

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 181. Israel, invasion, and the trap laid by Hamas

I'm Dr. John Watson.
For the first time ever.
I'm a consulting detective.
Every single Sherlock Holmes story
God help me.
will be retold.
We believe there is a bomb on a tube train heading to Clapham Cromby.
I know this.
Yeah, sorry, I was speaking to the listeners.
For goodness sake.
Hold this.
Oh my God.
Just don't pull the pin.
Why on earth would I pull the pin?
The game is afoot, Watson.
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Sherlock and Co.
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Welcome to the Restless Politics.
I'm here in London and Alistair and I are about to interview Yuval Noah Harari.
It's a very different type of episode to what we normally do
because often we're going for analysts.
We're stepping back from situations.
In this case, we're talking to a friend of mine
within a week of the events that unfolded with Hamas' terrorist attacks
across the border from Gaza.
He is right in the middle of this and you will feel in the interview
Yuval's own personal emotions, his connection to his own family in Israel.
I'm not apologizing for that at all.
I think if you would like our attempt to get a more objective picture
of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, please listen to our last episode
that we put out a few days ago, which tries to look at the bigger history.
But I think it's vital in these things to actually hear from people
who are fully engaged, who are connected emotionally
because only by doing so do we ever get a sense
of how these problems feel, why they're so difficult to resolve.
I think Yuval is a fascinating example of somebody
who has been deeply emotionally traumatized,
who feels deep attachment to Israel, but is also finding his way
towards talking about peace and empathy.
And I think that emotional journey makes this episode
even more powerful than some of our other episodes.
I hope you enjoyed it.
Today, I mean, it's a very, very difficult, sad day for recording.

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 181. Israel, invasion, and the trap laid by Hamas

And my friend Yuval, who we've interviewed a couple of times in the last month, has come back to join us after the horrifying terrorist attack of Hamas in Israel and now very, very disturbing ideas around how the Israeli army might respond in Gaza. And Yuval is right in the middle of this. As people remember who listened to the leading podcasts, he has been a very outspoken critic of the populism of the Israeli government and particularly their judicial reforms. But he's also found himself caught up as an Israeli and as a family member in the consequences of this attack. So thank you very much for joining us. Thank you for having me again. Maybe if we can start with just giving listeners a sense of how this attack felt, how it touched on your own family, how it felt personally, how Israelis understand it before we go on to try to talk about other structures, but just the immediate emotional impact. Yeah, I mean, it goes back to the deepest fears and the darkest moments of Jewish history. At first, people compared it to the Om Kippur war when the armies of Egypt and Syria surprised Israel. But very quickly, the narrative changed and everybody's now comparing it to scenes from the Holocaust or from pogroms. The state of Israel for a couple of hours just disappeared. There was no state. There were Jewish communities slaughtered. The comparisons are with the Einsatzgruppen mobile killing units of the Nazis that in 1941-1942 would in places that are today Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, would just come surround a Jewish village and just either burn people in their houses or just shoot them all to death. And also comparisons with pogroms even earlier like the famous Kishinev pogrom of 1903. And we hear just stories that we couldn't imagine. Like we are used to wars, but the idea that there will be massive pogroms in Jews in Israel in 2023 is just incomprehensible. I have family in one and friends in several of these kibbutzim of these villages that bore the brunt of the attack. My aunt and uncle live in Kibbutzbury.

All contact with them was cut on the morning of the attack.
We just got news that they somehow survived.
They hid in their house as Hamas terrorists
just went from house to house in the kibbutz
and just slaughtered everybody.
And we hear terrible stories about families hiding
in safe rooms and then the Hamas setting fire
to the house to burn them alive or suffocate them
in the safe room and if they try to jump or come out
they just shoot them.
I've heard also one really, I think it encapsulates
because these communities, the kibbutzim on the border with Gaza,
they were one of the last bastions of the left wing in Israel.
People who still cling to the belief in peace
through all those years of terrorism and attacks.
So one really terrible story I've heard from Kfar Gaza,
a kibbutz where I have many friends,
a family that for a couple of years
organized this kite festival or flying kites
on the fence border with Gaza with messages of peace
to show the civilians in Gaza
that despite all the violence and the impossibility
of the government of Israel and Hamas having any kind of dialogue
the civilians still want peace.
At least now civilians in Israel still want peace.
And the festival this year was planned for this Saturday
and a couple of hours before it happened
the Hamas terrorists came in and they found
when the Israeli army finally liberated Kfar Gaza
they found the entire family murdered.
Two parents, three kids, three children together
in bed holding hands shot.
And this is I think the symbol because Hamas is trying
not just to kill civilians
to kill any chance of their ever being peace.
One last thing from a broader perspective
the background to all that is that
there was a breakthrough for peace recently of sorts.
After Israel made peace treaties with the Gulf states, some of them
and now there was on the table the offer for a Saudi peace treaty
which would have normalized relations between Israel
and much of the Arab world and also hopefully could have reignited
the peace process with the Palestinians
and improved the situation of millions of Palestinians

