

The Impending Collapse of Zionism

by Kathleen Christison via rialator - Former CIA analyst *Wednesday, Sep 13 2006, 4:47am*
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The Moral Bankruptcy of Israel's Founding Idea

Is it only observers outside the conventional mainstream who have noticed that by its murderous assault on Lebanon and simultaneously on Gaza, Israel finally exposed, for even the most deluded to see, the total bankruptcy of its very founding idea?

Can it be that the deluded are still deluded? Can it truly still be that Israel's bankruptcy is evident only to those who already knew it, those who already recognized Zionism as illegitimate for the racist principle that underlies it?

Can it be therefore that only the already converted can see coming the ultimate collapse of Zionism and, with it, of Israel itself as the exclusivist state of Jews?

Racism has always been the lifeblood of Israel. Zionism rests on the fundamental belief that Jews have superior national, human, and natural rights in the land, an inherently racist foundation that excludes any possibility of true democracy or equality of peoples. Israel's destructive rampage in Lebanon and Gaza is merely the natural next step in the evolution of such a founding ideology. Precisely because that ideology posits the exclusivity and superiority of one people's rights, it can accept no legal or moral restraints on its behavior and no territorial limits, for it needs an ever-expanding geography to accommodate those unlimited rights.

Zionism cannot abide encroachment or even the slightest challenge to its total domination over its own space -- not merely of the space within Israel's 1967 borders, but of the surrounding space as well, extending outward to geographical limits that Zionism has not yet seen fit to set for itself. Total domination means no physical threat and no demographic threat: Jews reign, Jews are totally secure, Jews always outnumber, Jews hold all military power, Jews control all natural resources, all neighbors are powerless and totally subservient. This was the message Israel tried to send with its attack on Lebanon: that neither Hizbullah nor anything in Lebanon that nurtures Hizbullah should continue to exist, for the sole reason that Hizbullah challenges Israel's supreme authority in the region and Israel cannot abide this effrontery. Zionism cannot coexist with any other ideology or ethnicity except in the preeminent position, for everyone and every ideology that is not Zionist is a potential threat.

In Lebanon, Israel attempted by its wildly reckless violence to destroy the nation, to make of it a killing zone where only Zionism would reign, where non-Jews would die or flee or prostrate themselves, as they had during the nearly quarter-century of Israel's last occupation, from 1978 to 2000. Observing the war in Beirut after the first week of bombing, describing the murder in an Israeli bombing raid of four Lebanese army logistics techs who had been mending power and water lines "to keep Beirut alive," British correspondent Robert Fisk wrote that it dawned on him that what Israel intended was that "Beirut is to die . . . No one is to be allowed to keep Beirut alive." Israeli Chief of Staff Dan Halutz (the man who four years ago when he headed the Israeli Air Force said he felt no psychological discomfort after one of his F-16s had dropped a one-ton bomb on an apartment building in Gaza in the middle of the night, killing 14 civilians, mostly children) pledged at the start of the Lebanon assault to take Lebanon back 20 years; 20 years ago Lebanon was not alive, its

southern third occupied by Israel, the remainder a decade into a hopelessly destructive civil war.

The cluster bombs are a certain sign of Israel's intent to remake Lebanon, at least southern Lebanon, into a region cleansed of its Arab population and unable to function except at Israel's mercy. Cluster bombs, of which Israel's U.S. provider is the world's leading manufacturer (and user, in places like Yugoslavia and Iraq), explode in mid-flight and scatter hundreds of small bombs over a several-acre area. Up to one-quarter of the bomblets fail to explode on impact and are left to be found by unsuspecting civilians returning to their homes. UN surveyors estimate that there are as many as 100,000 unexploded cluster bomblets strewn around in 400 bomb-strike sites in southern Lebanon. Scores of Lebanese children and adults have been killed and injured by this unexploded ordnance since the cease-fire last month.

