

Gaslit Nation Transcript

19 May 2021

“Indicted Criminal Netanyahu Starts a War to Cling to Power”

<https://www.patreon.com/posts/indicted-starts-51428373>

Cori Bush:

St. Louis and I rise today in solidarity with the Palestinian people and in memory of our brother, Bassem Masri, a Ferguson activist who was with us on the front lines of our uprising for justice following the police murder of Michael Brown Jr. Bassem was a St. Louis Palestinian. Bassem also lived in Jerusalem, Palestine. Bassem was one of us. He showed up ready.

Cori Bush:

As a Palestinian, he was ready to resist, to rebel, to rise up with us as our St Louis community mourned Mike Brown Jr.'s state-sanctioned murder and as we demanded an end to the militarized police occupation of our communities. Palestinians know what state violence, militarized policing and occupation of their communities look like, and they've lived the reality of having to go through checkpoints while trying to live their lives. They know this reality and the reality of so much more.

Cori Bush:

So when heavily-militarized police forces showed up in Ferguson in 2014, Bassem and so many others of our St. Louis Palestinian community—our Palestinian siblings—showed up too. I remember sitting in a circle on the grass near where Michael Brown Jr. was murdered, and I remember them describing to us what to do when militarized law enforcement shot us with rubber bullets or when they tear gassed us. I remember learning that the same equipment that they use to brutalize us is the same equipment that we send to the Israeli military to police and brutalize Palestinians.

Cori Bush:

I remember Bassem putting his life on the line with us. I remember him live streaming for the whole world to see our struggle. I remember our solidarity, and I remember the harassment, the extortion, the brutalization he faced for resisting with us. That harassment, that extortion, that brutalization by a heavily-armed militarized presence in our community, that's what we fund when our government sends our tax dollars to the Israeli military.

Cori Bush:

St. Louis sent me here to save lives. Bassem's loved ones and his community, our St. Louis community, sent me here to save lives. So that means we oppose our money going to fund militarized policing, occupation and systems of violent oppression and trauma. We are anti-war, we are anti-occupation, and we are anti-apartheid, period. If this body is looking for something productive to do with \$3 million, instead of funding a military that polices and kills Palestinians, I have some communities in St. Louis City and in St. Louis County where that money can go.

Cori Bush:

Where we desperately need investment, where we are hurting, where we need help. Let us prioritize funding there. Prioritize funding life, not destruction. So today, we remember Bassem. We remember his resistance in the face of militarized police occupation as a St. Louisan and a Palestinian. We lost him to a

health crisis but we remember his words today, "Until all our children are safe we will continue to fight for our rights in Palestine and in Ferguson. We stand with you in solidarity."

Sarah Kendzior:

I'm Sarah Kendzior, the author of the bestselling books, *The View From Flyover Country* and *Hiding in Plain Sight*.

Andrea Chalupa:

I'm Andrea Chalupa, a journalist and filmmaker, and the writer and producer of the journalistic thriller, *Mr. Jones*. And I just realized I'm wearing my mask while recording so I have to take it off.

Sarah Kendzior:

[laughs] Oh my God. And this is *Gaslit Nation*, a podcast covering corruption in the United States and rising autocracy around the world. The opening clip you heard was my representative, Cori Bush, of St. Louis, Missouri, commemorating my friend, Bassem Masri, on the House floor while advocating for Palestinian rights. Every word of this sentence would have seemed unimaginable just a year ago, and it shows the incredible change on display this week as Americans increasingly and rightfully identify Netanyahu's Israel as an apartheid state and call for the protection of Palestinians.

Sarah Kendzior:

Cori Bush was not alone. She was joined in Congress by several Democratic colleagues, and to my surprise, she's been joined by some prominent mainstream media figures, including Mehdi Hasan, Ali Velshi and John Oliver, who all made honest assessments about Israeli state brutality that would have likely gotten them fired years ago just for speaking the truth. This is the way it's been in U.S. media for as long as I can remember and it seems like it's finally starting to change. Unfortunately, it took a large-scale, horrific, and well-documented atrocity—an atrocity aided by the U.S. government through its unconditional funding of indifference to Israel—to bring this change about. In a minute, I'm going to go through a chronology of events, but first I want to establish some ground rules.

Sarah Kendzior:

As we at *Gaslit Nation* have said many times, you should never conflate a corrupt and brutal regime with the people who have to live under it, particularly when they are often victims of that regime themselves. You should know this already. You all lived under the Trump administration and you likely felt it did not represent you, although it did of course represent the views of some American extremists. The same is true of Israelis living under Netanyahu's far-right regime, and the same is true of Palestinians living under Hamas. The victims of this crisis are ordinary people trying to live their lives.

Sarah Kendzior:

This week the victims were overwhelmingly Palestinian civilians. As of Tuesday morning, the Israeli government had killed over 200 Palestinians, over 60 of whom were children. In Gaza, the Israeli government attacked Palestinian hospitals, schools, media offices, places of worship, homes, and critical infrastructure. The vast majority of Palestinians who were hurt, displaced, or died in these attacks were not Hamas operatives, but innocent people.

Sarah Kendzior:

Israel has been unable to provide convincing evidence that the Palestinians they killed were even in proximity to Hamas. Not that this would justify the mass slaughter of families and civilians. There is no excuse: these are war crimes. In Israel, the casualty count was much lower. A total of 10 people were killed, including two children, but no civilian death is acceptable and Israelis are understandably frightened as the conflict goes on and they hide in shelters from Hamas rockets, the majority of which are thwarted by Israel's Iron Dome defense system.

