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Gaza: Truths Behind All the Lies

By: [Victor Davis Hanson](#)

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March 28, 2024

“Occupied Gaza.” Prior to October 7, there were roughly two million Arab citizens of Israel but no Jewish citizens in Gaza. Gazans in 2006 voted in Hamas to rule them. It summarily executed its Palestinian Authority rivals. Hamas cancelled all future scheduled elections. It established a dictatorship and diverted hundreds of billions of dollars in international aid to build a vast underground labyrinth of military installations.

So Gaza has been occupied by Hamas, not Israel, for two decades.

“Collateral Damage.” Hamas began the war by deliberately targeting civilians. It massacred them on October 7 when it invaded Israel during a time of peace and holidays. It sent more than 7,000 rockets into Israeli cities for the sole purpose of killing noncombatants. It has no vocabulary for the collateral damage of Israeli

civilians, since it believes *any* Jewish death under any circumstances is cause for celebration.

Hamas places its terrorist centers beneath and inside hospitals, schools, and mosques. Why? Israel is assumed to have more reservations about collaterally hitting Gaza civilians than Hamas does exposing them as human shields.

“Disproportionate.” We are told Israel wrongly uses disproportionate force to retaliate in Gaza. But it does so because no nation can win a war without disproportionate violence that hurts the enemy more than it is hurt by the enemy.

The U.S. incinerated German and Japanese cities with disproportionate force to end a war both Axis powers started. The American military in Iraq nearly leveled Fallujah and Mosul by disproportional force to root out Islamic gunmen hiding among innocents. Hamas has objections to disproportionate violence—but only when it is achieved by Israel and not Hamas.

“Two-state solution.” Prior to October 7, there was a de facto three-state solution, given that Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza were all separate states ruled by their own governments, two of which were illegitimate without scheduled elections.

It was not Israel, but the people of Gaza and the West Bank who institutionalized the “*from river to the sea*” agenda of destroying its neighbor.

Israel would have been content to live next to an autonomous Arab Gaza and West Bank that did not seek to destroy Israel in their multigenerational efforts to form their own “*one-state solution*.”

“Ceasefire.” The so-called international community is demanding Israel agree to a “*ceasefire*.” But there was already a ceasefire prior to October 7. Hamas broke it by massacring 1,200 Jews and taking over 250 hostages.

Hamas violated that peace because it thought it could gain leverage over Israel by murdering Jews.

Hamas now demands another ceasefire because it thinks it is no longer able to murder more unarmed Jews. Instead, it now fears that Israel will destroy Hamas in the way Hamas sought but failed to destroy Israel.

Did Hamas call for a cease-fire after the first 500 Jews it massacred on October 7?

“Ramadan.” Joe Biden believes that the Muslim religious holiday of Ramadan requires Israel to agree to a ceasefire.

But did either Hamas or any other Arab military ever respect Jewish—or even its own—religious holidays?

The October 7 massacre was timed to catch Israelis unaware while celebrating the Jewish religious holidays of Simchat Torah, Shemini Torah, and Shemini Atzeret on Shabbat.

Moreover, Hamas’s surprise attack was deliberately timed to commemorate the earlier sneak Arab attack on Israel some 50 years earlier.

On October 6, 1973, the Israelis were the target of a surprise attack when celebrating the religious holiday of Yom Kippur. Arab armies also assumed they would achieve greater surprise when attacking during their own religious holiday of Ramadan.

So, Arab militaries fight opportunistically both during Jewish and their own Islamic holidays. Egyptians and Syrians still boast of their 1973 surprise attack on Israel as the “*Ramadan War.*”

Only Westerners, not Arabs, believe there should be no war during Ramadan.

“Civilian Casualties.” Israel risks the lives of its soldiers to prevent civilian deaths. Hamas risks the lives of its civilians to prevent terrorists’ deaths. Israel considers it a failure, and Hamas considers it globally advantageous when more civilians die than its soldiers.

