

# Israel lobby crashout - Max on Judging Freedom

Max Blumenthal joins Judge Andrew Napolitano's Judging Freedom

## #Andrew Napolitano

Undeclared wars are commonplace. Tragically, our government engages in preemptive war, otherwise known as aggression, with no complaints from the American people. Sadly, we have become accustomed to living with the illegitimate use of force by the government. To develop a truly free society, the issue of initiating force must be understood and rejected.

## #Andrew Napolitano

What if sometimes, to love your country, you had to alter or abolish the government? What if Jefferson was right? What if that government is best which governs least? What if it is dangerous to be right when the government is wrong? What if it is better to perish fighting for freedom than to live as a slave? What if freedom's greatest hour of danger is now?

## #Andrew Napolitano

Hi everyone, Judge Andrew Napolitano here for Judging Freedom. Today is Thursday, June 25th, 2026. Max Blumenthal joins us now. Max, thanks very much for your time. Is Israel in a panic over the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the United States and Iran?

## #Max Blumenthal

Israel's in panic over the MOU. Israel's in panic over the Democratic congressional primaries. Israel's in panic over a new Quinnipiac poll showing that 48% of Americans think the United States is too supportive of Israel, compared to about 34% who think support is just about right. Israel's in panic about that same poll showing 66% of Democrats think the U.S. is too supportive of Israel, and only 18% think that the support level is just right. Israel's in panic over the losses they continue to take every time they try to advance in southern Lebanon and the restrictions they're now facing under the MOU. And the panic is playing out in the form of just overall crash-out on social media and the media as a whole by Israel's various proxies and cutouts. And it might look absurd to the rest of us, but it suggests Israel's moving into a more dangerous posture as its back is increasingly against the wall following the failure of the war it instigated against Iran.

## #Andrew Napolitano

How is Netanyahu being perceived these days, and how is he dealing with the panic? He's going to be terribly, terribly panicked because of the consequences for him when his government collapses.

## **#Max Blumenthal**

Well, if you want to know how he's perceived in the United States, his approval rating is at 20%, according to that new Quinnipiac poll. His disapproval rating is 48%. And the rest of Americans who responded to that poll had never heard of him. I mean, this is a foreign leader of a very small state. He's probably one of the most well-known foreign leaders in a country where many Americans can't even name that many foreign countries. So it's pretty significant when his disapproval rating is that high. In Israel, his disapproval rating is extremely high.

It might even be higher. That doesn't mean that he is necessarily immediately imperiled because there are no other clear successors, but he's at his weakest point in Israel. And without a war, he is in real danger. The Netanyahu coalition was going to fall before October 7th, and now I think he's back in the place he was before October 7th with the MOU, as Israel continues to take losses in southern Lebanon. But he can't leave southern Lebanon or have the military leave, because now it's the principal lever for jamming up the MOU and unraveling it.

## **#Andrew Napolitano**

So even if he did leave office, voluntarily or involuntarily, he's going to be replaced by someone—maybe with a nicer personality, maybe with a more amiable spirit—but the policies will be nearly the same. Isn't that so?

## **#Max Blumenthal**

Well, I've been saying that I think Netanyahu, while he's blamed for the position that Israel's in, actually managed to buy Israel a lot of time. He toppled the Biden administration. He basically helped destroy Kamala Harris. And he's destroying Donald Trump. And he could destroy any further administration because he has been able to connect so deeply through the Israel lobby and through Israel's cutouts in the U.S., which he helped develop going back to the 1980s and 90s as the main hasbarist, or propagandist, for Israel. He's been able to forge this unprecedented relationship between the Likud-controlled state of Israel and the Republican Party. And I don't think replacing Netanyahu will provide Israel with a clear answer.

