

Lincoln Dissected

By David Gordon

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Thomas DiLorenzo, the President of the Mises Institute, has already reviewed Paul C. Graham's *Nonsense on Stilts: The Gettysburg Address and Lincoln's Imaginary Nation* (Shotwell Publishing 2024) in characteristically excellent fashion, but the book is so insightful that some further comments are warranted. It is clear that Graham has a philosophical turn of mind and is a master of linguistic analysis.

His skill is amply on display in his dissection of Abraham Lincoln's First Inaugural, delivered in March 1861. In that address, Lincoln endeavored to respond to the main arguments that secession was constitutional. Graham calls attention to a crucial point in the beginning of the passage in which Lincoln does this. He said: "I hold that in contemplation of universal law and of the Constitution the Union of these States is perpetual."

What is the "universal law" to which Lincoln appeals? Lincoln's argument is that a nation, by which he means a single sovereign body, cannot include provision for its own dissolution. "Perpetuity is implied, if not expressed, in the fundamental law of all national governments. . . no government ever had a provision in its organic law for its own termination."

Graham easily skewers this argument. Lincoln is assuming just what the states that seceded denied, i.e., that America is a sovereign nation:

"Now, my dear reader, it may very well be the case that the fundamental law governing national governments is that they are perpetual, but the 'Union' has a federal, not national form of government. Lincoln seemingly took it for granted that there was one American people with one form of government—a national one—and the states were like counties—not sovereign bodies that created the institution Lincoln is characterizing as national. It should go without saying that this was not the way the States saw each other or themselves when they ratified this second American Constitution. . .

Note, again that the words 'union' and 'nation' are used interchangeably, as if they were one and the same thing. In the preceding statement he says that 'the Union of these States is perpetual.' Now he switches to the word 'nation,' saying that perpetuity is a fundamental characteristic of a 'national government'—a rhetorical 'bait and switch' maneuver. . .

Presumably, because a national government is 'indivisible,' we may assume it is a 'government proper,' the implication being that the actions of the Southern States made the United States an improper form of government. Of course, it is easily perceived that this argument is circular, pretending to be an argument from definition, but it is really a form of equivocation or conflation of ideas by using two words with different meaning as if they were the same (and clearly they are not)" (In two instances, I have changed Graham's spelling)

The "second American Constitution," according to Graham was an illegal overthrow of the Articles of Confederation, usefully reprinted in the book in full.

One might raise this objection to Graham. "You say, and document fully, that the United States was a compact between independent states, not a sovereign nation in Lincoln's sense; but you don't reject the notion of sovereignty altogether. In fact, you say that the states that joined in compact to establish the United States are sovereign. What is so great about that? Can't these states also be oppressive?"

Indeed they can, but it clear both from the horrendous war against the Southern States

2 unleashed by Lincoln down to our own times that the remedy for problems within the states does not lie with the chief agent of oppression, the central government.

In the Gettysburg Address, Lincoln, quoting the Declaration of Independence, said that the United States was "dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." Graham argues powerfully that Lincoln misread the Declaration. The primary thrust of that document is the "consent of the governed." Because of gross violations by the British King and Parliament, stated in a long list of grievances, of the traditional rights and liberties of the colonies, these colonies declared that they were now independent states.

Graham views with alarm the attempt to see America as a nation dedicated to a proposition:

"*Ought* is a tricky word and leads us to the field of ethics or moral philosophy. *Ought* requires a metaphysical foundation—take your pick, but it needs at least one. *Ought* takes us away from any proposition demonstrably true or false and depends on a kind of political or philosophical faith. . . It is for this reason that I hold to the position that even if we were a nation (which we are not), it is a bad idea for a nation, *any* nation, to dedicate themselves to a proposition, any proposition. Nothing good has ever come from such a thing and nothing ever will if history or human experience, born out of time and sifted out over multiple generations, is to be our guide." (emphasis in original)

I take Graham to be saying, "Forget about the gossamer notion of universal ethical 'oughts'. Let's stick with solid traditions, established through long experience, and among these historical traditions is government by consent. I venture to suggest that Graham has not escaped the realm of 'ought'. Isn't he committed to holding that the colonies acted in a morally proper way in seceding, i.e., that they acted as they ought to, or at least acted as they were morally permitted to do? How does Graham get from 'is' to 'ought', and if he denies that such a transition is needed, isn't that also a 'metaphysical' claim?"

Graham's position, fortunately, can be vindicated. Secession is a fundamental moral right. As Ludwig von Mises eloquently puts it:

"The right of self-determination in regard to the question of membership in a state thus means: whenever the inhabitants of a particular territory, whether it be a single village, a whole district, or a series of adjacent districts, make it known, by a freely conducted plebiscite, that they no longer wish to remain united to the state to which they belong at the time, but wish either to form an independent state or to attach themselves to some other state, their wishes are to be respected and complied with. This is the only feasible and effective way of preventing revolutions and civil international wars...

"[T]he right of self-determination of which we speak is not the right of self-determination of nations, but rather the right of self-determination of the inhabitants of every territory large enough to form an independent administrative unit. If it were in any way possible to grant this right of self-determination to every individual person, it would have to be done." <https://mises.org/library/secession-day>

Every collectivist revolution rides in on a Trojan horse of "Emergency." It was a tactic of Lenin, Hitler, and Mussolini. In the collectivist sweep over a dozen minor countries of Europe, it was the cry of the men striving to get on horseback. And "Emergency" became the justification of the subsequent steps. This technique of creating emergency is the greatest achievement that demagoguery attains. The invasion of New Deal Collectivism was introduced by this same Trojan Horse.

— Herbert Hoover



Ngo Dinh Diem, the first President of South Vietnam, and JFK were both Catholics, though Catholics of very different persuasions.

The assassination of President Kennedy on November 22, 1963, was one of the landmark moments and one of the most remembered events in twentieth-century history. The assassination of President Diem of Vietnam on All Souls' Day 1963, only twenty days earlier, is probably more important as a landmark moment but is largely forgotten. Intriguingly, there is a creepy and uncanny connection between these two events which represents one of the darkest moments in a history replete with dark moments.

