

Confessions of a Middle East Ceasefire-ophrenic

By Roger L Simon

Let me begin with an understatement.

It will be an interesting time to be visiting Israel.

Sheryl and I will be arriving at Ben Gurion Airport in slightly more than a week. This trip was not planned to coincide with a putative ceasefire in Gaza, but for a variety of personal reasons, plus research for a novel I am writing.



This will mean,
should things
hold—always a
monumental if
—we will be in
country as the
hostages are
dribbled out of
their
horrendous,
inhuman
kidnapping by
an
incomprehensibl
y evil group of

torturing and raping sadists.

At the same time we will be there to witness hundreds—it's unclear how many hundreds, but that's a distinction without much of a difference—of terrorists from that same organization, a number of them convicted murderers, be freed to go back to Gaza.

Forget all debates about levels of recidivism. This time it's not a question of whether they will return to their terrorist ways, but when. In 2011, Yahya Sinwar was released in a similar uneven exchange, 1,027 Palestinian and Israeli Arab prisoners for one Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit. We all know what the late Mr. Sinwar did.

Nevertheless, being what I hope is a relatively normal person, I, and I assume almost all readers, can only but rejoice at the liberation of however many hostages of whatever ages may emerge alive from Hamas Hell. Understanding the nightmare they and their families have gone through in the last 467 days is impossible unless you have experienced it yourself but multiply what you imagine by a hundred and you might be in the neighborhood.

For months many have been talking of the Reagan-Carter election when Reagan's victory over the incompetent Carter precipitated the release of the hostages in Iran. Would a Donald Trump victory over Joe Biden or Kamala Harris do the same?

As they say, history doesn't always repeat but it rhymes. Donald Trump had only to threaten all Hell breaking loose and voilà Middle East peace in our time... at least so far, hence the rhyme.

Right on schedule, as opera bouffe if you were willing to have a sense of humor in this situation, Joe Biden appeared with the vice-president he evidently despises and his feckless Secretary of State Antony Blinken to claim credit for what he and his administration had been unable to accomplish in over a year.

Actually, as even Blinken admitted, they impeded a solution by restricting arms to Israel and making that public, a constraint that Hamas seized on and only made the terrorists more intransigent and prolonged the war. Further, they kept

trying to dissuade Israel from taking actions the Jewish state ultimately did that turned out to be successful, like the attacks on Hezbollah and on Iran itself.

Even some of the blame for the horrifying global rise in antisemitism must go to the Biden Administration whose continued, almost entirely unfair and self-serving, remonstrations of the Israelis for not being careful enough of Gaza civilians or of preventing food distribution to them (when Hamas itself was at fault) gave credence to a worldwide trend that shows no sign of abating from the International Criminal Court to virulently antisemitic statements from the leaders of countries like Ireland and Spain.

The Biden Administration had set the table for this, doing next to nothing to oppose the antisemitism all across American academia or the endless “river to the sea” demonstrations in our streets..

It is only now that I am beginning to put together the degree Biden (or whoever acts in his behalf) has contributed to the greatest rise in antisemitism since the Nazi era, something I grew up in my naivety thinking would never be repeated.

The only explanation for Biden’s schizophrenic behavior regarding Israel that makes sense is votes in Michigan that never materialized. How pathetic is that!

Thank God or G-d another administration will be in place in less than a week. President Trump’s foreign affairs team—Marco Rubio (Secretary of State), Pete Hegseth (Secretary of Defense) and Mike Waltz (National Security)—all have advocated in confirmation testimony and elsewhere for the complete destruction of Hamas. The war is not over until that is done.

It should therefore be no surprise I remain extremely worried, as are so many. This ceasefire, no matter what its terms, only gives Hamas the opportunity to live again to rape, murder and pillage. They’re already dancing in the streets of Khan Yunis,

firing victory guns in the air.

This is a Seventh Century misogynist war culture in a battle with modernity that has been going on for centuries under different labels. The idea that putting an end to it can come from negotiated documents between gentlemen and gentleladies is difficult to accept or even imagine. Supposedly advanced Western Europe was unable to do that after World War I. It took a second brutal war the likes of which the world has never seen to bring what seemed to be an enduring peace... and then.... For the Middle East it will be yet more complicated.

If most of us realize that, we can assume that President Trump and his associates also do. I'm glad he said all Hell would break loose if the hostages were not returned and I'm glad he's getting some response.

How much will it be ultimately—or even in two weeks? That is the question. My best guess at this moment is that sooner or later, probably not that long, President Trump will have to make good on his threat of releasing all Hell.

But, as I noted at the outset, I am, like many apparently, a ceasefire-ophrenic. I reserve my right, as they say, to amend and extend, and well may do so, when in Israel.

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