

Reut Institute

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London as a Case Study

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Report Author(s): Reut Institute

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Chapter 1:

London: The 'Hub of Hubs' of the Delegitimization Network

Introduction to the Delegitimization Network

35. **In the Political Firewall document, Reut showed that Israel's delegitimizers are organized as a network** (see Chapter 3, pp. 42-44). In this respect, they are no different from many other systems, in areas as diverse as biology, economics, terrorism, and the internet, that are also organized as networks and operate according to similar principles.

In a nutshell, they operate within a flat and non-hierarchical structure without a command-and-control center **and are diverse and highly resilient.** Their actors possess independence of action.

In other words, **the assault on Israel's legitimacy is *not* the outcome of a 'headquarters-based conspiracy.'** Rather, **Israel's delegitimization is driven by a network** that shares a common logic; promotes common strategies, campaigns, and agendas; and often explicitly cooperates through key global activists and mechanisms.

36. **Networks revolve around hubs; similarly the Delegitimization Network's strength is concentrated in a handful of geographic locations.** Hubs are nodes of the network that have extraordinary influence on the entire network as a consequence of their vast array of connections to other nodes. Hubs are crucial to the network's character, viability, and resilience.¹⁰

The hubs of the Delegitimization Network are metropolitan areas. They have extraordinary global influence because of their exceptional interconnectedness to the rest of the world and their unique cultural and intellectual aura. In addition, they house a concentration of delegitimizers. These hubs **include London, as well as the San Francisco Bay Area, Brussels, Madrid, Toronto, and Johannesburg.**

37. **Catalysts drive networks: They are few, usually tightly interconnected, and able to significantly influence on the network** – 'Catalysts' are nodes of the network dedicated to its development and possessing the status and capacities to do so. Catalysts operate by collecting information and disseminating it; developing the ideology of the network and its *modus operandi*; harnessing new

¹⁰ See Albert-László Barabási, **Linked: The New Science of Networks**; Malcolm Gladwell, **The Tipping Point: How Little Things can make a Big Difference**. Doug Simpson, **Unintended Consequences, Reading Barabási, Linked the Science of Networks**. Joshua Cooper Ramo, **The Age of the Unthinkable**, p.236.

nodes; educating, training, and debriefing; protecting the network; and branding and publicizing it.

What makes London the 'hub-of-hubs' of Israel's delegitimization?

38. **London figures prominently among the hubs of the Delegitimization Network as a domicile of exceptionally high anti-Israeli activity with significant global weight.** Britain's geography, history, and language factor among the elements that have combined to render it a delegitimization hub of such significance. Additional factors include its:

- **Media concentration** – London is home to many media outlets of renowned international repute such as the *Economist*, *Financial Times*, BBC, and the *Guardian*, which are increasingly influential among opinion leaders in the U.S. Furthermore, it hosts several influential Arab-language newspapers, such as *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, *al-Hayat*, and *Al-Quds al-Arabi*.¹¹
- **Academic influence** – Several highly respected universities – such as Oxford, Cambridge, and London School of Economics – are based in the UK. Additionally, the country hosts thousands of foreign students, many of whom often become prominent figures in their countries of origin.
- **Disproportionate diplomatic weight** – Britain maintains close ties with Commonwealth countries and the EU, and enjoys a 'special' transatlantic relationship with the U.S. It also holds a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.
- **Central for NGOs** – The UK houses the headquarters of many human-rights organizations, such as Amnesty; development and humanitarian agencies, such as Oxfam; peace and security organizations, such as the Oxford Research Group; and politicized solidarity groups, such as Palestine Solidarity Campaign.

The Catalysts: The emergence of the Red-Green Alliance

39. **The Red-Green Alliance: In recent years, UK-based Islamists and radical left elements have been collaborating to promote Israel's delegitimization.** Until a few years ago, the two systems that were delegitimizing Israel – the Islamic and Arab Resistance Network and the primarily European Delegitimization Network – were operating independently of each other as two ideologically divergent human networks.

¹¹ Reports suggest that the BBC, as well as the *Guardian* and *Financial Times*, now rank among the most widely read media outlets in the U.S.

However, **in recent years, the two groups have become an 'organic' network of actors**, mobilized by a shared vision, mission, and purpose.¹²

Their collaboration is of strategic concern to Israel. For example: While Iran and Hamas build military capabilities in Gaza and espouse a radical ideology that negates Israel's right to exist, the Delegitimization Network legitimizes the Hamas regime and works to tie Israel's hands militarily.

40. **Despite the marginal political standing of the Red-Green Alliance, it has achieved significant global impact by enlisting support from the European and North American liberal progressive elite circles.**

41. **The key strategy: Blurring the lines between criticism of Israel and its delegitimization** along the following guidelines:

- **Posing as espousing liberal values** and putting forward a façade of promoting an agenda of human rights, justice, peace, and international law.
- **Essentialism** – Juxtaposing vigorous denunciation of particular policies with outright repudiation of Israel or Zionism, with the aim of conflating the two and ultimately undermining the moral basis of Israel's sovereign existence.
- **Demonization: Israel = Apartheid, Nazism** – Accusing Israel of the most heinous human-rights violations denies the moral legitimacy of its existence and suggests it should be dismantled.¹³ Examples include associations with apartheid and accusations of blatant acts of evil.
- **The BDS Movement** – The BDS Movement claims to be an apolitical movement that serves global peace, human rights, and international justice by promoting boycotts, divestment, and sanctions against Israel in order to 'correct its ways.' While some BDS activists may be driven by these goals, the movement's leaders are explicit about their true intentions. In effect, the BDS Movement advances the assault on Israel's legitimacy by consistently singling it out, seeking to undermine Israeli-Palestinian cooperation, promoting the 'right of return,' and comparing Israel with apartheid. (See: [The BDS Movement Promotes Delegitimization against Israel.](#))
- **'Lawfare'** – Judicial assaults against Israel, its leaders, and officials in Western countries and by international organizations have steadily increased in recent years. 'Lawfare' catalysts promote a selective use of international

¹² For more on what facilitated cooperation between the two groups see Chris Harman, The Prophet and the Proletariat **International Socialism** Journal 64 1994.

¹³ Irwin Cotler, [National Post](#).

law, and their backgrounds and activities associate many with delegitimization-oriented activities.

Moreover, in many cases, 'lawfare' efforts are promoted or supported by the most flagrant violators of international and humanitarian laws – such as Islamists who find common cause with Hamas. (see Chapter 3).

- **Branding: Framing the actors as good vs. evil** – The ability to delegitimize Israel is rooted in efforts to brand it as an occupying and aggressive entity that ignores human rights and international law. Meanwhile, Hamas and Hezbollah have improved their image and brand, and are considered in many circles as modern-day resistance movements.
- **Making pro-Palestinian and anti-Israel activity trendy** – The delegitimization movement is linked with liberal, progressive causes, exemplified by the annual 'Queers against Israeli Apartheid' march that takes place in Toronto.¹⁴

¹⁴ See the Web site <http://queersagainstapartheid.org/>