under Israeli occupation.

And most of the experts I'm talking with they say this is at least the immediate cause of the attack.

Nothing frightens Hamas more than the possibility of peace and the way the attack was conducted like the atrocities, the killing babies and not hiding it but actually filming and publishing they want to implant seeds of hatred in the minds of millions to make sure there will never be peace.

Ival, thanks very much for giving us more of your time and I want to pick up on something you said there about how Hamas don't want peace and this is in a sense deliberately provoked and this is something Roy and I talked about in the podcast last week that this may well have been sort of more strategically what lay behind all this.

Is there not therefore a need for Israel in its response whilst I absolutely understand the impact upon the national psyche, the demand for security and the demand possibly also for revenge there's a danger that they now actually to some extent give Hamas what they want which is to wipe out any possibility of ever getting back to a process that might lead to a state solution which right now feels so far off it would be a miracle if it ever happened.

Yes, I mean what's happening now is basically what we see unfortunately in many of these conflicts around the world, a competition of suffering, a competition also in public opinion around the world that each side wants to draw more and more attention to its immense pain and suffering and there is no winner in this competition of suffering except Hamas because the terrorists of Hamas they don't care about human suffering at least they don't care about anything that happens in this world.

This is something that I know for many Westerners it's just difficult to grasp the level of religious fanaticism that you have in my region of the world is in many ways incomprehensible to people who live in a place like London to most of them we need to grapple with this these are people, the Hamas terrorists they don't care at all about what is happening in this world they don't care about human suffering even on their side

they are fixated on the joys of paradise
which is why they are in love with death
and they are willing to just burn this world
There are many Palestinians who live in Gaza
who live in the West Bank
who live in different parts of the world
who don't feel like that
so Hamas do that
is there not also the case
because the last time we spoke
you and Rory and I
very very critical of Benjamin Netanyahu
and who he is and what he represents
but is it not also the case
that perhaps the reason they felt able to do this awful thing
is because they are surrounded by a sense of hopelessness
amongst the peaceful Palestinian people
that Israel under Netanyahu
and the right-wing government you put together
have absolutely no interest whatsoever
in recognizing their pain
even before this
again, the Netanyahu government has abandoned
for many years the peace process with the Palestinians
but this doesn't explain Hamas' actions
because actually Hamas is never interested
in any kind of peace treaty
and has done everything in its power
to undermine previous peace processes
like the Oslo process
and what ignited this attack
is probably that there was suddenly a step
from the Israeli side with the Saudi initiative
of perhaps reigniting some kind of peace process
now when I hear the voices now coming from Israel
it's clear to me that the level of pain
there is so high
there isn't a single millimeter left
to recognize or deal with any other pain in the world
it's just a psychological fact
Even you?
I don't want to make it personal about myself
No, but that's who we're talking to
I just wondered how you...

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 181. Israel, invasion, and the trap laid by Hamas

Yes, I think this is a war on the mind
a war on the soul
and again, this is deliberate
the way that Hamas orchestrated this attack
again, not just attacking civilians
but torturing and executing people
in the most horrendous ways they could think about
taking examples from ISIS
and not hiding it
but making sure this will be publicized
this was intentional
psychologically what is happening is
they are not just inciting fear and hatred
this is in a sense a crime against humanity
in the deepest sense of the world
you lose all trust in humanity
and you thereby also lose your own humanity
and there is a struggle now
to in this sense at least save our souls and minds
from this destruction
I try to wage this struggle in my own mind
I think we shouldn't allow Hamas to win
the war on our souls
it's impossible at this moment
to expect psychologically Israelis
to again, with anything except their pain
but I think it is vital
and this is one of the reasons I'm speaking both here and in Israel
to avoid falling into Hamas's trap
and doing things that will ruin any chance
for peace, for generations to come
we shouldn't allow this to happen
Talking about Hamas's trap
there's a Brazilian theorist of terrorism
a terrorist called Carlos Mariela
who effectively says that
he says it's necessary to turn political crisis
into armed conflict
by performing violent actions
that will force those in power
to transform the political situation of the country
into a military situation
this will alienate the masses
will revolt against the army and the police