“Foreign Aid.” The Biden administration threatens to cut off or slow-walk aid to Israel if it continues to retaliate against Hamas even though they started the war. So the administration promises to give more aid to Gaza after the October 7 Hamas massacres than it gave to Gaza before them.

“Prisoners.” The international community that favors Hamas, nevertheless, knows it would be safer to be a prisoner of Israel than of Hamas. It knows women are not going to be raped in custody by Israelis but are by Hamas. And the unarmed are more likely to be mutilated and decapitated by Hamas than Israelis.

Is the international community more likely to charge Israel than Hamas for war crimes because the Jewish state seeks to avoid civilian deaths that Hamas finds useful?

DOJ Launches Initiative to Confiscate Guns

**Under the guise of keeping firearms
out of the hands of dangerous people,
the Second and Fourth Amendments are at risk.**

By: Nate Jackson
The Patriot Post
March 27, 2024

Leftists hate the Rule of Law, perhaps most especially the Second Amendment. They're not big fans of the Fourth Amendment, either, as evidenced by the push for "red flag" laws. On that point, this past Saturday, Joe Biden's Justice Department announced the launch of the National Extreme Risk Protection Order Resource Center. Its purpose is to aid in taking guns from people.

The center "*will provide our partners across the country with valuable resources to keep firearms out of the hands of individuals who pose a threat to themselves or others,*" said Attorney General Merrick Garland in a press release:

"The establishment of the Center is the latest example of the Justice Department's work to use every tool provided by the landmark Bipartisan Safer Communities Act to protect communities from gun violence."

An Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) is a court-ordered disarming of a dangerous individual. Laws permitting such orders are colloquially known as “*red flag*” laws. So far, 21 states and the District of Columbia have such laws, and other states are considering them.

In theory, these laws and orders are meant to keep guns out of the hands of people who would illegally use them to harm someone else. Who wouldn’t think that’s a worthy goal?

Well, it depends on who judges another individual’s worthiness and how that process plays out. For example, this may surprise people on the Left, but sometimes women lie about men. That’s where the Fourth Amendment guarantee of due process comes in because no one should be deprived of their Second Amendment rights without it. The possibly malicious testimony of a jilted lover ought to be fairly weighed in court, as should the random report of a concerned “*Karen*” who sees a social media post she doesn’t like.

Moreover, conservatives have good reason to fear Biden’s Department of Two-Tiered Justice henchmen being the arbiters of threats or even just aiding this disarmament. Who are the people who “*pose a threat*”? Pro-lifers? “*Christian nationalists*”? “*MAGA extremists*”? It surely won’t include Hunter Biden, who lied on a federal gun form, which is a felony.

Biden has railed against guns for years, promising to ban and take them and even, on multiple occasions, threatening American gun owners with F-15s and nuclear weapons. Joe Biden is the red flag.

Also on Saturday, Kamala Harris went to Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, the site of the 2018 massacre of 17 people, to push for the same kinds of “*red flag*” laws. Harris issued a “*challenge*” to the remaining 29 states without them, saying, “*We got some resources for you to help you implement the work that you have done that has been the work of a leader on this tragic issue.*”

To make her point as emotional as possible, she again trotted out misleading statistics about kids: “*The leading cause of death for the children of America is gun violence.*” No, it’s not.

In short, we simply don’t trust this lying, power-grabbing administration.

Neither do Republicans, several of whom were surprised by the DOJ’s weekend announcement.

“*What the hell is this evil?*” howled Representative Thomas Massie. “*A Federal Red Flag center; We did not authorize this. Announced, of course, just hours after the omnibus passes.*”

Team Biden and others claim authority from the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, passed and signed in 2022. If you’re wondering, the Firearms Policy Coalition posted a list of the Republicans who voted for it.

