

# Kill the Culture, Destroy a Nation

What Was Behind Trump's Recent Threats Against Iran's Culture and Other High Level Sites?

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*During the Gulf War of the 1990's, U.S. troops in Baghdad looted important museums, destroyed historical artifacts, some were even found outside of the museums and on the side of roads, many of ancient artifacts and pieces of artworks were stolen. For example, in the city of Hillah, several museums were looted. Then when the George W. Bush Jr. regime came to power in 2000, they blamed Iraq for the September 11 attacks afterwards and accused Iraqi President Saddam Hussein of harboring "weapons of mass destruction" which of course, all turned out to be another manufactured lie by Washington that began another war on Iraq and then the looting of Iraq's museums continued. There was an estimated 35,000 small and large artifacts that was stolen from the National Museum of Iraq, a tragedy for where the 'cradle of civilization' began.*

Just last month, if you remember, U.S. President Donald Trump had threatened Iran in a barrage of tweets that his regime *"have targeted 52 Iranian sites (representing the 52 American hostages taken by Iran many years ago), some at a very high level & important to Iran & the Iranian culture"* and that they *"Will Be Hit Very fast And Very Hard"* so much for his support of the Iranian people Trump had claimed in the past. Trump did not follow through with his threats, perhaps slightly disappointing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

But first, we must ask ourselves, why did empires of the past including the Mongol empire who invaded Iraq in 1258 that begun the destruction of Iraq's priceless artifacts? There were revolutionary movements throughout history who also chose to commit *'Cultural genocide'* by destroying ancient artifacts, artworks, history books and even force the people to speak the invading empire's language. By destroying a people's culture you erase their history, language, art, everything that makes them who they are. Destroying a people's culture allows the powers that be to shape the present according to their liking, and then the future belongs to them, not to the people who they conquered. Ancient artifacts for example, embody beliefs, ideas, and sometimes they can even represent the characteristics of a people's history. Milan Kundera, a Czech-born writer who was living in exile in France once wrote something that described what was behind Trump and Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's sinister plan. *"The first step in liquidating a people is to erase its memory. Destroy its books, its culture, its history. Then have somebody write new books, manufacture a new culture, invent a new history. Before long that nation will begin to forget what it is and what it was... The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting."* Powerful words. Frantz Fanon, a psychiatrist and political philosopher from the French colony of Martinique in the Caribbean authored a groundbreaking book into the depths of colonialism titled *'The Wretched of the Earth'* which is reminiscent of what

Israeli settlers practice in reality today:

The settler makes history and is conscious of making it. And because he constantly refers to the history of his mother country, he clearly indicates that he himself is the extension of that mother-country. Thus the history which he writes is not the history of the country which he plunders but the history of his own nation in regard to all that she skims off, all that she violates and starves

However, it's fair to say that Trump's threat of attacking Iran's cultural sites on his twitter rant runs much deeper. In regards to the Israel-Palestinian conflict, there are several documents and statements that have been made by hard-line  Israelis that wanted to destroy Arab culture, history and identity and at the same time, jeopardize the future of education for children in the Middle East who will not know anything about their past since the creation of the state of Israel. Back on October 28, 1956, *Menachem Begin*, a former leader of the Zionist militant group Irgun, founder of the Likud Party and Israel's sixth Prime Minister was quoted as saying *"You shall have no pity on them until we shall have destroyed their so-called Arab culture, on the ruins of which we shall build our own civilization."* Despite that fact that on December 1948, the United Nations had passed 'Resolution 194' that essentially called for the return of Arab refugees and that *"holy places, religious buildings, and sites in Palestine should be protected and free access to them assured, in accordance with existing rights and historical practice."*

