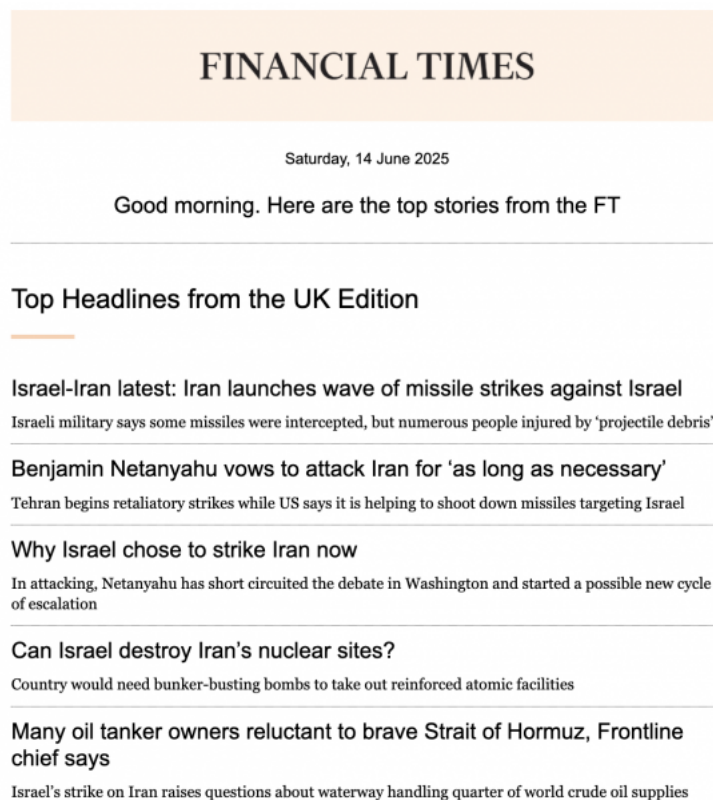


The government of Israel has to go: peace requires it

Published: January 12, 2026, 8:45 pm

It is rare that a newspaper like the Financial Times will think that there is only one real headline news story, but that is the case today. This comes from one of its emails this morning:



Every one of those stories relates to the conflict between Israel and Iran, and the role of other states in what is happening.

I did not have time to talk about this issue yesterday. I was, in fact, returning from a week away in Wales, although as readers here will have noted, this did not much interrupt the overall flow of either blog or YouTube traffic that I generated. This morning, I have a little more time and some thoughts to share.

Firstly, let's be clear that US intelligence sources said in March this year that Iran did not have a nuclear weapons program that threatened Israel. Mishal Hussein referred to this on Bloomberg yesterday, when interviewing Keir Starmer, and I am sure that her sources were impeccable. There is not, in other words, any self-defence justification for Israel undertaking these attacks. Iran's nuclear installations are not, according to the best US intelligence, a threat to it. As a consequence, anyone relying on this defence, as are the governments of the USA, the UK, France and Germany, is spreading misinformation, and in a situation like this, where lives are most definitely at risk, that is not forgivable.

Secondly, in that case, this attack must be seen for what it is, which is yet another diversion by Benjamin Netanyahu to deflect attention from his own trials for corruption, and now from Gaza. Like all fascist leaders, he is dependent upon ever-increasing scales of chaos to provide his own situation with the defence that he requires. Trump's position, which is fully supportive of Israel, unlike, it must be admitted, the governments of the UK, Germany and France, is no doubt relying on that chaos which these attacks create for exactly the same reasons.

Thirdly, and importantly, in that case, all discussion of criticism of Israeli actions as being antisemitic is, in this environment, wholly inappropriate. This is not a war about the right of Israel to exist, nor is it being conducted in defence of Jewish interests. It is being conducted in defence of the interests of Benjamin Netanyahu, and those are not those of all Jews.

Fourthly, as is so obviously the case in so many of the conflicts in which Benjamin Netanyahu has become involved, there is no obvious endgame to what is currently being undertaken. Just as Netanyahu has begun a conflict against Iran, when that country has no nuclear capacity capable of attacking Israel, or the means to create that capacity at present, or a desire to invade Israel itself, neither does Netanyahu have the capacity to end this conflict. It is unlikely that he has the resources to entirely eliminate Iran's nuclear capability, which does exist and is known about because it is subject to international surveillance on a regular basis, with the cooperation of the Iranian state. Nor has he the capacity to invade Iran, and there will be no advantage to him doing so. In other words, in military terms, what he is doing is skirmishing, with no intention of seeking to resolve a situation. This fact strongly supports my second suggestion.

Fifthly, as Trump's comments have made clear, this conflict fits into my concept of the Age of Aggression. Trump's threat to Iran is very straightforward. Trump's demand is that Iran either does what the USA, via Netanyahu, demands, or he will kill Iranians. There is no hint of negotiation within this approach. Nor is there any indication of an attempt to define common ground. It would appear that diplomacy has been dispensed with, with Trump and Netanyahu resorting to plain, straightforward thuggery instead.

So, what should the UK government be doing in response to this situation?

Firstly, it should condemn Israel's actions. There appears to be no intelligence justification for them. They are acts of international aggression.

Secondly, it should be distancing itself from Trump on this issue. His comments are utterly unacceptable.

Thirdly, we should be making clear that there is no Jewish element in this conflict, which is being promoted by a neo-fascist in defence of his own self-interest whilst he remains in government office.

Fourthly, we should be making clear that Iran has the right to defend itself. It is incomprehensible that our present ministers are saying that Israel is in this situation, despite it being the aggressor, whilst ignoring Iran's right to self-defence. I am no more a fan of the government of Iran than I am of the government of Benjamin Netanyahu, but it is clear which of them is the bigger threat at present.

Fifthly, the time has come to sanction Israel. This time did, in fact, come a long time ago, but let's ignore history at the moment. Having just a couple of Israeli cabinet ministers subject to sanctions at present is utterly meaningless when the whole of the Israeli government is engaged in international war crimes. Not only should all of that cabinet, and all of the senior military commanders who are supporting its actions, be subject to sanctions as a precursor to potential criminal charges, but so too should the state of Israel be subject to sanctions at present precisely because that is the most effective weapon that we have against this state that has gone rogue and is a threat to world stability.

There should be blocks on imports of many Israeli goods and services.

Most particularly, there should be a block put on the supply of financial services to Israel, including the facilitation of international payments to and from that state, as well as the provision of services to support the financing of its ongoing war efforts. I am quite sure that large quantities of such financial services are supplied from London, making this country deeply complicit in what Israel is doing. The time has come for that to end.

Saying this, I make clear that the sanctions must make apparent what their purpose is. The conditions should be:

- * The end of the war in Gaza.
- * The end of the occupation of Gaza.
- * The end of attacks in the West Bank.
- * The end of Netanyahu's government.
- * The negotiation of new settlement arrangements for Palestinians, to be upheld by

international peacekeeping forces, supported by Israeli and international funds for the reconstruction of their territories.

* The end of other regional aggression, which does not negate the right to self-defence, is something entirely different.

I am sure those can be refined. My point, however, is simple: it is time to say that we have had enough of this fascist aggression. There would, of course, also be conditions required for Hamas, Iran and others to comply with: this is not a one-sided issue, but the creation of insufferable chaos is entirely Netanyahu's fault, and it has to end, and end now. A line has to be drawn in the sand: the government of Israel has to go. Peace requires it. That is sufficient justification for action.