Ngo Dinh Diem would become the final Prime Minister of Vietnam in 1954 and the first President of South Vietnam a year later. Prior to his rise to power, Diem spent two years in the United States, during which time he became friends with John F. Kennedy, a young and aspiring politician. Diem and JFK were both Catholics, though Catholics of very different persuasions. Diem was devout. He attended Mass daily. Torn between his attraction to the religious life and his desire to help his country free itself from the strangling grip of communism, he embraced the latter as a sense of duty, a cross he must bear.

During his time in the United States in the early 1950s, Diem stayed at the Maryknoll Mission society seminaries in upstate New York and New Jersey. Although he was an internationally known political figure, he shared the chores with the seminarians. High profile politicians who visited him were stunned to see him taking out the rubbish, cleaning the floors, and doing other menial work. He was befriended by Francis Cardinal Spellman, archbishop of New York. It was Cardinal Spellman who introduced Diem to John F. Kennedy, who was then a young member of Congress.

Diem left the United States in May 1953 and spent some time in a Benedictine monastery in Belgium, praying for discernment. On January 12, 1954, he joined the third order of the Benedictines, committing himself to a life of observant prayer and practice in accordance with the Rule of St. Benedict. Later that year, he became the final Prime Minister of the short-lived state of Vietnam, prior to Vietnam's division into North Vietnam, ruled by the communists, and South Vietnam, of which Diem became the first president.

Diem's strategy in defeating communist guerilla insurgency in South Vietnam was the implementation of Catholic social teaching in the form of the Strategic Hamlet Program. This amounted to a localist response to the communist terrorism. Local police forces were established and armed so that villages were able to protect themselves without relying on centralized military intervention. The protected village communities could then continue to farm and sustain the local economy without fear of communist intrusion into their lives and without the need of the central government for economic or military support. This was what would now be called sustainable development, achieved by the implementation of the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity, the two pillars of Catholic social teaching, as outlined by Pope Leo XIII in *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and Pope Pius XI in *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931).

Compare Diem's Catholic approach to land reform with the Marxist approach of Ho Chi Minh, the president of North Vietnam. Following the example of Stalinist collectivization in the Soviet Union, the communists in North Vietnam confiscated land from the peasants, placing it into the hands of the government. This led, in 1956, to a massive peasants' revolt, or people's rebellion, against communist rule. Following the lead of communist rulers in other countries, Ho Chi Minh responded by sending in the army. At least ten thousand peasants were murdered and perhaps as many as 50,000.

Ironically, Diem's biggest enemy in the following years would not be his sworn political enemies in North Vietnam but his purported allies in the United States. By the beginning of the 1960s, the media in the United States was adopting a radical liberal agenda, which was antagonistic toward Diem's Catholicism and was suspicious of his anti-communism. In addition, certain high-profile politicians in the United States were antagonistic to Diem for not acquiescing in American neo-conservative imperialism. This unholy alliance between the liberal media and U.S. imperialism would prove ultimately deadly for Diem and hundreds of thousands of his fellow countrymen.

4 The media and the U.S. government accused Diem of discriminating against non-Catholics and demanded that he desist from choosing more Catholics to work in the government. In truth, however, Catholics were being selected on merit and not because of their religious affiliation. The best schools in Vietnam were run by the Catholic Church, a benign consequence of French colonialism, and so many of the best-educated Vietnamese were Catholics. In addition, the Catholics, which included almost a million refugees from the anti-Catholic persecution in North Vietnam, were united in their opposition to communism. They were natural allies in Diem's efforts to build a just and sustainable alternative to communism in Vietnam.

Even though Diem's Catholic approach was bearing positive results through the success of the Strategic Hamlet Program and other localist initiatives against Marxist insurgency, the American government was growing increasingly antagonistic to Diem's rule. President Kennedy based his perception of Diem and the situation in Vietnam on reports from his friends and from the biased spin of the news media, ignoring the reports on the ground from Vietnam charting Diem's successes. The tragic reality is that the Vietnam War and U.S. military involvement might have been avoided if Diem's strategy had been supported by President Kennedy and his administration.

Between 1961 and 1962, American policy toward Diem and the situation in Vietnam switched from "sink or swim with Diem" to what would prove to be "sinking without him" into the disaster of a war that could and should have been avoided. In 1963, heeding the advice of his anti-Diem associates, President Kennedy informed the South Vietnamese generals that they would continue to receive his support were they to overthrow the elected president of their own country in a military coup. Ironically, President Kennedy's betrayal of Diem came at a time when Diem's strategy was proving successful in the war against Marxist insurgency.

In March 1963, Robert Thompson, an expert on guerilla warfare, reported that he could say, "and in this I am supported by all members of the mission, that the Government is beginning to win the shooting war against the Viet Cong." Two months later, Robert McNamara, Kennedy's Secretary of Defense, reported that the war against communism was being won by the South Vietnamese government: "In the military sector of the counter-insurgency, we are winning."

Tragically, however, President Kennedy was more concerned about winning the following year's presidential election and was mindful of the impact that his support for Diem might have on the election campaign. The media's increasingly hostile reporting of Diem's "autocratic" government meant that support for Diem was now a political liability.

The crucial importance of the liberal media in laying the foundations for the Vietnam War cannot be overstated. Mindful of the role of the media in facilitating the Chinese and Cuban Revolutions, the Catholic-convert writer Clare Boothe Luce played the prophet with remarkable prescience: "Is the history of the Liberal Press...going to repeat itself? The evidence is that it is."

In a telegram sent on August 29, 1963, marked "Top Secret, Eyes Only," President Kennedy authorized the violent overthrow of Diem's civilian government, officially an ally of the United States, by the South Vietnamese military. This is surely one of the greatest acts of treachery by any American president.