Laying anti-personnel munitions in heavily populated civilian areas is not the surgical targeting of a military force in pursuit of military objectives; it is ethnic cleansing. Fully 90 percent of Israel's cluster-bomb strikes were conducted, according to UN humanitarian coordinator Jan Egelund, in the last 72 hours before the cease-fire took effect, when it was apparent that a UN cease-fire resolution was in the works. This can only have been a further effort, no doubt intended to be more or less a coup de grace, to depopulate the area. Added to the preceding month of bombing attacks that destroyed as much as 50 or in some cases 80 percent of the homes in many villages, that did vast damage to the nation's entire civilian infrastructure, that crippled a coastal power plant that continues to spill tons of oil and benzene-laden toxins along the Lebanese and part of the Syrian coastlines, and that killed over 1,000 civilians in residential apartment blocks, being transported in ambulances, and fleeing in cars flying white flags, Israel's war can only be interpreted as a mass act of ethnic cleansing, to keep the region safe for Jewish dominion.

In fact, approximately 250,000 people, by UN estimate, are unable to return to their homes because either the homes have been leveled or unexploded cluster bomblets and other ordnance have not yet been cleared by demining teams. This was not a war against Hizbullah, except incidentally. It was not a war against terror, as Israel and its U.S. acolytes would have us believe (indeed, Hizbullah was not conducting terrorist acts, but had been engaged in a sporadic series of military exchanges with Israeli forces along the border, usually initiated by Israel). This was a war for Israeli breathing space, for the absolute certainty that Israel would dominate the neighborhood. It was a war against a population that was not totally subservient, that had the audacity to harbor a force like Hizbullah that does not bow to Israel's will. It was a war on people and their way of thinking, people who are not Jewish and who do not act to promote Zionism and Jewish hegemony.

Israel has been doing this to its neighbors in one form or another since its creation. Palestinians have obviously been Zionism's longest suffering victims, and its most persistent opponents. The Zionists thought they had rid themselves of their most immediate problem, the problem at the very core of Zionism, in 1948 when they forced the flight of nearly two-thirds of the Palestinian population that stood in the way of establishing Israel as an exclusive Jewish-majority state. You can't have a Jewish state if most of your population is not Jewish. Nineteen years later, when Israel began to expand its borders with the capture of the West Bank and Gaza, those Palestinians who it thought had disappeared turned out to be still around after all, threatening the Zionists' Jewish hegemony.

In the nearly 40 years since then, Israeli policy has been largely directed -- with periodic time-outs for attacks on Lebanon -- toward making the Palestinians disappear for certain. The methods of ethnic cleansing are myriad: land theft, destruction of agricultural land and resources, economic strangulation, crippling restrictions on commerce, home demolition, residency permit revocation, outright deportation, arrest, assassination, family separation, movement restriction, destruction of

census and land ownership records, theft of tax monies, starvation. Israel wants all of the land of Palestine, including all of the West Bank and Gaza, but it cannot have a majority Jewish state in all of this land as long as the Palestinians are there. Hence the slow strangulation. In Gaza, where almost a million and a half people are crammed into an area less than one-tenth the size of Rhode Island, Israel is doing on a continuing basis what it did in Lebanon in a month's time -- killing civilians, destroying civilian infrastructure, making the place uninhabitable. Palestinians in Gaza are being murdered at the rate of eight a day. Maimings come at a higher rate. Such is the value of non-Jewish life in the Zionist scheme of things.

Israeli scholar Ilan Pappé calls it a slow genocide (ElectronicIntifada, September 2, 2006). Since 1948, every Palestinian act of resistance to Israeli oppression has been a further excuse for Israel to implement an ethnic cleansing policy, a phenomenon so inevitable and accepted in Israel that Pappé says "the daily business of slaying Palestinians, mainly children, is now reported in the internal pages of the local press, quite often in microscopic fonts." His prediction is that continued killing at this level either will produce a mass eviction or, if the Palestinians remain steadfast and continue to resist, as is far more likely, will result in an increasing level of killing. Pappé recalls that the world absolved Israel of responsibility and any accountability for its 1948 act of ethnic cleansing, allowing Israel to turn this policy "into a legitimate tool for its national security agenda." If the world remains silent again in response to the current round of ethnic cleansing, the policy will only escalate, "even more drastically."