Sarah Kendzior:

While this conflict was instigated by the Israeli government and military officials, it is important not to conflate ordinary Israelis with the instigators or assume that violence is what they want. It is also essential to never conflate the Jewish diaspora with the State of Israel or to assume that Israel somehow reflects the interests of all Jewish Americans, or worse, to claim that Israel is the real country of Jewish Americans and that Netanyahu is their real leader. That is the bigoted argument that Donald Trump made throughout his presidency and it's being reiterated again by right-wing pundits who are calling Jewish American Democrats "traitors".

Sarah Kendzior:

This rhetoric is particularly appalling since many Jewish American activists have been loudly advocating for Palestinian rights, and they are now facing backlash for it within their own communities as well as threats from White nationalists. It is not easy to take this stance, particularly in a time of rising antisemitism. We condemn attempts to conflate Jewish Americans with the Israeli government, and we condemn the ethno-nationalist bigotry that underlies it.

Sarah Kendzior:

And so now for a roundup of the last two weeks. How did this conflict start? Well, for a deep dive into the region we recommend you listen to our interview with Palestinian activist and writer, Iyad el-Baghdadi, which aired in April, and you can also get his book, *The Middle East Crisis Factory*. But for now, I'm going to run through only the events of the past two weeks, because while some media coverage has improved, most outlets are still beginning the narrative where it always begins in U.S. media; with an attack by Hamas. This is not how the recent conflict started and it is critical that the course of events be accurately recorded. Note that due to time constraints (because this is a podcast), this will be a summary of highlights and not a comprehensive account.

Sarah Kendzior:

I'm going to begin with the eviction of Palestinians in Sheikh Jarrah in East Jerusalem. Israel was formed by the forced removal of Palestinians from their land and this process continues today as Netanyahu and other right-wingers encourage Jewish settlers to kick Palestinians out of their homes and take those homes over. Though this has been referred to as a "real estate dispute" by people like Jared Kushner, it is in reality a violent act that cumulatively amounts to ethnic cleansing. In recent months, the neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah has been a key site of disputes. I'm going to play a clip of a Jewish settler, who you can hear by his accent is American, trying to displace a Palestinian family. This clip went viral on May 5th.

Palestinian Homeowner:

You are stealing my house.

Jewish Settler:

And if I don't steal it, someone else is going to steal it.

Palestinian Homeowner:

No. No one, no one. Hey, hey, hey... is allowed to steal it young man. Jacob, you know this is not your house.

Jewish Settler:

Yes, but if I go, you don't go back, so what's the problem? Why are you yelling at me? I didn't do this, I didn't do this.

Palestinian Homeowner:

But you...

Jewish Settler:

It's easy to yell at me, but I didn't do this.

Sarah Kendzior:

The Palestinians that are the targets of forced displacement are often the descendants of one of the 700,000 families who were ethnically cleansed by Israel during the Nakba, or "catastrophe", in 1948, when the nation-state of Israel was formed shortly after World War II and the Holocaust. There are layers upon layers of trauma and persecution embedded in this conflict, but it is certainly not a debate about real estate ownership.

Sarah Kendzior:

It should be noted that this settler was following the guidance of the Israeli government. He was permitted to embrace ethnic supremacism and promised a reward for doing so. The Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem, Fleur Hassan-Nahoum, told the New York Times on May 8th, "Of course, there are laws that some people might consider as favoring Jews. It's a Jewish state. It's here to protect the Jewish people." Previously such sentiments were often tempered or hidden but Israel's hard-right turn has emboldened supremacists and put Palestinians and other Arabs living within Israel's borders in danger from both state and mob violence which I will describe in a bit.

Sarah Kendzior:

And so all of this was taking place at the end of Ramadan and Palestinians were gathering nightly to pray at the Al-Aqsa Mosque, which is located on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. The Al-Aqsa Mosque is one of the holiest sites in Islam, which made it all the more shocking when Israeli forces invaded it repeatedly, attacking praying Palestinians with tear gas and beating them with clubs. Israeli police also beat up the journalists who were covering the beatings.

Sarah Kendzior:

On May 10th, Hamas retaliated by sending two rockets toward Israel. This attack coincided with Jerusalem Day, an Israeli holiday celebrating the takeover of Jerusalem's Old City during the 1967 Six-Day War. As a result, large crowds of Israelis amassed near Al-Aqsa. At one point, a tree caught fire near the mosque and a large crowd of Israeli men cheered and danced as the flames burned in the background.

Sarah Kendzior:

On May 11th and 12th, violence broke out in mixed Arab and Jewish cities within Israel in a development that shocked long-term scholars and residents of the region. In an act that is familiar to anyone that's watched the Trump administration and its interaction with American police, Netanyahu's regime gave both violent Israeli police and Jewish extremist mobs license to assault Muslim citizens of Israel. The windows of stores owned by Arabs were smashed and Israeli celebrated the destruction in scenes that scholar of fascism Jason Stanley said were reminiscent of the Kristallnacht attacks on Jews in Nazi Germany. Here's an audio clip of that night. We will post the full video on our Patreon page so you can see for yourself.

Audio Clip of Kristallnacht attacks on Jews in Nazi Germany:

You go. I mean it. You heard it. Move, move, move.