The coup took place on All Saints' Day, 1963. Having fled to the house of a friend, Diem and his brother attended Mass at the local church on the morning of All Souls' Day. They then spent some time in prayer. They were in the Grotto of the Virgin Mary, outside the church, when the soldiers arrived with a couple of American jeeps and an armored personnel carrier. Once Diem and his brother were secured in the hold of the personnel carrier, the order to murder them was carried out immediately as the vehicle drove away. Their gallbladders were cut out while they were still alive, and then they were shot.

According to General Minh, the leader of the coup, the Americans expected and wanted Diem to be murdered. Ironically, this was due to his popularity with the people of South Vietnam. "Diem could not be allowed to live," Minh insisted, "because he was too much respected among simple, gullible people in the countryside, especially the Catholics and the refugees."

Three days after the murders, Madame Nhu, the widowed wife of Diem's brother, foresaw that the murder of her husband and brother-in-law would have catastrophic consequences. "Whoever has the Americans as allies does not need any enemies," she said. "I can predict to you all that the story in Vietnam is only at its beginning."

A little over two years later, in February 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson was candid about the role of the American government in the coup and the murder of Diem: "[W]e killed him. We all got together and got a...bunch of thugs and we went in and assassinated him. Now, we've really had no political stability since then."

This was an understatement. The war would drag on for almost a decade longer. By its end, almost 60,000 members of the U.S. military were killed, as well as around 300,000 South Vietnamese combatants and a similar number of South Vietnamese civilians. When the deaths of North Vietnamese troops and civilians are added, the final body count is likely to have been more than a million people.

Three weeks after the assassination which he had ordered, President Kennedy would also be assassinated. Death, like a thief in the night, had visited him when he and the rest of the world had least expected it. It would not be appropriate to pass judgment on his eternal soul, but there's no denying that he died with the blood of two innocent men on his hands.

As the catastrophic consequences of Diem's murder unfolded, even his political enemies in Vietnam came to see his assassination as a mistake of unparalleled proportions. As for the Catholics of Vietnam, they continue to venerate Diem as a martyr. Perhaps the Church should do so also. As Josef Cardinal Frings affirmed in 1965: "The greater part of the world has not given just recognition of this noble man."

The primary source for this essay is Geoffrey Shaw's excellent book, The Lost Mandate of Heaven: The

House Passes Bill To Work Against Countries Normalizing With Syria

The bill is designed to expand already crippling economic sanctions on Syria

by Dave DeCamp / February 15, 2024 at 5:57 pm ET / News / Syria



On Wednesday, the House passed a bill that prohibits the US from opening diplomatic relations with the Syrian government of Bashar al-Assad and expands harsh sanctions on Syria to prevent other countries from normalizing with Syria.

The Assad Regime Anti-Normalization Act passed in a vote of 389-32, demonstrating broad bipartisan support for the economic war against Syria. Only 28 Democrats and four Republicans voted against the bill. The legislation now heads to the Senate.

The bill was introduced as a reaction to Arab countries repairing relations with the Assad government and Syria being brought back into the Arab league. Hawks in the US are opposed to Syria's regional integration and are hoping they can prevent it using sanctions under the Caesar Act.

The Caesar Act was implemented in 2020 and allows the US to sanction any individual or entity that does business with the Syrian government. The sanctions are specifically designed to prevent Syria from rebuilding, and Secretary of State Antony Blinken has previously said it's US policy to "oppose the reconstruction of Syria" as long as Assad remains in power.

The text of the bill declares that it's US policy "to actively oppose recognition or normalization of relations by other governments with any Government of Syria that is led by Bashar Al-Assad, including by fully implementing the mandatory primary and secondary sanctions in the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act."

On top of the economic sanctions on Syria, the US has about 900 troops occupying the eastern portion of the country, where it backs the Kurdish-led SDF and controls oil fields. Recent reports have suggested the US was considering a withdrawal from Syria as its forces have been under attack since October due to US support for the Israeli slaughter in Gaza. But an SDF commander said last week that he received assurances from the US that a withdrawal was not on the table.

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THE GOLDEN JOURNEY TO SAMARKAND

James Elroy Flecker
1884-1915

PROLOGUE



We who with songs beguile your pilgrimage
And swear that Beauty lives though lilies die,
We Poets of the proud old lineage
Who sing to find your hearts, we know not why, -
What shall we tell you? Tales, marvellous tales
Of ships and stars and isles where good men rest,
Where nevermore the rose of sunset pales,
And winds and shadows fall towards the West:
And there the world's first huge white-bearded kings
In dim glades sleeping, murmur in their sleep,
And closer round their breasts the ivy clings,
Cutting its pathway slow and red and deep.

THE GOLDEN JOURNEY TO SAMARKAND

EPILOGUE

At the Gate of the Sun, Baghdad, in olden time

THE MERCHANTS :

Away, for we are ready to a man!
Our camels sniff the evening and are glad.
Lead on, O Master of the Caravan:
Lead on the Merchant-Princes of Baghdad.

THE CHIEF DRAPER :

Have we not Indian carpets dark as wine,
Turbans and sashes, gowns and bows and veils,
And broideries of intricate design,
And printed hangings in enormous bales?

THE CHIEF GROCER :

We have rose-candy, we have spikenard,
Mastic and terebinth and oil and spice,
And such sweet jams meticulously jarred
As God's own Prophet eats in Paradise.

THE PRINCIPAL JEWS :

And we have manuscripts in peacock styles
By Ali of Damascus; we have swords
Engraved with storks and apes and crocodiles,
And heavy beaten necklaces, for Lords.

THE MASTER OF THE CARAVAN :

But you are nothing but a lot of Jews.

THE PRINCIPAL JEWS :

Sir, even dogs have daylight, and we pay.

THE MASTER OF THE CARAVAN :

But who are ye in rags and rotten shoes,
You dirty-bearded, blocking up the way?

THE PILGRIMS :

We are the Pilgrims, master; we shall go
Always a little further: it may be
Beyond the last blue mountain barred with snow,

Across that angry or that glimmering sea,
White on a throne or guarded in a cave
There lives a prophet who can understand
Why men were born: but surely we are brave,
Who take the golden road to Samarkand.

