

What is this war all about?

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As was apparent from the post [I made here yesterday](#) about seeing a bittern at the WWT Welney bird reserve, near where I live, I did take time off during the bank holiday. In fact, I continue to do so during the rest of the day, but as my wife often complains, even when I appear to be taking time off and relaxing, she is aware that what she calls my “second brain” continues to function, and that my thinking process continues to go on. She has got used to it; I live with it and know no other way of living. What I reflected on yesterday, whilst taking time out, was just what is going on in the war in the Middle East.

It would be easy to argue that Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu started this war to distract attention from the domestic problems that both have, including the prospect that both could be prosecuted for actions they have taken while they have been in office, and that both desperately need a victory to reduce the prospect of such prosecutions taking place. That would be easy, and might appear to be a justification for these hostilities in the first instance, but it now looks seriously displaced. Doing such a thing might have provided Netanyahu with a fig leaf in Gaza, but although many of the methods and the toll in civilian terms of casualties appear similar in the case of the war in Iran, the willingness to inflict human suffering by both countries appears to have reached new, intolerable limits, and new war crimes appear to happen by the day. Such a simplistic explanation, then, no longer seems to work.

What is more, given that no one, including US government defence experts, thinks there was a self-defence justification for starting this war, looking to that explanation also makes no sense.

In addition, trying to make any sense of what Trump has said is, in general, a fruitless task. The kindest possible thing to say about Donald Trump is that he is utterly incoherent and totally inconsistent in the announcements that he makes, whilst Netanyahu simply falls back on Zionist claptrap to justify his actions in Gaza, in Lebanon, and in Iran.

To discern a pattern in this is a task that many future authors and students of

international politics and military history will take on in innumerable publications and PhD theses, and I do not envy them when they do so. Making sense of the incomprehensible is hard. However, let me seek to do just that by offering a simple, yet I think comprehensive, explanation of what is happening in the Middle East.

On 1 April, Trump [gave a 19-minute speech](#) that created widespread bewilderment. It was broadcast on prime-time television because it was deemed so significant and because it was suggested that it might provide an explanation for the war and for what might happen next in that conflict. Trump's claim was, in the first instance, that:

We are on track to complete all of America's military objectives shortly, very shortly.

He then continued, saying:

We're going to hit them extremely hard over the next 2 to 3 weeks. We're going to bring them back to the Stone Age, where they belong.

The first statement was typically Trump. No one had the slightest clue as to what it meant. Contrast that with the second claim he made. A threat was issued, and a consequence explained, with an underpinning sentiment that sought, by implication, to justify the action. That sentiment was clear: Trump suggested that the people of Iran belong in the Stone Age.

When this war began, one of the many excuses Trump used for the aggression was that he was seeking to enable the people of Iran to overthrow their theocratic government. Those wanting to sympathise with Trump's position might have, in that claim, identified that regime change, to supposedly deliver a new and more sympathetic form of government in Iran, was the implicit goal of what he was doing. If it were, the random attacks on civilians, and many other comments he has made since, have shattered that myth. Instead, what we can now see is that what underpins this war is something best described as hatred.

Trump, and no doubt Netanyahu, appear to think that most people in the Middle East, and it would appear Muslims by definition, are lesser beings, and he has now summarised that sentiment in his claim that they belong in the Stone Age.

We are not, then, seeing a war that has rational and militarily justified aims. What we are seeing is fascism unleashed. Fascists always seek to identify an "other" group whom they might vilify, and use as the focus of their hate to distract a population whilst they accumulate gains for themselves, something which it appears that the Trump regime has been assiduous in doing throughout the period of this conflict. I think we can now presume that this is exactly what is going on here.

What we are seeing is a deeply toxic, hate-driven, cynical, and ultimately fascist war being perpetrated by Israel and the USA against people whom they have decided to

categorise as subhuman, to make them the “other” or enemy whom they vilify, so that the leaders of those countries, and their entourages, can support their own positions, politically and economically. The casualties incurred, directly and indirectly, around the world, and there may ultimately be millions of them, are a matter of indifference to them. These people have so debased their own humanity, and have themselves, and through the media they control, so debased the understanding of the humanity of others, that they can no longer see those they call their enemies as human.

It is on that basis that Trump can suggest that the people of Iran belong in the Stone Age. He quite literally sees them as “other”. In all this, the media's role is crucial. By taking, amplifying, and persistently repeating such messages in any way they can, they create the environment in which this toxic message is received, believed, and understood.

We can see this happening in the UK just as readily as it is in the USA. Look at the Daily Telegraph, the Daily Mail, GB News, and other similar outlets. If they ever existed to disseminate news, their purpose now is to spread misinformation to promote the politics of hate. The unfortunate fact is that they are good at this. The evidence is all around us: between 25% and 30% of the UK population have bought into this idea that there are people who have the goal of undermining consensual society as we might have known it, or at least desire it, when in fact the people in question have no greater goal than that which most of us share, which is to live in harmony, to coexist with our neighbours, and to survive with sufficient material well-being to be free from fear.

These people are not our enemies; they are our neighbours, but a fascist media, as intent on exploiting fear as are political leaders like Trump, Netanyahu, Farage, and even Badenoch, share in the culpability for the corruption of our society that is being created as a consequence.

This war, then, is nothing more than an extension of this programme of vilification designed to divide and ultimately destroy, because once it has eliminated one enemy, you can be sure that it will create another to perpetuate the control of those who seek to maintain their grip on power, as both Trump and Netanyahu do.

What should we, then, be doing now? We should be calling out this war for what it is. As has been apparent from the start, it is not defensive, nor is it strategic in the way that term has conventionally been used in both military and political narratives. It is instead opportunistic and fascist. There is no more to it than that. If there is such a thing as evil, and I think there is, then this war is a representation of it, and that is precisely why it is so dangerous.

Some governments have had the wisdom to recognise that fact. Ours has not. We will ultimately pay a heavy price in the form of a penance for that error of judgment on the part of Keir Starmer. It is, as a result, beholden on others to do what he has not done, and that is to condemn the USA and its actions in this war. Nothing less will do when

the only possible explanation for this war is hatred, fascist intent, and the pursuit of personal gain by a few at the cost of most of the world's population.

And, if we do understand that, we need to reconsider the whole structure of our society, after the USA, which we emulate, has stooped to this depth of depravity.

My final thought is this: when will that reconsideration begin?