

## The self-righteous and the just

Although there are many Palestinians, Arabs, and non-Arabs of the Islamic world who would like to see all of Israel driven into the sea, this latter is not likely to happen -- not with the world's strongest military and most powerful economy supporting Israel's every turn of aggression through acts of benign neglect, unheeded presidential remonstrance, token diplomacy, and organized international summits far removed from the alley ways of the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. Thus, many pragmatic people are finding it difficult to understand why so many continue to applaud the suicide bombings of Israeli society. Do these bombing not simply provoke more Israeli raids and incursions?

Perhaps the answer is not so difficult.

To the best of my knowledge not many Israelis and Palestinians are Christian. Thus, turning the other cheek as a response to the other's slap in the face, is not a recipe for relief for either side. Even the President of the United States, a supposedly devout Christian, did not turn his cheek when Osama bin Laden and his Al Qaeda network attacked three of the United States most cherished symbols of power and wealth.

Those, who would claim that the struggle between Palestinians and Israelis is little more than an unending petty, but lethal and disruptive quarrel between two sides with equivalent claims, are sadly mistaken, though.

It was not the Palestinians who pushed the Israelis from their land, so that Palestine could form a state in the aftermath of World War II. Moreover, those who would have us believe that the Middle East struggle began more than two millennia ago are seeking to pull the wool over our eyes. Even Japan can do better when it comes to historical and cultural justification for its own infamous legacy in East Asia. All in all, it may be a very convincing story to the world's Jewish population, New York's financial community, and naïve members of the US Senate, but thankfully it has not won over the hearts and minds of the rest of the world.

It is obviously the case that many Palestinians are driven by hatred and the memory of their half century struggle against their Israeli oppressor. For these people a feeling of justice is likely never to be achieved. This means that we can expect the suicide bombings to continue, no matter what Israel does. Notwithstanding, these people are not a majority of the Palestinian nation, and their actions are only truly sustainable, in so far as the majority of Palestinians and the Islamic, especially Arabic world, remain sympathetic with their cause.

Palestine is not Afghanistan, nor is it Iraq or Iran, two of Palestine's suicide bombers' reportedly most ardent international supporters. Neither are the primary providers of asylum in Palestine a weak, corrupt, semi-national, governmental body with limited powers dependant on outsiders for its financial and economic survival; rather, they are an entire national public who feels that it has been deeply wronged, not only by Israel, but by the world community as a whole, the same community that the 'good'

President Bush would like to think himself the leader.

By removing the feeling of injustice among those who are angry -- namely, the Palestinian general public -- vengeance seeking terrorists will no longer have a place to hide and their numbers will dwindle from over exposure. Then and only then, will any government in Palestine, Palestinian or Israeli, have the ability to eliminate the terrorist threat from inside Palestine. Of course, this does not mean that the bombings will stop, because Israel has many enemies outside of Palestine who are motivated by other causes of grievance. Removing the pervading feeling of injustice in both Palestine and as a result the Islamic World however, would go a long way to reduce the current level of bombings. Of course, such a reduction cannot occur overnight, maybe not even in many months or several years! It takes time for the anger of an entire nation to subside.

In the end most people are sensible and will eventually come around, if only they can walk with pride and see their way into the future.

Holding the Palestinian Authority responsible for the terrorist acts of organized Palestinian civilians, may very well put pressure on Yasir Arafat to abdicate or reform, but in the end it is akin to holding the US government responsible for its failure to wipe out 1930's bootlegging during the Prohibition Era in the US. Widespread crime based upon widespread feelings of social injustice can only be eliminated by removing the widespread feelings of social injustice. The bootlegging stopped when alcohol was made legal, not when Al Capone was thrown into Alcatraz!

In other words, the wrong that needs to be righted before the terrorists go away is not the wrong that Palestinian terrorists are inflicting on "innocent" Israelis, rather it is the wrong that gave rise to all the wrongs on both sides that have followed in its wake -- the displacement of millions of Palestinians from their homeland.

If there is ever to be peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians, then we as a world community must keep in mind a basic tenet of common justice: either the wronged party is allowed to do something wrong in return for the bad that it has suffered, or the party that has wronged must do something good to compensate the wronged party for its injuries. To the best of my understanding the current Israel government has offered nothing to compensate Palestinians for their loss of land and property, nor does it ever intend to do so. Quite the contrary, it is now supervising the building of barbed wire fences around the property its forefathers stole! Israel does not want peace with Palestine; rather it wants to re-erect the barbed wire of Auschwitz and embarrass the entire democratic world with its own historic shame!

Give back the land you stole, Israel, or continue to bleed behind your own barbed wire! One does not have to be a Hamas, a Hezbollah, or an Al Aksa Martyr to build a suicide bomb!

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