

Gaslit Nation Transcript

20 December 2023

“No Constraint”

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[opening clip]

Joe Scarborough (01:00):

What do we do the next time Israel is attacked from a third... from an outside force? What do we do at that point?

Zbigniew Brezinski (01:12):

That's the wrong question.

Joe Scarborough (01:13):

No, that's not the wrong question because we never get—

Zbigniew Brezinski (01:16):

You asked a question and I'm trying to answer though.

Joe Scarborough (01:17):

We never get the condemnation of Hamas or Hezbollah. It's always after Israel responds to defending itself.

Zbigniew Brezinski (01:23):

No, it's not. The problem is that this conflict has lasted for years and the United States has been largely passive. So the right question is not, “What do we do when things break down?” The right question is, “What do we do to avoid a breakdown?” By being engaged seriously in the peace process. And for the last eight years we haven't been, and that's why we have the mess like we have right now in our hands.

Joe Scarborough (01:46):

You can't blame what is happening in Israel right now on the Bush administration.

Zbigniew Brezinski (01:50):

Yes you can.

Joe Scarborough (01:51):

[laughs] No, you can't. Let's go back to 2000, Dr. Brezinski. You and I both know Bill Clinton gave Arafat and the Palestinians everything they could have wanted.

Zbigniew Brezinski (02:01):

You know, you have such a stunningly superficial knowledge of what went on that it's almost embarrassing to listen to you.

Joe Scarborough:

Oh, is it?

Zbigniew Brezinski:

If you were to look more closely at what happened in the Clinton Camp David discussions, you would know that what you have just said is absolutely wrong. There were all sorts of provisions and catches to the so-called proposal. And it wasn't rejected. The negotiations went on in Taba and then there were elections in Israel and Sharon came in and everything got aborted. In the last eight years, we had a policy in which we have proclaimed an interest in peace. Condi Rice has traveled 16 times in 21 months to the region proclaiming, "You must do this, you must do that." But the United States never exerted itself. So the issue that Obama faces—and that's a question that you raised—is are we going to be sitting there issuing condemnations, whether it's Hamas or Israel or anybody else, or are we going to be seriously engaged in the peace process? That is the question.

Joe Scarborough (02:59):

We have another block and I'm very excited about that because I'm stunningly superficial. Chief, I look forward to you educating me and the rest of America—hold on—the rest of America and the rest of the foreign policy community who have said, time and again, Arafat walked away from the best deal he could have got and that the Palestinians never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity.

Zbigniew Brezinski:

[inaudible]

Joe Scarborough (03:22):

What's that? Slogans. You're repeating slogans.

Zbigniew Brezinski:

He did not walk away.

Co-host:

Finish this up, please.

Zbigniew Brezinski:

What he said was, "I'm going to take the proposal to all of the Arab capitals and see how they react" because the proposals were controversial and then negotiations went on, even after Christmas, where

Clinton and Arafat met and they were going on in Taba in January after Clinton was already leaving office. And then the process got aborted. It's helpful to know a little bit about that.

Joe Scarborough (03:48):

There's very exciting, chief, that you know things that the rest of the international community, yes—

Zbigniew Brezinski (03:54):

You're going to judge your knowledge by the sort of collective standards of 300 million people, then don't be surprised that you're embarrassed.

Joe Scarborough (04:01):

Actually, I'm not embarrassed. I read the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* and *Foreign Affairs*. You know what I'm going to do? I'm going to throw those away and anytime I have a question, I'm going to call you up.

Co-host:

Go, go, go. Go to break and we'll bring him back—

Zbigniew Brezinski (04:10):

Let me spell it to you: T-A-B-A, Taba negotiations. Look 'em up. It'll be helpful.

Joe Scarborough (04:14):

I'll do that and I'll throw out papers and *Foreign Affairs* and everything else I read. Alright.

[end opening clip, opening theme music up and under]

Andrea Chalupa (04:27):

Welcome to *Gaslit Nation*. This week I am joined by longtime friend in real life and friend of the show, Terrell Starr, the journalist of the *Black Diplomats* podcast, who is home in New York City for a short while before he returns to his other home—some might argue his real home—which is Kyiv, Ukraine.

Terrell Starr:

Hey, what's up?

Andrea Chalupa:

And I am, of course, Andrea Chalupa, a journalist and filmmaker and the writer and producer of the journalistic thriller, *Mr. Jones*, about Stalin's genocide famine in Ukraine; the film the Kremlin does not want you to see, so be sure to watch it. And the opening clip that you heard was Zbigniew Brezinski, the former national security advisor to President Carter and a historic statesman in his own right fact-checking his—at the time—future son-in-law, Joe Scarborough, on *Morning Joe* back on December 30th, 2008; a much simpler world with all the danger signs out there, the ticking time bomb we were all sitting on.

