

Israel-Hamas War Offers Democrats an Opportunity to Purge Party of Anti-American Extremists



President Franklin Delano Roosevelt delivers his 'Day of Infamy' speech to Congress on December 8, 1941.

by Conrad Black

Along with the horrors of the Israel-Hamas war, there are opportunities. First, Israel has the provocation and the right in traditional international law to exterminate the military and terrorist potential of Hamas. This is the same right asserted by President Roosevelt in his war message on the day after the attack on Pearl Harbor, December 8, 1941: "We will make very certain that this form of treachery never again

endangers us.”

Churchill, also speaking to the Congress, on December 26, 1941, delivered a similar message when he said of the Japanese: “Do they not realize that we will never cease to persevere against them until they have been taught a lesson which they and the world will never forget?” America thereafter possessed sufficient deterrent force that no country directly initiated hostilities with it again. The American policy of what was called in the Eisenhower era “Massive Retaliation” convinced other countries of the inadvisability of a direct attack on the United States or its close allies.

Almost exactly 60 years later came the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington for which no national government admitted responsibility and President George W. Bush, on the night of September 11, 2001, said that the United States and its allies would “tear up the terrorist networks ... and make no distinction between terrorists and states who assist terrorists.” Those elements in the world who desperately wanted to attack the United States violently and without notice had to descend to anonymous terrorist attacks, the equivalent in international affairs of a drive-by shooting or an anonymously planted bomb in a public place.

It is not the least of the current ironies that Hamas and Hezbollah achieved the positions in Gaza and in Lebanon that have enabled them to engage in countless acts of terror, particularly against Israel, because of elections held in those areas at the insistence of the second Bush administration, as part of the enactment of the view of the second President Bush that democratically-elected governments did not initiate wars.

The president’s advisors were inexcusably unaware of the phenomenon, which had been demonstrated in Algeria and elsewhere, that populations in volatile countries sometimes

democratically elect political movements that promise to abolish democracy, and generally, unlike many political parties that are victorious in democratic systems, they fulfill their promises to abolish democracy.

To the extent that it can be done, a strenuous effort should be made to achieve and stabilize a bipartisan consensus on the most pressing foreign and strategic policy questions: Israel and Ukraine. Notwithstanding that the administration and the terribly deficient former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Mark Milley, persuaded the administration that Russia would overrun all of Ukraine within a couple of weeks and the capital of Kyiv within three days, the administration and most of the NATO countries responded with commendable swiftness and generosity when they saw that the Ukrainian resistance was real and determined and would not soon or easily be overcome.

On this issue the Democrats have a much better handle on the American and Alliance legitimate self-interest than those Republican office-holders and commentators who have been gulled by the Paleoconservative isolationists. If the Western Alliance had not reacted to the invasion of Ukraine and if Russia had effectively reintegrated that country into Russia, it would have been correctly represented by the Russian and Chinese leaders and understood by the world to be the exposure of the pitiful weakness of the Western Alliance.

Professions of friendship and support from NATO would have been exposed as completely worthless and Russia would have retrieved the largest single component in the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and taken a giant step in reversing the greatest and most bloodless strategic victory in the history of the nation-state, which the Western Alliance gained with the collapse of the USSR and of international communism at the end of the Cold War.

It is perverse and obtuse for isolationist critics not to

recognize that the dedication of 5 percent of the American defense budget without the loss of a single American life is a small price to pay to inflict the humiliation upon Russia that Ukraine has achieved and to run down Russia's military strength and national morale and prestige as this appalling fiasco in Ukraine has done. Yet what is needed now is not breezy remarks about "whatever it takes," but an exit strategy.

Accounts that have surfaced recently proclaiming that Ukraine is losing the war are nonsense, but if Ukraine is not really capable of removing Russia from the entrenched positions it has staked out, it is time for durable peace along those boundaries with this accretion of territory to Russia accepted and the resulting frontiers of Ukraine unconditionally guaranteed by Russia and its allies and all of NATO.

For six months. after a cease-fire more or less in place, all those in the former Ukraine including Crimea should be free to choose between living in Russia or Ukraine. The large military budgets being poured into that war could be turned into humanitarian assistance. Ukraine would be eligible to join the European Union when it met its criteria but would cooperate with NATO, and be guaranteed by NATO, yet not join NATO.

With Israel, it is less complicated for Americans to be overtly pro-Israel as a strategic matter, and the Republicans can heavily reinforce a bipartisan consensus. Yet the Democratic Party is hoisted on the horns of a dilemma that it has tried unsuccessfully to finesse. In order to maintain a united front against President Trump, the Democrats overlooked the orgy of rioting, supposedly caused by the death of George Floyd, in 2020, and gave the anti-American nihilists a virtual blank check to conduct their "mainly peaceful demonstrations" that killed dozens of people and caused billions of dollars of damage.

In pretending that any enterprise recognizable as the

Democratic Party could be the home of the Black Lives Matter movement, an infestation of racists, tax cheats, and misguided Republicans like Senator Romney, and the militant anti-Semites who portray the murder, subjugation, or expulsion of the Jews from Israel as an authentic solution and equitable recognition of Palestine, the Democratic leadership has invited the impasse that has now come.

Twenty to thirty percent of Democratic support, including the faction led by Senator Sanders, are woke anti-American extremists who think all talk of liberty and the inalienable rights of man is just a smokescreen for white oppression and capitalist exploitation, and if these elements are not effectively read out of the Democratic Party, as appears finally possibly to happen to the unspeakable Jew-baiting Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib, the Democrats will be unelectable.

If they take this morally uplifting and practically necessary step, they will probably still be unelectable, but at least they will have resurrected their party as an honorable enterprise and purged it of those who would taint the party of FDR, Truman, Stevenson, JFK, and LBJ, with racism, terrorism, and even the unutterable odium of genocide.

First published in the [New York Sun](#).