THE CHIEF MERCHANT :

We gnaw the nail of hurry. Master, away!

ONE OF THE WOMEN :

O turn your eyes to where your children stand.
Is not Baghdad the beautiful? O stay!

THE MERCHANTS in chorus :

We take the Golden Road to Samarkand.

AN OLD MAN :

Have you not girls and garlands in your homes,
Eunuchs and Syrian boys at your command?
Seek not excess: God hateth him who roams!

THE MERCHANTS :

We take the golden road to Samarkand.

A PILGRIM WITH A BEAUTIFUL VOICE :

Sweet to ride forth at evening from the wells
When shadows pass gigantic on the sand,
And softly through the silence beat the bells
Along the Golden Road to Samarkand.

A MERCHANT :

We travel not for trafficking alone:
By hotter winds our fiery hearts are fanned:
For lust of knowing what should not be known
We take the golden road to Samarkand.

THE MASTER OF THE CARAVAN :

Open the gate, O watchman of the night!

THE WATCHMAN :

Ho, travellers, I open. For what land
Leave you the dim-moon city of delight?

THE MERCHANTS (*with a shout*)

We take the golden road to Samarkand.

(The Caravan passes through the gate)

THE WATCHMAN (*consoling the women*)

What would ye, ladies? It was ever thus.
Men are unwise and curiously planned.

A WOMAN :

They have their dreams, and do not think of us.
(in the distance, singing)

VOICES OF THE CARAVAN :

We take the golden road to Samarkand.

No, the Palestinians Did Not Vote for More Terrorism in the 2006 Elections

MIKE WHITNEY • FEBRUARY 19, 2024 • 2,300 WORDS

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Is this statement true or false: Israel is justified in flattening Gaza because the Palestinians elected Hamas in 2006 which proves they support terrorism.

1. True
2. False

The answer is “2”. The 2006 elections do not prove that the Palestinians support terrorism. Quite the contrary. What the polling data shows is that the majority of people voted on issues completely unrelated to terrorism. Here’s what they voted for:

1. Safety and Security (37%)
2. Decreased Corruption (25%)

What a surprise, eh? So, the Palestinians want the same thing that people want everywhere; More security and less corruption.

No one—and I mean no one—voted for Hamas because they thought the group would instigate more bloody confrontations with Israel. The fact that “safety and security” were the Number 1 issue, shows that there’s no appetite for more conflict at all. Palestinians—at least the majority of Palestinians—want peace. That’s what all the surveys tell us. Unfortunately, the media has tried to convince people that the opposite is true, that the people of Gaza voted for Hamas because they still cling to the idea of “pushing the Jews into the sea.” But that’s just not true. See for yourself:

An exit poll conducted by Near East Consulting on 15 February 2006 on voters participating in the 2006 PA elections revealed the following responses to major concerns:

Support for a Peace Agreement with Israel:

79.5% in support
15.5% in opposition

Should Hamas change its policies regarding Israel:

Yes – 75.2%
No – 24.8%

Under Hamas corruption will decrease:

Yes – 78.1%
No – 21.9%

Under Hamas internal security will improve:

Yes – 67.8%
No – 32.2%

Hamas government priorities:

- 1) Combatting corruption
- 2) Ending security chaos
- 3) Solving poverty/unemployment

Now, I know that many people would like to scapegoat the Palestinians for the ghastly massacre that is going on today, but it just doesn’t square with the facts. Palestinians voted for Hamas—not because they thought the group was a perfect match with their own values—but because they appeared to be less corrupt than the disreputable puppets in Fatah. Americans should be sympathetic to these feelings given the similarities between the 2006 Gaza balloting and the 2016 Presidential elections in the US. In the American election, many people voted for Trump—not because they couldn’t see he was a deeply-flawed candidate with no political

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experience—but because his opponent was the most crooked and vindictive politician in American history. Trump was clearly the ‘lesser of two evils’, just as Hamas was the lesser of two evils.

But there’s more to this story than most people realize. And, that is, that **Hamas had ordered the complete cessation of suicide bombings more than a year before the election.** Did you know that?

It’s true; no more suicide missions, no more blown-up buses, retail shops and coffee houses. No more bereaved families, wailing mothers and endless funeral processions. It all stopped. **And it stopped because Hamas stopped it.**

Did the voters in Gaza know that?

Of course, they knew that, and it’s doubtful that Hamas would have won the election if the group had continued with the bombings. Because that’s not what the ‘average guy’ wants.

And, guess what happened after the bombings stopped?

Then **Hamas decided to enter the political arena.** Again, this was a significant development that was downplayed in the media but sent tremors through the Israeli political establishment.

Why?

Because Israeli leaders put the two developments together and could see what was going on. **Hamas was shifting its approach from armed struggle to a political track.** That is a tectonic change in policy that represented a grave threat to Israel’s broader Zionist strategy which involves the seizing of more land to form a Greater Israel.

But **how was Israel going to seize more land if the Hamas boogiemán had transformed himself into a dovish politician who no longer engaged in acts of terrorism?** That is the conundrum that Israel faced.

It’s also worth mentioning, that as soon as **Hamas won the election, they declared a unilateral ceasefire with Israel.** (which put even more pressure on Israel.) In other words, Israel continued the attacks on Gaza, but Hamas refused to respond.

Additionally, **Israel imposed a suffocating blockade on Gaza that has persisted until today. And the reason they did this, was because the threat of ‘peace breaking out’ was too serious to ignore. If Hamas was going to pursue a peaceful political track, then Israel would have to increase the provocations, the incitements and the brutality.**

But, why?

