the United Nations, nor the result of some arbitrary decision. The 1947 partition plan, offered by a deeply flawed international body, proposed giving Israel a narrow sliver of its ancestral homeland. The remainder was promised to disjointed groups who had never before claimed statehood, and the colonial-era label "Palestine" was imposed on them. Rather than accept the partition, these groups and neighboring Arab nations gambled on annihilating the fledgling Jewish state through war. They failed – not just in 1948, but in every subsequent conflict – and today, they distort the truth by framing Israel's self-defense efforts as "apartheid," while offering no constructive solution for peace.

International critics and bodies dismiss Israel's ancient and Biblical history as irrelevant, while paradoxically claiming that a national identity fabricated in 1964 – the Palestinian Liberation Organization, founded by Egyptian terrorist Yasser Arafat – has deep historical roots in the land. This selective application of history reflects the bias inherent in the international community's treatment of Israel. The same organizations that turn a blind eye to nearly a century of terrorism and failed attempts at war eagerly welcome rogue states into their ranks, empowering them to sit in judgment over Israel.

The United Nations, which perhaps was founded with noble intentions, has devolved into a corrupt "House of Darkness." The inclusion of countries like North Korea, China, Iran, and Russia in leadership roles within its committees undermines any credibility it might once have had. These regimes, notorious for human rights abuses and repression, lack the moral standing to lecture Israel on how to conduct its wars or manage its security.

The legitimacy of the State of Israel does not rest on the opinions of international bodies, political figures, or biased journalists. It is rooted in history, faith, and the undeniable right of the Jewish people to live in their ancestral homeland. No amount of slander or political maneuvering can change that fact.

Israel will continue to defend itself from existential threats, not because the world grants it permission, but because every nation has the right and duty to protect its citizens. Those who question Israel's legitimacy or demand that it capitulate to terror are on the wrong side of history.

Israel is not just a modern state; it is a 3,800-year-old promise fulfilled, and that truth will never be erased.

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Echos from Sinai
"Torah for Everyone"
Rabbi Yonatan Hamburger



Trick or Treat

Another Halloween has come and gone without a single trick-or-treater. Another big bowl of peanuts and prunes to wrap up and put away until next year. We don't know why the kids stopped coming.

I'm tempted to have a Heath Bar with my coffee this morning, but I'll stick with toast. We wouldn't waste our little supply of Heath Bars on kids, even if they did come. The sugar is bad for them.

Maybe next year we'll add some horehound candy to the mix. That was my dad's favorite, and during Christmas, I would sometimes bring him a bag from Betty's Country Store, which was about the only place I could find it. European settlers brought the horehound plant to America during the 19th century, but its use dates back at least as far as ancient Egypt, where it was known as the "Seed of Horus" and valued for its healing properties. It has a unique flavor somewhere between licorice and mint, and a bag of the strange brownish candy would last a long, long time at our house when we were kids.

It is a beautiful Friday morning on this 1st day of November as the glow of the maples outside my window keeps distracting me from this communiqué. Every morning is beautiful when you pause long enough to appreciate it, but this morning is particularly enchanting because it rained again last night, and we don't have to worry about fire for a few more days in the thickening layers of leaves collecting on the forest floor – leaves that were getting far too crunchy for those of us with an intimate recollection of the fires in 2016.

The deer were in the backyard again before dawn, down where the acorns collect in the drainage ditch below the laurel thicket. They know they're safe here during hunting season. Safer than any poachers would be. They know the sound of our voices and the schedules of our pups. We have an agreement with them that we will only shoot at targets unless someone gets hungry enough to do otherwise, and even then, we don't shoot anything with a name. If you like venison, it's best that you don't name your deer.

The robins are with us again, filling the trees below the barn by the hundreds in the morning and especially in the evening when they drop down to see what the chickens may have left behind. There are more species of birds hitting the feeders now than I can identify, and we're all glad that the bear has so much mast to eat this fall that she's not interested in adding bird feed to her diet on these not-very-November days.

The rhythms of life continue as they have done for millennia, oblivious to the sound and fury of idiots' tales and all the vanity and vexation of spirit which rises to a crescendo every four years. Beauty and wonder are abundant and easy to find when you look for them, and if you're reading this on the day after the election, you might want to keep that in mind.

A trick for some, a treat for others: About 80 million people are going to be satisfied with the results. Another 80 million are going to be disappointed, or worse. Same as last election. An uncomfortably large percentage of both groups will desperately need to learn to forgive the other side for having an opinion. Tragically, many will not. Again, same.

If all your information comes to you via glowing pixels, and if those pixels are sponsored by the half dozen corporations that peddle information and entertainment, and if you consume only one brand of information and never sample any of the others, and if you never look out the window or separate your awareness from the pervasive technological hive mind which feeds on the drama it creates, then you might believe that what just occurred is the most important thing in the world.

Yet here in this single nation on a small planet circling the fringe of a modest galaxy floating in the vastness of space, less than half of us voted. Some were too young, and therefore occupied with something far more important than politics, which is childhood. Some were too busy, or convinced that it would not matter.

It matters, but the drama has claimed far too much territory in our waking minds and far too many hours of the precious and few days we are granted. Its hooks sink deeply into the flesh of our emotional muscles, and these hooks are barbed, making their removal at least as painful as being pulled along at their urging.