But Massie and renowned gun researcher John Lott say the administration’s claim is a lie. “*Congress never authorized the U.S. Department of Justice to create this resource center,*” the two write. “*The administration confuses ‘grants ... to implement state ... mental health courts, drug courts, veterans’ courts, and extreme risk protection order programs’ with creating an entirely new center for one of these areas.*”

The two also detail how “*red flag*” laws circumvent due process by removing key steps before firearms are confiscated. How ridiculous can this be? Massie and Lott write:

Andrew Pollack, who lost his daughter in the 2017 Stoneman Douglas High School shooting in Parkland, Florida, recently had an Extreme Risk Protection Order used against him by a neighbor in rural Oregon. When Pollack finally had

his hearing in court, the judge didn't even need to hear a defense because there was no evidence that Pollack had threatened anyone. Unfortunately, while disarmed, he faced a mountain lion outside his home. His dog tangled with the mountain lion, requiring 50 stitches on his side. As is virtually always the case, there was no punishment for the neighbors bringing the false claim [emphasis added].

If you don't think the Biden administration will inject the process with anti-gun steroids, you haven't been paying attention to this lawless, open-borders, student-loan-transferring, EV- and vaccine-mandating administration.

Unfortunately, it's not just Biden. More localized organizations, often run by left-wing operatives, are seducing suburban women with attempts at gun control that sound well-meaning and helpful but can be grossly distorted by Democrat politicians with detrimental consequences for law-abiding gun owners. Mark Alexander detailed that again yesterday.

Democrats know the primary obstacle to their tyranny is an armed population. The bad news is that they keep pushing stuff like this to disarm more people. The good news is that gun sales seem to hit records every time Democrats renew their push.

**NYC Subway:
Where Safety Is Job No. 319 or So**

**New York City is determined to get criminals
back on the streets as quickly as possible.**

By: Ann Coulter
The Patriot Post
March, 28, 2024

I'm excited to announce a new acquisition for my New York Times museum! It's an article from the March 24 edition titled, "*What Would Make the Subway Feel Safer? Experts Have 5 Suggestions.*"

Appropriating from mid-20th-century works, when the streets ran with blood, none of the "*experts*" suggested locking criminals up. Encouragingly, only two experts suggested making subways safer by reducing their carbon footprint.

The motif of the work is the idea that District Attorney Alvin Bragg's declared refusal to prosecute offenders for any but the most infamous crimes — such as murder or overstating the valuation of property in a bank loan application — has had no effect on criminals.

Only the public's "*perception*" of crime has changed.

E.g.:

— "[S]ome New Yorkers [are] on edge."

— "Gov. Kathy Hochul deployed National Guard members ... to make riders feel safe."

— News about subway crime "undermined officials' message, supported by data, that the subway is safe." Plus, it ruined the surprise for subway riders who were later assaulted, raped or murdered.

Thus, the experts' ideas were not aimed at actually reducing crime — which to be fair, is impossible if you're not allowed to put criminals in prison — but to “*ease riders' fears about the subway.*”

Isn't that the worst of all possible worlds? The subway won't be any safer, but will feel safer, so you'll let your guard down.

One big idea for giving passengers a false sense of security is: Increase lighting! Or, as subway rapists sometimes call it, “*mood lighting.*” The Times optimistically reports that the MTA has already announced that it will “*convert all 150,000 fluorescent light fixtures in the system to LED lighting.*” Of course, considering how well the MTA maintains its platform cameras, the conversion should be completed around the year 2067.

On the other hand, lighting has done absolutely nothing to impede violent crazies, as evidenced by the vast collection of well-lit videos showing monstrous crimes being committed on the subway. The last video I saw of an Asian man being punched and choked on a subway was so well-shot it could have been nominated for best cinematography.

