

Joe Kent resigns, denounces Israel for wars of aggression

The Grayzone's Max Blumenthal and Aaron Mate on the dramatic resignation of former US Director of Counter-Terrorism Joe Kent, the highest level US official to resign over a war since the Vietnam era. ||| The Grayzone ||| Find more reporting at <https://thegrayzone.com> Support our original journalism at Patreon: <https://patreon.com/grayzone> Facebook: <https://facebook.com/thegrayzone> Twitter: <https://twitter.com/thegrayzonenews> Instagram: <https://instagram.com/thegrayzonenews> Minds: <https://minds.com/thegrayzone> Mastodon: <https://mastodon.social/@thegrayzone>
#TheGrayzone

#Max

The big story—it's one that the mainstream media is covering. They were on it wall to wall for the last 48 hours, without ever mentioning Israel, unless it was to call Joe Kent an anti-Semite or to bring on a guest to do it. I think Joe Kent's resignation is a harbinger of doom for Donald Trump, and we'll see more—more harm to those who stay close to Trump and remain loyal. Political harm. Their careers will go down with the ship; they'll go down with the USS Gerald Ford. I was just as stunned by this as anyone. Joe Kent resigned two days ago from the National Counterterrorism Center, which looks like he was hired by Tulsi Gabbard, Director of National Intelligence, to run.

And it's a pretty high-level position. They provide analysis and conclusions on national security matters and the whole issue of terrorism to the president. I don't know if I want to read the whole letter. Many people watching this—or most of you—have probably already read it. But the key point about this letter is that Joe Kent recalls his eleven combat tours as a Special Forces operator, a Green Beret, whose wife was in the CIA and was killed in Syria because national security state operatives sabotaged a withdrawal plan that Donald Trump had been pushing for. That really—I'm not sure "radicalized" is the right word—but it galvanized Joe Kent's opposition to these senseless wars.

And he actually says that the Syria dirty war was being driven by Israel and pro-Israel interests in this letter. He says some things in the letter I don't totally agree with, but he writes that early in this administration, high-ranking Israeli officials and influential members of the American media deployed a misinformation campaign that woefully undermined the America First platform and sowed pro-war sentiment to encourage a war with Iran. Again, he's directly blaming Israel. He says this was a lie and the same tactic the Israelis used to draw us into the disastrous Iraq war that cost our nation the lives of thousands of our best men and women. I mean, it's incredible—he's calling it out.

He's calling out what we've been calling out for years, which everyone can see. And now there's no going back—there's no going back. The only thing the supporters of this war can do is destroy Joe Kent personally, destroy everyone around him, and make an example of him to prevent others from coming out of this government—to intimidate others into silence. Because what he says has the potential to completely expose the Israel lobby. And those who are attacking Joe Kent expose it further, because who are they? They're all the faces and voices of Israel and the United States in the media and politics. So the more they say, the more it proves Joe Kent's point. What was your reaction when Joe Kent resigned, Aaron? It was muted.

#Aaron Mate

Like you, there were things he said in the letter that I don't agree with at all. For example, he supported the killing of Qasem Soleimani and thought that part of Trump's record was a success, that it was helping to contain Iran. He supported that, which, of course, I don't agree with. Trump had no right to kill Qasem Soleimani, and I think he killed someone who was helping to contain the rise of ISIS in West Asia—a goal I think Joe Kent supports. He doesn't want to see that, but whatever, putting that aside—putting aside my own disagreements with him.

The fact that Joe Kent, despite supporting Trump and some of the things he's done—including killing Qasem Soleimani—still felt he couldn't be part of this administration anymore, speaks to the fundamental rift inside Trump's circle: people who actually believe in the concept of "America First," and people who are there for "Israel First." And Joe Kent, seeing that the administration was making decisions based on "Israel First," couldn't be a part of it. There's a part of his interview with Tucker Carlson that was posted last night where he explains his decision in greater detail. He says, "I didn't want to be another Colin Powell." Like Colin Powell, long after the war, became sort of the voice of dissent inside the Bush administration—except Powell never resigned. He went along with it every single step of the way.

#Max

Yeah, he was a good soldier.

