

Reasons for Great Hope Start To Appear in the Mideast After 75 Years of Multilateral Hypocrisy

By Conrad Black



Israel's Iron Dome air defense system fires to intercept rockets that were launched from Lebanon, as seen from Haifa, September 23, 2024. AP/Baz Ratner

Gruesome though war always is, there are in the current Middle Eastern conflict reasons for great hope for dramatic progress in what has for 75 years been an

intractable problem aggravated by multilateral hypocrisy. Almost the entire current peace process is a fraud: meaningless posturing of no relevance to the geopolitical facts.

The sequence of events that culminated in the unspeakable crime of the Hamas invasion of Israel nearly a year ago has been an aggregation of acts and policies of utter hypocrisy until there was no alternative but the radical solution now being imposed by the defense and intelligence forces of Israel.

The hypocrisy has been universal. Egypt ignored for many years the massive importation of arms and war supplies to Hamas through tunnels under the Philadelphi crossing. The government of Egypt and its officials were simply bribed to ignore its promise and its mandate to assure that the Gaza-Egypt crossing was not used for the importation of weapons and war supplies.

By doing nothing to moderate the arming of Hamas, Egypt avoided frictions with radical Arabs, enriched itself, and attempted to maintain civil relations with Israel by professing neutrality and goodwill in trying to mediate a cease-fire. It is all a sham, and Egypt's economy, including tourism, is disintegrating and the failure of the Egyptian government to institute economic reforms will soon bring it under intense pressure. The Muslim Brotherhood bungled its opportunity at government between 2011 and 2013; we cannot risk them doing so again.

Qatar's hypocrisy is even more brazen. It has materially supported Hamas and sheltered its leaders for years. It has ignored the sanctions that it is supposedly upholding and its television service, Al Jazeera, is simply the mouthpiece of Hamas. Qatar also goes through the charade of pretended neutrality and good-faith mediation but it is paying Danegeld to the Hamas terrorists while implausibly masquerading as an agent for conciliation.

The hypocrisy of Hamas itself is naturally the most egregious of all the protagonists. They appear to have been ordered by Iran to disrupt the Israeli-Saudi Arabian settlement negotiations and did so while apparently confident that hostilities would soon be de-escalated as so often in the past by demanding the release of a huge number of their cadres in Israeli detention in exchange for another limited, comparative peace.

It is not clear if the thugs they sent into Israel on October 7 exceeded their remit in the hideous barbarity of their

actions or if this was part of the Iranian instruction to its terrorist puppets. All participants knew that the subsequent peace talks were a fraud.

Hamas dictated terms as if it was victorious: release of thousands of their terrorists, complete Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, guarantee of the survival of the new Hamas leader (whose predecessor Israel had killed at the Iranian government VIP guest house in Tehran), a return to the status quo ante – with Hamas tyrannizing Gaza and provoking Israel whenever it wished, while Israel recognized Hamas as a legitimate nation-state.

This hardly reflected the facts on the ground, which are that 80 percent of Hamas terrorists have been killed and Israel promises to eliminate the rest. Hamas apparently expected that Hezbollah and the Houthis and even Iran would join them in war with Israel. Despite professions of enthusiasm to die, Hamas' "brothers" have been reticent.

The American government has also been steeped in hypocrisy and has sponsored a cease-fire which would include Israel handing over the Philadelphi corridor to Hamas and withdrawing entirely from Gaza. The Biden-Harris formula that "Israel has a right to defend itself" means that it has a right to expel invaders but not to retaliate with the level of force that would seriously deter future aggression.

The American administration is happy to sacrifice the lives of untold thousands of Israelis in the future for a sprinkling of Islamist votes in Michigan in the November election. Three-quarters of the world's political problems would be resolved if the United States ceased to be a weak super power; the world awaits the result of the American presidential election.

The government of Israel has not entirely escaped the contagion of hypocrisy either. It has sensibly concluded that Hamas must be destroyed as a terrorist force, but they have

been less than candid in acknowledging the likely human cost of this escalation.

It is a myth that this is a Netanyahu policy only –even his domestic opponents acknowledge that Hamas has to be destroyed. The prime minister is not so easily excused for his past policy of also paying Danegeld to Hamas, to prevent the Palestine Authority from being able to found a state.

Israel issued up to 20,000 work permits to Gaza and facilitated the transfer of large amounts of cash from Qatar to Hamas. Mr. Netanyahu plays the Churchillian role well now but that does not entirely whitewash his former performance as a covert appeaser.

Naturally, the summit of hypocrisy has probably been scaled by the United Nations, which has knowingly and generously funded Hamas for many years. UN hospitals and schools and other buildings have been allowed to be used as shields for Hamas to build tunnels and violate all agreements to pursue peace, while UN personnel have actively collaborated with Hamas in its terrorist barbarities.

Practically all of the United Nations employees in Gaza are Hamas nominees, and United Nations ambulances are routinely used to shuttle Hamas military personnel about. The United Nations is entirely complicit in the Hamas practice of expropriating all aid of any kind that is sent to Gaza while supporting false claims that Israel is trying to starve the population. The United Nations largely funds Hamas' terrorist operation, and certainly foots the bill for most of Hamas' "government."

The complete destruction of Hamas and prospectively of Hezbollah also, which still has tens of thousands of rockets but now only about 100 launchers which the Israelis are systematically eliminating, will create a possibility for peace that has not existed before since the founding of the

State of Israel.

The culmination will be the destruction of Iran's military nuclear program, which Mr. Netanyahu promised when he addressed Congress two months ago and which President Trump promised in his debate with Vice President Harris.

Mr. Netanyahu is not the cause of this problem and after a tortuous career may well be part of its solution. In killing the Hamas and Hezbollah leaders and blowing up the Hezbollah electronic devices and carrying the battle to their enemies, the Israelis, as Mr. Churchill said of Finland in 1940 and Greece in 1941, "are showing what free men can do."

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