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OPINION EXCLUSIVE

If a Pulitzer Prize was handed out for the (unintentionally) funniest, stitch-inducing headline drafted by a "major" news organisation in 2024, then *The New York Times* – which craves such frivolous baubles – would win it without question.

On genocide, Trump will be no different from Biden

Here's the "award-winning" headline, published last week in the aftermath of US President-elect Donald Trump's diplomatic selections that, according to the Times, will "help shape President-elect Trump's strategy" on the Middle East.

"Trump's Middle East Picks Signal Staunch Pro-Israel Policy," the Times wrote.

It is just so comical, isn't it? An identical headline could have been recycled verbatim after every Democrat or Republican president-elect made public his "Middle East picks" since Israel's engineered inception in 1948.

My goodness. The headline's implicit suggestion is that, somehow, for some puzzling reason, there may have been a scintilla of doubt that Trump was not going to adopt a "Staunch Pro-Israel Policy" like all his deferential predecessors.

East is not necessarily a prerequisite in the White House or the State Department, when it comes to electing or appointing people to take carriage of America's "policy" or "strategy" for that troubled part of the world.

Do the discredited names George W Bush, Dick Cheney, Condoleezza Rice and the late Donald Rumsfeld and Colin Powell spring to anyone's mind – particularly at the complicit New York Times?

Lest we forget.

Predictably, Joe Biden and Antony Blinken followed the "shock and awe" gang's ruinous footprints by giving the indicted prime minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, all the money, arms, and "strategic" cover he required to commit genocide in Gaza and the occupied West Bank. Biden, Blinken and United Nations Ambassador Lin-



Donald Trump in the Oval Office of the White House on Oct. 08, 2019.
CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES

ator Marco Rubio and Representative Elise Stefanik

means the erasure of Gaza and the West Bank, then so be it — decency, human and civil rights conventions, and international law be damned. Beyond the rhetorical edges about a mythical "two-state solution", there is no "daylight" between Biden, Blinken, and Thomas-Greenfield and Trump, Rubio, Huckabee and Stefanik concerning the "future" of the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. They have no "future".

Biden, Blinken, and Thomas-Greenfield have permitted Israel to do to Gaza and the West Bank what Trump, Rubio, Huckabee and Stefanik have long hoped to do to Gaza and the West Bank – turn what remains of Palestinian land into dust and memory by, if need be, lethal and indiscriminate force.

Trump, Rubio, Huckabee and Stefanik represent the slightly more blunt and profane continuum of America's defining "kill first, think later" attitude towards the Middle East.

That is why Democrats' and the cognoscenti's fuming "outrage" over Trump's "scandalous" cabinet and other high-profile administration choices has been largely reserved – surprise, surprise – for his "controversial" picks for attorney general and defence secretary.

The methodical, more than yearlong destruction of Gaza and the West Bank is stale news.

Biden, Blinken and Thomas-Greenfield gave Israel the "green light" to kill as many Palestinians as it wants to for as long as it wants to and Trump, Rubio, Huckabee and Stefanik will do precisely the same.

On genocide: the new White House gang is the same as the old White House gang.

Hold on. There's still hope. The Arab leaders (pawns) who met with Trump towards the end of the campaign – in rebuff of Kamala Harris – have sent him a letter asking the president-elect "to apply [his] political influence in demanding an immediate ceasefire in Lebanon and Palestine" with a view towards negotiating "a lasting peace". Of course, a letter – assuming Trump bothers to read it – is bound to change Washington's ingrained view that Palestinians are always the perpetrators and never the victims, and that their lives are as disposable as they are inconsequential.

Yes, a pretty-please-worded letter should finally do the elusive trick.

The article first appeared on Al Jazeera.



A man kisses the body of one of three children as they are carried for burial in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip, on Nov. 21, 2024. Seven-year-old Hamza, his five-year-old brother Abdelaziz, and his four-year-old sister Laila Hassan were among 9 people killed by an Israeli strike in Khan Younis on Wednesday.
ABDEL KAREEM HANA/AP

Sure, Trump played nice-nicey with a bunch of gullible Arab "leaders" (pawns) in swing-state Michigan during the presidential election campaign to curry fleeting favour with a "community" he would immediately abandon once he scored 270 electoral votes.