Sarah Kendzior:

Night after night the terror continued, armed extremists wearing an insignia that was half Star of David and half symbol of The Punisher, a symbol that's embraced by groups like the Proud Boys in the West, terrorized Muslims on the street chanting, "Death to Arabs." The extremist mobs marked the doors of the houses of Muslims to show other extremists whom to target. Muslim families tried to remove external signs of their identity, like Ramadan lanterns, from their homes as the militias moved in for the kill. Videos show Israeli mobs breaking into Arab apartments often abetted by the Israeli police and beating up Arab men while their wives and children scream in terror. This was all happening as Muslim families were attempting to celebrate Ramadan.

Sarah Kendzior:

On May 12th, Israeli journalist Elizabeth Tsurkov posted on Twitter, "The Jewish mobs rampaging tonight organized themselves via Telegram and Facebook groups. They spoke explicitly about using weapons and killing Arabs. All the information below was provided to Israeli police by two Israeli NGOs. The police didn't arrest anyone." That same night, Palestinian journalist, Rula Jebreal, described what it was like for her family: "Palestinian families including mine are terrorized. My sister can hear mob threats. She locked her door with furniture, turned off the lights, fearing arms Jewish militias will start attacking homes. She just whispered to take care of her kids if she doesn't survive."

Sarah Kendzior:

There have been countless tweets like this from Palestinians over the past two weeks. Human rights activist, Joey Ayoub, wrote on May 14th, "My grandfather was from Haifa and I'm relieved he died last year so that he never had to see scenes of Jewish supremacists literally hunting human beings in his home city." The attacks in ethnically-mixed cities were shocking but the greatest horror was reserved for the residents of Gaza. Gaza, a tiny strip of land barricaded on all sides but that which faces the sea, is essentially an open air prison for Palestinians. They lack bomb shelters, clean water, and often electricity, medicine, food, and other basic necessities of life.

Sarah Kendzior:

They now lack a COVID-testing facility because Israel bombed it last week and they have long lacked access to the vaccine despite Israel leading the world in vaccinations. They're unable to travel freely and they have nowhere to run when they are attacked. Once the first major round of Hamas rockets were

fired, the Israeli military attacked Gaza mercilessly. They wiped out entire families. One Palestinian lost nearly 30 family members in one night. The Israelis targeted homes, hospitals, roads, and schools.

Sarah Kendzior:

In the West, the media at first tried desperately to “both sides” this conflict until it hit too close to home when on May 15th, Israel attacked an office and residential building that held the offices of The Associated Press and Al-Jazeera. The journalists were unable to get their equipment and archives out before the building was destroyed. Members of the AP said they narrowly avoided being killed. While the Israeli government has said the building was harboring members of Hamas, there is no evidence of this. Even Antony Blinken, who has taken Israel's side throughout this conflict, has admitted that much.

*[begin advertisement]*

Sarah Kendzior:

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Sarah Kendzior:

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Sarah Kendzior:

Furthermore, Israel's rationale makes no sense. They gave a warning for people in the building to evacuate before they destroyed it. If Hamas operatives were inside, they would have evacuated too, so what was the point of demolishing the building? We know the point. It was to terrorize the press who report on Israeli war crimes from within Gaza and to destroy the evidence that they had already obtained. This is what happens in authoritarian regimes. This is what happens in apartheid states.

Sarah Kendzior:

It's notable that Israel carried out this particular act of violence against the media on the anniversary of the Nakba, the massacre of Palestinians that they have tried to block out from world memory. As Orwell said, "He who controls the past controls the future," and part of the Israeli government's aim is to annihilate the Palestinian past. Over the next few days, the death toll in Gaza mounted and the greatest victims of all were Palestinian children, who comprise nearly a third of those murdered by Israeli forces. This is a clip of a ten-year-old girl in Gaza describing how she felt after the attacks.

10-year-old Palestinian girl:

I'm always sick. I'm always... I don't know. I can't do anything. Through all of this, what do you expect me to do? Fix it? I'm only 10. I can't even deal with this anymore. I just want to be a doctor or anything to help my people but I can't. I'm just a kid. I don't even know what to do. I get scared, but not really that much. I'd do anything for my people but I don't know what to do, I'm just 10. I'm just 10. All of this, when I see it I literally cry every day, saying to myself, "Why do we deserve this? What did we do to this?" My family said they just hate us, they just don't like us because we are Muslims. Why does Muslims act for you like that? We're just kids. You see all of the kids around me? They're just kids. Why would you just send a missile to them and kill them? It's not fair. It's not fair.

Sarah Kendzior:

And what was the U.S. reaction to this unrelenting violence, this widely disproportionate devastation? It was to continue backing and funding it. Despite pleas from the international community to stop. Three times in one week, the U.S. government blocked a joint statement from the UN Security Council calling for an immediate ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. They were the lone holdout. Even more disgustingly, on May 17th, the Biden administration approved the sale of \$735 million in "precision-guided" weapons to Israel.

Sarah Kendzior:

This deal was originally made on May 5th, which is when Israeli aggression accelerated. Some members of Congress, like Representative Gregory Meeks, have implored Biden not to go through with the weapons deal but so far Biden has not budged. Netanyahu behaves with utter impunity because the United States lets him get away with it. By providing aid Israel with no conditions, the U.S. ensures the continued death of Palestinian civilians and the continued violence of a far-right ethno-state that seems, at this point, to be intent on genocide.

Sarah Kendzior:

The U.S. stance is immoral, unjust, and dangerous. It not only leads to the wide-scale murder of Palestinian civilians, but it also endangers Americans and it endangers the Jewish diaspora. Antisemitic rhetoric and attacks are rising in response to U.S. support for Israeli war crimes, and fascists around the world and within the United States have embraced the Israeli state cause. So I'm left to wonder, why are Biden, and Blinken, and other members of this administration continuing to back this regime and its atrocities? Andrea, what are your thoughts?

