

Introduction

The Jewish nation of Israel stands accused in the dock of international justice. The charges include being a criminal state, the prime violator of human rights, the mirror image of Nazism, and the most intransigent barrier to peace in the Middle East. Throughout the world, from the chambers of the United Nations to the campuses of universities, Israel is singled out for condemnation, divestment, boycott, and demonization. Its leaders are threatened with prosecution as war criminals. Its supporters are charged with dual loyalty and parochialism.

The time has come for a proactive defense of Israel to be offered in the court of public opinion. In this book, I offer such a defense—not of every Israeli policy or action but of Israel’s basic right to exist, to protect its citizens from terrorism, and to defend its borders from hostile enemies. I show that Israel has long been willing to accept the kind of two-state solution that is now on the proposed “road map” to peace, and that it was the Arab leadership that persistently refused to accept any Jewish state—no matter how small—in those areas of Palestine with a Jewish majority. I also try to present a realistic picture of Israel, warts and all, as a flourishing multiethnic democracy, similar in many ways to the United States, that affords all of its citizens—Jews, Muslims, and Christians—far better lives and opportunities than those afforded by any Arab or Muslim nation. Most important, I argue that those who single out Israel for unique criticism not directed against countries with far worse human rights records are themselves guilty of international bigotry. This is a serious accusation and I back it up. Let me be clear that I am not charging all critics of Israel with anti-Semitism. I myself have been quite critical of specific Israeli policies and actions over the years, as have most Israel supporters, virtually every Israeli citizen, and many American Jews. But I am also critical of other countries, including my own, as well as European, Asian, and Middle Eastern countries. So long as criticism is comparative, contextual, and fair, it should be encouraged, not disparaged. But when the Jewish nation is the only one criticized for faults that are far worse among other nations, such criticism crosses the line from fair to foul, from acceptable to anti-Semitic.

Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times* got it right when he said,

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“Criticizing Israel is not anti-Semitic, and saying so is vile. But singling out Israel for opprobrium and international sanction—out of all proportion to any other party in the Middle East—is anti-Semitic, and not saying so is dishonest.”¹ A good working definition of anti-Semitism is taking a trait or an action that is widespread, if not universal, and blaming *only* the Jews for it. That is what Hitler and Stalin did, and that is what former Harvard University president A. Lawrence Lowell did in the 1920s when he tried to limit the number of Jews admitted to Harvard because “Jews cheat.” When a distinguished alumnus objected on the grounds that non-Jews also cheat, Lowell replied, “You’re changing the subject. I’m talking about Jews.” So, too, when those who single out only the Jewish nation for criticism are asked why they don’t criticize Israel’s enemies, they respond, “You’re changing the subject. We’re talking about Israel.”

This book will prove not only that Israel is innocent of the charges being leveled against it but that no other nation in history faced with comparable challenges has ever adhered to a higher standard of human rights, been more sensitive to the safety of innocent civilians, tried harder to operate under the rule of law, or been willing to take more risks for peace. This is a bold claim, and I support it with facts and figures, some of which will surprise those who get their information from biased sources. For example, Israel is the only nation in the world whose judiciary actively enforces the rule of law against its military even during wartime.² It is the only country in modern history to have returned disputed territory captured in a defensive war and crucial to its own self-defense in exchange for peace. And Israel has killed fewer innocent civilians in proportion to the number of its own civilians killed than any country engaged in a comparable war. I challenge Israel’s accusers to produce data supporting their claim that, as one accuser put it, Israel “is the prime example of human rights violators in the world.”³ They will be unable to do so.

When the best is accused of being the worst, the focus must shift to the accusers, who I contend may be guilty of bigotry, hypocrisy, or abysmal ignorance at the very least. It is they who must stand in the dock of history, along with others who have also singled out the Jewish people, the Jewish religion, the Jewish culture, or the Jewish nation for unique and undeserved condemnation.