The headline's second underlying inference is that any US president-elect – Democrat or Republican – would consider, let alone be capable of, embracing anything other than a "Staunch Pro-Israel Policy".

Finally, and perhaps most absurdly, in its ongoing and signature efforts to normalise a fascist president-elect, the Times's uproarious headline and sub-headline imply that Trump, who will soon occupy the Oval Office for a second time, has a nuanced understanding of the Middle East that will translate into a well-defined "policy" and "strategy" for the region.

My goodness – the sequel. This may be a revelation to the Times, but I don't think that Trump can even distinguish between Iran and Iraq on a map.

But, as we know, a nuanced understanding of the Middle

da Thomas-Greenfield have pursued the same "kill first, think later" "policy" or "strategy" – take your pick – that the "shock and awe" gang employed with such disastrous and inhumane consequences.

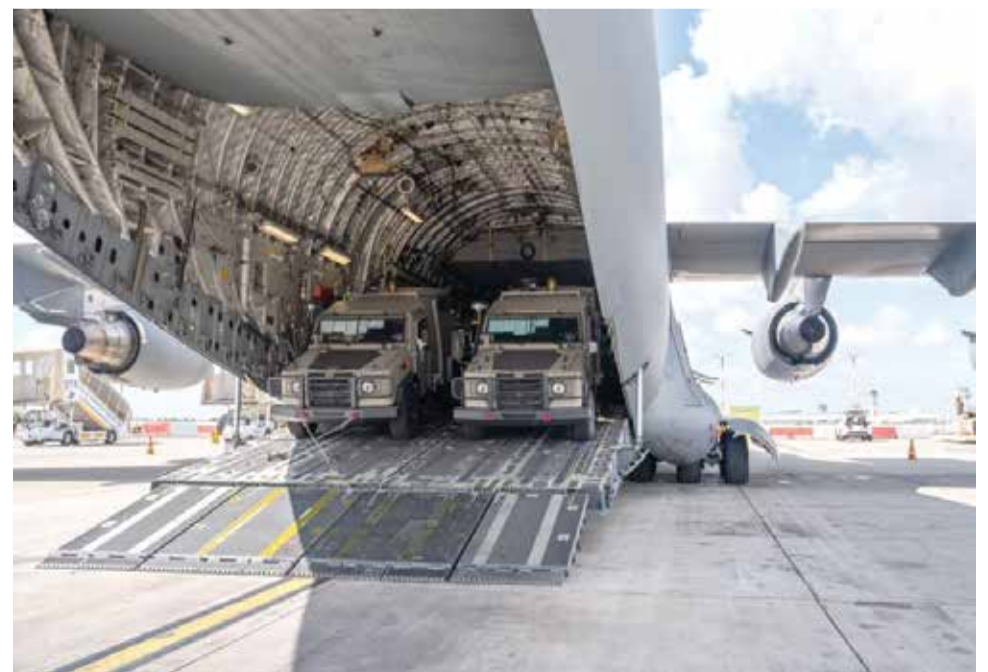
You would have reasonably thought that the calamitous invasion of Iraq would have given Biden, Blinken and Thomas-Greenfield pause. You would be wrong.

Instead, true to "kill first, think later" form, Biden, Blinken and Thomas-Greenfield have enabled a genocide – that has already claimed the lives of more than 43,000 Palestinians, mostly children and women – with the patina of faux seriousness that Trump and halting company lack and that is so valued by the learned cognoscenti at the Times, CNN and MSNBC. So, why anyone, anywhere, would be "shocked" that Trump has chosen an evangelical Christian and wannabe rampaging Israeli settler, Mike Huckabee, to be America's next ambassador to Israel is a silly mystery to me.

Why anyone, anywhere would be "shocked" that pro-Israel zealots like Sen-

would be appointed secretary of state and UN ambassador respectively is also a silly mystery to me.

Like Biden, Blinken, and Thomas-Greenfield, Trump, Rubio, Huckabee and Stefanik believe that Israel enjoys the absolute, uncontested "right to defend itself". If that



American armored SUVs carried to Israel are seen on a military plane in an airport in Tel Aviv, Israel on October 19, 2023.



Trump has picked 'staunchly pro-Israel' cadres for his administration, just like all other US presidents of the past 75 years.