Andrea Chalupa:

Well, I have a lot of thoughts on this. It's just plain and simple: Netanyahu is a corrupt, indicted criminal trying to avoid prison by starting a war and Biden should treat him like Biden treats the Big Lie. Netanyahu is totally legitimate, and I'm going to go into my thoughts because I prepared something as well because this is dark. What is happening is dark. We've been covering corruption under Netanyahu and growing authoritarianism under Netanyahu, we've been referencing it throughout because our focus on the show is fighting international crime syndicates, Kremlin mafia, and all of their useful blood money lobbyists throughout the world in capitals like London and in New York and elsewhere.

Andrea Chalupa:

And so obviously Netanyahu comes up a lot in those conversations, so we've been watching eagerly in the past several weeks to see how the most recent Israeli election would go. And everyone was wondering, is it possible? Is Netanyahu—the longest serving prime minister—finally going to be pushed

out and face some sort of justice? And then instead, Netanyahu unleashes a war, killing all these innocent people, especially several dozen children. He's a monster. He's a monster.

Andrea Chalupa:

So I'm going to go into something I prepared because this is as you can probably hear in Sarah's voice, this is difficult to cover. This is horrendous and it's this last gasp, hopefully, of this monster fighting back at the end of a horror film, because this feels very much like a horror film. So I'm going to cover my points, just to stress that Netanyahu is very much the original Trump. He's an aspiring autocrat. He uses his far-right base as a battering ram against his political opponents. Like Trump represents the worst in America, Netanyahu represents the very worst of Israel.

Andrea Chalupa:

Helping Netanyahu in any way, enabling Netanyahu, is enabling an indicted criminal and aspiring autocrat who is closely aligned with both Trump and Putin. Netanyahu belongs in the Hague. He should face charges in the Hague. It will be the downfall of the Democratic Party in 2022 and 2024 if Biden and Harris, along with Pelosi, divide Democrats by serving such a blatant and brazen criminal. This is not an exaggeration. This is not hysteria. We can see with our own eyes the crimes Netanyahu is carrying out before the world. Biden, Harris, and Pelosi discredit themselves before the voters they need to stay in power and keep Congress by enabling Netanyahu's slaughter, committed just to stay in power and avoid prison.

Andrea Chalupa:

Biden has said that he wants America back on the global stage, to be a global leader again. Biden will not achieve this by propping up and legitimizing Netanyahu. The global community largely condemns Israel's ongoing genocide of the Palestinian people. I was in the Council of Europe, for instance, in 2015 for the World Forum for Democracy. During a question and answer session with the audience and some European dignitaries on stage, a young activist stood up from the audience and simply, like so many in the audience, stated his name and where he's from.

Andrea Chalupa:

He stated his name and that he was from Palestine. The entire Council of Europe, filled with activists and dignitaries from around the world, burst out in applause. They applauded spontaneously and instantaneously that this young activist stated Palestine and not Israel as his home. The world wants justice for the Palestinian people. America is in the minority by continuing to prop up, overlook, excuse, and gaslight when it comes to Israeli atrocities against the Palestinians. With the exception of Russia and other post-Soviet states that tend to have conservative or authoritarian governments, the world largely does not support Netanyahu. To underline this point, in March of this year, the International Criminal Court in the Hague, set up to ensure another Nazi-engineered Holocaust never happens again, launched an investigation into alleged Israeli crimes in Palestinian Territories. I'm going to read now from The Associated Press.

Andrea Chalupa:

"Israel captured the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip in the 1967 Mideast War. The Palestinians claimed all three areas for a future independent state, a position that has widespread international support." The U.S. taking a stronger stance on indicted criminal Netanyahu is very much in line with the global leadership Biden has been trying to send the American people and our allies.



Netanyahu's Israel is very similar now to Putin's Russia. This is what Republican and Democratic party leaders in America are enabling.

Andrea Chalupa:

I'm going to read now from this must-read deep dive in Vox, which we'll link to in the show notes for this episode which you can find as always on our Patreon page. "The West Bank's Palestinian residents who live under the grinding realities of occupation are not Israeli citizens and don't have a voice in the policies that profoundly shape their lives. The Israeli settlers, many of whom moved to the West Bank with the explicit ideological purpose of seizing control of Palestinian land, do. Israel is a democratic country within its internationally-recognized borders, but it maintains a military occupation of land on which millions of people live while denying those people the right to vote."

Andrea Chalupa:

"Under Prime Minister Netanyahu, this inherent instability has started to tip toward outright authoritarianism throughout the territory under Israeli control. In a 2019 poll conducted by the non-partisan Israeli Democracy Institute, a majority of Israelis, 54%, said their democracy was 'in grave danger.' Since Netanyahu took office in 2009, the nationalist right has mounted an assault on liberal institutions and eroded democracy in Israel. The Israeli parliament has passed a bill formally defining Israel as a state for its Jewish citizens, implicitly slotting the sizable minority of Arab-Muslim Israeli citizens into a form of second class citizenship."

Andrea Chalupa:

"Another recent law promoted as a funding transparency effort makes it tougher for human rights groups to work in the country." Russia has these kinds of laws as well, I just want to point out. "A third allows Israeli officials to bar foreigners who advocate a boycott of Israel from entering the country. The law was used to deport Omar Shakir, an American citizen, and the Director of Human Rights Watch's Israel-Palestine division."

