

Unacceptable

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Following the September 11, 2001 atrocity one could barely see anyone demonstrating against terrorism. The one exception was after the March 11, 2004, train bombings in Madrid when millions took to the streets (yet, three days later the government fell and the terrorists won). Barring that exception it became evident that it was easier to get 1-2 million to march in the capitals of Europe and the U.S. against the war than to get 500 people to march against terrorism and the atrocities that represent it.

Therefore it came as little surprise that in addition to the typical Arab and Muslim "outrage," the usual suspects of so-called peace activists got together to show their selective anger at Israel's self-defense initiative against Hamas which they were quick to describe as "war crime." One of the "leaders" of such anti-Israel activities is the singer (who until a week ago I admittedly did not know she existed) Annie Lennox (who actually was once married to an Israeli). She got up one day and saw on TV what was happening in Gaza and was so moved as to express her outrage at Israel. One might ask why wasn't she moved in the last eight years when Hamas lobbed over 8,000 rockets at Israel. Perhaps she did not own a TV.

However, the field is finally not dominated by terrorist supporters any more. Recently massive pro-Israel demonstrations took place in London, New York, and Los Angeles with throngs of tens of thousands showing their own outrage at Hamas. Many rallied across the US and one such rally in Atlanta attracted about 2,500 Jews and non-Jews to show support for Israel clearly delivering the message that enough is enough. Yet a small group of pro-terrorists demonstrating at a distance held signs of V (for peace or for victory?) shouting "no justice no peace." They may have received their marching orders from Iran and their inspiration from Annie Lennox as their outrage is always one-sided.

A great deal of information is being provided on the Israeli operation and an even greater deal of commentary and spinning is available. It is important to state at the outset that it is deeply regrettable that innocent civilians become victims to circumstances over which they have little control. No one in the world more than the Israelis themselves wishes that Israel could do the current operation without any such victims. Certainly not Hamas: for them every such victim is considered a victory. But counting victims does little to explain the complexity of the situation. There are three components to this conflict that are unacceptable and should be axiomatically viewed as such.

First, the sense of victimization that Palestinians have adopted. They have elevated victimhood to an unprecedented level of pornographic art. Dr. Mustapha Barghouti ("General Secretary of the Palestinian National Initiative") stated in a TV interview this week that he has not seen anything as horrendous as in Gaza "except in the Warsaw Ghetto." Last week pro-terrorist

demonstrators near Jerusalem dressed up in Nazi concentration camp prisoner pajama-like uniform. What these two examples demonstrate is the incessant attempt by the Palestinians to play the role of the victim and by taking on the classic symbols of Nazi victimization of Jews they seek to replace Jews as the victims of the world. Regrettably it is important to mention that the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza strip are not concentration camp prisoners as Jews were during the holocaust. Jews were exterminated. The Palestinians are a threat to those around them and measures of self-defense have to be taken against this threat. The Gaza strip is by no means the Warsaw Ghetto as citizens there - even with the Hamas government - have an option to live freely should they relinquish terrorism and they are not candidates for extinction as were Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto. While symbols play an extremely important role it needs to be understood that the Palestinian refugee problem is the only one that is still perpetuated by a special UN organization and the Arabs; it is of their own doing without any attempt in sight to truly resolve it to the benefit and welfare of the refugees. This is unacceptable.

Second, terrorists feel an entitlement to murder with immunity. Last week a pro-terrorist demonstrator shouted in Ft. Lauderdale: "go back to the ovens" and "nuke Israel." It is assumed that everyone knows what is to "nuke" a country but for the sake of those who think that "go back to the ovens" has something to do with a cooking class on a TV show they should be reminded that those ovens burned the victims who were gassed in Auschwitz. What this inciting cry signifies is that the terrorists and their supporters have adopted a mentality that murder is a right, indeed, an obligation. Their culture of death (whether it is their own people or their enemies) has evolved to such a level that when they are prevented from murdering they complain. Just look at the Hamas terrorist who was brought to a Gaza hospital: he was unable to understand why everyone was sad when they should be smiling since they are (or should become) martyrs. Nothing justifies this culture of death. It is unacceptable.

Third, a corollary to the culture of death and the entitlement to murder is simultaneously denying the intended victim the right for self-defense. That is why every time Israel embarks on a defensive operation it is hammered by the pro-terrorists as committing a "massacre." It is perfectly acceptable for the terrorist to commit such massacres but when someone rises against them in self-defense that becomes a "war-crime." The one time Israel enjoyed a brief moment of adoration was after the stunning victory over Egypt, Syria, and Jordan at the end of the Six Days War (1967). But when Israel is trying to fight terrorists who commit war crimes by hiding amongst civilians, using them as human shields, shooting at civilians and unequivocally declare their desire to destroy a member state of the United Nations, then Israel is charged with committing "war crimes" and acting "disproportionately." Time Magazine even argues in a cover story that "Israel can't win." Given it was wrong before (on the surge in Iraq; on operation defensive shield) it will be wrong again and Israel will win. But it is unacceptable for the terrorists, their supporters and particularly for those who comment from a distance (politicians, media) to deny Israel its right for self defense. Disproportional and all.

Time Magazine misguidedly suggests the truism that "peace not war is its only hope." How exactly will Israel achieve peace with those who aim to destroy it in what is obviously a non-negotiable conflict? Time Magazine is yet to pull that rabbit out of its hat. Israel has no choice but to win this operation and eradicate Gaza from the terrorists that rule it. Not because Israel needs to turn Gaza residents into ardent Zionists (that will not hurt) or because peace will come

if Israel will stop the operation, but because the end game in Gaza is far bigger than what meets the eye. Iran is building a noose around Israel's neck with Hizballah in Lebanon in the north, Syria in the northeast and Hamas in the southwest. This is in the hope of toppling the moderate Arab regimes such as Jordan and Egypt to complete its stronghold on Israel and eventually destroying it. Iran already threatened Hamas this week that if it accepts the Egyptian ceasefire proposal it will stop its funding.

Thus far the military operation seems to proceed well for Israel. It is even fair to say that support for the Israeli operation is out there in public opinion as well as government support (including from many Arabs) far more than is evident by only examining the plethora of Israel-bashing sources. The remaining critical question is whether Israel will be able to convert the military victory into a political one. Assuming a successful operation and a non-acquiescing political outcome Israel will do well to lead an international campaign to remove the refugee problem from the international agenda, condemn murderous terrorist acts as unacceptable and insist on the right for self-defense. It will be highly encouraging to see other countries that care about their future follow the Israeli example. Once accomplished, the next challenge will not be achieving peace but achieving an end to the conflict. Peace will surely come afterwards. Wouldn't Time magazine be happy then?

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