The crisis Israel faces is not Netanyahu. The crisis is the anachronistic colonial structure of Zionism. And Netanyahu has been able to try to paper over the contradictions. But if he's replaced, it could be with someone who is positioning himself in many ways to his right, like Naftali Bennett, who comes from the Likud Party, who is one of the few figures who speaks fluent English, who's vying for prime minister and actually was raised in California, is close to the whole Israeli tech sector, but is very aligned with the settlement movement and recently attacked Netanyahu for not providing enough

support to destabilize Iran internally and said that he will be the more effective figure to generate regime change in Iran.

And then to Netanyahu's left, you have someone like Gabi Ashkenazi, who is the intellectual author of the so-called Dahiya Doctrine of disproportionate force and attacking civilians. He presided over the 2006 Israeli assault, which blew up southern Beirut, the quarter known as Dahiya. Gabi Ashkenazi was also the author of the 2008–2009 assault on the Gaza Strip, Operation Cast Lead. So he's the center-left. And then you have other figures like Benny Gantz, who might not be as popular, who is the author of the 2014 assault on Gaza and actually previously campaigned on how many, quote-unquote, terrorists he killed in Gaza. So, yeah, there's not going to be an answer for Israel after Netanyahu. If anything, there will be a less recognizable figure with fewer ties to the Republican or Democratic Party who will be at least as fascist as Netanyahu was.

## **#Andrew Napolitano**

Has the Israeli apartheid colonial dream for a Greater Israel collapsed?

## **#Max Blumenthal**

Yeah, I mean, the apartheid colonial dream was expressed and neatly distilled by Ehud Barak, who was sort of the stalwart of the Labor Party, who had succeeded Yitzhak Rabin before he became one of the closest Epstein associates. He was defense minister, the most decorated Israeli military officer in history, and then a long-serving prime minister. And so he says this with a lot of authority, that Israel is to be a villa in the jungle. And that builds off of Theodor Herzl's definition of Zionism, which is, we will be a rampart of civilization against barbarism.

And so the idea there is that Israel will provide a class of Jews who enter their undefined, militarized frontiers with a first-world standard of living in which they will enjoy total security. And any challenge to that must be treated with ruthless force. As Moshe Dayan, the former Israeli chief of staff, said in, I think it was the early '50s, that we cannot plow a field or build a house without the cannon and the steel helmet. So it's a completely colonial mindset in which any challenge to total European-style security has to be basically treated with genocidal force. But they did that after October 7th.

And they mobilized the whole of their society—the reservists, everyone—to carry out this genocide, and yet they still are in a state of vulnerability in which, at any moment, Iran could rain down ballistic missiles, and the supposedly impenetrable Iron Dome and the Arrow system and all of the THAAD missiles that the U.S. brought to bear, repositioned from Asia and Ukraine, did not stop them. And so there is this constant sense of insecurity in Israel, which really erodes the very purpose of Zionism, while at the same time, if you are aware, I am, as a Jew, we are living through a golden age here in the United States. So Zionism has failed.

## **#Andrew Napolitano**

What kind of shape is Hezbollah in today?

## **#Max Blumenthal**

Hezbollah has proven to be extremely resilient, and it has flipped the script on Israel with its FPV drones, which they have declared are revenge for the Pager attacks. The Pager attack was psychologically one of the biggest blows Hezbollah has ever suffered. And now they have taken this cheap technology and are using it to hammer Israeli positions across southern Lebanon, and Israel has no answer to that. Israel also predicted that after assassinating Hassan Nasrallah, who was really the spiritual leader of Hezbollah as its general secretary and its key tactician, someone who was also providing advice and was very influential within Iran, that Hezbollah would no longer have any leadership. The new general secretary, Naim Qassem, has proven to be a force in his own right, and I think he was underestimated, as well as Hezbollah's arsenal.

