Anti-Zionism Is Deadlier Than Antisemitism

**By Joshua Muravchik**

Some say that anti-Zionism isn’t tantamount to antisemitism. If so, it’s worse. Antisemitism always stings, but in the West today, it usually doesn’t, but in the West today, it usually doesn’t wound. The same can’t be said of anti-Zionism.

Antisemitism in America consists mostly of small things: exclusion from country clubs, restrictive covenants on housing, quotas in college admissions, casual slights, and insults. Since World War II, the same has been true, if a little worse, in the rest of the West. America and Europe have seen horrible moments of violence, such as at the Tree of Life synagogue in 2018 of the Toulouse shootings in France in 2012, as well as instances of intimidation, vandalism, and assault. But these have mostly been isolated incidents.

Every one of these hurts me as a Jew. Jewish educational attainment and earnings in America nonetheless far exceed that of most other groups. Jews fill elite occupations, the heights of industry, and high office in government short of the presidency – all in numbers well beyond our proportion in the population. For the most part we dwell among out gentile neighbors in safety.

Jews faced with anti-Zionism are under much greater threat. Until the Holocaust, most Jews were anti-Zionist because they thought it impractical and a diplomatic liability.

But since the birth of Israel, and its baptism by fire when the Arab states and local Arabs tried to destroy it, anti-Zionism can only mean the destruction of Israel, which is home to some seven million Jews as well as two million, Arabs and other minorities.

Israel is democratic and prosperous and contributes disproportionately to global progress in technology, medicine, and other fields. It is by far the most successful of the many nations founded in the aftermath of World War II. For the Jewish people as a whole, it success is a redemption from the Holocaust.

Iran’s repeatedly proclaimed goal is to wipe Israel from the map. Hamas in its charter and Hezbollah’s leader, Hassan Nasrallah, in his speeches go further, saying they want to kill all the world’s Jews. Hezbollah has slaughtered Jews at Iran’s orders as far afield as Buenos Aires, but the real target is Israel.

Some, willfully ignoring all relevant experience, say the Jews wouldn’t have to go anywhere if Israel ceased to be a state. The Jews could live on harmoniously amid the new Arab majority that would pour into “Palestine from the river to the sea.” But the Jews, once numerous throughout the region, were driven from every Arab country by their Muslim compatriots. The Palestinian Arabs, who harbor bitter grievances that none of those other Arab peoples even claimed, wouldn’t treat the Jews under their rule with greater tolerance. We saw the spirit of many of them on Oct. 7.

Another thought in that fleeing Israelis could settle in America or Europe. Eighty years ago, Jews attempting to escape the Holocaust found these doors sealed, and we have no evidence they would fare better today. Immigration is controversial in America, where we admit about one million people legally and give asylum to tens of thousands each year, while others sneak in. There’s little chance the U.S. would let in all at once seven million Jewish Israelis and have them jump the line ahead of the waiting Latin Americans, Africans, and Asians.

There is no escaping the reality that the end of Israel could only mean the death of millions of its Jews. The fulfillment of anti-Zionism means nothing less than a second Holocaust.

In a speech on the Senate floor, Majority Leder Chuck Schumer expressed the fear and trauma that many Jews have been feeling as we watch the demonstrations and other expressions of support for Hamas since the Oct. 7 massacre. He claimed that “there are plenty of people who chant., ‘From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free’ not because they hate Jewish people, but because they support a better future for Palestinians.” But he went on to warn, “Antisemites are taking advantage of the pro-Palestinian movement to espouse hatred and bigotry towards Jewish people.”

Welcome as Mr. Schumer’s remarks are, he misstates the danger. It’s true that anti-Zionists don’t necessarily hate Jews. (I wrote a book about the demonization of Israel in which I saw no reason to cite Jew-hatred as a major source.) The danger is that the goal of anti-Zionism is the annihilation of the large part of the Jewish people, the Jews of Israel.