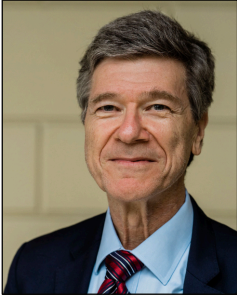


This illegal US-Israeli attack on Iran is also an assault on the United Nations

by Jeffrey D. Sachs* & Sybil Fares**



Jeffrey D. Sachs (Picture Gabriella C. Marino)

Let us be clear about what the United States and Israel are pursuing. The US objective is not the security of the American people. The objective is global hegemony. The attempt is to destroy the UN and the international rule of law – an attempt that will fail.



Sybil Fares. (Picture www.laprogressive.com)

On 16 February 2026, one of us (Jeffrey Sachs) sent a letter to the UN Security Council warning that the United States was on the verge of tearing up the United Nations Charter. That warning has now come to pass. The United States and Israel have launched an unprovoked war against Iran in flagrant violation of Article 2(4) of the Charter, without authorization from the Security Council, and without any legitimate claim of self-defence under Article 51. They are trying to kill the UN Charter and the international rule of law, but they will fail.

At the *Security Council*¹ on 28 February 2026, the US and its allies directed their condemnation not at the American and Israeli aggression, but at Iran. One US ally after the next condemned Iran for its retaliatory attacks yet absurdly failed to condemn the illegal and unprovoked US-Israeli attack on Iran. This performance by these countries was disgraceful and turned reality completely upside down.

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View from Roosevelt Island to the UN headquarters in New York. (Picture Wikipedia)

The joint US-Israeli attacks were described by Trump as necessary because Iran “rejected every opportunity to renounce their nuclear ambitions, and we can’t take it anymore”. This is of course a flat lie. As the letter of 16 February recounted, Iran agreed a decade ago to a nuclear deal, the *Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action*² (JCPOA) that was adopted by the UN Security Council in Resolution 2231. It was Trump who ripped up the agreement in 2018. In June 2025, Israel bombed Iran in the midst of US-Iran negotiations. This time too, the Israel-US war plans were set weeks ago when Netanyahu met with Trump, and the negotiations underway between the US and Iran were a charade. This seems to be the new modus operandi of the US: start negotiations and then aim to murder the counterparts.

It is easy to understand why the US allies behave in the embarrassing and self-abasing way they did at the UN Security Council. In addition to the United States, eight of the other fourteen Council members host US military bases or grant the US military access to local bases: Bahrain, Colombia, Denmark, France, Greece, Latvia, Panama, and the United Kingdom. These countries are not fully sovereign. They are partially governed by the US. The US military bases house CIA operations, and the host countries constantly look over their shoulder to try to avoid US subversion in their own countries.

As Henry Kissinger famously said, “It may be dangerous to be America’s enemy, but to be its friend is fatal”. We can add that to host US military bases and CIA operations is to turn your country into a vassal state.

As an absurd but telling example, the Danish ambassador parroted every US talking point, pointing her finger at Iran for its aggression as if Iran had not been attacked by the US and Israel. She completely forgot that such humiliating vassalage to the US will not play well for Denmark if the US occupies Greenland.

The truthful voices at the Security Council came from the countries not occupied by the United States. Russia explained correctly that the so-called West (that is, the countries occupied by the US) is engaged in victim-blaming when it points its finger at Iran. China reminded the Council that the crisis began with the US and Israeli attacks on Iran, not with Iran's retaliation. Somalia's ambassador, speaking on behalf of several African member states, truthfully portrayed the source of this recent escalation. The UN Representative of the League of Arab States spoke brilliantly about the root cause of Israel's mad aggression: the denial of rights to Palestinian people, and Israel's use of mass murder and regional war to prevent the emergence of a State of Palestine.

When Iran retaliates against US military bases in the Gulf, it is exercising its inherent right of self-defence under Article 51 of the Charter. We must remember that the US and Israel are openly and repeatedly assassinating Iran's leaders, with the aim of overthrowing its government. When states murder a foreign head of state and attempt to destroy the government, the target of those threats is entitled under *international law*³ to defend itself.

The US-Israeli bombing murdered not only Iran's Supreme Leader and several top government officials, but also more than 140 young girls in their school in Minab. These young *children*⁴ are the victims of a horrific war crime. The countries today that gave a pass to the United States and Israel for these killings – notably Denmark, France, Latvia, the United Kingdom, and of course the US – are also complicit in this war crime.