and blame them for the status things
to what extent do you feel that
along with the religious agenda
this is a deliberate strategy of Hamas
they actually wanted to bring down a huge IDF response
hoping by doing so
to bring the masses over onto their side
and further alienate them
I can't get into their minds and plans
but they knew for sure
that there will be massive Israeli retaliation
they either don't care about it
or they actually hope for it
you see that right now Israel is calling
on Palestinian civilians
in the north part of the Gaza Strip
to leave their houses
and move to the central and southern parts
of the Gaza Strip
because obviously there's going to be
major military action in the north
and the Hamas is telling the Palestinian civilians
don't go, you have to stay
whether it's because the Hamas
wants to use the civilians as shields
against the Israeli military
or because it's just interested
in massive casualties on the Palestinian side
I also think that there's a terrible military logic
to what they're doing
I think from a military point of view
they would fear that if they evacuate the northern part
allow Israel to clear and occupy that
Israel will then tell the people in the south
to move to the north while they move to the south
so Hamas, I imagine
sees this like the fight with ISIS and Mosul
urban warfare that would go on for a very long time
and they have no intention of facilitating
making it easier for the Israeli military
to conduct urban warfare operations
through the Strip
that's exactly the point
there is terrible suffering

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 181. Israel, invasion, and the trap laid by Hamas

now in Gaza
and it only gets worse and worse
this terrible situation
I don't know how to solve it
and ideally we would see
movements to de-escalate
to return some kind of trust in humanity
the most immediate step that could be taken
is immediately release all the hostages
that Hamas took
hostages including babies, old people
and this could, you know, a tiny, tiny gesture
of humanity that brings back
some sanities to the situation
but obviously Hamas is not interested in that
they're interested in prisoner swaps
also there is a very clear message
coming from the Israeli public
to the Israeli government
that's it
we cannot go on living here with Hamas
we tried it for many years
it's impossible, you choose either Hamas or Israel
if Hamas is not completely disarmed
then we can just no longer live here
but does that not mean you Val, that the logic of that
is that the IDF
virtually wipes the place out
just literally goes in
and first destroys the north
and if people don't leave
well that's their problem
that'll be the thinking
and then maybe tells the people in the south
to move back north which has been destroyed
and then they just destroy the whole place
this is I think part of the responsibility
of the international community
to find some
better solution to the situation
but based on
the understanding
that a return
to the status quo before the war

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 181. Israel, invasion, and the trap laid by Hamas

is simply totally unacceptable
for the Israeli public
that however it is done
the war must end
with Hamas disarmed
and the Gaza Strip
demilitarized
and how to do it
I don't know
from the Israeli public's perspective
they cannot settle
for anything less than that
and you know I hear many comparisons
now with 9-11
in the United States
and also warnings
that Israel should not repeat
the American mistake of
invading Iraq and Afghanistan
and look what's happening now in Afghanistan
there is a fundamental flaw
in the comparison
which is it's like 9-11
but with the Taliban and ISIS
controlling New Jersey
not Afghanistan
I mean like my family
Putsberri is about
a kilometer from the border
fence with Gaza
they cannot go living
whoever survived
cannot go on living there
after what happened
with again Hamas bases
a kilometer from their houses
what happened Ival with the
we have this vaunted image
of Israeli security systems
and the security services
what Hamas did
military historians are going to be writing about this forever
how on earth did this
vaunted intelligence

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 181. Israel, invasion, and the trap laid by Hamas

and security service
not have any sense this was happening
or be prepared for it?
I don't know the answer
but it is clear already now
that this is a price
Israel has been is paying
for allowing
a populist strongman
to rule it
and to divide it against itself
not just for the last 9 months
but for years
that many Israelis are saying
we took our eyes off the ball
that for months and actually
for years now
we focused on the wrong issues
and this came from the top
that when you have
a leader, a government
that bases its political
career
on dividing, intentionally dividing
the nation against itself
on giving
no importance whatever
to telling or hearing the truth
spreading conspiracy theories
about the central institutions
of the state
turning the people against
these institutions
telling people that the state institutions
they are full of
deep state traitors
and attacking
the serving elites
of the country
not just in the US
in the UK also in Israel
nobody wants to be elites
no system
can survive such an attack

