

We Should Be Clear on What Iran's Air Assault on Israel Represents



by Conrad Black

The attempted blitzkrieg on Israel by Iran when it launched over 300 drones and missiles at Israel on April 13 proved once again the fallacy of the widespread Western view, including the Canadian government and its partners in the NDP, that what has been happening in the Middle East is just another skirmish in the lengthy disagreement between Israel and its Arab neighbours over their borders.

Hamas launched its invasion of Israel on Oct. 7 last year, intending the most barbarous massacre possible of women, children, and the elderly, and expressing again its refusal ever to accept the right of Israel to survive as a Jewish state. Hamas made it clear, though it is counting on most of the world not noticing, that no compromise is possible, and that if Israel wishes peace it will have to exterminate Hamas as a terrorist organization.

That was the conclusion that the Israeli government rightly derived from the Oct. 7 massacre. And that is why Israel declared war, formed a national unity government of all predominantly Jewish parties in the Knesset, pledged the destruction of Hamas as a terrorist organization, and vowed to maintain the promise of the Jewish people at the end of World War II that Jews would “never again” go passively to their deaths without resistance or retaliation. Despite all the tragic interruptions, the overarching goal of all Middle East policy must be the quest for peace, and peace will only come

when the right of Israel to be a Jewish state and the right of the Palestinians to have their own state have both been realized.

The first step from the present tumultuous conditions in the Middle East to the attainment of a durable peace must be the destruction of the Hamas terrorist apparatus, which appears to have been from 35–50 percent accomplished by Israel in the last six months. The second step would be the completion of the [Saudi Arabia-Israel agreement](#), the disruption of which was generally agreed to as one of the principal reasons why Iran ordered the Hamas invasion of Israel in October.

For these reasons, the calls of Canadian political leaders, apart from the Conservatives, to de-escalate and declare ceasefires are essentially helpful to the terrorists as they permit Hamas to come out from under ground, replenish their ammunition, and recruit replacements for the thousands of fighters the Israeli Defense Forces have killed. Anything that gives Hamas a respite is a favour to the terrorists, and it is not useful, even if it is well-intentioned, for Canadian government officials to make truly meaningless noises and pantomime gestures on the distant sidelines of this very long and complicated impasse.

One of the masterminds of the Hamas attack in October was the principal casualty when Israel attacked a supposedly diplomatic [building in Iraq on April 1](#). In fact, much of Iraq has effectively become an adjunct of Iran as a result of George W. Bush's ill-considered [Second Gulf War](#). Among the stupendous American strategic blunders in the last 50 years, the disintegration of Iraq and the resulting Iranian domination of much of that country must rank second to President Carter's undermining of the Shah of Iran, who can now be seen as a benign and progressive ruler as well as a reliable friend of the West.

While the air assault by Iran on April 13 was a fiasco and 99 percent of the drones and missiles hurled at Israel did not land, and approximately half of the missile launchings failed on or shortly after takeoff, it was still an act of war and

was intended to kill many thousands of Israelis and do great damage to the self-defence capacity and infrastructure of Israel. The argument that Israel should not respond to it—because although it was murderously intended, it was a failure because of Israeli and allied technological superiority and Iranian incompetence—is bunk. If there had been, as was ordered, air patrols out 250 miles from the Hawaiian islands in all daylight hours on the first Sunday of December in 1941, and torpedo nets around the battleships, there would have been little damage to the U.S. Navy, but it would have been no less an act of war. Such premeditated treachery does not have to be a successful to deserve, and usually to require, a reply, in the interests of peace through deterrence.

The Jews have never felt particularly governed by the New Testament and turning the other cheek; if they had it would have assured the complete destruction of the modern State of Israel within a few years. The Jews have been in what is now the land of Israel for over 5,000 years and there is no good reason why they should leave. Nor does the correlation of forces require them to treat gently those who wish to massacre, expel, or subjugate the Jews, one more time, and now, in their historic and unchallengeably legitimate homeland, even though the exact borders of Israel are subject to negotiation.

Israel had as much right to kill one of the chief architects of the Hamas invasion of Israel as the United States did to kill Osama bin Laden: a perfect right. Iran's response was an act of war, and was intended to be an act of war, and its intent is not mitigated by its failure. The appropriate response to that act of war is one that teaches Iran and its sympathizers a lesson they will never forget.

Israel should feel perfectly justified in comprehensively destroying from the air Iran's entire drone- and missile-launching capability, its advanced defence production

industry, its oil extraction, pipelining, refinement, and export capacity, and its nuclear military program. The entire world, including almost the entire Arab world, would be inexpressibly happy at such an action. And Israel could make it clear to the Iranians that if there was another attempted assault on Israel, none of the Iranian leadership would survive the response.

The peace process in the Middle East broke down when it became clear that Arafat and the Palestine Liberation Organization did not want peace, because they would cease to be important people in the world and instead become just nondescript leaders of another dusty little Arab state. And land-for-peace was just Israel giving back ground to the Arabs, which they had lost in wars that they started and in which Israel defeated them, in exchange for a peace which consisted of a brief ceasefire—which was swiftly violated by the Arabs. Since then, the only road to peace has been in the destruction by Israel of those Arabs who would always make war rather than peace. Once they have been destroyed, the terms of peace will emerge quite quickly.

The west should stop trying to inflict its poorly informed wishes on the Israelis to force them to adjust their policy. No one seeks peace more ardently than Israel, and only Israel and the more astute Arab governments realize how to achieve that peace. The West, including Canada, should encourage them to do so.

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