In June 1967, three days after The Six-Day War, the *Israeli Defense Forces* (IDF) destroyed the 770-year old Moroccan Quarter known in the Arab world as *The Harat al-Magharibah* (The Moroccan Quarter) in the Old City of Jerusalem in order to occupy the sanctuary and construct it for Jews only. The Moroccan Quarter was originally founded by the son of Saladin in the late 12th century. Israel's efforts was to expand the alley and create a new path to the Western Wall so that Jews can have easy access to pray to the newly conquered area. IDF actions was the start of a long campaign to eliminate Arab culture and replace it with Israel's perception of its historical and cultural footprint in the region especially Jerusalem. *The Institute for Palestine Studies* headquartered in Ramallah published an article on the history of the Moroccan Quarter back in 2000 titled *'The Moroccan Quarter: A History of the Present'* explains how the Israeli government has re-constructed the Arab section of Jerusalem which has taken place in different forms since 1948:

Israeli attempts at re-configuring Arab Jerusalem have been varied over the past half-century. Appropriating the built form in Palestinian owned areas of the city has most often meant seizing Arab structures, homes, and neighborhoods, emptying them of their Arab inhabitants, and substituting new histories, new communities, and new meanings in place of old.

Entire neighborhoods and thousands of Arab homes were taken over by the nascent Jewish state in 1948. Occasionally, however, the Israeli state has sought to demolish and to physically erase particular areas of Palestinian habitation that obstruct Israeli visions for exclusive rule in what mainstream Zionism regards as Israel's "eternal" and "unified" capital

According to the study *"The Harat al-Magharibah (the Moroccan Quarter), first constructed over 700 years ago in the age of the Ayyubids and Mamluks, was on the eve of the June 1967 War home to approximately 650 people and 100 families. The neighborhood as demolished by the Israeli state in the days immediately after it conquered East Jerusalem."*

The study also concluded that *“This former space represents a site where practices of ethnic cleansing and wholesale dispossession have been combined with Israeli discourses of “the sacred” as well as others which promote exclusivist, transhistorical notions of Jewish entitlement to the city.”* The study also described what were the characteristics before 1948:

The Character of the Neighborhood before 1948 The structures that comprised this neighborhood over the course of seven centuries were familial, religious, and social and were built mainly of stone and brick. Clustered densely together, these modest one and two story buildings enveloped a network of narrow alleyways that snaked through this largely poor neighborhood.

Its population became increasingly diverse in the centuries after the quarter’s inception. Historically, most families resident in this quarter traced a genealogy back to the Maghrib. Pilgrimage or oppression in former lands brought many to Jerusalem. Over the course of several centuries, Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Arabs from Palestine and elsewhere also took up residence in this quarter

Today, part of the Israel-Palestinian conflict is the destruction of Palestinian cultural history and replace it with Israel’s historical claims in Palestine from more than 2,000 years ago. However, Palestinian culture and history was not the only target of Israel. It seems that the *Islamic State* (ISIS) is taking its marching orders to destroy Arab culture from Israel as they also destroyed numerous archaeological sites with explosives and even bulldozers that deliberately targeted important cultural sites in Iraq and Syria. ISIS is doing what the Israeli hardliners would want and that is to destroy Arabic culture, history and its identity and deprive future generations of that knowledge. According to one of Israel’s mainstream news websites, *Haaretz* from December 7th, 2014, *‘UN Reveals Israeli Links With Syrian Rebels’*:

The observers have continued to file reports to New York, which were relatively mundane; but their content changed in March 2013, when Israel started admitting injured Syrians for medical treatment in Safed and Nahariya hospitals. The Syrian ambassador to the UN complained of widespread cooperation between Israel and Syrian rebels, not only treatment of the wounded but also other aid