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 181. Israel, invasion, and the trap laid by Hamas

for years
the Israeli army is calling this operation
this war iron swords
iron swords
and I remember my teacher at university
like 25 years ago
telling me a military historian
if you put an iron sword
in salt water
and it rusts
the Netanyahu government has taken
Israel's iron swords
and put them in salt water
for 14 years
and they rust it
OK so Yorval Alasdair let's take a quick break
just following this through
I mean what about southern Lebanon
so obviously Hezbollah is based in southern Lebanon
if the policy becomes
the only way to defend Israel's security
is to try to occupy and control
and prevent any terrorist groups
emerging in Gaza does the same logic
not begin to extend into southern Lebanon
again there is a very big danger there
of escalating the conflict
also to Lebanon also to the West Bank
and again it's
I think one very good thing
about the very
firm way
that the Biden administration intervened
is that President Biden
by far the most popular
politician in Israel
after you know most Israelis were very
keen Trump supporters
and now President Biden is
I don't know 99%
support in Israel
he gave the speech
that we expected
our Prime Minister to give

but he couldn't Netanyahu couldn't
and Biden gave us
the speech we needed
aircraft carriers
and massive support
and making it very very clear
that he's not hedging his bets
he's not seeing the complexity
no he's very clearly
on Israel's side
and this gives him and his administration
a lot of credibility
in Israel and enables
him and his administration
I hope to
prevent Israel from making
huge mistakes
in some ways this attack
will strengthen the hand of
the extreme nationalist Israeli
right that they will say this is what we always told
you this is why we can't coexist
with these people and it gives strength
to people like Smotridge because it feeds
into their narrative
I don't know this is the battle
now being waged in the souls
and the minds of Israelis
because on the one hand there is
these voices being
heard on the other hand
there is immense rage
in Israel against this
right-wing coalition government
that in the name of its
messianic fantasies
brought Israel to this
catastrophic situation
I don't know which way it will go
I think the country has
has been given a chance
to save itself and if
if Israelis stay loyal
to the ideals

of democracy at home
and peace abroad
and again Israelis are incapable
of hearing this right now
and the mind is completely filled
with pain but
just to avoid
magnifying the pain in the region
unnecessarily
and keeping a space
open so that there will be
a possibility of healing
later on this is
the best that I can hope
for the present moment and again
something that we need help
from people
in the rest of the world
I'm glad you pointed out
the sort of leadership
that Joe Biden has showed
and particularly watching
Donald Trump yesterday with his
absolute nonsense he was coming out with
it would be terrifying if he were in charge
of the Western world right now
and also I completely understand
why not just Joe Biden but other
leaders around the world have been
emphasizing absolute solidarity
with Israel but is there not a danger
that as this
goes on and as people become
more and more conscious of the
kind of horror that's going
to be inflicted upon
people in Gaza who are not just Hamas
that we also need world leaders
who will speak if you like
to a more nuanced
message that will try to use
this to get back to and that does mean
something like Netanyahu
who you know you have rightly

condemned in all pretty
clear terms long before
this that there's a danger that
he takes this as kind of permission
to do things
that frankly are going to take us
to places we've never imagined
this is the big danger and this is why
I was also glad to hear
both President Joe Biden and Foreign
Minister Blinken and others
with all the support they give Israel
again and again emphasize democracies
fight wars by a different
standard than Hamas
terrorists if we go down
to their standard what's the point
if we become like Hamas
what's the point
and emphasizing the need
to keep international
laws
and
again I think it's very important
this combination of very clear support
to Israel
and a clear emphasis
on the need to keep international
law and humanitarian
standards even in the darkest hours
otherwise there is no point
presumably the only
end point to this
will have to be an Israeli
occupation of Gaza in the long
term because I can't see how else
Israel can guarantee that Hamas
will not re-emerge
and hopefully there will be
and nobody will fight Hamas
for Israel I think this is quite clear
but I hope there will be forces
who will take it upon themselves
not just to rebuild Gaza