Once again, it’s because **Israel needs a boogiemán to justify its operational plan for territorial expansion. It’s that simple.** They can’t simply take the land by force without first concocting a pretext that will conceal their real motive. So, even though everyone knows that Israel is expelling the Palestinians in order to control all the land from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea, they still need to justify the operation in terms of a (fictitious) national security threat that they need to confront. **Hamas, of course, is that fictitious threat that must be eradicated by turning all of Gaza into a smoldering pile of rubble.** See how it works? Check out this brief excerpt from an article at *Counterpunch* in 2007:

Hamas recently renounced violence by maintaining a unilateral ceasefire for well over a year. The same period saw a steady escalation of Israeli raids, arrests, killings, and settlements in the occupied territories. Everyone, including Israel’s general staff, knows that Hamas would return to a ceasefire if it thought Israel were serious about reciprocating. Hamas leader-in-exile Khaled Meshaal’s recent proposal for a 10-year ceasefire was summarily rebuffed. **Pushing the Wedge in Palestine, Counterpunch**

Bottom line: The Palestinians voted for the wrong party, so the Palestinians had to be punished. That's not the way democracy is supposed to work.

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And, what is particularly ironic about these developments, is that it was the United States that forced the elections to begin with. The Palestinians didn't care about elections. How were elections going to help them? No, it was the Bush Administration and their risible democracy-spreading agenda that forced the balloting. In fact, **Bush and Co pumped \$2.3 million into the Palestinian elections via USAID which was "allegedly designed to bolster the image of President Abbas and his Fatah party."**

Interesting, isn't it, that we actually know how much money was spent meddling in a foreign election. And, yet—even after all that meddling—the plan failed. Hamas won anyway.

And that is when Israel freaked out. They said the elections proved that the Palestinians supported terrorism which—as we've already shown—is not the case at all. **The Palestinians did not vote for terrorism, they voted for security and honest government. The whole Israel-media narrative is a fairytale.**

But the critics are correct in saying that Hamas steadfastly refused to acknowledge "Israel's right to exist". That is true, but there's also an explanation. Here's more from James Brooks:

As for 'recognizing Israel's right to exist', we simply note that Israel has yet to recognize the state of Palestine's 'right to exist'. Israel currently forbids a Palestinian state and negates the Palestinians' national rights daily with its strangling military occupation. Under the circumstances, it hardly seems unreasonable for Hamas to withhold recognition of this 'right to exist' until it is reciprocated in word and deed." (*Counterpunch*)

He's right; why should Hamas make concessions to Israel that Israel won't make to Hamas? All Israel needs to do is accept UN Resolutions requiring it to stay within its 1967 internationally-accepted borders, and everything will be fine. Which brings us to the next point, which is; **Is Hamas willing to live side-by-side with Israel in peace?**

And, the answer is: **Yes, it is.** This is from an article by Elaine Hagopian:

After Hamas won the elections in 2006, its leadership accepted a two-state solution based on the pre-war June 4, 1967 borders, but this was unacceptable to Israel. Earlier, Israel destroyed secular Fatah leader and Palestinian Authority President Arafat for failing at Camp David in July 2000 to comply with its demands to accept permanent Israeli control over Palestinian life and land confined in enclaves. Hamas became the new challenge to Israel's vision. **Gaza: History Matters, Counterpunch**

Let me get this straight: Hamas accepts a two-state solution?

Yep, it sure does, in fact, here it is from the horse's mouth himself. This is a short excerpt from a Washington Post interview with Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh in 2006. Haniyeh said that he wanted to see an end the "vicious cycle of violence" and vehemently denied the claim that "Hamas is committed to destroying Israel". He said, **"We do not have any feelings of animosity toward Jews. We do not wish to throw them into the sea.** All we seek is to be given our land back, not to harm anybody....We are not war seekers nor are we war initiators. We are not lovers of blood. We are oppressed people with rights."

Wa Post: "Would Hamas recognize Israel if it were to withdraw to the '67 borders?"

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Haniyeh: "If Israel withdraws to the '67 borders, then we will establish peace in stages... We will establish a situation of stability and calm which will bring safety for our people."

Wa Post: "Do you recognize Israel's right to exist?"

Haniyeh: "The answer is to let Israel say it will recognize a Palestinian state along the 1967 borders, release the prisoners and recognize the rights of the refugees to return to Israel. Hamas will have a position if this occurs."

Wa Post: "Will you recognize Israel?"

Haniyeh: "If Israel declares that it will give the Palestinian people a state and give them back all their rights, then we are ready to recognize them."

Haniyeh's answers are straightforward and rational. He asked for nothing that isn't already required under existing United Nations resolutions; a return to the 1967 borders, basic human rights, and settlement of the final status issues. An agreement could be facilitated tomorrow if Israel was willing to conform to international law. Instead, Israel has chosen to invade Gaza. Here's more from Haniyeh:

"We want what Americans enjoy — democratic rights, economic sovereignty and justice. We thought our pride in conducting the fairest elections in the Arab world might resonate with the United States and its citizens. Instead, our new government was met from the very beginning by acts of explicit, declared sabotage by the White House. Now this aggression continues against 3.9 million civilians living in the world's largest prison camps. America's complacency in the face of these war crimes is, as usual, embedded in the coded rhetorical green light: "Israel has a right to defend itself." **The Gaza Bloodbath**, *Counterpunch*

Here's a bit more on the topic:

In 2009, former President Jimmy Carter visited the West Bank and Gaza where he met with Ismail Haniyeh, who he thought would be a reliable partner in future negotiations. Carter also met with Hamas Chief Khaled Meshaal in Damascus who assured the ex-president that Hamas would accept any agreement reached between the Palestinian Authority and Israel, provided it was approved by the Palestinian people in a national referendum. **Carter's interaction with Hamas leaders disproved western pro-Israel pundits who had claimed that Hamas would never commit to such an agreement. They were wrong. Hamas wants peace.** Here's a short blurb from an article in the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* in 2015:

Former U.S. President **Jimmy Carter said Hamas leader Khaled Meshal is in favor of the peace process with Israel and that Hamas is not a terrorist organization.**

Carter also told Israel Channel 2 on Saturday that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is not in favor of a two-state solution with the Palestinians.