If you're feeling victorious this morning, understand that it was a Pyrrhic victory. If you feel defeated, remember that, even with all its faults, this is still and by far the most robust democracy on our little planet, and the political pendulum will continue to swing in spite of the determined efforts to pull it off its suspension spring. So for God's sake, close the laptop, turn off the television, and take a walk. Leave the phone on the table.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE E-MAILED OR MAILED TO:

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Composting

Compost is a welcome addition to any garden. It's a popular and effective method to improve the quality of your soil. It can also help you get rid of lawn debris such as grass clippings or leaves as they are falling. Composting is not difficult to do, but here are some tips so that you can start your own compost pile.

UGA Extension
Watching and Working
Jacob Williams



Compost is rich, dark humus that is the end product of the natural decomposition of plants or plant products. Using a compost pile will speed up the natural decomposition of plant material. Compost can improve soil drainage, structure, and help hold water and nutrients. The nutrients in compost will not be enough to replace fertilizing, but they can reduce fertilizing.

You can use just about any organic material for composting. Leaves, grass clippings, twigs, old annual or perennial flowers, old vegetable plants, straw, and sawdust can all be thrown into the compost pile. Try to avoid using insect or disease infested plants to reduce the spread of those plants the following season. You can put things like kitchen peelings and coffee grounds into the compost pile too. Kitchen scraps should be buried into existing compost so that they don't attract too many wild animals. Covering your compost pile will help keep animals out too. Avoid using highly processed foods because these will take longer to break down.

When making a compost pile, it's helpful to have something to contain it. A lot of different materials can be used from wire, fencing, wood pallets or concrete blocks. Leave some open spaces on the sides for ventilation. Good air circulation is important for successful compost. The bottom of the pile needs to be open to the soil to allow good drainage. Construct your pile in an out of the way place in your yard, in full sun.

Once you've constructed your container for the compost pile, start adding organic matter. Smaller pieces will decompose more quickly than large pieces of organic matter. Once you have a layer of organic matter in there, add in some garden soil or animal manure. These will add fungi, bacteria, insects, and worms to the pile. They're the critters responsible for breaking down the plant material into the humus that you add to your garden. You'll want to keep the pile moist, but not soggy.

Sometimes a concern with compost piles is that there might be an odor. If you turn the pile with a shovel at least once a month this will reduce the smell. A good functioning compost pile will heat up from the activity of the microbes decomposing organic matter. The heat produced will kill off the odor causing bacteria. If you add manure to your pile there will be some initial odor, but as the pile matures the smell will go away. A well maintained compost pile should not have a strong odor.

Once the compost has a crumbly earth look and you can no longer recognize the plant material it's ready to be added to the garden. If you add the organic material over time the compost will become ready a little at a time. If you have questions about creating or maintaining your compost pile contact your county Extension Office or send me an email at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Letters To The Editor

5G Warts

Dear Editor,

The U.S. Congress has funded billions of taxpayer dollars for Federal Communications Commission (FCC) programs such as the "5G Fund for Rural America," which has resulted in the rapid "overnight" implementation of 5G antennas hanging under powerlines everywhere.

In general, 5G signals can reach only 1,500 feet without obstructions, so there are a lot of these unsightly 5G "warts" being installed through densification. According to FCC Chairwoman Rosenworcel, "If we want broad economic growth and widespread mobile opportunity, we need to avoid unnecessary delays in the state and local approval process. That's because they can slow deployment." That certainly appears to be true, because nobody asked us if we wanted this blight upon our communities.

Electromagnetic Frequency (EMF) is poisoning each of us as our bodies cannot evolve fast enough to tolerate it, some people more than others. Symptoms such as insomnia, headaches, tinnitus, vertigo, nausea, heart palpitations, body aches, hand and face numbness and sporadic flu symptoms are all indications of EMF overexposure.

Nikola Tesla, the inventor of alternating-current electricity, radio, fluorescent lights, remote control, robotics and the electric motor, found himself experiencing all of the above symptoms later in life and is possibly the first victim of EMF poisoning from his experiments. Cellphones and towers, WiFi, 5G, wireless and power lines all contribute to EMF poisoning.

A U.S. National Toxicology Program \$25 million, two-year study found clear evidence linking RF radiation to cancer, including malignant brain tumors (gliomas) and heart tumors (schwannomas) in animal studies. The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has classified non-ionizing EMFs as possible human carcinogens, while some view it as known carcinogens. A 2022 Polish Department of Environment study of honeybees exposed to man-made EMF found bees can lose their ability to pollinate and navigate, which threatens our food supply.

The FCC continues to rely upon outdated safety guidelines established in the 1990s, which consider only the thermal effects of RF-EMF and not the non-thermal biological effects such as DNA damage, oxidative stress and cellular dysfunction, which pose significant health risks, especially to children. The FCC must immediately update its safety guidelines to reflect current scientific understanding and place an immediate halt to 5G expansion and prioritizing public health over corporate profits.

Pat Campbell

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Publication No: 635540

Advertising, News deadlines: Friday at 5 p.m.

Towns County (1 Year) \$30. Out of County (1 Year) \$40. Entered as second-class matter on November 8, 1928, at the post office at Hiawassee, Georgia under Act of March 3, 1879. With additional mailing points. The Towns County Herald is not responsible for errors in advertising beyond the cost of the actual space involved. All advertisements are accepted subject to the Publisher's approval of the copy and to the space being available, and the Publisher reserves the right to refuse any advertisement. **Postmaster:** Send change of address to: Towns County Herald, P.O. Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546.

Office located at: 518 N. Main St. Suite 3 "The Mall", Hiawassee
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