in a way which gives
a future to the Palestinians
there but also
simultaneously takes it upon itself
to disarm Hamas
and to make sure that it doesn't
remilitarize the Gaza Strip
who will be these forces that will take
upon themselves this immense task
I don't know but
we must find such forces
because the alternatives are really
too difficult to even imagine
so essentially you're saying that
if Israel is not acting as the
occupying force demilitarizing
the hope would be that some other group
of people the United Nations or
Arab countries or somebody else would take
security responsibility for Gaza
and responsibility for its economic development
in order to ensure that Hamas doesn't re-emerge
again you have the Palestinian Authority
which is discredited but it still
when it's politics you have to
work with whatever forces
are there and
you have more moderate Arab countries
you have the international community
a coalition of the willing
whoever is willing to take it upon themselves
it's not going to be easy
it's going to be very expensive
but if you really care about
the suffering of people in the area
this is the thing to do
but unfortunately as we've discussed before
the context is not very favorable
we're in a context of isolationism
people are very bruised, the liberal world order
seem to collapse
people are overextended towards Ukraine
it's very very
improbable sadly that anybody

is going to have the appetite for getting involved
with what will seem from the distance
the most painful, horrifying
political situation on earth
I mean I don't think the international community is likely
to be volunteering at all for that
Yvonne there's the situation with the hostages
so
Netanyahu in a previous incarnation
one of his previous premierships periods
and he did this extraordinary
exchange over
the IDF soldier
Gilad Shalit
and exchanged more than a thousand
Palestinian prisoners including
some very very senior Hamas figures
so you've got that and then you've got the fact
of the security and intelligence failures
and if we think back to the previous
when Israeli security has failed
there's been real anger that has really
turned against political leaders over the
security failures
what is the
putting to one side if you can
I don't know how hard this is
your personal view that Netanyahu is a very bad man
and a very bad prime minister
what's your sense of how
Israeli opinion is rallying
to him as a leader
and do you think that the
one of the reasons that the Hamas have taken
so many hostages
is because of what they took from that
previous exchange 17 years ago
which obviously knows that Israel is extremely sensitive
to hostages
and they plan to play this card
for maximum effect
which means again for maximum
terror and hatred
creating more and more of that

and
Israelis now have very little confidence
in the leadership of Netanyahu
he can still in a way
I mean it's beyond him to resign
I mean he can't do what
Chamberlain did in 1940
just move aside and give somebody
better
I mean this is what he should have done
he can't, I think he can't
but maybe maybe he can still
do something very simple but very difficult
just give a speech to the Israeli public
and say
I'm responsible, I ran this country for 14 years
I divided the nation
against itself
I'm responsible for this catastrophe
I will pay the full price
I don't think this is the moment
for me to step down
there is nobody else so I'll do this
one job but know that I take
full responsibility and I will pay the price
and based on that
now let me do my best
with this extremely difficult situation
if he would just utter these
like 5-6 sentences
he can still in a way
unite the people are extremely
angry against him
but I'm not sure if he's capable
of doing such a gesture
and you have to
now bring in the
Palestinian voice
I mean I don't presume to be able to speak on their behalf
but my sense is that
mainstream Palestinian opinion
sees this in terms of Gaza
being an extended prison camp
is the way that they think about it

that Gaza is
supposed to be the beginning of a
two state solution an independent country
not so much New Jersey as Mexico
and its relationship to the United States
and so I think Palestinians
hearing this would be completely horrified
at the idea that
this would then lead to
an Israeli occupation of Gaza
I can say this that
just as Israelis have so much pain
that they don't have any space
to even acknowledge
the pain of others
I think this is the same is true of Palestinians
we've been living under
horrible conditions for decades
millions of Palestinians
living under Israeli occupation in the west bank
and also the conditions
in Gaza and again
I don't expect them I think that
psychologically most people
in this situation they don't have
any space left for even
acknowledging the pain of others
and you can condemn this you can say
I think it's a psychological fact
it's impossible and also
you know we need simple stories
even though this is the case in most conflicts in the world
it's hard for people to understand
that you can be victim
and perpetrator at the same time
it's a very simple fact
impossible to accept for most people
either you're a victim or you're perpetrator
there is no other but no usually we are both
you know from the level of
individuals how we behave
in our family to the level of entire nations
we are usually both
and of course perhaps one issue is that