The premise of this book is that a two-state solution to the Israeli and Palestinian claims is both inevitable and desirable. What precise form this solution will and should ultimately take is, of course, subject to considerable dispute—as evidenced by the failure of the Camp David and Taba negotiations in 2000–2001 to reach a mutually acceptable resolution and by the disputes surrounding the “road map” of 2003. There are really only four possible alternatives to a Jewish and a Palestinian state living side by side in peace.

The first is the preferred Palestinian solution demanded by Hamas and others who reject Israel's very right to exist (commonly referred to as rejectionists): namely, the destruction of Israel and the total elimination of a Jewish state anywhere in the Middle East. The second is preferred by a small number of Jewish fundamentalists and expansionists: the permanent annexation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and the expulsion or occupation of the millions of Arabs who now live in these areas. The third alternative was once preferred by the Palestinians, but they no longer accept it: some kind of federation between the West Bank and another Arab state (i.e., Syria or Jordan). The fourth, which has always been a pretext to turn Israel into a de facto Palestinian state, is the creation of a single binational state. None of these alternatives is currently acceptable. A resolution that recognizes the right of self-determination by Israelis as well as Palestinians is the only reasonable path to peace, although it is not without its own risks.

A two-state solution to the Arab–Palestinian–Israeli conflict also seems to be a rare point of consensus in what is otherwise an intractable dilemma. Any reasonable consideration of how to resolve this longstanding dispute peacefully must begin with this consensus. Most of the world currently advocates a two-state solution, including the vast majority of Americans. A substantial majority of Israelis have long accepted this compromise. It is now the official position of the Palestinian Authority as well as the Egyptian, Jordanian, Saudi Arabian, and Moroccan governments. Only the extremists among the Israelis and the Palestinians, as well as the rejectionist states of Syria, Iran, and Libya, claim that the entire landmass of what is now Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip should permanently be controlled either by the Israelis alone or by the Palestinians alone.

Some academic opponents of Israel, such as Noam Chomsky and Edward Said, also reject the two-state solution. Chomsky has said, "I don't think it's a good idea," although he has acknowledged that it may be "the best of various rotten ideas around." Chomsky has long preferred, and apparently still prefers, a single binational federal state based on the models of Lebanon and Yugoslavia.⁴ The fact that both of these models failed miserably and ended in bloody fratricide is ignored by Chomsky, for whom theory is more important than experience. Said is adamantly opposed to any solution that leaves Israel in existence as a Jewish state: "I don't myself believe in a two-state solution. I believe in a one-state solution."⁵ He, along with Chomsky, favors a binational secular state—an elitist and impractical solution that would have to be imposed on both sides, since virtually no Israelis or Palestinians would accept it (except as a ploy to destroy the other side's state).

To be sure, the poll numbers in favor of a two-state solution vary over time, especially according to circumstance. In times of violent conflict, more Israelis and more Palestinians reject compromise, but most reasonable

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people realize that whatever particular individuals would hope for in theory or even claim as a matter of God-given right, the reality is that neither the Israelis nor the Palestinians will go away or accept a one-state solution. Accordingly, the inevitability—and correctness—of some sort of two-state compromise is a useful beginning to any discussion that seeks a constructive resolution of this dangerous and painful conflict.

An agreed-upon starting point is essential, because each party to this long dispute begins the narrative of its claim to the land at a different point in history. This should not be surprising, since nations and peoples who are in conflict generally select as the beginning of their national narrative a point that best serves to support their claims and grievances. When the American colonists sought separation from England, their Declaration of Independence began the narrative with a history of “repeated injuries and usurpations” committed by “the present king,” such as “imposing taxes on us without our consent” and “quartering large bodies of armed troops among us.” Those who opposed separation began their narrative with the wrongs perpetrated by the colonists, such as their refusal to pay certain taxes and the provocations directed against British soldiers. Similarly, the Israeli Declaration of Independence begins its narrative with the land of Israel being “the birthplace of the Jewish People,” where they “first attained statehood . . . and gave the world the Eternal Book of Books.” The original Palestine National Charter begins with the “Zionist occupation” and rejects any “claim of historical or spiritual links between the Jews and Palestine,” the United Nation’s partition of Palestine, and the “establishment of the state of Israel.”

