**[The aging empire](https://www.dawn.com/news/1828928/the-aging-empire)**

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IT’S doublespeak that would have George Orwell slit his wrists with a sharpened quill: right after casting a veto against a draft resolution that recommended granting the state of Palestine full membership in the UN, the US ambassador said: “This vote does not reflect opposition to Palestinian statehood.” If we are to actually believe the words coming out of the envoy’s mouth it would mean that America just voted ‘no’ on something it claims to strongly support.

The US vetoes anything that goes against Israeli interests, interests which it values more than its diplomatic standing, global stability, or even the welfare of its own citizens. Since 1945, it has used its veto to block 34 draft resolutions to protect Israel, with most of them calling for Israel to respect international laws or condemning it for displacing Palestinians and building settlements in occupied territories.

The US also used its veto to block 46 resolutions on Israel. The first instance was in 1972 when it vetoed a resolution regarding Israeli air raids in Syria and Lebanon. Interestingly, this was the second-ever use of the veto by the US with the first being in 1970 to protect Britain from condemnation for not using force to overthrow the white supremacist regime of Rhodesia. Funny how history always comes more or less full circle.

Meanwhile, the US House of Represen­ta­tives voted in a resolution condemning the chant ‘from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free’, as antisemitic and presumably a call for genocide, all the while funding and supporting an actual genocide in Gaza.

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Speaking of antisemitism, the US Congress also conducted a hearing about how the hallowed halls of Columbia University have become hotbeds of hatred. Congressmen and women lined up to prove their allegiance to Israel by grilling the university administration on the measures taken to tackle antisemitism on campus. Representative Rick Allen, in a fascinating display of the brain rot that Christian Zionism can cause, quoted Bible verses from Genesis 12:3, “If you bless Israel, I will bless you. If you curse Israel, I will curse you”, before asking the Columbia president if she wanted her university to “be cursed by God”.

It was a bit much given that Columbia has gone out of its way to support Zionist students and staff, while clamping down on pro-Palestinian voices. In a move that, had it taken place in any other country would have invited immediate condemnation from the US, Columbia suspended protesting students en masse and had them arrested by the NYPD. The suspended students included the daughter of US Congresswoman Ilhan Omar, just a day after Omar had questioned the Columbia administration about its treatment of pro-Palestinian voices. With every such action, the number of Americans opposed to Israel only grows.

Disquiet is increasing in Israel itself since the myth of Israeli invincibility was shattered first by Hamas and now by Iran. After Oct 7, the assurance that Israelis felt about being secure and separate from the Palestinians, caged as they were behind heavily guarded walls, brutalised as they were by a highly armed military, surveilled as they were by an infallible intelligence apparatus aided by the most cutting-edge technology available, all vanished like mist in the breeze.

With Iran’s retaliation, the confidence Israelis had in the impermeability of their air defences which, in their imagination, allowed them to strike outwards with impunity and with no fear of payback, has also been punctured.

Israel claims to have intercepted the majority of the drones and missiles fired from Iran, but the fact is that most of these were intercepted by the US, UK, France and Jordan. Israel also points to the relatively little damage caused by the strikes as evidence of failure, but the very fact that the Nevatim airbase, from which the US-supplied F-35 jets operate, was hit several times should come as a shock to the Zionist regime, given that this is, without doubt, the most highly defended military base in all of Israel. Not only is the best of Israel’s air defence deployed here, the base is also home to an US-supplied radar system as the TPY 2 X-band radar system, which is arguably the most advanced radar system the US has in its arsenal.

Less publicised were the drone attacks Hezbollah carried out on Israel during this time, penetrating deep into northern Israel and wounding dozens of Israeli soldiers, thus delivering the message that in any serious confrontation, it would rain down fire on large parts of Israel.

Perhaps this is why the Israeli riposte to Iran has so far been unimpressive, but no one should bet on Israel to show any restraint given the psychotic nature of its ruling class, military and public, and given that a decadent and decrepit empire will support them to the bitter end.

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