Israel has been unable to take one of its key targets, the Ali al-Tahrir Hill, which is fortified. It was actually a fortification built by Israel during its occupation of southern Lebanon in the 1990s, just south of Nabatea. And they've been unable to take that hill. They've lost a lot of armor trying to take that hill. And their advances have also been stopped because of Iran's demand that Lebanon be included in the MOU with the U.S. So they're frustrated, yet they can't pull out. And we have a new piece up at The Grayzone, a video report by our correspondent Wyatt Reed, which shows he went pretty close to the front line, to the yellow line, which is the Israeli kill zone. If anyone crosses the yellow line, you get killed.

He showed Israel trying to move D9 excavators into civilian areas. He actually found some fiber optic wire that had been connected to a Hezbollah FPV drone. And he was with the many civilians who are seeking to return to their homes. And Israel is doing everything it can to prevent these civilians from returning home because once they return home and they're willing to come back to the rubble and rebuild, they're not afraid. These are very courageous people who have a real spirit of resilience and resistance of their own. Once they come back, Israel fails because its objective is to create a buffer zone by rendering the Shia community of Lebanon in the south homeless. And yeah, it doesn't look like their objectives will be realized under these conditions.

## **#Andrew Napolitano**

How do you—I'm switching gears, Max—how do you read the recent New York City primaries in which serious, serious, serious progressives defeated mainstream liberal Democrats, including the defeat of an incumbent congressman, Dan Goldman, who was Jewish, by a progressive who also is Jewish?

## **#Max Blumenthal**

Well, this goes back to the top of this conversation, just about how unpopular Israel is in the United States and how it's actually become an issue in major elections. And it's an issue in these areas in New York. You have, in Brooklyn and Queens, these areas that are filled with highly educated, younger, mostly white people that have traditionally been Black and Latino areas. And that's changing the political dynamic there. It's given the Democratic Socialists of America a foothold. And, you know, I lived in New York for 10 years. I've been spending a lot of time there throughout my life. Whenever I go up there, I get recognized on the street. People are watching The Grayzone all around the city, but throughout these areas.

It's like when we do any event in the New York area, it fills up. There's just a real—there's a high level of political consciousness there and a rejection of the political establishment. But it's also important to mention that a candidate like—what's her name—Daria Elizabeth Chevalier, who was portrayed as sort of a neophyte, who was a Columbia student, Columbia PhD, who didn't really fit in and ran against the chairman of the Hispanic Caucus, who was like this veteran, kind of a political hack, who was backed by AIPAC. Her opponents were saying, oh, she's just going to win over these white gentrifiers. But she came very close to winning a majority of Latino voters in that area, in the Bronx, and also a majority of Black voters.

So these candidates actually got traction in the Black and Latino communities as well, which frightens the Israel lobby. The defeat of Dan Goldman was a landslide. This is a guy who's an heir to the Levi Strauss fortune, portrayed himself as the biggest progressive. He was woke on the LGBTQ issues and abortion and everything, but he was a fascist on Israel. And they threw him out in favor of Brad Lander, someone who actually used to be a liberal Zionist, who has now kind of understood which way the wind is blowing and is now portraying himself as kind of a non-Zionist and even anti-Zionist Jew. Wow. So this is particular to New York City. I wouldn't necessarily call this a national trend.

This AIPAC-backed, crypto-scammer-backed candidate in suburban Maryland, Adrian Buafo, just won. But it's terrifying to the Israel lobby, and it's also terrifying to the Zionist movement. This goes back to my comments about the purpose of Zionism as providing sanctuary for Jews who are imperiled by anti-Semitism around the world. If you go on social media, particularly on Twitter/X, you're going to see the major Zionist influencers having a complete freak-out and declaring that Jews have to leave New York City now. And it's absolutely absurd. Jews are living through a golden age in New York, and these candidates—Brad Lander—how do they threaten Jews with a new Kristallnacht?

It's absurd. So it really exposes how out of touch the Zionist movement in America is. If they just for a second accepted the golden age—the unprecedented, unbelievable privilege and power and protection that they still enjoy in New York City—then the whole idea of Israel as a sanctuary for Jews begins to melt away and has no purpose any further. So they have to perpetuate this lie. And they're doing so based on the victory of a handful of candidates who campaigned against AIPAC—

and candidates, by the way, whose staff were heavily Jewish, who won a large number of Jewish voters. And so you're starting to see the contradictions of Zionism explode in broad daylight.