Any attempt to unravel the complexly disputed and ultimately unverifiable historical contentions of extremist Israelis and Arabs only produces unrealistic arguments on both sides. It is, of course, necessary to have some description of the history—ancient and modern—of this land and its ever-changing demographics, for no reason other than to begin to understand how reasonable people can draw such diametrically opposed conclusions from the same basic facts on the ground. The reality, of course, is that only some of the facts are agreed upon. Much is disputed and believed to be absolute truth by some, while others believe that its opposite is equally true.

This dramatic disparity in perception results from a number of factors. Sometimes it is a matter of the interpretation of an agreed-upon event. For example, as we will see in chapter 12, everyone agrees that hundreds of thousands of Arabs who once lived in what is now Israel no longer live there. Although the precise number is in dispute, the major disagreement is whether all, most, some, or none of these refugees were chased out of Israel, left because Arab leaders urged them to, or some combination of these and other factors. There is also disagreement over how long many of

these refugees had actually lived in the places they left, since the United Nations defined a Palestinian refugee—unlike any other refugee in history—as anyone who had lived in what became Israel for only two years prior to leaving.

Because it is impossible to reconstruct the precise dynamics and atmospherics that accompanied the 1948 war waged by the Arab states against Israel, the one conclusion about which we can be absolutely certain is that no one will ever know—or convince his or her opponents—whether most of the Arabs who left Israel were chased, left on their own, or experienced some combination of factors that led them to move from one place to another. Israel has recently opened many of its historical archives to scholars, and newly available information has produced more insights and interpretations but has not—and will never—end all disagreements.⁶

Similarly, the 850,000 Sephardic Jews who had lived in Arab countries before 1948, most of whom ended up in Israel, were either forced to leave, left on their own, or experienced some combination of fear, opportunity, and religious destiny. Again, the precise dynamics will never be known, especially since the Arab countries they left do not maintain, or refuse to share, historical records and archives.

Each side is entitled to its self-serving narrative so long as it recognizes that others may interpret the facts somewhat differently. Sometimes the dispute is about definition of terms rather than interpretation of facts. For example, it is often claimed by Arabs that Israel was allocated 54 percent of the land of Palestine, despite the fact that only 35 percent of the residents of that land were Jews.⁷ Israelis, on the other hand, contend that Jews were a clear majority in the *parts* of the land allocated to Israel when the United Nations partitioned the disputed land. As you will see, precise definitions can sometimes narrow disparities.

Another starting point must include some kind of statute of limitations for ancient grievances. Just as the case for Israel can no longer rely exclusively on the expulsion of the Jews from the land of Israel in the first century, so too the Arab case must move beyond a reliance on events that allegedly occurred more than a century ago. One reason for statutes of limitations is the recognition that as time passes it becomes increasingly difficult to reconstruct the past with any degree of precision, and political memories harden and replace the facts. As it has been said, “There are facts and there are true facts.”

With regard to the events preceding the First Aliyah in 1882 (the initial immigration of European Jewish refugees to Palestine), there are more political and religious memories than true facts. We know that there has always been a Jewish presence in Israel, particularly in the holy cities of Jerusalem, Hebron, and Safad, and that there has been a Jewish plurality or majority in Jerusalem for centuries. We know that European Jews

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began to move to what is now Israel in significant numbers during the 1880s—only shortly after the time when Australians of British descent began to displace Aboriginal Australians and Americans of European descent began to move into some Western lands originally populated by Native Americans.

The Jews of the First Aliyah did not displace local residents by conquest or fear as the Americans and Australians did. They lawfully and openly bought land—much of it thought to be nonarable—from absentee landlords. No one who accepts the legitimacy of Australia being an English-speaking Christian nation, or of Western America being part of the United States, can question the legitimacy of the Jewish presence in what is now Israel from the 1880s to the present. Even before the U.N. Partition of 1947, international treaties and law recognized that the Jewish community in Palestine was there, as a matter “of right,” and any rational discussion of the conflict must be premised on the assumption that the “fundamental conflict” is “of right with right.” Such conflicts are often the most difficult to resolve, since each side must be persuaded to compromise what it believes is an absolute claim of right. The task becomes even more daunting when some on each side see their claim as based on God’s mandate.

