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Israel cannot survive in global public space.

Two days before the International Court of Justice ruled, last Friday, that South Africa has presented plausible evidence of Israel's genocidal conduct in Gaza and a court case must proceed, the Zionist government claimed it had declassified nearly three dozen documents—cabinet minutes, internal orders, advisory notes—to suggest that its intent all along has been to limit casualties among the Palestinians of Gaza. One of these documents—these alleged documents, this is to say—reads in part:

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The prime minister stressed time and again the need to increase significantly the humanitarian aid in the Gaza Strip.

And from another:

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It is recommended to respond favorably to the request of the U.S.A. to enable the entry of fuel.

The Israelis allowed *The New York Times* to see copies of these texts—alleged copies of alleged texts. So far as we know, no other person or organization other than the ICJ has had access to them. *The Times*, as is its wont whenever it covers Israel, reported on these alleged copies of alleged documents with wide-eyed

credulity. It never questioned their provenance or their authenticity—an omission that is easy to understand but difficult to forgive.

Read these passages carefully. Can you imagine a circumstance in which an Israeli minister or another government official would make such remarks in a closed-door cabinet meeting or in an internal memorandum? I cannot. I interpret this exercise in “declassification” at the eleventh hour as crude propaganda in anticipation of the ICJ’s ruling. My prediction: We will never again hear anything about these “documents,” references to which merit quotation marks.

As widely reported, The Hague ruled against Israel shortly after *The Times*’s report on the alleged copies of the alleged minutes and memos. Instantly, the apartheid regime asserted it had evidence that a dozen employees of the U.N. Relief and Works Agency, which bears responsibility for the welfare of Palestinians in Gaza and elsewhere across the region, participated in the incursions into southern Israel led by Hamas militias last October 7.

The evidence this time derives—the supposed evidence supposedly derives—from a couple of sources. There are the supposed confessions of Palestinians the Israel Defense Forces captured during or after the events of October 7. In addition, the Israelis claim to have cross-referenced a Relief and Works Agency staff list with a list of Hamas members it claims to have found on a computer in the course of its ground campaign in Gaza.

Again, no Western official or Western medium has raised even the mildest question as to the verity of Israel’s “evidence.” The Israelis have a long, sordid record of torturing confessions from captive Palestinians. They operate a propaganda machine the match of any nation’s and superior to most. These

realities go unmentioned. No one has yet proven Israel's allegations to be true. Nonetheless, more than a dozen nations—among them Britain, Germany France, the Netherlands, Italy, Finland, Australia, Canada, Japan—have followed the Biden regime's lead in cutting off aid to Relief and Works.

At writing, the agency predicts it will be unable to operate by the end of February. Famine, starvation, disease, chronic dehydration: This kind of catastrophe is now very near. As Jonathan Cook notes in [an excellent commentary published 30 January](#), the U.S. and those acting with it are no longer merely complicit in Israel's genocide: They are now participants in it.

It is important at this moment to recognize what we know and do not know about Israel's reaction to ICJ's judgment. We cannot be entirely certain that the Zionist state has submitted falsified evidence at The Hague, although this is very likely the case. We cannot know with certainty how Israeli interrogators obtained the confessions of captive Palestinians, or if they indeed obtained any confessions, or if the IDF possesses any kind of Hamas membership list, as the Israelis claim, and if they cross-referenced it as they also claim. I confirm my scepticism as to all of Israel's accounts of these matters, but it is important also to confirm that they remain too opaque to permit us to judge them with full confidence.

But the World Court's ruling and Israel's preliminary response are nonetheless transformative—clarifying as a chemical agent turns a solution with suspended solids transparent. We know two things now, as they are perfectly clear. One, Israel, with the backing of the U.S. and the various pilot fish that follow it, has begun—or resumed, better put—a concerted attack on the U.N., global justice, and altogether what I will call international public space.

Two, if this strategy tells us anything, it is that neither the Israelis nor their Western backers have any idea what time it is on history's clock. They do not understand that the international public space just mentioned is undergoing a process of restoration. John Whitbeck, an international lawyer and commentator in Paris, put last week's events in their proper historical context as well as anyone. He wrote Tuesday in his privately circulated newsletter:

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More so with each passing day, it appears that our world is restructuring itself for the long term into two new geopolitical blocs, largely if not exclusively based on historical divisions between colonizing states and colonized states and ethnic/cultural divisions between "white" states and "non-white" states.