we don't feel like that as individuals
we don't feel that we have the full responsibility
for our state so there's a sort of
strange problem here too which is that
you feel as an individual that you're a victim
and you feel distance from your state
or your fellow Palestinians
or fellow Israelis as perpetrators
so you don't feel a direct responsibility
in that way exactly
and the most we can hope
for the outside
intervention is a different matter
that I think what I would expect
people say in London or in New York
or in Sao Paulo
in Beijing because you're not
in this immense pain
you can try and see both sides
instead of kind of making your life easier
by just dividing the world
into only victims and only perpetrators
Israelis and Palestinians
at this moment can't
but I expect that people in other countries
will have the capacity to do that
instead of going for the easy solution
of no there is just this two-sided
story what we can hope
is to think
how do we get out of this
repeat of despair
going back to the Hamas attack
what everyone thinks
about the misery of Palestinians
under Israeli occupation
how does murdering parents
in front of their children
going to help this
but do you think that by doing that
you will solve the occupation
you will incentivize Israelis to make peace
obviously not
so in this competition

of immense suffering
how do we calculate who is suffering more
so focus on the question
what is still possible to do
that at some point in the future
there might be reconciliation
and peace because one last comment on that
we do know from history
that even though it seems utterly
impossible at the moment
over the longer term
of decades of generations
the wounds do heal
and if people make the right decision
it is possible
especially French and Germans
or English and Scots
or Ireland
I have just read
about looking at relations between
Poland, Ukraine
and Lithuania
and people don't really know this
but we all know about the wars in the Balkans
in the 1990s
which were fought over
injuries done
decades and centuries previously
between Serbs and Croats
and so forth
nobody remembers the wars
that weren't fought between Poland
Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus
in the 1990s
why because there were no wars
even though there was a lot
of historical injuries
between these peoples
there was a conscious decision
at the end of the Cold War
that we will not go back in history
the massacres
the horrible things done in the 1940s
and earlier

we don't forget them
but we don't want to go back there
very quickly
this is a show
which is about politics
and at the core of these questions
is the politicians
in a way the reason why
Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia
Kosovo went to war
is actually because the politicians chose to whip up that nationalism
and as you say
in the case of Poland, Ukraine, Belarus
which puts an immense responsibility
in the end on the Palestinian
and Israeli leadership here
because people in these moments
of trauma can be led
in positive directions, can be led in deeply
deeply negative directions
and the notion that it's just a fundamental
fact about people
I think underestimates the politicians
agency
and what I said earlier about the psychological
limits
of us as human beings
this is not an excuse for the politicians
the politicians are there
this is their job
what is the job of being a politician
this is the job that you try to go
you're not an ordinary citizen
you have a higher responsibility
you have a historical responsibility
and we now need to see
whether the leaders, the politicians
on all sides have this kind of responsibility
history has its eyes on them
what they decide to do in the next few days
weeks will reverberate
really for generations
and I hope they do the responsible thing
and the responsible thing

going back to hospital
when there is an injury
your responsibility is to heal it
not to widen it
not to use the injury
as an excuse for more injuries
how do you translate that
into policies
in extremely difficult situations
I'm not a politician
one of the reasons I don't go into politics
I don't know how to do that
that demands very, very tough
skills
and I think it was Truman who said
if you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen
so this is
the moment of heat
and if you have politicians who just have
no idea what to do in this situation
step aside and let somebody else
you're in London
with Rory, I'm in Paris
before you leave
if you can
look at Rory mentioned Ireland
take a look at a BBC documentary series
that's aired recently called
Once Upon a Time in Northern Ireland
because I think you made the point
there that change can come
when it feels absolutely impossible
and I can't imagine what it's like for you
for every Israeli, for every person
living in the West Bank
and Gaza and Jews
and Palestinians around the world
utterly, utterly horrific
but it is one of the most hopeful TV
things I've ever watched
but finally from me and thanks for giving us so much of your time
but finally from me
you mentioned there the politicians
there's three politicians I want to