I begin the case for Israel by briefly reviewing the history of the Arab–Muslim–Jewish and then the Arab–Palestinian–Muslim–Israeli conflict, emphasizing the refusal of Palestinian leaders to accept a two-state (or two-homeland) solution in 1917, 1937, 1948, and 2000. I focus on Israel’s pragmatic efforts to live in peace within secure boundaries despite the repeated efforts of Arab leaders to destroy the Jewish state. I point out Israel’s mistakes but argue that they were generally made in a good-faith (although sometimes misguided) effort to defend its civilian population. Finally, I argue that Israel has sought to comply with the rule of law in virtually all of its activities.

Despite my own strong belief that there must be a statute of limitations for grievances, making the case for Israel requires a brief journey into the relatively recent past. This is so because the case against Israel currently being made on university campuses, in the media, and throughout the world relies on willful distortions of the historical record, beginning with the first arrival of Europeans in Palestine near the end of the nineteenth century and continuing throughout the U.N. partition, the establishment of the Jewish state, and the wars between the Arab states and Israel, and culminating in the ongoing terrorism and responses to it. The historical record must be set straight so as to heed the philosopher Santayana’s warning that those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.

Each chapter of the book starts with the accusation leveled against Israel, quoting specific sources. I respond to the accusation with hard facts

backed up by credible evidence. In presenting the facts, I do not generally rely on pro-Israel sources but primarily on objective, and sometimes to emphasize the point, overtly anti-Israel sources.

I prove beyond any shadow of a doubt that a pernicious double standard has been applied to judging Israel's actions: that even when Israel has been the best or among the best in the world, it has often been accused of being the worst or among the worst in the world. I also prove that this double standard has not only been unfair to the Jewish state but that it has damaged the rule of law, wounded the credibility of international organizations such as the United Nations, and encouraged Palestinian terrorists to commit acts of violence in order to provoke overreaction by Israel and secure one-sided condemnation of Israel by the international community.

In the conclusion to the book I argue that it is impossible to understand the conflict in the Middle East without accepting the reality that from the very beginning the strategy of the Arab leadership has been to eliminate the existence of any Jewish state, and indeed any substantial Jewish population, in what is now Israel. Even Professor Edward Said, the Palestinians' most prominent academic champion, has acknowledged that "the whole of Palestinian nationalism was based on driving all Israelis [by which he means Jews] out."⁸ This is a simple fact not subject to reasonable dispute. The evidence from the mouths and pens of Arab and Palestinian leaders is overwhelming. Various tactics have been employed toward this end, including the mendacious rewriting of the history of the immigration of Jewish refugees into Palestine, as well as the demographic history of the Arabs of Palestine. Other tactics have included the targeting of vulnerable Jewish civilians beginning in the 1920s, the Palestinian support for Hitler and Nazi genocide in the 1930s and 1940s, and the violent opposition to the two-state solution proposed by the Peel Commission in 1937, then by the United Nations in 1948. Yet another tactic was creating, then deliberately exacerbating and exploiting, the refugee crisis.

For some, the very idea of Palestinian statehood alongside a Jewish state has itself been a tactic—a first step—toward the elimination of Israel. Between 1880 and 1967, virtually no Arab or Palestinian spokesperson called for a Palestinian state. Instead they wanted the area that the Romans had designated as Palestine to be merged into Syria or Jordan. As Auni Bey Abdul-Hati, a prominent Palestinian leader, told the Peel Commission in 1937, "There is no such country. . . . Palestine is a term the Zionists invented. . . . Our country was for centuries part of Syria." Accordingly, the Palestinians rejected the independent homeland proposed by the Peel Commission because it would also have entailed a tiny Jewish homeland alongside it. The goal has always remained the same: eliminating the Jewish state and transferring most of the Jews out of the area.