Soon After, the destruction of Syrian cultural and historical sites began. One example I would like to point out was the incident on May 2015, a site called *Palmyra*, located in the desert in the eastern part of Damascus which was in essence a historical part of the Roman Empire. At one point in history, Palmyra was a wealthy metropolitan city and at its peak around the 3rd century, Queen Zenobia lead a rebellion against the Roman Empire but failed to win its freedom. Rome re-conquered Palmyra and then was destroyed by Rome’s army in A.D. 273. By the 20th Century, Palmyra became one of Syria’s main tourist attractions. The Islamic State invaded the modern town of Palmyra and its ancient ruins and practically destroyed it. ISIS even executed Khaled al-Asaad, a Syrian archaeologist who managed excavations and hung his headless body on a column (a tactic to put fear on civilians). Another site destroyed by the terrorists with explosives was *The Temple of Baal Shamin* which was a 1,900-year-old ancient temple. The destruction of *Dura-Europos*, a fortress founded in 303 B.C was another site that also sacked. It was called Dura by the Seleucids on the intersection of an east-west trade routes along another trade route close to

the Euphrates. Dura controlled the river crossing on the route between the cities of Antioch and Seleucia on the Tigris. Dura was also considered border city that included Hellenistic, Parthian and the Romans built above the right bank of the Euphrates river and in close proximity to the village of Salhiyé in Syria. By 113 B.C., the Parthians had conquered the city and occupied Dura until 165 A.D. although there was a brief occupation by the Romans around 114 A.D. Under Parthian rule, Dura became an important provincial administrative center until the Romans decided to invade and permanently occupy Dura-Europos by 165 A.D. and expanded their territories reaching the eastern Mesopotamia, but was later destroyed by the Sassanians in 257 A.D.

Besides the fact that different cultures have intermingled at one point or another over the centuries, many interesting findings have been made including temples, inscriptions and tombs which many were looted by the US and Israeli backed terrorists during the height of the Syrian Civil War. According to '*The 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two (1954 and 1999) Protocols*' under '*Article 4 – Respect For Cultural Property*' clearly states the following:

The High Contracting Parties undertake to respect cultural property situated within their own territory as well as within the territory of other High Contracting Parties by refraining from any use of the property and its immediate surroundings or of the appliances in use for its protection for purposes which are likely to expose it to destruction or damage in the event of armed conflict; and by refraining from any act of hostility, directed against such property

Raphael Lemkin, a lecturer on comparative law at the *Institute of Criminology of the Free University of Poland* and Deputy Prosecutor of the District Court of Warsaw wrote '*Acts Constituting a General (Transnational) Danger Considered as Offences Against the Law of Nations.*' One of the sections '*Acts Of Vandalism: Destruction of the culture and works of art*' described as an act of vandalism:

An attack targeting a collectivity can also take the form of systematic and organized destruction of the art and cultural heritage in which the unique genius and achievement of a collectivity are revealed in fields of science, arts and literature. The contribution of any particular collectivity to world culture as a whole forms the wealth of all of humanity, even while exhibiting unique characteristics.

Thus, the destruction of a work of art of any nation must be regarded as acts of vandalism directed against world culture. The author [of the crime] causes not only the immediate irrevocable losses of the destroyed work as property and as the culture of the collectivity directly concerned (whose unique genius contributed to the creation of this work); it is also all humanity which experiences a loss by this act of vandalism.

In the acts of barbarity, as well as in those of vandalism, the asocial and destructive spirit of the author is made evident. This spirit, by definition, is the opposite of the culture and progress of humanity. It throws the evolution of ideas back to the bleak period of the Middle Ages. Such acts shock the conscience of all humanity, while generating extreme anxiety about the future. For all these reasons, acts of vandalism and barbarity must be regarded as offenses against the law of nations

A people's culture, history and identity is what makes a nation. If an invading force has its way, destroying the culture would serve as a stepping stone that would solidify their complete conquest of the land they occupy. Trump is already ignorant of culture and history just like the majority of the elected officials in Washington. Looking back at what Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin said in 1956, Trump is obviously taking advice from Netanyahu and the Israeli hardliners.

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*Timothy Alexander Guzman writes on his blog, Silent Crow News, where [this article](#) was originally published. He is a frequent contributor to Global Research.*

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