#Aaron Mate

Yeah, and Joe Kent, having served in combat—unlike, by the way, so many of his "Israel First" detractors who've never served, people like Mark Levin and others calling him a coward and weak—having served, he didn't want to be a Colin Powell-like figure who was responsible for sacrificing U. S. soldiers based on a lie, knowing he couldn't defend it. So he did the honorable thing and stepped down. And there's a huge effort now, not just among the "Israel First" MAGA people but also liberals like Jake Tapper of CNN or Michelle Goldberg of The New York Times, to call him anti-Semitic for saying that Israel was a driver of all these wars. When, you know, Michelle Goldberg, for example—

and not that it really matters what she says, but just to illustrate the liberal critique of Joe—yeah, she was saying in The Times today that Israel was against the Iraq War. Which was just—did you listen to anything they said back then?

It wasn't just Benjamin Netanyahu, by the way, who was going before Congress and saying what a great thing it would be if the U.S. went to war against Iraq and that the Middle East would be better off. It was also people like Shimon Peres, who was considered the liberal dove in the Israeli spectrum, relatively speaking. So, of course, Israel was pushing for the Iraq War. And, of course, Israel was, as Joe Kent says, a major factor in the Syria dirty war. Why do you think the U.S. spent tens of billions of dollars arming sectarian death squads? It was to take out a frontline state in the axis of resistance against Israel. Syria was helping to supply Hezbollah in its resistance to Israel by serving as a land bridge between Iran and Hezbollah. And there's a think tanker named Aaron Zelin—is that his name? Yeah, yeah.

#Max

He's an Israel lobbyist himself.

#Aaron Mate

He's an Israel lobbyist. He wrote an article for his think tank saying that this war on Iran couldn't have happened without the dirty war on Syria. Because, he said, if the U.S. and Israel had done this a year and a half earlier, when Assad was still in power, Syria would have been a frontline state helping Iran resist the U.S. and Israel. And that's why Joe Kent says the Syria dirty war—the one that claimed the life of his wife, that made him a widower—was driven by Israeli interests. Of course it was. So for people to call that anti-Semitic is just another attempt to smear someone who's accurately laying out the reality of U.S. policy.

#Max

It's ahistorical. Qasem Soleimani said that when the IRGC entered Syria, if they didn't fight them on their borders, they would have to fight ISIS and al-Qaeda inside their own territory—which was absolutely correct. The IRGC and Hezbollah, by getting involved in Syria, delayed the war on Iran by about 14 years. The war would have come sooner if they hadn't kept Jolani's forces from storming into Damascus. And that's very clear now. And, of course, where did the "red line" come from? That was an Israeli intelligence contrivance—the red line for chemical attacks. "The chemical attacks are coming." Go back to the source of the red line: it came from Israeli intelligence. The Iraq War—Michelle Goldberg in the New York Times said, no, Joe Kent said the Iraq War had something to do with Israel.

Like, oh, that's crazy. Who's in the Pentagon now stovepiping intelligence about Saddam Hussein being involved with al-Qaeda and having WMDs? Who was it? It was Doug Feith, Richard Perle, and

the Wormsers—Mayrav Wormser and her husband. Who are they? They were the authors of the “Clean Break” document for Benjamin Netanyahu, produced at an Israeli-backed think tank in 1996 when Netanyahu came in as prime minister, advising him on how to take out Syria—partly by instigating dirty wars in Iraq, even Sudan, and other countries—in order to prevent a Palestinian state from coming into being, because all of those countries backed Palestinian sovereignty.

And ultimately, the prize would be Iran. It's all spelled out right there. It was also spelled out in Israeli media at the time, in 2003. This is my response to Michelle Goldberg. I just tweeted out a Haaretz article by Aluf Benn, who is now the editor-in-chief of Haaretz: “Enthusiastic IDF Awaits War in Iraq.” Senior security figures paint a rosy picture of the post-war future Israel can expect. They envision a domino effect with Saddam’s fall, followed by that of Israel’s other enemies—Arafat poisoned to death, Nasrallah assassinated, Assad toppled through a dirty war, the Ayatollah assassinated, and maybe even Gaddafi assassinated.