Andrea Chalupa (05:37):

And he's right. He's absolutely right. Before we get into this week's discussion tackling geopolitics, the threats were up against what to do about them, and so on, I want to give a big *Gaslit Nation* thank you to Eloise of Mississippi who is being given a signed copy as a big thank you for listening to the show of the *Gaslit Nation* graphic novel. And she is the listener of December, 2023. We're giving away a signed copy every month, I believe through March or April. Thank you to everyone who listens to *Gaslit Nation* and supports the show on Patreon. If you're not signed up, go to [patreon.com/gaslit](https://patreon.com/gaslit) and get all sorts of fun stuff. And a reminder as a thank you to our Patreon community on January 18, a Thursday evening, 8:00 PM Eastern, we're having a social media workshop for people who hate social media. And that's me.

Andrea Chalupa (06:26):

So if you are a fellow introvert, come join that. We're going to be trying to kick our Twitter habit (given that it was deliberately destroyed) and we're trying to build up homes elsewhere and decentralize and just make sure we really take back our power and own that power with the huge loss of Twitter. So if you are an introvert, you hate social media, you want to elevate your voice online to raise it for those who need you to be a voice for them out in the world heading into 2024, come join us for that. The wonderful Rachel Brody, an organizer with a lot of local New York City politics, including the diverse political coalition across the state working really hard to replace Jay Jacobs, the useless chair of the Democratic State Party here in New York, whose incompetence led to just years of decline of Democratic power and really threatening to turn New York State into a purple state.

Andrea Chalupa (07:20):

And the Republicans now dominate Long Island. They took over the House thanks to a lot of winnable Democratic seats, including George Santos. The George Santos tragedy came out of New York State and that's all on the watch of incompetent state chair Jay Jacobs. In a state like New York, where there's so much talent, so much energy, we could be doing a lot better. And instead, we're a drag. We're a drag on national resources and so on. And the reason why Ukraine is not getting the funding it so desperately needs out of Congress is because Republicans were able to eke through, seize the House through New York State. And that's on Jay Jacobs. So the blood of Ukrainians is on his hands. So Rachel Brody is going to update us on the efforts to get him out and get some competent coalition-building leadership in. And so that workshop is going to cover a lot of bases, getting us all energized and ready for 2024, but also checking in on the all-important grassroots fight here in New York State that has national and therefore international, major repercussions. Alright, so Terrell, my dear, how are you doing? How are you feeling this holiday season?

Terrell Starr (08:26):

I'm rested. I'm here, home in Brooklyn. I didn't realize how much I would miss being here until I actually arrived at JFK Airport. I really am passionate about being in Ukraine and just being on the ground makes me feel like I could do something even though there are days or weeks that go by where I don't feel like my role is as strong as it could be. But I realize that every day or every moment that goes by when I'm not being active doesn't mean that I'm complacent. And being here in the United States just replenishing and meeting people here to talk about my work gave me proof of that fact. So it's fine. I'm going to stay until February, enjoy yoga, meet with people here and just live and exist and think about my plans. But also just live. I think when people ask us how we're doing, we talk about our job, we talk about things that are productive, things that contribute to capitalism. And I'm just happy to say that I am healthy and I feel good. I'm in a great mental state regardless of everything that's going on in the world because I can't be good to anyone if I'm not personally whole as an individual. How about yourself?

Andrea Chalupa (09:53):

I'm ready for the holiday slowdown and I am absolutely with you about [how] capitalism can take a big fat backseat. I'm tired of capitalism. A lot of the stories I'm brainstorming and researching are all about how to establish greater livability, to look at the Nordic nations and how they're able to be moral leaders on the global stage with strong, morally consistent foreign policy and also strong domestic policy, putting to rest this idea among the left, "Why are we helping Ukraine? Why are we giving money to Ukraine when we need it for social—"... And the Left and the Right, that slogan: "Why are we giving money to countries like Ukraine, struggling democracies protecting us all in the global fight against fascism, when we have all these needs here at home?" The Nordic nations are doing both. The Nordic nations are walking and talking. And capitalism separates families.

Andrea Chalupa (10:47):

Families are forced today to juggle several jobs just to make ends meet. You have greater numbers of society falling through the cracks, going hungry. You have hunger levels up in the richest country in the world, America. It's far past sustainable. And so when people want to get the torches and pitchforks out and roll out the guillotines, that's coming from a real place that reflects a real reality. And everyone wants to talk about Biden economics, but the reality is that people can't even afford homes anymore. I don't know if my kids are going to be able to afford homes. I'm going to have to work till I'm dead to make sure I can leave my kids as much as possible so they can survive in this *Hunger Games* of capitalism. So I'm really angry at capitalism. And I'm really formulating a number of series and things I want to research to try to put a leash on that, to claw it back and to establish a more livable future for everyone so we can chill out more and relax and enjoy each other, enjoy our families, enjoy the time we have left, and just really improve our quality of life.

Andrea Chalupa (11:50):

And I think the way that America is doing things is killing us. So that's my whole goal is just to chill out, take it easy, and not even worry about where I am right now. You know me, I've got like 1,000,001 projects going on because I have so much hunger to get these stories out into the world, but the reality is the scripts I write need money. They need me to be out there pitching and really strategizing and that's exhausting. But I'm just focused on putting one foot ahead of the other and just picking my battles very carefully going into 2024. And part of the targets I'm taking is we need stronger economic reform in this country. And doing that absolutely secures our democracy here at home. It puts in safeguards when you have economic instability; that's what gets people really riled up against the system and they start voting against the system and then you get a bunch of Trump votes in 2016 and Brexit and so on.

