

## Should Israel Welcome Glenn Beck's Support?

by Alan M. Dershowitz  
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All decent people, whether on the left or the right, should support Israel's right to exist as the democratic nation state of the Jewish people. All decent people should support Israel's right to defend its civilians from terrorist attacks. All reasonable people should favor a just peace that assures Israel's ability to thrive in a dangerous neighborhood and to defend its borders.

These issues should not divide decent people along ideological or political lines. Israel's existence and right to defend itself should be bipartisan issues, not only in the United States, but in all democratic countries of the world.

The reality, however, is very different. The Jewish state is demonized by the hard left in America, by virtually the entire left in much of Europe, and by most of the left and right in Ireland, Norway and Sweden. Its right to exist is denied by a high proportion of Arabs and Muslims, and most of the Arab and Muslim nations do not have diplomatic relations with Israel.

In many circles, anti-Zionism easily morphs into anti-Semitism, and in some countries Jews are afraid to walk the streets wearing any clothing or symbols that identify them as Jewish.

The general assembly of the United Nations has become the world's new *Der Sturmer*, whose podium hosts, and many of whose audience members cheer, virulent anti-Semites such as Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Defenders of Israel, even those critical of some of Israel's policies, are banned from speaking at universities, are attacked personally by the hard left media and are treated as pariahs by their academic colleagues.

It is against this sad and increasingly dangerous background that one must evaluate Glenn Beck's visit to Israel. I disagree with much of Beck's politics and with virtually all of his conspiracy theorizing. Yet I admire his courage in putting his body in the line of fire. I believe him when he says:

If the world goes down the road of dehumanizing Jews again, "then count me a Jew and come for me first."

At a time when old friends and allies who should be supporting the Jewish state are abandoning it in droves, Beck's willingness to stand up for Israel must be accepted with gratitude. I, for one, do not question his motives. I believe they are genuine. One need not

accept all of Beck's positions on Israel—and I certainly do not—in order to agree with him that support of Israel is one of the great moral issues of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Those who thoughtlessly attack Israel no matter what it does and thoughtlessly defend Israel's enemies regardless of what they do, are making peace far more difficult. They incentivize terrorism by Israel's enemies and disincentivizes compromise on all sides.

I will wait to hear precisely what Glenn Beck says during his visit to Israel before I evaluate it. Just as I feel free to criticize the Israeli government when I think it is wrong, I certainly feel free to criticize defenders of Israel when I think they are wrong. But I will not prejudge Beck until he is given a full opportunity to express his views.

I certainly admire Beck's decision to go to Israel far more than the decision of so many so-called artists and intellectuals who call for a boycott against the Jewish state without even bothering to go there and see for themselves. I welcome the support of religious Christians who love Israel for religious reasons. I abhor the ignorant and misguided efforts of other Christians, such as Jimmy Carter and Desmond Tutu, who misuse their faith against the Jewish state. I hope that more Christians will follow in Beck's footsteps and take the time to visit Israel. They will see Christianity thriving in Israel while at the same time being dismantled and destroyed in Lebanon, in Gaza, in Egypt, and in other areas in which Islamic fundamentalists have taken over. Christian religious sites are preserved in Jerusalem and other areas under Israeli control. When the Jordanian government controlled parts of Jerusalem, it destroyed many historic religious sites sacred to both Jews and Christians.

Nation states are entitled to engage in Realpolitik so long as they do so within the limits of acceptable morality. Realpolitik requires accepting support from, and sometimes giving support to, nations and people who are not in complete agreement over policies. Consider Nelson Mandela's alliances with some of most brutal dictatorships (Libya, Cuba, Syria) and supporters of terrorism (P.L.O., Iran) while he was engaged in his just struggle against the evils of apartheid. I do not recall the left condemning Mandela for doing what he had to do. But the same left was unforgiving in Israel when it was forced to make some strategic military deals with South Africa, while strongly opposing its apartheid policies. I do not mean to compare dictatorial, terrorist or apartheid regimes with Glenn Beck, only to make the point that the Jewish state is often subjected to a double standard when it comes to the support it receives or gives.

Many Israelis will welcome Glenn Beck's support. Some will oppose it. Others will wish his views were more consistent with their own. This is as it should be in a democracy. The fact is that Israel is the only country in the Middle East that would allow Glenn Beck to express his views, without censoring them or even knowing in advance what he was going to say. This too is as it should be in a democracy.