Other nominees include:

- Video of a psychopath attempting to rape a woman on a Lexington Avenue subway platform at 11 a.m. one Saturday.
- Video of a psychopath smashing human feces into a woman's face at a Bronx subway station.
- Video of a psychopath punching and kicking a woman in the face at a subway stop in Jamaica Queens (leaving her blind in one eye).
- Multiple videos of psychopaths shoving bystanders onto the train tracks — in the Bronx, at the Times Square station, at the Union Square station, at the Hunter College station, at the 53rd and Fifth Avenue station, etc.

Thanks to the well-lit videos, the suspects are usually apprehended within hours, as soon as facial recognition software connects them to their previous mugshots.

For example, the broad-daylight rapist had already been arrested at least 14 times. Each time, D.A. Bragg simply let him go. The feces assailant had a slew of arrests for assault, theft and hate crimes, but the Bronx D.A., Darcel Clark, also kept unleashing him on the public for more rollicking fun.

The Times Square subway shover has racked up a half-dozen prior arrests for things like beating and kicking a 57-year-old woman in the face, scratching a woman in the eye, stealing a woman's cellphone, repeatedly punching an 18-year-old woman in the face and biting her. Released, released, released, sentenced to death and released again. (One of those is fake.)

Just this Monday, a 52-year-old man was stabbed in the neck on a J train; a 21-year-old woman was stabbed at the Franklin Avenue station; and, at 7 p.m., a 54-year-old man was killed at the 125th Street station after being pushed onto the tracks of an incoming subway train by career criminal Carlton McPherson. Odd that government officials are having trouble easing riders' fears about the subway. Maybe if they gave out tote bags with slogans like, "*Boy, are subways getting safer all the time now or what?*"

Having soft-launched his one-man crime wave as a teenager, McPherson has numerous prior arrests for assault, fare evasion and burglary. (These are all legal in New York.) His latest arrest was a mere six months ago. He was due back in court in July, which I'm sure he had marked carefully in his Palm Pilot.

Unless it's rape or murder, New York City is determined to get criminals back on the streets as quickly as possible. The only way to make this clearer to criminals

would be to literally install actual revolving doors at the entrance to every police precinct and courthouse.

Another expert, Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris, interim dean at UCLA's Luskin School of Public Affairs, suggested that New York "*strengthen gun checks*" and suggested using "*sensors*" to detect guns.

It doesn't take a gun to push someone in front of an oncoming train, but on the other hand, there have already been seven shootings on the subway so far this year — and we're not even three months in.

Unfortunately, there are no magical "*sensors*" to detect guns, except the ones that exist in police officers' heads.

As explained by Mayor Michael Bloomberg about a year after he'd left office, having driven the crime rate in New York City to unimaginable lows:

"People say, 'Oh, my God, you are arresting kids for marijuana that are all minorities.' Yes, that's true. Why? Because we put all the cops in the minority neighborhoods. Yes, that's true. Why do we do it? Because that's where all the crime is.

"And the way you get the guns out of the kids' hands is to throw them up against the wall and frisk them. And then they start, they say, 'Oh, I don't want to get caught.' So they don't bring the gun. They still have a gun, but they leave it at home."

But we can't do that anymore, because it would be "racist."

The Times, being the Times, formulated a trick question for the experts. How do you solve a problem after we've ruled every plausible solution "racist"?

Other ideas from "experts" consisted of doing exactly what we're doing now, but harder. Specifically: Be even nicer to criminals and blame the victims.

Passengers should be more alert! Also, it's not enough to release suspects — give them a hug and a juice box, too.

The only expert interviewed by the Times who had any remotely relevant experience was Dorothy Schulz, a retired captain with the Metro-North Police. Not surprisingly, her solution was the same as Bloomberg's, delivered without the vivid imagery. Position officers at subway turnstiles, she said, and frisk every fare-beater. *"You'll pick up a lot of weapons and a lot of people with warrants."*

That will get the guns and knives out of the subway, but not the rapists, the violent assailants, the shovers and the feces-throwers (except maybe for an hour, before the prosecutor cheerfully releases them). We won't be safe from psychopaths in the subway until we're rid of the psychopaths in the D.A.s' offices.