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Arab realists now recognize that this goal is unattainable—at least in the foreseeable future. The hope is that pragmatism will prevail over fundamentalism and that the Palestinian people and their leaders will finally come to understand that the case for a Palestinian state is strengthened by the acceptance of a Jewish state. When the Palestinians want their own state more than they want to destroy the Jewish state, most Israelis will welcome a peaceful Palestinian state as a good neighbor. The agreement to follow the “road map,” and the handshakes and promises exchanged in Aqaba on June 4, 2003, represent some hope that the two-state solution—long accepted by Israel—will finally become a reality.

I welcome vigorous discussion about the case for Israel I make in this book. Indeed I hope to generate honest, contextual debate about an issue that has become polarized by extremist arguments. There will surely be disagreement about the conclusions I reach and the inferences I draw from the historical facts. But there can be no reasonable disagreement about the basic facts: the European Jews who joined their Sephardic Jewish cousins in what is now Israel at the end of the nineteenth century had an absolute right to seek refuge in the land of their ancestors; they established by the sweat of their brows a Jewish homeland in parts of Palestine that they fairly purchased from absentee landlords; they displaced very few local fellahin (Arabs who worked the land); they accepted proposals based on international law for a partitioned Jewish homeland in areas with a Jewish majority; and, at least until recently, virtually all Palestinian and Arab leaders categorically rejected any solution that included a Jewish state, a Jewish homeland, or Jewish self-determination. These indisputable facts laid the foundation for the conflict that accompanied the establishment of Israel and that continues to this day. It is important to present these historical facts as part of the current case for Israel, because distortion or omission of the painful history is a staple of the case often made against the Jewish state.

I decided to write this book after closely following the Camp David–Taba peace negotiations of 2000–2001, then watching as so many people throughout the world turned viciously against Israel when the negotiations failed and the Palestinians turned once again to terrorism. I was lecturing at Haifa University in Israel during the summer of 2000, so I observed firsthand the enthusiasm and anticipation with which so many Israelis awaited the outcome of the peace process that had begun with the Oslo Accords in 1993 and appeared on track toward the acceptance of a two-state resolution, with Israel and Palestine finally living in peace after so many years of violent conflict.

As the process moved toward resolution, Prime Minister Ehud Barak shocked the world by offering the Palestinians virtually everything they had been demanding, including a state with its capital in Jerusalem, control over

the Temple Mount, a return of approximately 95 percent of the West Bank and all of the Gaza Strip, and a \$30 billion compensation package for the 1948 refugees. How could Yasser Arafat possibly reject that historic offer? Prince Bandar of Saudi Arabia, who was serving as an intermediary among the parties, urged Arafat to “take this deal.” Could you ever get “a better deal”? he asked. Would you rather negotiate with Sharon? As Arafat vacillated, Bandar issued a stern warning: “I hope you remember, sir, what I told you. If we lose this opportunity, it is going to be a crime.”⁹

I watched in horror as Arafat committed that crime by rejecting Barak’s offer, walking away from the peace negotiations without even making a counterproposal. Prince Bandar was later to characterize Arafat’s decision as “a crime against the Palestinians—in fact, against the entire region.” He held Arafat personally responsible for all the ensuing deaths of Israelis and Palestinians.¹⁰ President Clinton also placed the entire blame for the termination of the process on Arafat, as did most of those who had participated in the negotiations. Even many Europeans were furious at Arafat for walking away from this generous offer. Finally, it looked as if world public opinion was shifting away from the Palestinians, who had rejected the two-state solution once again, and toward the Israelis, who had proposed a way out of the violent impasse.

But within a few short months, international public opinion had once again shifted away from Israel and back toward the Palestinians, this time with a vengeance. Suddenly Israel was the pariah, the villain, the aggressor, and the destroyer of peace. On university campuses across the world, it was Israel—the country that had just offered so much—that was the sole object of divestment and boycott petitions. How could so many intelligent people have forgotten so quickly who was to blame for the termination of the peace process? How could the world so quickly turn Arafat, the villain of Camp David, into a hero, while turning Israel, which had heroically offered so much, into the villain? What happened in this brief period to produce such a dramatic shift in public perceptions?