Andrea Chalupa:

"Netanyahu's government has launched an attack on the court system. It has cultivated allies in the private sector, NGOs, and the right-wing press, funded in part by wealthy Americans that aim to stifle and de-legitimized dissent. It has corrupted the mainstream media. Netanyahu allegedly struck a deal with a major newspaper to exchange political favors for favorable coverage." I'm just going to note, that describes one of the several corruption cases against Netanyahu. "When this scandal was exposed, Netanyahu was indicted on bribery charges. His response has been to attack the media that reported on the scandal,—” Sound familiar? “demonize the prosecutors who brought the case,—” Sound familiar? “and attempt to pass a law immunizing himself from prosecution while in office.”

Andrea Chalupa:

"Israel is heading down a path already trod by countries like Turkey, Hungary, and Venezuela, former democracies whose elected leaders have gradually and through mostly legal processes twisted the state's institutions to the point where the public no longer has a meaningful choice in who rules them. The Jewish state is not so far gone as Hungary, it still has competitive elections and a free press, but the past 10 years have put new strains on these core institutions. A country that has long prided itself as 'the only democracy in the Middle East' seems to be doing its damndest to give up its claim to being a democracy at all. Some of the causes of this anti-democratic drift are uniquely Israeli. No advanced

democracy maintains anything like the occupation of the West Bank. The foundational Zionist vision—state that's both meaningfully Jewish and democratic—leads to a constant high wire act in a country whose citizens are around 25% non-Jewish.”

Andrea Chalupa:

"But while these difficulties are particular to Israel, the Israeli experience also resembles that of other imperial democracies, most notably the United States. Like Israel, the United States suffers from a bedrock tension between its nominally egalitarian founding vision and its deep historical commitment to the supremacy of a particular ethno-cultural group. In both cases, a revanchist ethno-nationalism has handed power to a political faction willing to demolish democratic institutions in pursuit of maintaining the majority group's power." There's a reason Donald Trump and Netanyahu get along so well.

Andrea Chalupa:

I want to underline something from this Vox article which we'll link to once again in the show notes. The American far-right and the Israeli far-right are united in a war against democracy and Democratic Party leaders are enabling this by legitimizing Netanyahu, an illegitimate prime minister who would be in jail if he wasn't so skilled—like Trump—in the dark arts of corruption and strong man authoritarianism. I'm going to read this final piece from Vox.

Andrea Chalupa:

"It is a process of slow state capture by the ascendant Israeli right, bending core institutions against democracy through the passage of new laws and attacks on checks and balances. Arab Israelis have been increasingly marginalized as a matter of law, while both Jewish Israelis and diaspora Jews critical of the government's policies have had their freedoms attacked."

Andrea Chalupa:

So understand that what's been going on under Netanyahu is a warning to us the United States, especially Biden, Harris, and Pelosi. If you do not openly show accountability for the indicted, corrupt criminal Netanyahu, you're going to divide your party. And as we all know, if we're divided, we lose. We've seen that again and again. And if we're divided going into 2022, the Netanyahus of America—the Republican Party, which gladly supports a genocidal mass murdering corrupt Kremlin mafia-backed far-right Netanyahu Israel, and dismantling democracy generally—they're going to come to power in 2022 and they could come to power in 2024 if the Democrats stay divided.

Andrea Chalupa:

And what's going to happen if the Netanyahu allies in America—the Republican Party—are in power, they're going to learn from their mistakes under Trump and ramp up the dismantling of our democracy, and you're going to see the same attack on dissent, on human rights. You're going to see the same legalized corruption and legalized authoritarianism that's rapidly taking place in Israel under Netanyahu. It's going to speed up here in the U.S., and once it's entrenched—as we've seen with Netanyahu—it's very difficult to get rid of.

Andrea Chalupa:

These aspiring autocrats like Netanyahu, like Trump, try to start wars. They try to incite violence. They try to engineer a Capitol coup, right? We've seen this again and again. Democracy depends on the good guys. So Biden, Harris, and Pelosi, this is all on you. You need to keep us united by recognizing reality,

recognizing what we can all see with our eyes. This is a mass slaughter for one man's personal ambitions, for him and his Trumpian family, because if you know Netanyahu and his family, they are the Trumps through and through. They even have a worthless son who runs his mouth all the time. Okay? They are the Israeli Trumps. Please do not sacrifice our democracy here at home for these corrupt criminals.

Sarah Kendzior:

Yeah, absolutely. And one more thing that links them, although I want to point out that Netanyahu was good friends with Fred Trump, good friends with Donald Trump, and in a second I'm going to talk about the relationship between the Netanyahu family and the Kushner family. These relationships go back decades. But, of course, a large part of this is Netanyahu trying to avoid prison, trying to stay in power, trying to consolidate power, but just like Trump, he taps into the worst and most dangerous elements of Israeli political culture—purges his enemies, packs courts, manipulates media, everything you're saying—as part of a broader project.

Sarah Kendzior:

There are people now in the Israeli government, the Kahanists, who were banned, the people who followed Meir Kahane. And if you could get a copy of it, I highly recommend Robert I. Friedman's book about him. It's one of the most terrifying books I've ever read. Friedman was the author of *Red Mafiya*, the book about the Russian mafia that came out, I think, in 2001 before he died shortly thereafter.

Sarah Kendzior:

But anyway, my point is that both Trump and Netanyahu, both embody and exacerbate pre existing problems within failing democracies. I mean, that's how I would describe both Israel and the United States at this point. The United States held, but held by a thread in January and easily could have gone further down the road. And then as you said... I think we will. And I'm going to get into this I think maybe next week because I want to make sure I flesh this out.