But at least passengers in New York's well-lit subways will feel safer. Right up until the moment they're assaulted, raped, murdered or, God willing, just smeared with human feces. All aboard!

**The Need to Reboot and Reemphasize
Civics Instruction Has Never Been Greater**

**Civic ignorance is a silent killer, akin to
high blood pressure: easy to ignore even as it
hastens the onset of more serious maladies.**

By: Chester E. Finn, Jr.

The 74

March 26, 2024

American education, both K-12 and postsecondary, has long needed to reboot and reemphasize instruction in civics and citizenship. But that need has never

been greater than today, as disunion, disruption and disbelief come to characterize so many elements of American life. Schools alone cannot cure society's ills, but they could do far more to rectify people's ignorance about the principles, practices and origins of our democratic republic and the responsibilities and rights of its citizens.

A number of worthy efforts to address this challenge are underway, including the development of new academic standards and curricula for the public schools. Among the most prominent of these are Educating for American Democracy, a curricular roadmap created by a bipartisan team of scholars and educators under the aegis of iCivics, and the "*American Birthright*" K-12 social studies standards created by the Civics Alliance under the aegis of the National Association of Scholars.

While the roadmap concentrates on inquiry and understanding, posing myriad questions about civics and history that students should grapple with, "*American Birthright*" is chockablock with content — names, dates, events and concepts that students should know. Each offers a framework on which to hang a complete K-12 curriculum, and I believe an amalgamation of their divergent approaches would tap into a nascent consensus among American parents about what their children should learn.

But instead of seeking common ground and striving for a unified approach to revitalizing this essential subject, some seem to prefer conflict. Call them culture warriors or not, they work at finding fault. From the right, for instance, the Civics Alliance slams the College Board's excellent Advanced Placement course in civics and American government — developed with the National Constitution Center and anchored to Supreme Court decisions — because it includes an “*action*” component. The lead author of “*American Birthright*” gave Educating for American Democracy's roadmap an F-plus with the accusation that it harbors “*a very large amount of radical action civics.*” He similarly denounces all forms of “*bipartisan cooperation*” in this realm because “*the radicals conceive of ‘civics’ as a means to eliminate their political opponents from the public square.*”

The roadmap has been also faulted by progressive academics, for leaving curriculum (and test) development to state and local sources, rather than propagating a national plan, and being too soft on social justice issues. And EAD is trying to fend off initiatives from the left that it sees as incompatible with the more-or-less centrist path it is trying to follow. For example, Biden administration's priorities for a grant program meant to foster civics education,

seek more attention to “*racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse perspectives*” than the consensus-minded roadmap supplies.

Educators, too, sometimes add to the discord and suspicion, because many teachers don’t view these subjects the same way many parents and voters do. As Frederick Hess and Michael McShane note in their new book, Getting Education Right, drawing on a RAND survey of social studies teachers, “*Barely half deemed it essential that students understand concepts like the separation of powers or checks and balances.*” A broader RAND survey of K-12 instructors found “*that more ... think civics education is about promoting environmental activism than ‘knowledge of social, political and civic institutions.’*”

Is the potential juice — a consensus-based reboot of civics education — worth so many squeezes? Why keep struggling to fend off culture warriors and redirect instructors? Earlier efforts at civics revival have had meager impacts, petered out or been reversed, and the quest for concord is slower and a lot less fun than hurling brickbats.

So why persist? The country has muddled through for decades despite the fact that Americans know next to nothing about civics or history — what editorial cartoonist Pat Oliphant once called a “*forest fire of ignorance.*” Never mind that

just 22% of eighth-graders scored as proficient in civics on the recent National Assessment of Educational Progress and barely 25% of college-age Americans know that the vice president breaks ties in the Senate. (More think that's the responsibility of the speaker of the House!) How much does it really matter in the real world that they understand so little about government?