And here is the crux of the situation today. Will anyone notice this horror? Has Israel, as proposed at the beginning, truly exposed by its wild summer campaign of ethnic cleansing in Lebanon and Gaza the total bankruptcy of its very founding idea, the essential illegitimacy of the Zionist principle of Jewish exclusivity? Can even the most deluded see this, or will they continue to be deluded and the world continue to turn away, excusing atrocity because it is committed by Israel in the name of keeping the neighborhood safe for Jews?

Since Israel's crazed run through Lebanon began, numerous clear-eyed observers in the alternative and the European and Arab media have noted the new moral nudity of Israel, and of its U.S. backer, with an unusual degree of bluntness. Also on many tongues is a new awareness of growing Arab and Muslim resistance to the staggering viciousness of Israeli-U.S. actions. Palestinian-British scholar Karma Nabulsi, writing in the Guardian in early August, laments the "indiscriminate wrath of an enemy driven by an existential mania that cannot be assuaged, only stopped." American scholar Virginia Tilley (Counterpunch, August 5, 2006) observes that any kind of normal, peaceful existence is anathema to Israel, for it "must see and treat its neighbors as an existential threat in order to justify . . . its ethnic/racial character." Even before the Lebanon war, but after Gaza had begun to be starved, political economist Edward Herman (Z Magazine, March 2006) condemned Israel's "long-term ethnic cleansing and institutionalized racism" and the hypocritical way in which the West and the western media accept and underwrite these policies "in violation of all purported enlightenment values."

Racism underlies the Israeli-U.S. neocon axis that is currently running amok in the Middle East. The inherent racism of Zionism has found a natural ally in the racist imperial philosophy espoused by the neoconservatives of the Bush administration. The ultimate logic of the Israeli-U.S. global war, writes Israeli activist Michel Warschawski of the Alternative Information Center in Jerusalem (July 30, 2006) is the "full ethnicization" of all conflicts, "in which one is not fighting a policy, a government or specific targets, but a 'threat' identified with a community" -- or, in Israel's case, with all non-Jewish communities.

The basically racist notion of a clash of civilizations, being promoted both by the Bush administration

and by Israel, provides the rationale for the assaults on Palestine and Lebanon. As Azmi Bishara, a leading Palestinian member of Israel's Knesset, has observed (al-Ahram, August 10-16, 2006), if the Israeli-U.S. argument that the world is divided into two distinct and incompatible cultures, us vs. them, is accurate, then the notion that "we" operate by a double standard loses all moral opprobrium, for it becomes the natural order of things. This has always been Israel's natural order of things: in Israel's world and that of its U.S. supporters, the idea that Jews and the Jewish culture are superior to and incompatible with surrounding peoples and cultures is the very basis of the state.

In the wake of Israel's failure in Lebanon, Arabs and Muslims have a sense, for the first time since Israel's implantation in the heart of the Arab Middle East almost 60 years ago, that Israel in its arrogance has badly overreached and that its power and its reach can be limited. The "ethnicization" of the global conflict that Michel Warschawski speaks of -- the arrogant colonial approach of old, now in a new high-tech guise backed by F-16s and nuclear weapons, that assumes Western and Israeli superiority and posits a kind of apocalyptic clash between the "civilized" West and a backward, enraged East -- has been seen for what it is because of Israel's mad assault on Lebanon. What it is is a crude racist assertion of power by a Zionist regime pursuing absolute, unchallenged regional hegemony and a neoconservative regime in the United States pursuing absolute, unchallenged global hegemony. As Palestinian commentator Rami Khouri observed in an interview with Charlie Rose a week into the Lebanon war, Hizbullah in Lebanon and Hamas in Palestine, having both grown out of earlier Israeli wars of hegemony, are the political response of populations "that have been degraded and occupied and bombed and killed and humiliated repeatedly by the Israelis, and often with the direct or indirect acquiescence, or, as we see now, the direct support of the United States."