This UN Security Council emergency meeting will likely be remembered as the day the United Nations ceased to function from its headquarters on American soil. An international organization dedicated to the peaceful settlement of disputes cannot credibly operate from a country that wages illegal wars, threatens member states with annihilation, and treats UN Security Council resolutions as disposable instruments

of convenience. For the UN to survive, and we need it to survive, it will need several homes around the world – in Brazil, China, India, South Africa, and others – honouring the true multipolarity of our world.

Let us be clear about what the United States and Israel are pursuing. The US objective is not the security of the American people. The objective is global hegemony. The attempt is to destroy the UN and the international rule of law – an attempt that will fail. Israel's objective is to establish a Greater Israel, destroy the Palestinian people, and assert its hegemony over hundreds of millions of Arabs across the Middle East (from the Nile to the Euphrates, as US Ambassador Mike Huckabee recently *asserted*⁵).

The United States' delusional efforts at global hegemony are proceeding region by region. The US has recently claimed, in a wholly twisted supposed revival of the *Monroe Doctrine*, that it controls the Western Hemisphere and can dictate how Latin American countries conduct their economic and political affairs. The US kidnapped the sitting Venezuelan president to prove the point, and it now threatens to overthrow the Cuban government as well.

Today's war against Iran aims to prove that the US similarly owns the Middle East. The war is part of a 30-year campaign, initiated by the *Clean Break*⁶ doctrine, to overthrow all governments that oppose US and Israeli hegemony in the region. Those joint Israel-US wars have included the genocide in Gaza, the occupation of the West Bank and the decades of wars and regime-change operations in Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen.

One part of the US global plan is to commandeer the world's oil exports and to weaken China and Russia in the process. The US seizure of Venezuela was designed to ensure American control of that country's oil exports, especially to control the flow of oil to China. US *sanctions*⁷ on Russia aim to prevent Russian oil from reaching India and China. Now the US aims to stop the flow of Iran's oil to China. More broadly, the US aims to control the entire Gulf region plus Iran to maintain its imperial dominance.

The international order that *Franklin* and *Eleanor Roosevelt* helped to build after the catastrophe of WWII was founded on a simple and profound idea – that law and respect, not force, should govern relations among states. That idea is now being destroyed by the very nation that

did most to promote it in founding the UN. The irony is bitter beyond measure.

The truth is that the devastation of the war will not directly affect the so-called West: their children will not suffer traumas or death, and their countries will not be set ablaze. The victims of this attack are the people of the Middle East. They are the expendable ones who suffer from Western arrogance, abuse of power, and addiction to war.

We close with two observations. First, the United States will not achieve global hegemony or kill the UN. The world is too large, too diverse, and too determined to resist domination by any single power, much less one with 4 percent of the world's population. The world outside of the US and the countries it occupies want the UN to live and thrive. The US attempt will surely fail, but it may cause immense suffering before it does.

Second, if Israel continues its addiction to war and occupation, it too will not survive. That addiction represents a mix of theocracy and post-traumatic stress. Part of Israel believes that it is the biblical kingdom of the 5th century BC. The other part lives in the traumatic memory of the Holocaust, and so is determined to kill any perceived adversary rather than learn to live together with it in peace. The Israeli Ambassador's twisted defense of Israel's brazen attack on Iran, as usual, cited the Bible and Auschwitz as the two justifications. These are Israel's two perennial references, but not the real world of today.

A state that depends on permanent war, permanent occupation and slaughter of the

Palestinians,⁸ and the indefinite subjugation of millions of people has no viable future, and the policies that the United States is now pursuing on Israel's behalf will accelerate rather than prevent that outcome.

The two-state solution, which the Council has endorsed repeatedly, offers Israel a path to peace. Tragically Israel rejects that. The result, eventually, will be the end of Israel itself in its current form, especially as the US population is rapidly turning against Israel's violent theocracy and towards the cause of Palestine. Perhaps there will be one democratic state for both Arabs and Jews living in peace, together, with an end of apartheid rule.

These are harsh truths, but emergencies demand honesty. The UN is being murdered by Israel and the United States. The Security Council must rouse itself from their military occupation by the US, and remember that they are the stewards of the UN Charter's promise to maintain international peace and security.

Source: <https://www.commondreams.org/opinion/united-nations-israel-us-attack-iran>, 2 March 2026

¹ <https://www.un.org/en/middle-east-live-un-security-council-meeting-emergency-session-over-iran>

² <https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/2231/background>

³ <https://www.commondreams.org/tag/international-law>

⁴ <https://www.commondreams.org/tag/children>

⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XS7itdfgNnU>

⁶ https://www.dougfeith.com/docs/Clean_Break.pdf

⁷ <https://www.commondreams.org/tag/sanctions>

⁸ <https://www.commondreams.org/tag/palestinians>