"I don't see that deep commitment on the part of Netanyahu to make concessions which [former prime minister] Menachem Begin did to find peace with his potential enemies," Carter said.

Of Meshal, the ex-U.S. leader said, "I don't believe that he's a terrorist. He's strongly in favor of the peace process." Carter added that he "deplored" terrorist acts by Hamas and would support moderate members of the group. **Jimmy Carter: Hamas leader favors peace, Netanyahu not committed to 2 states, JTA**

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So, let's summarize:

Jimmy Carter wants a two-state solution based on UN Resolutions requiring Israel to stay within its 1967 internationally-accepted borders.

Hamas leader Khaled Meshal wants a two-state solution based on UN Resolutions requiring Israel to stay within its 1967 internationally-accepted borders.

Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh wants a two-state solution based on UN Resolutions requiring Israel to stay within its 1967 internationally-accepted borders.

So, what's the problem? It looks like everyone agrees.

But, no, Mr. Netanyahu doesn't agree, in fact, he is adamantly opposed to any Palestinian state within the area from the Jordan to the Sea. And Netanyahu not only has a powerful military machine to back him up, but he also has influential friends in Washington that will provide him with as many bombs and weapons as he needs to drive defenseless civilians off their historic homeland and into Egypt.

So, the peace process cannot move forward which means the bloodletting will continue for the foreseeable future. It is the great tragedy of our time. Here's one last excerpt from an interview between Alexander Cockburn and Khaled Meshal that took place in 2008:

I know very well that the American people are very kind people. But our problem is with the foreign policies of successive American administrations. We accepted a state of... Palestine on the borders of 1967. The international community failed to pressure Israelis to do the same. So, **what is left for Palestinians to do, except resist? For our part, we prefer the peaceful path. But we find the peaceful path blocked. Hence, the Palestinians are left with no option but the resistance.** And this is what explains why the Palestinian people elected Hamas and why, amid famine and hunger and siege inflicted on the Palestinian people today, you find the same thing: the Palestinian people are supporting Hamas.... **Alexander Cockburn's 2008 Interview With Hamas' Khaled Meshal, Counterpunch**

American president John F Kennedy reiterated these same sentiments in March 1962 at an address on the first Anniversary of the Alliance for Progress when he said:

Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable.

Indeed.

Warsaw Uprising

Polish history

Written and fact-checked by The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica
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Warsaw Uprising, (August–October 1944), insurrection in Warsaw during World War II by which Poles unsuccessfully tried to oust the German army and seize control of the city before it was occupied by the advancing Soviet army. The uprising's failure allowed the pro-Soviet Polish administration, rather than the Polish government-in-exile in London, to gain control of Poland.

As the Red Army approached Warsaw (July 29–30, 1944), Soviet authorities, promising aid, encouraged the Polish underground there to stage an uprising against the Germans. However, the Polish underground, known as the Home Army, was anxious because the Soviet Union had already assumed direct control of eastern Poland and had sponsored the formation of the Polish Committee of National Liberation to administer the remainder of Soviet-occupied Polish territory. Hoping to gain control of Warsaw before the Red Army could “liberate” it, the Home Army followed the Soviet suggestion to revolt.

Commanded by Gen. Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski, the Warsaw corps of 50,000 troops attacked the relatively weak German garrison on August 1. Within three days the Poles had regained control of most of the city, but they failed to capture main transportation and communications arteries such as railway stations and road junctures. By August 20 German forces in the city had laid firm plans to counterattack, which they did on August 25. This was a well-supported and brutal assault, and as many as 40,000 Polish civilians were massacred. Designed to last ten days, the uprising now entered into a siege phase that favoured the better equipped and supplied Germans.

Meanwhile, the Red Army, which had been detained during the first days of the insurrection by a German assault, occupied a position at Praga, a suburb across the Vistula River from Warsaw, and remained idle. In addition, the Soviet government refused to allow the western Allies to use Soviet air bases to airlift supplies to the beleaguered Poles. Western powers did try to help the Poles, but the distance between them and the city limited their ability; flights from Allied-occupied Brindisi, Italy, crossed more than 800 miles (1,300 km) of hostile territory and losses were extraordinary. Finally, on September 13 Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin initiated limited humanitarian and military aid air drops in Warsaw, but it was too little and too late to help the Poles.

Without significant Allied support, the Home Army split into small, disconnected units and was forced to surrender when its supplies gave out (October 2). Bór-Komorowski and his forces were taken prisoner, and the Germans then systematically deported the remainder of the city's population and razed the city itself. As many as 15,000 insurgents and 250,000 civilians were killed in this second Warsaw Uprising, while the Germans lost about 16,000 men.

By allowing the Germans to suppress the Warsaw Uprising, the Soviet authorities also allowed them to eliminate the main body of the military organization that supported the Polish government-in-exile in London. Consequently, when the Soviet army occupied all of Poland, there was little effective organized resistance to its establishing Soviet political domination over the country and imposing the communist-led Provisional Government of Poland (January 1, 1945).

Unconstitutional: U.S. presidents restrain personal liberty, kill with impunity

By Andrew P. Napolitano
Wednesday, November 8, 2023

OPINION:

The Biden administration is killing people, openly in Ukraine and Gaza and secretly around the world. It has continued to use the killing machinery crafted by President George W. Bush, expanded by President Barack Obama and employed by President Donald Trump. These presidents have used drones and other unmanned projectiles to target people in foreign countries with which the United States is not at war.

They have done this notwithstanding the prohibition against taking life, liberty or property from any person — not just any American, but any person — in the Constitution each has sworn to uphold, and they have done so pursuant to secret rules that they themselves have established for these killings.

Last year, 11 senators and 39 members of the House of Representatives sent a harshly worded letter to President Biden asking him to stop the secret, but not the public, killings. As of this writing, he has not publicly replied.

Here is the backstory.

The purpose of the Bill of Rights — the first 10 amendments to the Constitution — is to protect personal liberty by restraining the government.