Andrea Chalupa (12:42):

So that's where my mind's at: my one woman war against hyper capitalism. I want to just point out that you and I, back in the days—early days—after October 7th, 2023, you and I joined together for a very difficult conversation on Israel and Palestine. I had been warned personally by somebody to just lay low that week because it was such a dark time, it was a very shocking time. And you and I went ahead and had a conversation that has aged incredibly well. We covered a lot and our warnings have unfortunately come true. And part of the warnings that we gave in that episode—and that episode's called "[Israel and Palestine: A Difficult \[Discussion\]](#)"—and one of the warnings we had was that Israel was headed to a rallying-around-the-flag moment and that this war was going to be genocidal and self-destructive, not only for Palestinians and their whole history of terror under Israel, but also for the Israeli people themselves, given how corrupt and far-right and extreme Netanyahu and his government are; and that they likely engineered this war so they could carry out a genocide.

Andrea Chalupa (13:52):

And lo and behold, here we are. As this show has predicted, Netanyahu never cared about those hostages. And there's reporting that there were three Israeli hostages walking—unarmed obviously—with their arms up, waving white flags, trying to surrender to IDF soldiers and the IDF soldiers just straight up exterminated them thinking they were Palestinian civilians. We warned that was going to happen. When you drop more bombs in a single week than across the entire country of Afghanistan in the largest year of fighting for the US—and under Trump—that's collective punishment. That's war crimes. When you have a massive chorus of human rights groups all saying the same thing over and over again, that this is collective punishment, these are war crimes, of course you're going to kill your own people. And that's what people have to understand is that when you have an anti-democracy movement like Netanyahu's movement, which has been blatantly anti-democracy, leading to the largest protest in Israel's history, where he's trying to purge the court system openly so he can stay in power and die in power and so on, the whole definition of authoritarianism is where minority groups, targeted scapegoated groups are no longer the sole targets. Authoritarianism comes for everybody, including Israelis themselves. And it's exemplified here with the three Israeli hostages being gunned down by the IDF, totally predictably, as we've been warning. And so I wanted just to get your comment on that.

Terrell Starr (15:24):

Yeah, about the three hostages who were killed... What was really chilling was an account that is documented in an article by the *BBC* dated December 18th, which was yesterday. Two of the three hostages who came out with the white flags saying, "SOS" were killed instantly. One of them was injured, but then went back into the building where they were seeking cover and then reemerged and was killed. So, what it tells us is that these soldiers have gotten a top-down cultural command or understanding that they can operate with impunity. And Benjamin Netanyahu knows that Joe Biden will not do anything to challenge him or to speak out against the atrocities that the Israeli government is taking out against Gaza, so it's no longer a conversation about Hamas. And we see—and we'll get into the polling later—but what really strikes me about all of this is that the American government is directly complicit in the ways in which the IDF is operating.

Terrell Starr (16:45):

And it's a bipartisan indifference, I would say, to the mass murder and killing of Gazans. So until the US government decides that they're going to take a stand—and that's going to be critical because this afternoon there's going to be a vote at the United Nations that's going to be brought up by, I believe, the United Arab Emirates that is going... I believe so I'm going to double check that. But the vote is going to call for more humanitarian aid and a deescalation of the military operation. And we will see where the US stands in that regard because now it shows us that it doesn't matter if 30,000, 40,000, 50,000 civilians who have nothing to do with this, with Hamas are killed, the Israeli government is operating with impunity. And to be quite frank with you, if you are operating on this political identity that anybody that is against Israel is antisemitic and we know that the rest of the world believes that, can you blame them for operating in the way that they're operating because no one's going to punish them. So these three killings are of no surprise to me at all because the West, particularly the United States, is giving them the green light to do so

Andrea Chalupa (18:11):

Yeah, without question, and it really puts in danger so many things—and we're going to go into that—but what it's also doing is the US is just taking the status quo stance and they're paying lip service. Biden said in Israel, he said before the whole world, "We support Israel's right to defend itself. We don't support war crimes." Well, guess what? They're carrying out war crimes. A historic number of aid

workers, humanitarian aid workers have been killed. A historic number of journalists operating in Gaza have been killed. Well-documented collective punishment. And so there needs to be more than just statements. Statements from the US and looking the other way is what allowed Russia to escalate its war crimes over decades, right? And now we have statements from the US while looking the other way allowing Israeli war crimes to escalate. It's just such an extraordinary reversal where the US rallied the world, the democratic alliance, to save Ukraine in these critical hours.