On one side is a New Evil Empire (the Israeli/American one), supplemented by its faithful and obedient servants in Europe and the settler-colonial Anglosphere. On the other side is a New Free World, encompassing countries with widely varying cultures and internal governance systems which are both willing and able to stand up to and resist domination by the New Evil Empire and, more broadly, to assert their own freedom, sovereignty and national preferences ...

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Itamar Ben-Gvir, Israel's national security minister and one of its more repugnant public figures, went on social media after the ICJ announced its decision with two

words those who know Jewish colloquialisms will easily recognize: “Hague Schmague,” Ben-Givv posted on the message platform known as X.

Apart from this degree of crudity coming from an official of cabinet rank, there is no surprise here. Illegal settlements, the criminal mistreatment of Palestinians, incidents of torture, assassinations and covert operations: The list of Israel’s transgressions of international law is long. It has contravened more than 30 Security Council resolutions since the Six-Day War in 1967. When the Israelis ignore the ICJ ruling and proceed with their campaign to exterminate the Palestinian population of Gaza, as appears likely, this will be entirely of a piece with “the Jewish state’s” conduct since its founding amid the massacres and forced removals—al-Nakba, “the Catastrophe,” as Palestinians call it—that began (but never ended) 76 years ago.

It is a forlorn hope that Israel’s leadership, extremist as it is, could recognize that the global order is changing, the ICJ decision reflect this, and a new set of responses is necessary. There is no chance of this. The bitter truth is that Israel, as constituted in 1948, cannot survive in international public space. It is too committed to Zionism, which is precisely the racist ideology the U.N. proclaimed it to be, not quite 50 years ago, in General Assembly Council Resolution 3379. Israel is in consequence too reliant on unending war, repression, institutionalized discrimination, and violence to count as anything other than a failed experiment. 3379, revoked in 1991 under heavy U.S. pressure, should be restored in recognition of this reality.

Rejecting the validity of global public space is a considerable part of the bond Israel enjoys—do I mean exploits?—with the U.S. Where do we begin enumerating America’s genocides, with Jackson’s Native American removals, the

“Trail of Tears,” in the late-1830s? Where its flouting of international law, with the annexation of Texas and the Mexican–American War, 1846–48? Closer to our time, matters have become more explicit. In 2002, shortly after the U.S. invaded Afghanistan, it passed the American Service–Members Protection Act, otherwise known as the Hague Invasion Act. It proclaimed unilaterally that American military personnel were immune from prosecution courts such as the ICJ. Joe Biden, then a senator, was an enthusiastic supporter of this bill as it made its way into law.

Quickly after the events of October 7 the Israelis took to calling it “Israel’s September 11,” a reference to the attacks in New York and Washington in 2001. This is too histrionic a notion to take seriously, in my view, except for one thing these events have in common. Israel and the U.S. share an obsession with total security, both believing they were impregnable against the intrusions of others. October 7 shocked Israel out of this illusion, just as September 11 ended it for Americans. Both discovered, on these dates, that there is no such thing as immunity from history and the tempests that are inevitably part of it.

Two nations with “chosen people” complexes, to put the point another way, found they were no more chosen than anyone else. It is not difficult to imagine the psychological shocks that led both to extreme, irrationally violent reactions when this consciousness was disturbed. And in my read, Israel is about to begin struggling with the same bitter lesson Americans have so far declined to learn: As there is no such thing as total security, quests for it are not merely doomed to failure but also to destroy the people or nation seeking it.

It is useful now to consider Zionism as a variant of America’s claim to exceptionalism. And in their responses to the judicial ruling in The Hague last

week, Israel and the U.S. have signaled they intend to continue insisting that they are exceptions to the international community's laws and norms. Sadly but not tragically—tragedy implies a cleansing, suffering that leads to knowledge—they have read our moment wrongly. Can Zionism survive this mistake? Only with more extreme violence. Can Israel survive the mistake of Zionism? This is our question now.

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