The Fifth Amendment prohibits killing persons, restraining liberty and taking property without due process; that means a jury trial at which the government must prove criminal behavior or fault, depending upon its goal.

If the country is at war — lawfully and constitutionally declared by Congress — the president can use the U.S. military to kill the military of the opposing country. And if an attack on the U.S. is imminent, the president can strike the first blow against the military of the entity whose attack is imminent.

There are no other constitutional circumstances under which a president may kill.

When President Harry Truman targeted Japanese civilians as the Japanese government was within days of surrendering in World War II, he murdered them. Notwithstanding his unprosecuted war crimes, and with the government's version of Pearl Harbor still fresh in many Americans' minds, Truman was regarded as heroic for using nuclear bombs to cause the immoral, militarily useless and plainly criminal mass killings of the hated Japanese.

Fast-forward to the 9/11 era, and Mr. Bush had precedent to begin his own presidential killings of people the government wanted Americans to hate. While Congress did authorize him to use force against those who caused or aided the 9/11 attacks, we all know that his thirst for Middle Eastern blood knew no regard for the Constitution, evidence, proportionality, civilian lives, morality or human decency. Thus, \$3 trillion was spent, and 1 million people lost their lives in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Julian Assange sits in a British dungeon awaiting decisions on his extradition to the U.S. because he courageously, lawfully and constitutionally published documents and videos demonstrating conclusively that Mr. Bush's use of drones targeted and murdered Afghan and Iraqi civilians, and his administration covered it up.

Mr. Obama took this to another level when he targeted and killed Anwar al-Awlaki, who was born in the U.S. Mr. Obama's then-attorney general, Eric Holder, advised Mr.

Obama that the killing was lawful, as al-Awlaki had encouraged people in the Middle East to fight against American soldiers there. Mr. Holder likened killing al-Awlaki to police shooting at a bank robber they are chasing while he is shooting at them.

Mr. Holder forgot that al-Awlaki was unarmed, was not charged with any crime, was never accused of violence, and was not even the subject of an arrest warrant when a drone evaporated him while he sat at an outdoor cafe in Yemen.

The exercise of power by the federal government is largely based on precedent and politics. Whenever a president wants to kill, he need only find an example of a predecessor having killed with impunity — without due process, without a declaration of war and without an imminent attack. And then he needs only to calculate what he thinks he can politically get away with.

Mr. Biden — whose drones in 2021 destroyed a dam in Syria, killing thousands, and who targeted civilians in Afghanistan, killing dozens, and whose shipments of guns to Ukraine and Israel are killing tens of thousands of people he wants us to hate — is using unlawful powers that his modern predecessors used and got away with to target and kill people he sees as unsympathetic. But the U.S. has not declared war on Russia or Gaza.

The nature of political power is to expand so that it fills a perceived need unless there are mechanisms in place to restrain its expansion.

The founding generation believed that British monarchs had no limits on their power, and that was a good enough reason for the 13 colonies to violently secede. They also believed that they had crafted the Constitution and the Bill of Rights to impose sufficient restraints on the federal government. They believed that the states could peacefully leave a federal government they had voluntarily joined when it exceeded its constitutional powers.

The Constitution is the supreme law of the land. Its language is clear that only Congress writes laws and declares war, and presidents can kill only troops in wartime or civilians consistent with due process.

Sadly, the Founders were wrong.

Every president takes an oath to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution as it was written, not as he may wish it to be.

Yet today, the president writes laws and rules that let him restrain personal liberty and kill with impunity, and Congress and the American people let him get away with it. Formally, we still have a Constitution. Functionally, it has utterly failed to restrain the government.

Ultimately, we have ourselves to blame for these killings and undeclared wars. Why do we repose the Constitution for safekeeping into the hands of those who subvert it? If a future president uses Mr. Bush's lust, Mr. Obama's logic and Mr. Biden's hatred to kill Americans in America, then no one's life, liberty or property will be secure.

• To learn more about Judge Andrew Napolitano, visit <https://JudgeNap.com>.

How strangely will the Tools of a Tyrant pervert the plain Meaning of Words!

— Samuel Adams, *letter to John Pitts* [January 21, 1776]

The George Floyd Cover-Up

THE AMERICAN PUBLIC WAS LIED TO about one of the most important and far-reaching events of this century: the death of George Floyd. Floyd's apparent asphyxiation beneath the knee of Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin on May 25, 2020, made Floyd a martyr for Black Lives Matter worldwide. His face appeared on the placards of chanting protestors in places as far-flung as Nairobi and Tokyo, and to this day, his name is invoked as a saint of racial justice. "Even Dr. King's assassination did not have the worldwide impact that George Floyd's death did," newly elected President Joe Biden said in April 2021.

Floyd's death was also exploited for maximal political gain by America's Democratic Party in the 2020 election year, playing into the narrative that the law enforcement institutions of Donald Trump's America are racist and need to be destroyed. It provided an excuse for leftists to demonstrate their capacity to inflict political violence, vandalism, and intimidation in cities across America with near impunity—with encouragement, in fact, from the Democrat politicians who run those cities. That starkly contrasted the draconian treatment the Jan. 6 protestors received after daring to express political protest at the U.S. Capitol on a far milder scale than anything seen in Minneapolis in 2020.

Thus, the average person may be shocked that what they were told about George Floyd's death was a lie. Rather than being killed by Minneapolis police, there is plenty of evidence to suggest Floyd died of a heart attack after a massive drug overdose. Rather than a brutal rogue cop who abused his power, Officer Chauvin was just following the restraint techniques he was taught by his department, literally "by the book." Floyd's official autopsy found no bruises or damage to his neck, which should have been there if he died of asphyxiation. It appears that, under intense political and public pressure, Minneapolis police officials, doctors, the justice system, and the government covered up or lied about evidence that contradicted the story of Floyd dying due to police brutality.