Andrea Chalupa (19:15):

And now you have the US increasingly isolated because the whole world sees very well what's happening in Gaza. And the big danger is that Western audiences are desperate for honest information and analysis of what's really going on on the ground in Gaza. And so therefore they're turning to voices that don't know what time it is in Ukraine and have no moral consistency, who have furthered Russian disinformation talking points in regard to Ukraine. And they happen to be in the right place at the right time when it comes to Gaza because they just have a knee jerk reaction that anything that the US stands for is automatically bad. They're either paid off, they write for RU (Russia Today) or some sort, or they have, or some other Russian Kremlin-linked disinformation outlet. And they come from maybe a traumatized mindset or maybe an opportunistic mindset where they are professional trolls and the only way to build a voice for themselves in a crowded field in the media is to be contrarian. Or they have a well-known strategy of the left, which is "The enemy of my enemy is my friend, So I'm trying to take on the US and its corruption and its military industrial complex, and Russia wants to take on the West too. So I'm going to advocate for Russia and bring up Russia's point of view on things." And so what I'm saying is that the US abdicating any moral standing in the crisis with Gaza is giving greater authority to these disinformation agents.

Terrell Starr (20:51):

So lemme respond to one thing directly about the Left, and I consider myself a leftist. So let's talk about what that means because it's very critical to what you're saying. I am a non-resident senior fellow at the Center for International Progress where my good buddy, Matt Doss, who was Bernie Sanders' former foreign policy advisor. And so my definition of Left—because people have these, I think, ridiculous arguments about who's left and who isn't—to me, I lean Elizabeth Warren/Bernie Sanders generally, then you have people who are The Squad. And one of the larger challenges that you have with Joe Biden, one thing I will give a degree of understanding for at least politically is that the tent of public opinion that Joe Biden has to speak to is a lot more wide and diverse and complex than the very limited, small box of opinions that a Donald Trump has to speak to.

Terrell Starr (21:51):

When you're dealing with Democrats, you have blue dogs, you have centrist, you have The Squad, you have the Left that's more of, again, the Bernie Sanders/Elizabeth Warren type. And then you have people who are center-right, so to speak. So you have all these different spectrums of political thought in the Democratic party, whereas with Republicans, you're either right-wing or you're far-right. And those two parts of the Republican party all bow down to Donald Trump and there's very little dissent because in the grand scheme of things they both believe in the same things, they just say it differently. Whereas with Democrats, it's not like that at all. Another thing about the Left, and a lot of the discontent that I have with a lot of the far-left extreme part of the Left is, which... I consider that to be Code Pink. Those groups, they have no political power in respect, but there is a conversation that's led there where a lot of political people have some degree—and the Democratic party—has some sympathy to. What I notice when you're dealing with Ukraine versus Palestine is that on the... And it's something that really annoys me.

Terrell Starr (23:05):

When you're dealing with Palestine, you notice very rightfully so, where you have the Cornell Wests of the world, for example, they are surrounded by people from the region. They have expertise. They have people who have stayed in this region for decades. When you're dealing with Ukraine, as it pertains to the Left, notice that there are no regional experts on these panels. There's no one with any type of respect in Ukraine. Most of my friends in Ukraine are socialists and not one Ukrainian socialist agrees with a lot of the Left's approach towards Ukraine. In fact, they believe that the Left believes in aiding and abetting in their own genocide—because they are. And so they don't offer that same respect towards Ukrainians. And I think it's because they see it as a whole bunch of... Quite frankly a whole bunch of white people doing white shit.

Terrell Starr (24:04):

And it's a very simplistic reductive approach. And the way that we talk about Ukraine and Palestine are both very important because... And you notice that the biggest irony in the way that Biden is talking about Palestine or, say, the Gaza situation and Ukraine, is that there's a failure in both. And so the failure with Ukraine and the failure with Palestine comes down to two main things. It comes back to this old school thinking that doesn't understand current realities and people who are unwilling to divest from their traditional way of thinking and understanding the reality that we have. They lack creativity. They lack... And also, getting to the core structures, with Ukraine. In order to really deal with Ukraine and really to really deal with Russians the way we need to, we have to deal with our own kleptocracy that aids and abets Russia.

Terrell Starr (25:03):

There's hundreds of millions of dollars in business that still goes into Russia from the West. The West still is the washing machine for Russian money. And so there's a failure morally dealing with Ukraine even though, generally speaking, they get wide range support. There is a moral failing with Palestine in that they do not realize that there is a difference between being Jewish fighting against antisemitism against all Jewish people versus supporting the apartheid state that is propagated by Zionists. There is a major difference between the two, and so... But the way that Biden is talking about it, he is dividing his base because the people who may have the power in connection to the lobbying power of the Israeli state do not reflect the totality of the public that he needs to win. And so until Biden is able to speak with a new policy that holds the state of Israel to account, then they're going to always look at this Biden administration as having a double standard for Israel versus Russia, because as somebody who focuses on Ukraine part-time, I think that he does and he just doesn't want to admit it. But it's causing him all kinds of problems that I don't think that he has the political will or even capacity (because of his age and because of his old school Zionist devotion) to correct. I pray that he does because he needs to.

