

# **“Speaking for Israel”: A Speechwriter Battle’s Anti-Israeli Opinions at the United Nations**

## **A Book Review**

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [History](#)

*I expected much more from a book speaking for Israel, something to truly engage the mind and require some concerted thought. Unfortunately I was disappointed and found myself reading one person’s personal journal about endless speechwriting written and using only the standard Israeli hasbara narrative which is essentially a narrative out of context.*

“Speaking for Israel” is essentially two intertwined books. The first is the longer story about the job of speechwriter itself, and Aviva Klompas spends most of her time telling the reader about how short the timelines were, how many revisions had to be made, and she does it rather repetitively speech after speech. The second book, much shorter, actually tries to look at the UN and its anti-Israel bias and the many resolutions and statements that go against Israel.

The first book on speech writing can be summed up fairly shortly. At least for the position that Ms Klompas found herself in, her speech writing talents amounted to creating aphorisms using derisory humour and sarcastic kitsch for an audience not wanting to address real issues in either their historical or current geopolitical context.

### **Narrative and context**

The second book is also summed up in short terms. First off it is probably needless to say that someone vetted to write speeches for Israel at the UN obviously accepts the Israeli narrative. And that is it, in short form – if you are familiar with what the usual Israeli narrative and their usual turn of phrasing, there is nothing new in this work.

That narrative includes denouncing terms such as apartheid, ethnic cleansing, occupying entity or occupation. It includes the biblical narrative as the Jewish birthplace and homeland. All Palestinian actions against Israel are “terror” actions, and all actions going the other way are from the “most moral army in the world.” For the latter, the emphasis is on Hamas and its thousands of rockets, and the terror thus perpetrated on Israeli citizens, and indeed, children.

For contemporary events Kompas several times reminds the reader about how “volatile and dangerous” the region is at the same time reminding that Israel is the only democracy in the region....and all this information, slim as it is, is taken wholly out of the larger historical and contemporary geopolitical context of both the Middle East and the rest of the ‘western’ world.

Regardless of the details of either the speechwriter’s daily efforts, or of the out of context

narrative, the overall purpose of the book appears to be asking: Why pick on Israel when there are so many other nasty countries and events in the world that the UN needs to pay attention to? That is actually a reasonable question and it revolves back to all that missing context.

### Context – and why Israel is “picked on”

To start with, the history of Jewish Zionism is consistent on its requirements for removing the indigenous Palestinians from as much of the land as possible. This was recognized by the original philosophers Theodor Herzl and Ze'ev Jabotinsky; it continued on through the arguments of David ben Gurion; was expressed by the destruction of towns and villages under Plan Dalet even before the war of independence in 1948 and continuing afterwards; further expulsions were made during the Israeli initiated 1967 war; it was furthered by Ariel Sharon's massacres in Sabra and Shatila during the Lebanon war; and is ongoing today through military restrictions, house demolitions, seizure of farmland, and the creation of many settlements in occupied territory.

This history is well recorded in Israeli archives and has been written about by many Israel historians and public figures. Works written by Ilan Pappé, Taya Rinehart, Benny Morris, Avi Shlaim, Miko Peled, Shlomo Sand, and see most recently Seth Anziska's "Preventing Palestine" (Princeton University, 2018) and many others cover this history of dispossession.

It is that history included in context that highlights the militarized actions leading to ethnic cleansing and occupation of Palestinian lands. But another big miss is anything to do with Great Britain, the U.S. (in particular), and other western nations in the creation and sustenance of Israel for their own purposes. Many of those purposes are written about by the above mentioned authors.

Israel was originally accepted as a means to remove the Jewish population from Europe, to serve as an “outpost” of western hegemonic influence in the Middle East, and to satisfy the demands of the Christian right wing evangelists of the Anglo-American empire. Israel has received billions in financial assistance, and billions of dollars worth of military equipment. The combined factors of the oil riches of the region and then the U.S. abandonment of the gold standard for the petro-dollar, military security in the region became a dominant factor of U.S. foreign policy – and Israel well serves U.S. purposes in all these areas.

Israel holds a tremendous amount of power over the U.S. – not in the military sense as its nuclear weapons are mainly to protect itself in an ultimate Samson option if Israel's existence is ever really threatened – but by the workings of its lobby group AIPAC which controls Congress through intensive lobbying and financial donations, through various societies and organizations built to support Israel, and by the general bias of the domestic media. The U.S. accepts its role through its military and financial support, its acquiescence to the Israeli narrative (remember the USS Liberty?), and its need to control the oil resources of the region for its own financial stability.

This “volatile and dangerous region” is thus made in contemporary history by all these factors. Denied independence after the collapse of the Ottoman empire, recolonized by European nations, subjected to military interventions all along the way (especially significant for this work, the attacks against Iran), it is no surprise the region is in turmoil. That turmoil is furthered by the U.S./Saudi backing of “freedom fighters” in Afghanistan who

later morphed into al-Qaeda and thus ISIS. To this day the U.S. supports indirectly these no longer “freedom fighters” along with their cohorts Israel, Saudi Arabia, and their Gulf allies in order to further U.S. imperial hegemonic desires in the region.

It is that combination of alignment within the U.S. empire and the historical reality of a colonial settler nation using military violence against an indigenous people in an already neo-colonized area that creates the target on Israel’s back.

Israel will continue to exist, most likely as an apartheid state. It is the major military power in the region with its not so secret nuclear arsenal and a highly militarized state apparatus. The two state solution is dead, and was never truly alive. A truly democratic state would provide equal rights in all areas for all inhabitants of the country, one factor that denies Israel the right to call itself a democracy just because it holds elections once in a while.

So yes, there are problems in other regions of the world, but Israel just happens to be – by action and location – in the centre of the global geopolitical network fighting for empire and armageddon. There is much more that can be argued without rewriting many histories that are already available to genuinely interested and critical thinking reader. Aviva Kompas’ book, “Speaking for Israel” will not do the trick.

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