This revisionist case is ably made in the documentary *The Fall of Minneapolis*, released online in November by the conservative Minnesota online news site *Alpha News*. The 100-minute documentary was produced by investigative reporter Liz Collins based on her 2022 book, *They're Lying: The Media, The Left, and The Death of George Floyd*. The film's summary of the evidence makes it clear that, at the very least, the public has not heard the whole story about Floyd's death.

For those who have succeeded in forgetting the loathsome details of that event: on May 25, 2020, George Floyd was arrested for forgery after trying to pass a counterfeit bill at the Cup Foods convenience store in South Minneapolis. Four police officers, including Chauvin, responded to the call and attempted to restrain the drug-impaired Floyd, who resisted arrest wildly while babbling and foaming at the mouth. Most people have not seen the police body cam footage this documentary shows, and it alone is enough to shatter a reasonable person's perception of that day.

During the stop, Floyd appeared to be swallowing pills to evade a drug possession charge. He had done the same thing during a similar police stop a year earlier. He was caught in the act and rushed to the hospital that time. But in 2020, he insisted to the arresting officers that he hadn't taken anything. Police called emergency services anyway and used a "Maximal Restraint Technique" procedure to pin him to the ground as he continued to resist arrest. He was pronounced dead at the hospital.

The official autopsy by Dr. Andrew Baker found no signs of asphyxiation and no bruising or trauma to Floyd's neck but did find advanced heart disease. A memo detailing Dr. Baker's initial autopsy the day of Floyd's death reported Dr. Baker "opined the ultimate cause of death may prove to be... 1) coronary heart disease, 2) any stimulants potentially in Mr. Floyd's system causing his heart to work harder, and 3) Mr. Floyd's exertion during his encounter with the police officers." The toxicology report arrived a few days later and showed Floyd had consumed what Dr. Baker called "a fatal level of fentanyl under normal circumstances"—more than three times the lethal level.

But Dr. Baker appeared to change his mind after meeting with FBI officials and prosecutors from the office of Hennepin County Attorney Keith Ellison—a rabidly partisan Democrat and former member of the Nation of Islam. Dr. Baker later testified at Chauvin's trial that Floyd was murdered and that his heart disease and drug use were "contributing" but "not direct causes" of his death.

Yet, during a deposition for an unrelated case in August 2023, Former Hennepin County Attorney Amy Sweasy Tamburino testified that Dr. Baker told her at the time that he had found no evidence of asphyxia, strangulation, or any injury to Floyd's neck. "He said to me, 'Amy, what happens when the actual evidence doesn't match up with the public narrative that everyone's already decided on?'" Tamburino testified under oath. "And then he said, 'This is the kind of case that ends careers.'"

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When the trial began in March 2021, the Hennepin County Courthouse in downtown Minneapolis had to be barricaded with high fences, concrete barriers, and barbed wire to keep out the mob, which had been whipped into a frenzy by BLM and D.C. race grifters like Al Sharpton and Rep. Maxine Waters, who descended on the burned-out city like vultures.

Chauvin's defense team submitted training manuals showing the maximal restraint technique, in which an officer places a shin on a suspect's shoulder blade. They also presented viewpoints from the perspective of the officers' body cameras, appearing to show that Chauvin was applying pressure from his shin to Floyd's back, rather than his knee on his neck, which was consistent with Dr. Baker's finding no damage to Floyd's neck.

Despite this, Minneapolis Police Chief Medaria Arradondo testified that he was unfamiliar with the technique—an apparent lie immediately contradicted by seven officers interviewed by Collins. "I heard him say that," said retired Minneapolis Police Lieutenant Lindsay Herron. "It's tough to hear people lie. Just straight lie."

Two days after the documentary's release, Chauvin was stabbed 22 times in prison, allegedly by a former Mexican Mafia member who did it on Black Friday to honor BLM. Chauvin survived the attack and is back in jail. Earlier that week, the U.S. Supreme Court rejected Chauvin's appeal; the justices did not comment on their decision.

Another election year is beginning, and all the polls show Trump beating Biden nationally and in all seven swing states. Somewhere a Democrat strategist is saying, "We need another George Floyd."

—Edward Welsch

EDITORIALS

Chronicles

January 2024



Plutarch on the role of statecraft in a time of rampant corruption

By Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr.

January 31, 2024

Writes Rick Rozoff:

From essays of Plutarch included in the Moralia. His observations seem particularly pertinent during the reign of Josephus Bidenus Malefactorius.

Precepts of Statecraft

...Demosthenes is right in declaring that the greatest safeguard states possess against tyrants is distrust; for that part of the soul with which we trust is most easily taken captive.

So of all kinds of love that which is engendered in states and peoples for an individual because of his virtue is at once the strongest and the most divine; but those falsely named and falsely attested honors which are derived from giving theatrical performances, making distributions of money or offering gladiatorial shows are like harlots' flatteries, since the masses always smile upon him who gives to them and does them favors, granting him an ephemeral and uncertain reputation.

Now those who are skilled in tending and keeping bees think that the hive which hums loudest and is most full of noise is thriving and is in good condition; but he to whom God has given the care of the rational and political swarm will judge of its happiness chiefly by the quietness and tranquility of the people....States which have fallen unto complete disorder are utterly ruined unless they meet with some external necessity and chastisement and are thus forcibly compelled by their misfortunes to be reasonable.

...just as a conflagration does not often begin in sacred or public places, but some lamp left neglected in a house or some rubbish causes a great flame and works public destruction, so disorder in a state is not always kindled by contentions about public matters, but frequently differences arising from private affairs and offenses pass thence into public life and throw the whole state into confusion.

...rivalries affecting public interests, if private enmities are done away with, become of slight importance and do no serious or incurable harm.

That We Ought Not to Borrow

...loans are not made to people in need, but to those who wish to acquire some superfluity for themselves. And a man produces a witness and a surety to aver that, since the man has property, he serves credit, whereas, since he has it, he ought not to be borrowing.

Being unable to carry the burden of poverty, you put the money-lender upon your back, a burden difficult for even the rich to bear.

...if we were content with the necessities of life, the race of money-lenders would be as non-existent as that of Centaurs and Gorgons....