Andrea Chalupa (26:41):

Yeah, without question. Absolutely. I was head banging, nodding along to everything you were saying. And I want to just point out that one of his crowning achievements—and I'll say this again—was uniting a global democratic alliance to save Ukraine in those final hours. And you know that was a major pivot for his administration and foreign policy team, which initially was like, “Zelensky, get the hell out. We're going to extract you from Ukraine, you're about to lose your country. It's going to be another Afghanistan. Flee now.” And it was Ukrainians and their bravery that turned that around. And the US/Biden's foreign policy team had to react, had to pivot. And they did an extraordinary thing, which we're going to hopefully get to sort of update people on later in this episode. They created this massive sea change across the European Union that was desperate just to look the other way and take all that cheap Russian gas, easy Russian money, right?



Andrea Chalupa (27:39):

Put Deripaska's name, put Roman Abramovich's name, all the Russian oligarch football club owners' names on all their institutions and so on. The European Union didn't want the Russian money tap to dry out, but that's what's happened. And that was because Biden and his foreign policy team reacted. They changed course. They could do that again now. And so what they did with Ukraine was historic, a crowning achievement of this administration. You cannot take that away from them. What's extraordinary now is that their status quo way of thinking with Israel is now threatening their crowning achievement because it's dividing this global alliance. It's aligning them with a wannabe autocrat Netanyahu, who's mobbed up with the Russians, and it's amplifying and furthering the influence of a lot of disinformation merchants on the far left and the far right that are gaining credibility, gaining audience because people are desperate to break through the status quo.

Andrea Chalupa (28:36):

And they're right because the status quo is broken in regard to Israel and Palestine. The warnings have always been there. Like the US, the West was asleep when it came to Russia with its stupid reset button back in 2008. The same with Israel and Palestine. The same with Israel and Palestine. This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Oslo accords. The West just let that die and just left Palestinians to fend for themselves, and that led to the most historic levels of Palestinian murders by Israeli forces, including of children, especially of children. And it's just broken now. It's broken. So the time for statements and slogans is over and there needs to be serious accountability, serious movement. We need to see results. The American people, the American voter, are very results-driven. Show us results. We want to see Ukraine win. We want to see Ukraine turn this around.

Andrea Chalupa (29:26):

We want to see liberation videos coming out of Ukraine, get Ukraine what it needs. Stop trying to force Ukraine to the negotiating table because that's not worked at all in the 10 years or so of this war. And we want to see Netanyahu's extremist, genocidal, mass murdering, far-right, government contained. And we want to see the collective punishment of Palestinians in Gaza ended. We want to see an end to this West Bank violence. We need to see results. That's the American voter by and large. There's new voting polling coming out of this *Times/Siena* College poll, which showed that the majority of Americans do not like Biden's handling of Gaza. That's the majority of Americans. There is a very close second/a very large percentage of Americans that are fine with it. They tend to be older. They tend to be much older and more old school and more in line with the status quo of thinking.

Andrea Chalupa (30:17):

They also grew up at a time when there was maybe, like, three to six news channels on TV, where Americans today can get their news from all sorts of sources, including internationally. And the majority of young voters, millennials and Gen Z, who are about to become the largest voting block in America overwhelmingly disapprove of Biden's handling of Gaza. Overwhelmingly. They're coming into their own. They're coming into a massive amount of political power with becoming the largest voting block combined in the United States. Biden likes to say he's a transition president, that he's trying to transition us to this future, that he's just holding the line right now for American democracy. Well, you need to now talk to these younger leaders that are coming up. You need to now allow them to have a seat at the table with their moral leadership, with their voice. And you cannot blame it on TikTok as though their sentiment is coming from some seeded Chinese manipulation.

Andrea Chalupa (31:09):

It's not that. I am not on TikTok. I have a carefully curated group of experts online that I regularly go to make sense of what's going on in the world because I've followed them so long during this disruptive 15

years or so of global affairs with the rise of Putin, with the Pandora boxes of Iraq and Afghanistan and so on, and all the repercussions of ISIS and so on. So I have a steady stream of experts whose work I've seen over the years, who I implicitly trust. I'm not going to TikTok. I'm reading widely. I'm reading trusted experts widely. And that's where I'm getting my information from. And I'm reading books on the history of the region and I have a diversity of voices. And I'm also reading what people say that think very differently from me, who think that Hamas are some romantic resistance fighters, when they're not. They're terrorist organizations. Or think that Israel's fully justified...

Andrea Chalupa (32:08):

So I'm reading very, very widely, and I just want to tell you the facts are the facts. The truth is the truth. There's no stopping the truth. And the truth is that Israel's unchecked power is carrying out war crimes sponsored and paid for by the United States government. And the whole world sees this. And it's not only carrying out atrocities that are going to create generations of trauma that we're all going to be living under the fallout of, but it's just beyond soul shattering heartbreak what these innocent human beings are put through. It is a trauma that will be discussed in history books passed down through families. And as a Ukrainian that has devoted my life to the Holodomor (Stalin's genocide famine in Ukraine), this is a Holodomor that has been carried out on Palestinians. There are kids right now that are starving. Starvation eats your body alive from the inside. It drives you mad. It is a mental torture. It is a slow, excruciating way to die. And so this is a Palestinian Holodomor right now. And Biden and his national security team, they've shown us they can have their come to Jesus moments. They did it with Ukraine and they need to do it now.

