Twitter Thread by Seth Frantzman



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Quick thoughts and thread on the recent barrage of articles seeking to push the view that all of Israel, and the West Bank, and Jerusalem and Gaza are “apartheid”...implications of this is to roll it out on eve of Biden admin to try to shift narrative (again)



First of all the whole “Zionism is racism” and “Israel is apartheid” has been a talking point for decades pushed first by the “anti-imperialist” crowd and then later in the 1990s after end of Cold War and end of actual apartheid in S. Africa.

Second this argument has shifted from seeking to encourage Israel to leave the “Occupied Palestinian Territories” which means Gaza and West Bank and East Jerusalem; to arguing all of Israel is “apartheid”

Essentially this seeks to re-write the partition plan that the colonial power and UN put in place in 1940s and the resulting armistice lines of 1948; shoehorning Israel and the Palestinians into One State, which neither communities actually want.

The goal of this paradigm is to move from trying to encourage Israel to withdraw, making it IMPOSSIBLE for Israel to withdraw because even if Israel does...the next goal will be to dismantle the rest of Israel as an “apartheid” state inside the Green Line

We know this because of the forcible inclusion of Gaza, which Israel withdrew from in 2005. Despite leaving Israel is still called the “occupying power” because it controls the airspace and several borders (Egypt controls the fourth)

It’s interesting how even though Israel withdrew it is called “occupying” Gaza even though when Egypt withdrew in 1967 it isn’t said to be still “occupying”...Israel is the only country treated this way in the world.

Notice for instance that Ankara’s treatment of Kurds and occupation of Afrin doesn’t receive a barrage of claims it is “apartheid” even though it’s essential discrimination and national ethos has commonalities with Israel’s policies and nationalist origins .

So the goal here is to present Israel with a clear message: Even if Israel withdraws, as in Gaza, it is still “apartheid” (even though Hamas runs Gaza like an actual apartheid state denying Jewish minorities access)...so if Israel leaves the West Bank it still be “occupying”

Let me pause and provide my expertise on this issue: 10 years covering this region and Israel-Palestinian issues; and five years teaching at Palestinian Al-Quds University as an assistant professor where I heard a lot from students and faculty on their daily life.

In essence the goal of the recent articles is to argue that Israel can never end the “occupation”, even if it wants to. This is about making the nature of Israel, a nationalist state of the Jewish people, “apartheid” in essence.

Now...no other state is subjected to this definition, not Pakistan or Malaysia or other countries that put one group above another in the law; and dozens of countries do that. Only Israel is said to be “apartheid” in this logic.

The end goal here is to force Israel to be seen as one state. No reward for negotiating or leaving, as in Gaza. If Israel leaves it will always be said to “occupy”. The result is to torpedo any possible negotiations.

The reality of course is that Israel is not occupying Gaza, Gaza is it’s own entity like other non-state self-governing entities in the world (lots in the Caucasus); and the West Bank is a state-in-the-making where PA is recognized as a state by 100+ countries

At its very least the West Bank is an autonomous region, an imperfect one, but a functioning autonomous region, and there are others like it globally. Imperfect these complexities are, but the world is not perfect and many anomalies exist

From North Cyprus to Somaliland to the Kurdistan Region or Abkhazia you have many examples of powerful substate entities...and that's ok, the post colonial and post Cold War world left many complexities. Shoehorning them into "apartheid" is just a talking point.

The tragedy of all this is that few Palestinians get to have their articles published on this issue, it's dominated by westerners telling Palestinians what they want; there is no evidence Gazans and Israelis want one state. At the very least they should be heard from.

There is a tiny group of pro-one state activists and profiteers, in general no one wants one state who actually lives on the land. They don't want discrimination either. They are in an imperfect and complex reality.

The essential fallacy of the apartheid argument is that apartheid South Africa came into being as one state (with its complex British and colonial era origins as multiple entities), whereas Israel has no pretense of wanting to annex Gaza or the West Bank.

Control of an area for 50 years doesn't necessarily make it part of the larger state, for instance the same voices don't make this argument about Morocco...or I guess about South Ossetia or other examples.

This is an artificial argument made about Israel, especially with regards to trying to force Gaza to be under Israeli rule...everyone knows Israel will NEVER administer Gaza again. It's like the "vaccine" argument suddenly trying to make Israel responsible for Gaza health care

This rewriting history, when Israel was for many decades asked to leave Gaza and is now being shoehorned back with it...it illustrates that part of the Oslo narrative was a scam, some never wanted two states because they knew the only way to dismantle Israel's ethos is one state

The mistaken logic of forcing the "apartheid" concept on all of Israel is that while in South Africa in the 1990s the ruling regime was convinced to dismantle itself in a post-Cold War era of democratization pushed by the West, things are different now.

Israel's government and its national institutions, supported by a huge majority of the people inside the Green Line...are not rushing to create some experiment of the sort like Yugoslavia back in the day. They saw what happens to such shoehorned states of different groups

Israelis and Palestinians may differ on many things, but they are generally united on NOT wanting to be ruled by the same government. They worked hard to be separate in Gaza and the WB; no foreign authority is going to force them back together again.