I learned that what happened was precisely what Prince Bandar had predicted to Arafat would happen if he turned down Barak’s peace offer: “You have only two choices. Either you take this deal or we go to war.” Arafat chose to go to war. According to his own communications minister, “The P.A. [Palestinian Authority] began to prepare for the outbreak of the current intifada since its return from the Camp David negotiations, by request of President Yasser Arafat.”¹¹

The excuse for the escalation of suicide bombings was Ariel Sharon’s visit to the Temple Mount. But as the communications minister boasted, “Arafat . . . predicted the outbreak of the intifada as a complementary stage to the Palestinian steadfastness in the negotiations, and not as a specific protest against Sharon’s visit to Al-Haram Al-Sharif [the Temple

Mount].” Indeed, the escalation in terrorism had actually begun several days *before* Sharon’s visit, as part of “the PA’s instruct[ion]” to “the political forces and factions to run all materials of the intifada.” In other words, instead of showing “steadfastness in the negotiations” by making a counterproposal to Barak’s generous offer, Arafat decided to make his counteroffer in the form of suicide bombings and escalating violence. Prince Bandar has charged Arafat with responsibility for the resulting bloodbath: “I have still not recovered . . . from the magnitude of the missed opportunity,” he told a reporter. “Sixteen hundred Palestinians dead so far. And seven hundred Israelis dead. In my judgment, not one life of these Israelis and Palestinians dead is justified.”¹²

How then could the man who was responsible for these avoidable deaths, who chose to reject the Barak peace proposal, and who instructed his subordinates to restart the violent intifada as “a complementary stage” to the negotiations manage to turn world public opinion so quickly in favor of the Palestinians and against the Israelis? It was this daunting question that cried out for an answer, and it was the frightening answer that impelled me to write this book.

The answer comes in two parts. The first is rather obvious: Arafat played the tried-and-true terrorism card that had worked for him so many times over his long and tortuous career as a terrorist diplomat. By targeting Israel’s civilians—children on school buses, pregnant women in shopping malls, teenagers at a discotheque, families at a Passover seder, university students in a cafeteria—Arafat knew he could get Israel to overreact, first by electing a more hawkish prime minister to replace the dovish Ehud Barak, then by provoking the military to take actions that would inevitably result in the deaths of Palestinian civilians. It worked perfectly, as it had in the past. Suddenly the world was seeing disturbing images of Israeli soldiers shooting into crowds, stopping women at checkpoints, and killing civilians. Arafat had “mastered” the “harsh arithmetic of pain,” as one diplomat put it: “Palestinian casualties play in their favor, and Israeli casualties play in their favor. Non-violence doesn’t pay.”¹³

For many, the bare arithmetic was enough: more Palestinians than Israelis were dead, and that fact alone proved that Israel was the villain. Ignored was the fact that although “only” 810 Israelis were killed (as of June 2003), Palestinian terrorists had *attempted* to kill thousands more and had failed only because Israeli authorities had thwarted “about 80 percent of the attempted” terrorist attacks.¹⁴ Ignored also was the fact that among the 2,000 or so Palestinians killed were hundreds of suicide bombers, bomb makers, bomb throwers, terrorism commanders, and even alleged collaborators who were killed by other Palestinians. When only innocent civilians are counted, significantly more Israelis than Palestinians have been killed.¹⁵ Indeed, Israel has killed fewer innocent Palestinian civilians during the

decades it has been fighting terrorism than any other nation in history facing comparable violence, and these tragic deaths have been the unintended consequences of fighting terrorism, rather than the object of the violence.

Why then have so many people in the international community—diplomats, media pundits, students, politicians, religious leaders—fallen for Arafat's transparent and immoral ploy? Why were they not blaming Arafat for the escalation of bloodshed, as Prince Bandar and others were doing? Why were they so quick to place the blame on Israel? Why were moral and religious leaders who ordinarily drew a sharp distinction between those who *purposefully* target innocent civilians and those who *inadvertently* kill civilians in an effort to protect their own civilians failing to draw that important distinction when it came to Israel? Why did they not understand how the Palestinian leadership was manipulating and exploiting the arithmetic of death? Why could they not see beyond the gross body count and focus on the correct moral calculus: how many *innocent* people were deliberately being targeted and killed by each side?