Terrell Starr (33:16):

Well, I agree with what you're saying. I think it goes back to the way that we have conversations about these topics. So with Ukraine, what changed the public tide of sentiment was Ukrainian resistance against Russian aggression and their genocidal pursuit because we both have to recognize that what Putin is doing in Ukraine and what Benjamin Netanyahu is doing in Gaza, they're both genocidal operations. They both are. Let's just be clear about that and be morally consistent in our dialogue about it. Which is the problem. The reason why this is fascinating to me—because I'm into the why, because a lot of people could get into the history and get into 1948, all those other things. I find that when I was talking about Ukraine, what mattered to people was not necessarily the history and ways that the two of us know. What the American public cares about is, “What is my government doing to address the problem that's right before my eyes and is it morally correct to do so?”

Terrell Starr (34:22):

And with Ukraine, it was a resounding “No” because even now, the vast majority of America still supports military support for Ukraine. And with this current poll from Siena and the *New York Times*, what you see is that as opposed to a military resistance that is changing public perception, it's a lot of young Jewish people here in the United States. And people don't really pay enough attention to the high number of Jewish young people who are saying, “This is bullshit” and that “you are endangering me.” and this suggestion that the only way for Jews to be safe is that we have the state of Israel, which quite frankly was founded off of a genocide pursuit against Arabs, and so the problem that we have now is Biden cannot speak to these young people, even though I've been told that he's aware of the reactions. I don't think that he is personally constructed to respond in an adequate way that can not only address and stop what's happening in Gaza—the genocide that's happening in Gaza—but potentially to save his presidency because he has not constructed to respond to Gaza in the way that he responded to in Ukraine.

Terrell Starr (35:45):

With Ukraine it was a slow response and it's continued to be slow for different reasons. But in regards to Gaza, you have to remember that this man came of age when Israel was founded in 1948. Israel is a very young state, to be clear. And it came off of less than three years or four years from the Holocaust, which was very real, which was a straight up genocide. We both recognize that. The problem is that we have been conditioned to believe that "the state of Israel right now is a state basically where if you don't support us, you're against our own genocide and so we can do what we to these Arabs. And so if you speak out against us, that means that you want the Holocaust to happen again." That is how we are being conditioned to think about this and what you see with a lot of these young Jewish people who are leading the pack, who quite frankly give us a moral comfort to even have this conversation and to tell us that there is political diversity within the Jewish community.

Terrell Starr (36:52):

That's why you see the change in these polls. So we can get into the history. It doesn't matter how many books that we read on the subject, the conversation is who is politically controlling the narrative and why? And with Biden and most of the older voters who feel like Biden is doing a good job on this, they come from this age where the lobbying groups that support the state of Israel are hanging the holocaust over our heads and it's manipulative. And there is a sharp difference between talking about the very real antisemitism that has taken place, which by the way, increased under President Donald Trump. And so politically, we have to be able to ask ourselves, what does it mean to resolve a conflict? What does it mean to stand in solidarity with the very real violence that's being perpetrated against Jewish people? I live in Brooklyn.

Terrell Starr (37:47):

I am right at the doorstep of Crown Heights where you walk a couple blocks in there's hasidic Jews. There is real antisemitism that is going on in this country. Very, very real and very violent, which is perpetrated by white nationalists by the way. And the very ironic reaction to this response is that if you continue to disrespect the concern and pain of much of our Arab-American community here in the States, in places like Michigan and places like Georgia where their turnout is significant and critical, then we're going to usher in a president that is going to continue that white antisemitic tirade of political policy that we want to ignore. And so with Biden not having a morally consistent approach to this, he's actually undermining the integrity of his beliefs, which is supporting Jewish people. And these young Jewish people are telling us that he is being morally inconsistent.

Terrell Starr (38:48):

They're telling us that this is hypocrisy and there's going to be a tide, and that's the tide that we're going down and it can't be reversed. And so all I hope that the Biden administration can do is to respond to this conflict in a language that speaks to that. I do not think that he is built to do so, but I hope for a miracle because that's what it's going to take because he is an old school Zionist that is going to live and die by "going against the state of Israel means that you're supporting antisemitism and their own genocide," which is complete bullshit because they're perpetrating one themselves

Andrea Chalupa (39:26):

Without question, and for those who are staunch supporters of Israel—ride or die Israel—Netanyahu is one of the greatest threats to Israel. There's all these reports coming out. As we talked about, Terrell and I talked about in the days after October 7th, we flagged these reports and more reporting has come out to confirm all this, which is that Netanyahu, the longest serving Israeli prime minister (we're talking two decades), his government propped up, financially propped up Hamas. They allowed the money tap to flourish to Hamas. And not only that, the US being such staunch allies of Israel allowed this too. And lo and behold, the Frankenstein monster that Netanyahu's government and decades of rot and lack of

self-reflection, American foreign policy status quo allowed to flourish. And together, Hamas is the Frankenstein monster of the American status quo. And Netanyahu's government, they allowed Hamas to carry out October 7th. October 7th did not happen overnight. It was just disastrous status quo thinking and Netanyahu going unchecked for so long, and so-called Israeli moderates being okay with Netanyahu in power, maybe even voting for him or putting in votes that allowed his coalition to come to power or whatever, because they thought that he was the strongman that was going to protect them. Anytime you do a deal like that with a strongman, you're doing a deal with the devil and they're going to put your own life in danger.