Sarah Kendzior:

But one of the many reasons that I wanted Pelosi gone—and God knows we've talked enough about this on the show, about her refusal to impeach Trump, her lies about the impeachment process, her refusal to support Black Lives Matter and civil rights, her refusal to impeach George Bush, her thanking George Floyd for dying, I could go on with many of the things she'd done, the attacks on The Squad, the refusal to get them security, et cetera, et cetera.

Sarah Kendzior:

She is particularly and uniquely bad on the topic of Israel. And, again, I'll flesh this out next week and provide all the documentation you need, but we've played this clip on the show before where Pelosi said back in late 2018 when she was meeting with Haim Saban—the major Democratic donor to the Democratic Party who defines himself as a one-issue donor and his issue is Israel—that if the Capitol crumbled to the ground, the one thing that would remain is our aid and our cooperation with Israel. And it was at that moment that I feared something was going to happen to the Capitol, and I'm not saying Pelosi, of course, attacked the Capitol, but I was like, "What in the world? Where is this even coming from? Why are you talking about the Capitol crumbling to the ground and why, if it did, if we were attacked, like say we were on 9/11, why in the world would your priority be any foreign country?"

Sarah Kendzior:

This didn't even have to do with Israel. She could have said our greatest priority would be Canada and I would have the same reaction. It's like, of course, the priority should be helping America, helping Americans who would be traumatized by an attack on the Capitol as we all are now, because the attack on the Capitol has happened and their priority is indeed Israel.

Sarah Kendzior:

And this goes way back with the Pelosi family. In Haifa, one of the cities I mentioned where these attacks on Arab stores, Arab homes, et cetera, are taking place, there's a stadium named for Pelosi's father who was mayor of Baltimore and who was also a supporter of violent Zionist movements. That's why he has a stadium named after him in Haifa. Pelosi has said that the creation of Israel was the greatest thing to happen in the 20th century, like, greater than civil rights, greater than women's rights, greater than all the scientific and technological innovations. No, it's Israel, not America., it's Israel.

Sarah Kendzior:

She keeps a collection of Israeli soldiers' dog tags. When 9/11 happened, she sang the Israeli national anthem. And she was speaking, I believe, to APAC or a similar organization, but that's a very strange thing to do, again, when your country is in mourning and when your country is America, why? Why would you do that? She also said when she was reassuring, I believe it was Saban or another donor, that she was selecting heads of congressional committees based on their, and this is her word not mine, on their "Israeli-ness," and which she defined as their loyalty to Israel. It didn't necessarily have to do with being Jewish, although that was true of most of the appointments she made.

Sarah Kendzior:

So I worry that there's a conflation there, that she's conflating people's ethnic and religious identity with their policy positions, which is not at all representative of what is actually happening in Congress. In fact, there were many Jewish Democrats who together jointly sent a letter condemning what Netanyahu is doing right now to Palestinians, condemning these war crimes. And so again, you cannot conflate these two disparate identities. Anyway, that's a long way of saying I really, really did not want Pelosi to continue as Speaker of the House. I think she's a dangerous person for our country right now and she's particularly dangerous on this issue.

Sarah Kendzior:

I'm going to bring all this out next week, but I want to turn to some other horrible people and their enablers in the Biden administration, and I'm going to start, of course, with Jared Kushner, who is really the nexus of this conflict. We've spoken many times on this show that when Trump was in power it was a transnational crime syndicate masquerading as a government. The same is true of Russia, the same is true of Israel, and the same is true of Saudi Arabia, and Kushner is involved in all of these countries. And that is one of the reasons that he even was in office. It was a delight for the Netanyahu family that Kushner was able to get there with such proximity to internal developments and state secrets.

Sarah Kendzior:

Anyway, I don't think that there's enough attention being paid to what the Trump administration was up to in the Middle East during its final months, in particular after the election but before the attempted January 6th coup. During that time, both Kushner and Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo—a rapture fiend—both made multiple visits to the region and what we worried about at the time was going to be

an attempt at a war with Iran, a war, both to sate their own fanaticism—this is particularly true of Pompeo who has wanted a war in Iran for his entire political career—but also to keep Trump in power.

Sarah Kendzior:

This did not happen, thankfully, but it does raise the question of, you know, well, what were they doing there? Why was Pompeo meeting with Mossad? Why was Jared meeting with all these different Arab countries? I mean, he says it's under the guise of seeking peace but that is not accurate. Notably, there were other visits in this time. For one, Trump allowed American spy for Israel, Jonathan Pollard, to leave the United States, which he had not been allowed to do until then, and fly to Israel on GOP mega donor Sheldon Adelson's private plane, and then he was warmly received by Netanyahu.

Sarah Kendzior:

So Jonathan Pollard is now in Israel with a ton of United States state secrets, although those secrets are probably not as up to date as the ones that Kushner has likely spilled. We've discussed on the show many times the relationship between the criminal Kushner clan and the criminal Netanyahu clan. The families are so close that Netanyahu used to stay in Jared Kushner's bedroom while visiting the U.S.. To be clear, not with Kushner in the bedroom, when Kushner was out of town.

Andrea Chalupa:

[laughs] They had bunk beds, okay? Netanyahu called top bunk.