In seeking to answer these disturbing questions, it became clear to me that darker forces were at play. The dramatic and almost total shift in public perceptions over so brief a period of time could not be explained by reference exclusively to principles of logic, morality, justice—even politics. The answers lay, at least in part, in the fact that Israel is the Jewish state and the “Jew” among the states of the world. A full understanding of so much of the world's bizarre reactions to Israel's generous peace offer and the Palestinians' violent response to it requires a recognition of the world's long and disturbing history of judging the Jewish people by different, and far more demanding, standards.

So too with the Jewish nation. Since shortly after its establishment as the world's first modern Jewish state, Israel has been subjected to a unique double standard of judgment and criticism for its actions in defending itself against threats to its very existence and to its civilian population. This book is about that double standard—both its unfairness toward Israel and, even more important, its pernicious effect on encouraging terrorism by Palestinians and others.

If the tone of this book sometimes sounds contentious, it is because the accusations currently being made against Israel are so often shrill, uncompromising, one-sided, and exaggerated: “Nazi-like,” “genocidal,” “the prime example of human rights violators in the world,” and so on. These false charges must be answered directly and truthfully before a tone of compromise and mutual acknowledgment of wrongdoing can be restored and the issues debated on their often complex merits and demerits. But all too often, today's debate, especially on university campuses, is characterized by contentious and one-sided accusations made by those seeking to demonize Israel. They are often answered by far more candid acknowledgments

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of wrongdoing by defenders of Israel and a tone of apology that often panders to the accusers.

Progress toward peace will come only when both sides are willing to acknowledge their own wrongdoing and blameworthiness and move beyond the finger-pointing past to a future of mutual compromise. An atmosphere conducive to such compromise will not be achieved unless the air is cleared of the false, exaggerated, and one-sided accusations that now pollute the discussion in so many settings. The purpose of this book is to help clear the air by providing direct and truthful defenses to false accusations. The tone of these defenses sometimes necessarily mirrors the tone of the accusations. The hallmark of my writing, speaking, and teaching over the years has always been to be direct and not to pander to, or worry about, offending those who, on the basis of their own bigoted actions and false accusations, deserve to be offended. I try to follow that path in this book.

Once the air is cleared of the pollutants of bigotry and falsehood, a more nuanced debate can begin over specific Israeli policies—as well as specific Palestinian policies. This book is not part of *that* debate, although I have my own views on many of these issues. So long as Israel stands singularly and falsely accused of being the worst offender, the first obligation of those committed to truth and fairness is to disprove those accusations—firmly and unequivocally.

I am frequently asked how I, as a civil libertarian and liberal, can support Israel. The implication behind the question is that I must be compromising my principles in supporting so “repressive” a regime. The truth is that I support Israel precisely *because* I am a civil libertarian and a liberal. I also criticize Israel whenever its policies violate the rule of law. Nor do I try to defend egregious actions by Israelis or their allies, such as the 1948 killings by irregular troops of civilians at Deir Yassin, the 1982 Phalangist massacre of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps, or the 1994 mass murder of Muslims at prayer by Baruch Goldstein. Like any other democracy, Israel and its leaders should be criticized whenever their actions fail to meet acceptable standards, but the criticism should be proportional, comparative, and contextual, as it should be with regard to other nations as well.

I make the case for Israel based on liberal and civil libertarian considerations, although I believe that conservatives should also support the Jewish state based on conservative values. I am not asking anybody to compromise their principles. Rather, my request is that all people of goodwill should simply apply the same principles of morality and justice to the Jewish state of Israel that they do to other states and peoples. If they would only apply a single standard, the case for Israel would largely make itself. But since so many people insist on applying a more demanding standard to Israel, I now make the case that, judged by any rational standard, Israel deserves the support—although certainly not the uncritical support—of all people of goodwill who value peace, justice, fairness, and self-determination.