Terrell Starr (41:01):

Precisely. And I want to just briefly interject that for all the *Gaslit Nation* listeners, I just sent Andrea a article by Akbar Shahid Ahmed, and he is a foreign affairs journalist at the *HuffPost*. He does some of the best work on this conflict, just foreign affairs in general, but particularly with how the US government is thinking about how to address this. He is one of the most well-sourced journalists in Washington and I strongly recommend that everyone read this, but this is very critical to what you're saying is that there is a lot of division within the administration, and he specifically spoke about Linda Thomas-Greenfield, who is the United States Ambassador to the UN. And for a lot of people who don't know, she's an African-American woman and one of the most well-respected Black diplomats in the core today and ever. And so she has deep ties to the continent of Africa.

Terrell Starr (42:02):

And so a lot of this support from the global south that we touched on earlier, she understands this. And what Shahid Ahmed was saying was that there's a sentiment that she's being thrown under the bus in a similar way that Colin Powell was when it came to the weapons of mass destruction. So they drew that parallel, two different circumstances. Two different circumstances, but the point of it is that you have an African-American woman who is voting against anything that would stop this genocidal pursuit, even though she personally does not agree with it. And so it goes back to my earlier conversation about the type of friction that Biden's handling of this conflict is causing because of the diversity within the Democratic party. And so a lot of people who know the Ambassador, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, are troubled by her votes, but they know it's not her. It's Biden. And so it's just a thread of these very strained ties that Biden's lack of moral integrity to address this issue is causing. He can definitely undo this, but until he does, I think it will honestly take a loss for many Democrats to really appreciate this because I don't think they really understand the gravity of how devastating an effect this is going to have on the electorate.

Andrea Chalupa (43:32):

People want to ignore polls right now because so much can happen within a year, right? The October surprise is a real phenomenon. It's what helped hand Trump the White House in 2016. Comey's letter was the big October surprise. And so a lot can happen between now and then, but right now the polling, especially this *Times*/Siena College poll, is pointing to a very divided electorate along generational lines. It's the millennials and Gen Z versus the olds. And that obviously doesn't represent everyone, right? There's all sorts of generalizations there, but this is just... The reality is that this is divisive. The electoral college is going to be extremely close. Whichever party wins, it's going to be a very tight race. And as Terrell mentioned before, you have sizable Palestinian Arab populations in the so-called Blue Wall of Michigan and Pennsylvania and Wisconsin and so on.

Andrea Chalupa (44:31):

So there needs to be results. The time for slogans, the time for statements, the time for hugging Netanyahu is over. Now there needs to be a ceasefire. And that's not because anyone here is pro Hamas or doesn't want to see these hostages come home. Please understand that some of the experts we listen to are on the ground in Israel, are progressives on the ground in Israel, are analysts who are saying there's a massive growing movement—protests—again, continuing calling for Netanyahu to resign. And because they don't see this war as conducive to getting these hostages free. They're like, “We'll deal with Hamas later. We'll deal with any sort of war later. Right now is the time for negotiation. Get these hostages freed.” And instead of negotiation, it's just a Russian-style... What the Russians did to Chechnya, what the Russians did to Syria, what the Russians did to several cities across Ukraine like Mariupol, that's what Israeli forces are doing to Gaza.

Andrea Chalupa (45:34):

Just leveling. Leveling the city, executing civilians on site as we saw with these three Israeli hostages. And the time for that... How much worse can it get and how much more rock bottom can we get? There needs to be a meaningful response from the US now to really end this. So let us have a vote in the UN calling for that ceasefire. Let us join the global community calling now for the ceasefire. That would go a very long way. And I know Republicans, as you mentioned, Terrell, lock, stock, and barrel, they are all in line, very militant, and they will take to Fox News—the whole far-right echo chamber—and destroy Biden politically. But Biden will finally... He'll be entering the right side of history on this issue, and that will go a long way finally in making amends and backing that up with meaningful action, massive humanitarian aid to Palestinians, ending these hostilities. And yes, there's a way. There's a way to get Hamas leadership... There's a way to... Look at the episode “[Israel and Palestine: A Political Solution](#)” that talks about how to deal with the Hamas problem. It's all there. But our point is that this is the issue going into 2024.

Terrell Starr (46:47):

Indeed it is.

Andrea Chalupa (46:48):

I want to include in our discussion, Clarissa Ward of *CNN* became the first Western journalist to enter Gaza since October 7th. Here's some of her report from on the ground in Gaza. It's important to note that she did not enter Gaza with the IDF, which has been censoring news reports from journalists as well as killing a record number of journalists in Gaza. Instead, Ward entered with an Emirati medical team. We'll play a clip now of her coverage.