Those oppressed populations are now fighting back. No matter how much Arab leaders in Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia may bow to the U.S. and Israel, the Arab people now recognize the fundamental weakness of Israel's race-based culture and polity and have a growing confidence that they can ultimately defeat it. The Palestinians in particular have been at this for 60 years, never disappearing despite Israel's best designs, never failing to remind Israel and the world of their existence. They will not succumb now, and the rest of the Arab world is taking heart from their endurance and Hizbullah's.

Something in the way Israel operates, and in the way the United States supports Israel's method of operating, must change. More and more commentators, inside the Arab world and outside, have begun to notice this, and a striking number are audacious enough to predict some sort of end to Zionism in the racist, exclusivist form in which it now exists and functions. This does not mean throwing the Jews into the sea. Israel will not be defeated militarily. But it can be defeated psychologically, which means putting limits on its hegemony, stopping its marauding advance through its neighborhood, ending Jewish racial/religious domination over other peoples.

Rami Khouri contends that the much greater public support throughout the Arab world for Hizbullah and Hamas is "a catastrophe" both for Israel and for the United States because it means resistance to their imperial designs. Khouri does not go further in his predictions, but others do, seeing at least in vague outline the vision of a future in which Israel no longer enjoys ultimate dominion. Gilad Atzmon, an ex-Israeli living in Britain, a jazz musician and thinker, sees Hizbullah's victory in Lebanon as signaling the defeat of what he calls global Zionism, by which he means the Israeli/U.S. neocon axis. It is the Lebanese, Palestinian, Iraqi, Afghani, and Iranian people, he says, who are "at the vanguard of the war for humanity and humanism," while Israel and the U.S. spread destruction and death, and more and more Europeans and Americans, recognizing this, are falling off the Zionist/neocon bandwagon. Atzmon talks about Israel as, ultimately, "an historic event" and a "dead entity."

Many others see similar visions. Commentators increasingly discuss the possibility of Israel, its myth of invincibility having been deflated, going through a South Africa-like epiphany, in which its leadership somehow recognizes the error of its racist ways and in a surge of humanitarian feeling renounces Zionism's inequities and agrees that Jews and Palestinians should live in equality in a unitary state. British MP George Galloway (Guardian, August 31, 2006) foresees the possibility of "an FW de Klerk moment" emerging in Israel and among its international backers when, as occurred in South Africa, a "critical mass of opposition" overwhelms the position of the previously invincible minority and the leadership is able to justify transferring power on the basis that doing so later under duress will be far less favorable. Short of such peaceful transition, along with a move to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Galloway along with many others -- sees only "war, war and more war, until one day it is Tel Aviv which is on fire and the Israeli leaders' intransigence brings the whole state down on their heads."

This increasingly appears to be the shape of the future: either Israel and its neocon supporters in the United States can dismantle Zionism's most egregious aspects by agreeing to establish a unitary state in Palestine inhabited by the Palestinians and Jews whose land this is, or the world will face a conflagration of a scale not fully imaginable now.

Just as Hizbullah is an integral part of Lebanon, not to be destroyed by the bombing of bridges and power plants, the Palestinians before their expulsion in 1948 were Palestine and still are Palestine. By hitting the Palestinians where they lived, in the literal and the colloquial sense, Israel left them with only a goal and a vision. That vision is justice and redress in some form, whether redress means ultimately defeating Zionism and taking back Palestine, or reconciling with Israel on the condition that it act like a decent neighbor and not a conqueror, or finally joining with Israeli Jews to form a single state in which no people has superior rights . In Lebanon, Israel again seemed bent on imposing its will, its dominion, its culture and ethnicity on another Arab country. It never worked in Palestine, it has not worked in Lebanon, and it will not work anywhere in the Arab world.

We have reached a moral crossroads. In the "new Middle East" defined by Israel, Bush, and the neocons, only Israel and the U.S. may dominate, only they may be strong, only they may be secure. But in the just world that lies on the other side of that crossroads, this is unacceptable. Justice can ultimately prevail.

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<http://www.counterpunch.org/christison09122006.html>

Cleaves Alternative News. <http://cleaves.lingama.net/news/story-305.html>