Sarah Kendzior:

Yeah. It's not that salacious. We're going down a wild road, but not that wild. And we have also discussed, and I discussed in my book *Hiding in Plain Sight*, Kushner's settlement investments in the West Bank, his profiteering—which is an obvious conflict of interest—and the way that he used U.S. foreign policy to pay off his massive personal debt in particular with the deal with Qatar, as well as with... We've also discussed... It's just a list of Kushner corruption, I'm going to wrap it up or it'll be like a two-decade long show.

Sarah Kendzior:

We also have discussed his close relationship with Saudi Arabian tyrant MBS and his apparent role in the murder of journalist, Jamal Khashoggi, a Washington Post journalist. Kushner never intended to bring peace to the Middle East, he intended to bring profit to himself and strengthen Israel's power. The deals he brokered with Arab leaders in partnership with Israel may well have been to ensure that they would stand back and not intervene when the Israeli military brutally slaughtered Palestinians in Gaza and in the West Bank.

Sarah Kendzior:

And so that brings us back to Pompeo. In February, 2020, Netanyahu announced that he was confident he would successfully sabotage an ICC investigation into Israeli war crimes, and he had good reason to think that, because in the summer of 2020, Pompeo began targeting ICC Head, Fatou Bensouda, putting her on the Treasury sanction list at Netanyahu's request, which was of course a massive abuse of power from his position.

Sarah Kendzior:

You may be wondering who is stopping the ICC investigation into Israeli war crimes now, since Pompeo is no longer there, and the answer is Kamala Harris. In March, Al-Jazeera reported that Harris and Netanyahu spoke and agreed to oppose "the International Criminal Court's attempts to exercise its jurisdiction over Israeli personnel." Harris, then "emphasized the United States' unwavering commitment to Israel's security," and then Antony Blinken weighed in later and he said the same thing. And one can only assume that Biden agrees with both of them since he's currently showering Israel with money as Israel showers Gaza with missiles.

Sarah Kendzior:

And so, again, just stress this point, there is no difference between the Trump administration and the Biden administration when it comes to Palestinian rights. The Biden administration is continuing the Trump agenda minus the personal kleptocratic deals and it is an affront to international human rights law. On May 14th, as the current violence was playing out, Bensouda announced that she was going to continue the ICC investigation anyway. This is what she should be doing. We've increasingly seen human rights organizations, like Human Rights Watch, for example, released a very comprehensive account of how Israel is a apartheid state. This is something that people should be able to discuss and debate openly without fear of repercussions.

Sarah Kendzior:

And if you believe in democracy, if you believe in human rights, you should believe in it for everyone and you should want this transparency. You should want war crimes documented, you should want acts of terrorism documented, I don't know what you're so afraid of. I mean, I actually, I think I do because I wrote a whole book about it. But it needs to come out. This can no longer be a taboo topic and I don't think it's going to be, because I think Americans, especially younger Americans, see very clearly what's happening.

Sarah Kendzior:

We see videos of destruction. We see videos of settler violence. We see Jewish Americans, especially younger generations, standing up and saying, "Not in our name. We are not going to accept this." And it's something to behold. I think a change, at least in how we discuss this, is here and I only hope that a similar change in the actual conditions on the ground for Palestinians living in occupied territories, I hope that change comes as well.

Andrea Chalupa:

Yeah. I mean, this is a difficult subject to tackle. I want to just share personally, we've discussed a lot on the show, my sister Alexandra Chalupa, the consultant for the DNC who warned both Democratic and Republican Party leaders about the Kremlin's attack on our democracy in 2016 and she was relentlessly punished for it by the Kremlin and the Kremlin's assets, otherwise known as the Republican Party and Donald Trump and his family.

Andrea Chalupa:

My sister, to add more to her already dramatic life, growing up, my sister's two best friends happened to be a Jewish girl from Israel and a Palestinian Muslim. And these were my sister's best friends, childhood best friends. That made them older sisters to me. And so growing up I always saw this conflict through the eyes of families that I knew that helped to raise me, so it's not comfortable to talk about this. It's heartbreaking. And so we have to stress again, we're anti-Netanyahu, we're anti-corruption, we're

antiwar, we're anti the mass violence that Netanyahu has unleashed just to save himself. And we're anti the gaslighting, especially in the United States by Democratic leaders who should know better and who are openly betraying the values they're now trying to promote on the global stage.

Andrea Chalupa:

We're going to now look at the legal jeopardy that Netanyahu, like Trump, faces. Netanyahu was indicted for fraud, accepting bribes, and breach of trust, yet as prime minister he enjoys elite criminal impunity. Once again, sound familiar? This has created a political crisis in Israel where his party is losing seats in the parliament, but the political opposition to Netanyahu is so fractured and there are so many competing parties, it's been impossible, so far, to form a coalition to push Netanyahu out of power. Elections keep taking place but none so far have been able to break what's essentially a stalemate. Israel faces entering yet a fifth election, a fifth election in two years. That's called political instability.

Andrea Chalupa:

Before the horror of Gaza that was unleashed by Netanyahu as Sarah touched on earlier, on May 5th it was reported that Israel's president asked centrist leader and former finance minister Yair Lapid to form a ruling coalition. If he's successful in the coming weeks, Netanyahu is out of power and loses legal protection from being prime minister, meaning he can go to prison. So that's when, of course, in this hot water he finds himself in, we now have a war and dozens of children have been killed. Just like Trump tried to bring in the military, right?

Andrea Chalupa:

These tyrants, they do whatever it takes, kill innocent lives just to protect themselves, their families. It's a very tense time. There's a lot that could still happen and develop, and hopefully Netanyahu's war doesn't protect him from losing power, because it's so close. Israel stands a chance to finally rid themselves of Netanyahu.