Yet, having muddled through yesterday is no guarantee of successful muddling tomorrow. The nation's citizenship woes grow more consequential as people's faith in democracy itself falters. YouGov reported late last year that almost a third of young Americans agree — many of them strongly — that “*democracy is no longer a viable system, and America should explore alternative forms of government.*”

Why believe in something you barely understand or were never taught and feel you have no role in?

Civic ignorance is a silent killer, akin to high blood pressure, easy to ignore or take for granted even as it accompanies and hastens the onset of more serious maladies. Deteriorating norms of behavior, vulnerability to fake news and conspiracy theories, inability to compromise, isolation from civil society — all are associated with not knowing or caring much about the functions of

government, the principles that underlie it or the historical saga that explains why we have the kind we do, where it has succeeded, where it has faltered, how it has changed.

Over time, like persistent hypertension, accumulated ignorance makes a difference. As Americans huddle in separate ideological (and socioeconomic and ethnographic) silos and accustom ourselves to cruder language and worse conduct, especially in the public square — “*defining deviancy down,*” as famously phrased by my mentor, the late Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan — civic and citizenship challenges mount. It’s no surprise that people, especially the young, grow more cynical and pessimistic, more open to alternatives such as strong leaders who don’t have to bother with messy elections of the “*free and fair*” variety.

Because people’s attitudes and actions in the civics-and-citizenship realm are shaped by a hundred forces, schools bear limited responsibility. But when it comes to old-fashioned ignorance, formal education has a big role — and was playing it poorly before anyone heard of culture wars. For decades, civics has loomed small in the curriculum, standards have been low, requirements few (and declining), instructors often ill-prepared. In few places are schools, teachers or students held to account for whether anything gets learned. Rare is the college

that requires its students to study civics, and almost as rare are colleges that even offer such courses.

Yes, most high schoolers must take a course in civics or government — though a dozen states have no such graduation requirement, and most of those that do mandate just a single semester. Some administer a statewide end-of-course exam, but almost nowhere do students actually have to pass it. In Maryland, where I live, the test score counts for 20% of a student’s course grade, while teachers determine 80%. (Until recently, passing the exam itself was a prerequisite for a diploma, but that was seen as too onerous and punitive, particularly for poor and minority students.)

When the Thomas B. Fordham Institute evaluated state academic standards for civics (and U.S. history) in 2021 — an effort the “*American Birthright*” author criticized for its alleged advocacy of “*action civics*” — reviewers gave A ratings to just five jurisdictions while judging 21 to deserve a D or F. Common failings, said the reviewers, included “*overbroad, vague or otherwise insufficient guidance for curriculum and instruction*” and neglect of “*topics that are essential to informed citizenship and historical comprehension.*”

Weak standards, low expectations, few requirements, practically no accountability, poorly prepared (and oft-misguided) teachers and too little time spent on the curriculum. A mess, to be sure. Yet it's hard to muddle through with a population that's gradually untethering from democracy, that knows not how a Senate tie gets broken and that's more engaged with video games than understanding elections or attending to issues before the town council. Nor should we look forward to a day when schools, to the extent that they teach the subject at all, are confined either to progressive "*action civics*" or MAGA-style "*patriotism civics*." It's one thing for the country to evolve politically toward blue and red but quite another for young Americans not to know enough to see what they have in common.

Whether the renaissance that K-12 civics urgently needs is likelier to emerge from a curriculum based on the government's citizenship test, an arranged marriage between EAD and "*American Birthright*" or something entirely different, it's important to persist. Instead of getting depressed by the challenges ahead, let's recall once more that in this realm there's far greater agreement than argument across the land on fundamentals. It's a ceasefire most Americans would cheer.

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*If you do not take an interest
in the affairs of your government,
then you are doomed to live under
the rule of fools.*

Plato