## **#Andrew Napolitano**

Here is the prince of the American Zionists in the United States House of Representatives, who might know, you know. Chris, cut number 12.

## **#Max Blumenthal**

It's more like the Quasimodo of Zionism.

## **#Speaker 1**

Look, I think the Vice President owes the American people an apology. I mean, making an offensive statement that Israel only exists because the United States created it is disrespectful to millions of Americans, many of whom had relatives who died in the Holocaust. Israel was created through the blood, sweat, and tears of the Jews in the aftermath of the greatest tragedy in the history of the world. And America wasn't always a great friend to Israel in its earliest formative days. So some of the rhetoric has been pretty terrible, and I am not going to be afraid to call it out.

## **#Andrew Napolitano**

Getting the show on audio only was Congressman Randy Fine. Is he a Republican or a Democrat?

## **#Max Blumenthal**

Well, he's a Republican. And according to his bio there, he's the chair of the Judea and Samaria Caucus. Is it just him? Let's go and ask, you know, hardworking Americans what they think about the Judea and Samaria Caucus and if that applies to their kitchen table situation. Again, the contradictions of Zionism are exploding. He's claiming that Israel doesn't need the United States, that Israel didn't need the United States when it was established in 1948 by the United Nations, which had been built by the Rockefellers in New York City, that that vote hadn't been pushed by the United States, that Harry Truman didn't have to be pushed on that vote to support the creation of a state of Israel. The United States—and I would like more of this—I would like to hear more Zionists like Randy Fine declare that Israel doesn't need the United States.

And then we won't need Section 224 of the NDAA, which is calling for Israel's military to integrate with the United States military in order to buy Israel more time, which will allow Israel to actually infiltrate American weapons systems and America's defense production base. It's obvious that what he's saying is a show of desperation, as J.D. Vance expresses the reality that we all understand, that everyone knows. And it should be mentioned that Vance continues to escalate this reality-based

rhetoric. He has a new interview with someone named Sohrab Ahmari at UnHerd, which is a publication that has published some criticism of Israel, and he welcomed him on to Air Force Two. Ahmari used to be a neocon, one of the leading Persian voices for regime change war in Iran, and he changed. He converted to Catholicism and became a sort of conservative opponent of war on Iran.

## **#Andrew Napolitano**

I know Sohrab pretty well. In fact, the priest who converted him is a longtime friend of mine. He was converted through Opus Dei, so he's a traditionalist Catholic. He's not a crazy person.

## **#Max Blumenthal**

Yeah, so this shows that J.D. Vance is sort of mobilizing these anti-war figures more on the right as proxies to sell the MOU, and he's been given permission to do so. Other figures in the White House are attacking the critics of the MOU within the Republican Party and within the right. So they seem—you know, Vance seems to be serious about pushing this. And so I think we're going to see the clash deepen within the Republican Party.

## **#Andrew Napolitano**

Yes, that's why I raised Fein, not because of your personal encounters with him, which I knew would get a smile on your face, but because these are deep fissures in the Republican Party. I know you want to talk about the Columbia presidential election, but I have to go. So maybe we can do that next week. We might even know more about it by then. But thank you very much, Max.

## **#Max Blumenthal**

Well, it looks like it was rigged. Yeah.

## **#Andrew Napolitano**

All right. Well, that's a good teaser. You'll tell us why you understand that when we discuss it next week. All the best, my friend.

## **#Max Blumenthal**

Great seeing you.

## **#Andrew Napolitano**

Okay. Bye-bye. And coming up in half an hour, if you're watching us live, in 35 minutes at 3 o'clock, we found him — Pepe Escobar. Judge Napolitano for Judging Freedom.