Andrea Chalupa:

In addition to that and since we've been stressing throughout the show the similarities between Trump and Netanyahu, I want to share a story of another one of these similarities between these two... I don't even know what to call them anymore, but on a trip to Ukraine, Netanyahu's wife, who herself has been indicted on fraud charges for misusing public funds. So on an official state visit to Ukraine, Sara Netanyahu and her husband were greeted on the flight tarmac by Ukrainian women wearing the country's traditional dress complete with flower crowns and trays of bread and salts, all very traditional.

Andrea Chalupa:

Netanyahu accepted a piece of bread and ate it as is the custom. He then handed a piece of bread offered by the Ukrainians to his wife. Sara took it and discarded it instantly on the ground like she couldn't be bothered. Anyone who has traveled extensively to Ukraine, as I have, knows that there's a custom for Ukrainians, especially for the older generation, to hold onto bread, every last piece, even stale bread. Bread is symbolic in Ukraine. This is because it's an agricultural nation, it's a bread basket of Europe.

Andrea Chalupa:

Also, bread was denied Ukrainians during Stalin's genocide famine, which is the great trauma of the nation. During the famine, they had no bread. The dying begged for bread. Bread is symbolic in Ukraine.

This was a painful and insulting gesture by Sara Netanyahu. It created a great scandal. It was very much on par with Melania Trump deliberately wearing that jacket that said, "I don't care. Do you?" While visiting children locked in cages due to her husband's deliberately sadistic immigration policy. So Melania and Sara Netanyahu are one in the same.

Andrea Chalupa:

The other thing to note about recent Israeli history that tends to get overlooked, Israel and Russia are... There's a lot of integration there going on. They're certainly both nations politically held captive by a mass murdering far-right that's closely allied and aligned. A prominent Russian opposition leader made this comment to me. He said that Israel and Russia are so close now they're like one country. This in large part due to the mass immigration of Jewish people, many claiming to be Jewish allowed to leave the Soviet Union for Israel.

Andrea Chalupa:

Shortly after Trump stole the election with the Kremlin's help in 2016, someone in the intelligence community made the comment to me that Israel had already fallen to the Russian mafia. He said the actual words, "Israel is fucked." One of Ukraine's most notorious oligarchs, Ihor Kolomoisky, who's wanted by the United States for a whole list of corruption charges like money laundering. This is a ruthless oligarch who literally has a shark tank in an office back in Ukraine where he feeds live animals to the sharks.

Andrea Chalupa:

Kolomoisky has Israeli citizenship and has hid there when he faced legal and financial consequences for corruption back in Ukraine. Netanyahu campaigns by putting a giant billboard of himself shaking hands with Putin. Israel, like the United States, has a serious Russian mafia problem, only their infiltration is arguably worse because we've managed to vote out our far-right Russian mafia asset so far. The Israeli people can't seem to get rid of theirs. Netanyahu, like Trump, is a self-serving, corrupt far-right Russian mafia asset. If Netanyahu is committing crimes and getting away with them, then you better believe he's created a system that allows other criminals—like the mafia—to flourish. For background on this, here's an excerpt from our interview with Vanity Fair contributor, Craig Unger, on his book *House of Trump, House of Putin*.

Craig Unger:

Israel is definitely one of the several legs of all this and I think you can bring in the Saudis as well. But this goes back really to the 1970s because there was a Congressional act passed called the Jackson-Vanik amendment. And that was a law that gave Russia a favored nation trading status if they would allow Jews to leave the Soviet Union, it's still the Soviet days. And essentially, it meant the only way out of the Soviet union was through Israel. So you see Mogilevich and so forth, and a lot of people who weren't Jewish pretending they were Jewish—Sergei Mikhailov, who's really the most powerful person in the Russian mafia got Israeli citizenship as well and he was not Jewish.

Craig Unger:

So this was very important. You also see a bunch of oligarchs who... Alexandra Moskvicz, there's [inaudible], these were allies of Boris Berstin and they were essentially given various commodities, sectors that they could rule. There the aluminum wars with Deripaska and Chernoye. There were various



minerals, and these were sort of given out to various segments of the Russian mafia and a lot of them were based in Israel for some time.

Andrea Chalupa:

Like in the U.S., Israel is completely responsible for its own corruption and genocidal ideology, but the homegrown problems become worse and harder to fight when they're backed up and weaponized by the Russian mafia that's building a stakehold in your country and through corruption turning the homegrown far-right into a Kremlin battering ram against our democracy.

Andrea Chalupa:

Our discussion continues and you can get access to that by signing up on our Patreon at the Truth Teller level or higher.

Sarah Kendzior:

We want to encourage you to donate to your local Food Bank, which is experiencing a spike in demand. We also encourage you to donate to [giveindia.org](https://giveindia.org) to help Indians battling COVID-19.

Andrea Chalupa:

We also encourage you to donate to the International Rescue Committee, a humanitarian relief organization helping refugees from Syria. Donate at [rescue.org](https://rescue.org). And if you want to help critically-endangered orangutans already under pressure from the palm oil industry, donate to the Orangutan Project at [theorangutanproject.org](https://theorangutanproject.org).

Andrea Chalupa:

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Sarah Kendzior:

Our production managers are Nicholas Torres and Karlyn Daigle. Our episodes are edited by Nicholas Torres and our Patreon exclusive content is edited by Karlyn Daigle.

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Sarah Kendzior:

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Andrea Chalupa:

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