#Aaron Mate

And the sad thing is, it’s not just liberals who write for the New York Times, like Michelle Goldberg, who were duped into cheering on this domino effect of targeting anyone who deters Israeli aggression. It’s also leftists. I mean, how many leftists cheered the effort to overthrow Gaddafi, then Assad, and then even Nasrallah? I’m just shaking my head—how much time we wasted having to defend ourselves for daring not to go along with all those regime-change campaigns, and for debunking the propaganda, like the false-flag chemical attacks that were used to wage them.

#Max

Anyway, that’s—so, I mean, there’s a good transition there back to Joe Kent, which is like, all the crazy stuff we were saying, the conspiracy theories—everybody sees it now. It’s not just Cenk Uygur and Ana Kasparian who sound like us five years ago. I don’t want to say anything bad about them, but they definitely rebranded and changed their tune to maintain relevancy, because that’s where everyone is at right now. It’s now a high-level Trump national security official, someone who served eleven combat tours, who is saying this—who is validating John Mearsheimer’s thesis. And it’s not because he’s a—this is a guy who in the past made plenty of pro-Israel statements. It’s because it was impossible to deny, based on what he was seeing in there.

#Aaron Mate

And because the lies are now leading to the deaths of U.S. soldiers—something he cares deeply about, having served himself—it’s obvious from watching his interview with Tucker Carlson that he’s a genuine person who just doesn’t want to be part of something that gets his fellow service members killed. And I think when you’ve served, you’re more sensitive to that, unlike all these chicken hawks who are cheering on this Israel-first war from their comfortable perches.

#Max

Yeah. So the White House has attacked him, and they dispatched Caroline Levitt to do it. It's a funny line of attack from her, because Joe Kent said there was no imminent threat from Iran. Of course there was no imminent threat. If there had been, or if they'd even wanted to convince us there was, they would have said so. But the Trump administration made no attempt to convince the American public that they needed to support this war.

#Aaron Mate

Marco Rubio even admitted that the only imminent threat was from Israel, because he said Israel was going to attack first. And that's why we attacked—because once Israel attacked, Iran would retaliate against U.S. forces. That was the imminent threat from Israel, which Marco Rubio then tried to walk back. But that was the only possible imminent threat there was, because Iran wasn't—

#Aaron Mate

Everyone in the White House knows, just as Joe Kent knows, that Iran was not going to attack the U. S. So of course they're going to try to disparage him. And someone who's happy to go along with it is Jake Tapper of CNN.

#CNN 1

His letter blames Israel and absolves Trump—blames Israel for the war in Iran, blames Israel for the war in Iraq, blames Israel and its supporters for ISIS, for the war on ISIS in Syria. And I think there are a lot of people today wondering, how did somebody like this get a position like this in government, given his views?

#CNN 2

This is a very important operation that connects the dots to protect the American people, especially right now, when we're at a high state of terror alert. The kind of anti-Semitism we've traditionally seen on the left, we're now seeing a bit of it on the right, too. He's not the type of individual I'd personally want to appoint to that position, given his anti-Israel views and, quite frankly, his anti-president views now.

#Max

Anti-president views.

#Aaron Mate

So now being anti-Israel, or being critical of Israel, that's anti-Semitic—and it's also anti-president. Because I guess Trump now also represents global Jewry. And by the way, I don't even like using the term "anti-Semitism," because that's another case of Israel-firsters appropriating someone else's culture. Not all Semitic people are Jewish—far from it.

#Max

But anyway, we'll just call it anti-president.

#Aaron Mate

Yeah. We should just say "anti." So now someone being anti-Jewish just means anti-president—anti-president.

#Max

It's a hate crime to be against the president—violating the IHRA definition of "presidentism."

#Aaron Mate

Yeah, and that's Michael McCaul there, who's the chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

#Max

He's our AIPAC guy, Michael McCaul.

#Aaron Mate

Exactly.

#Max

In his district, he probably has Israeli weapons companies, but he's a marionette for AIPAC. And Jake Tapper is getting ready for his big gig at the Ellison-controlled CNN. Yeah, he's a friend of Bari Weiss—very close to Israel. Yeah, it's getting a little too obvious here.

#Aaron Mate

So on top of accusing him of being anti-president—aka anti-Semitic, anti-Jewish—they're also accusing Joe Kent of being tied to the most nefarious entity of all, which is The Grayzone.