get your sense and maybe also Rory's sense
of how you think they're viewing this
the first is Khamenei in Iran
and whether, I'm not asking you to get inside
his head but how you think that might be going
Putin in Moscow
and also Zelensky
because my other fear for this
is that it's going to take the world's attention
away from another really difficult situation
in a way that could be very, very damaging
to Ukraine so what's your take
on those three and how they'll be looking at this
I think Khamenei's like
official title is the spiritual leader of Iran
right? Now what is spirituality?
I mean what is a
spiritual leader?
What does a spiritual leader do
in a situation of this
immense suffering? Let's see
what is the quality
of spirituality of the Iranian
spiritual leadership?
I don't know, let's see
with regard to Putin I think
I can't get into the mind
of such a person but
given the horrors
that he unleashed
on the Ukrainian people
I don't think this person can have any kind of compassion
maybe he just rejoices
as more and more of the world
goes up in flame
and also
diverting attention from his crimes
and from the threat
that he poses. Zelensky again
I think Zelensky's
besides being
an inspiring leader of Ukraine
I think he's the most inspiring
Jewish leader of our time

what is done in Ukraine
is absolutely amazing
especially given again the very, very difficult
history of Jews and
Ukrainians the fact that
Ukrainians have chosen
a Jewish person
to lead them at their greatest hour
of need and the way
he leads them this is absolutely
anybody who you know all these kind of
very nationalistic views
that you can't be both a Ukrainian
and a Jew an absolute nonsense
I mean he is showing the world
what true patriotism is
and also his reaction now
you know Israel in many ways turned
a cold shoulder to Ukraine
in its hour of greatest need
being very, very careful about
how it raises itself on the conflict
so as not to anger the Russians
because we have our own interests to take into account
and being quite stingy
in the way that the help
that we extend to Ukraine
and a bit like
President Biden Zelensky
didn't
didn't use it to
you didn't do this for me so I'll now show
no, like
very, very clear
and offering to come to Israel
his country is under this vicious attack
and he says
I know from my experience how important it is
in your hour of
desperation and pain
that foreign leaders come
and just be there with you
and I want to come and be there with you
despite the fact that the war, the terrible war

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 181. Israel, invasion, and the trap laid by Hamas

is still ongoing and you know
Israel is not really under an existential
threat in the way that Ukraine is
Hamas cannot conquer Israel
Ukraine is still in danger
of being
conquered and obliterated by the Russian army
and Zelensky says
I want to come and be with you
so this is so inspiring
I mean just very quickly on your question there
and I think the terrible logic here
is stepping back from Israel Palestine
for a second is just
the explosion of conflict since 2014
I mean almost every year over the last nine years
we've had more civilian casualties
more refugees, more displaced people
we've had nearly seven coups
in Africa in just over a year
we have the horror of Ukraine
we now have the unbelievable horror
of what's happening in Israel and Palestine
I mean there is a sense that this populist age
is also coinciding with
an age of increasing violence
and it's very simple
you destroy the global order
you get the disorder
I mean how it can't be any simpler than that
we have had for several years now
leaders including in the UK
in the USA
we don't want a global order anymore
we care only about our own country
again you can say whatever you want
about how these leaders
take care of the interests of their country
what is very clear is that none of them
came with an offer
of how to arrange the global order
they are against the very idea
of a global order
and what's the alternative to order?

chaos, if you don't work
and it's hard work to build
a global order what you get
is these increasing waves
of we had the pandemic
and famine and now war
and there will be more and more of that
if we do not re-establish order
and I haven't heard any suggestion
from anywhere in the world
for a better order
than the besmirched liberal order
which is based
again on a very basic understanding
that all humans
share the same basic experiences
and therefore we all share
some common interests
it's biological
that pain
and despair
and sadness they are the same
in Israelis and Palestinians
in Russians and Ukrainians
and this simple realization
is the basis for the liberal global order
we are all humans and we have shared experiences
we have shared interests
and we haven't heard from all these
putins and orbans
and trumps
we haven't heard any alternative idea
so what would you base a global order on
if not on these shared
experiences and interests
and values
and if you don't have any alternative suggestion
then
we need to go back
and re-establish on better foundations
the only offer on the table
which is the liberal global order
Well Yvonne, honestly it's been
yet again great to talk to you

[Transcript] The Rest Is Politics / 181. Israel, invasion, and the trap laid by Hamas

thanks for your time
I think even in such a horrific time
for you
your people
what you stand for, what you believe in
still able to try to articulate
some of the deeper things that are going on here
and why
these things are not always as simple as they seem
from a quick headline
a quick snapshot
I think your voice is really important in this whole debate
and power to your elbow in keeping going
thank you
you