[begin audio clip]

Clarissa Ward (47:22):

UAE medical volunteers, the Emirati medical volunteers who we went in with to their field hospital. But still even that brief window, Gail, you really got a sense of the absolute horrors that have been taking place in Gaza. This hospital was filled with the youngest victims of this war; children who have been disfigured, who are in full body casts, who are covered in burns. Two thirds of the victims have been women and children. And we definitely saw that bore out in this hospital. There was a strike just minutes after we arrived near the hospital. Two casualties brought in; a 13-year-old boy who had lost half his leg, an older man with his foot hanging off. And so it was chilling, it was harrowing, and a very sobering experience to see just how difficult life is on the ground.

[end audio clip]

Andrea Chalupa (48:22):

Look, when you've lost *CNN*, that's how you know things have gotten really bad.

Terrell Starr (48:29):

They are. And I watched the entire clip from Clarissa Ward, and I have to tell you, that was really great. It was exceptional journalism and she ought to be commended for it. I have nothing but gold stars, platinum stars, whatever you can give her. It was just outstanding. And for her to be a mainstream media outlet that really prides itself on carrying the neutral tone, the best thing about her journalism was that it gave, unfortunately, the type of credibility that certain people need in order to see the devastation of what is happening. I feel like she had a far greater hurdle to overcome in regards to reporting to humanity of what is happening to people on the ground in Gaza than I did when I was covering Ukraine. And it's simply because too many folks in the American public and the world public don't value Palestinian lives in the same way that they do Ukrainian ones.

Terrell Starr (49:36):

And we have to be very frank and direct about that because again, it has very little to do with the facts per se. It's about how people feel. And so much of why people are so resistant to pushing Israel is because of their own prejudices; their racial prejudices, their xenophobic prejudices. And so for Clarissa Ward, the white woman to go in, blonde white woman to go in and show that devastation and to see her almost break down into tears, all unfortunately for a lot of people humanize these people—and I hate to use that terminology, but I'm talking about who we're dealing with here in the American public—humanize these people in ways that mainstream media rarely does. And so what really stood out with me about her work in that 14 minute clip was that she went from bed to bed because she went into a hospital and she was going from one cot to another and showing children, which really punctuates the point for a lot of folks. And thousands of children have been killed. And so it was almost like a montage. And she's just literally taking a microphone to people—she speaks Arabic—and communicating with folks. We need more reporting that way. And I'm not sure of any other reporting people being able or really trying to go into Gaza in the way that she did. And so what it tells me is that mainstream media, who have far more resources than I had when I was in Ukraine, are able to tell these types of stories, but they don't. And the question is, Why?

Andrea Chalupa (51:17):

It's a choice. And I want to say Clarissa Ward has been consistently good on her Ukraine and Russia coverage. She walked... Listen, Clarissa Ward knocked on the door of an FSB agent who was on the task force to assassinate Alexi Navalny and his wife when they were on vacation, to slip some radioactive toxins into their underwear or whatever. She just hounded this FSB killer, this hired gun for the Russian mafia at his home. So she's consistently good. Of course she's going to be the first journalist from the American side and Western side into Gaza. She's like the Martha Gellhorn of her age and really putting her body/her life on the line. God bless her. That's what we need more of today. I mean, there's no guarantee she's going to survive this conflict. She could be killed by the Israeli side. They're just killing, killing, killing, just dozens of journalists and aid workers.

Andrea Chalupa (52:16):

Anyway, well, listen, if we fell short in this conversation; not providing context, not providing other points of view, write to the show at [GaslitNation@gmail.com](mailto:GaslitNation@gmail.com), share your thoughts, share/flag for us what we're missing. The other dynamic at play here is that Terrell and I have had this conversation on and off the

show for a very long time and so some of it is I don't want to feel like I'm doing the same show over and over again, so also listen to previous episodes. We've done so many deep dives on this crisis and ways out of it from all different perspectives and elevating a lot of Palestinian and Israeli voices for peace. So I encourage everyone to listen to those old episodes if you haven't yet. I really do believe that we were early in saying what needed to be said, and a lot of those episodes have unfortunately aged well, and our warnings unfortunately have come to pass. Netanyahu cannot be trusted. Netanyahu must go now, and the US must join the global community in standing up to this genocidal bad guy because anytime you have unchecked power in the world, that's a danger to all of us.

[outro theme music, roll credits]

Andrea Chalupa (53:36):

Our discussion continues and you can get access to that by signing up for the Truth-teller level or higher on Patreon at [patreon.com/gaslit](https://patreon.com/gaslit).

To help the refugees of the Israel—Hamas War, donate to Doctors Without Borders at [doctorswithoutborders.org](https://doctorswithoutborders.org). We also encourage you to donate to the International Rescue Committee, a humanitarian relief organization helping refugees from Ukraine, Syria, Afghanistan, and Gaza. 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).

Gaslit Nation is produced by Andrea Chalupa. Our production managers Nicholas Torres and our associate producer is Karlyn Daigle. Our episodes are edited by Nicholas Torres and our Patreon-exclusive content is edited by Karlyn Daigle.

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Speaker 9 ([56:28](#)):

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Speaker 2 ([56:57](#)):

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