

Forget turning the other cheek; Israel should teach Iran a lesson



by Conrad Black

Once again, good fortune has been on the side of the West, as it was when the Muslim Brotherhood fumbled its way out of government in Egypt in 2011. It was almost unbelievable that Iran, having masterminded the barbarous Hamas invasion of Israel on October 7, would respond to Israel's killing of Mohammed Reza Zahedi, one of the planners of the Hamas invasion, by trying to kill many thousands of Israelis with an indiscriminate carpet-assault of hundreds of attack drones and cruise and ballistic missiles, and that the massive air assault would be a complete fiasco.

Iran came out of the closet as the real enemy, handed Israel a provocation that amounts to a blank cheque to retaliate as severely as they please, and for good measure, Iran's

escalation was a farcical disaster (almost half the missiles launched blew up on launch or crashed prematurely).

Predictably, the response of most of the West has been to heave a window-rattling sigh of relief and urge Israel to show "restraint." The West is suffering from Mideast fatigue and its response to everything is in fact to urge "restraint".

Whatever the rights and wrongs of any incident, it is always the duty of the victim country, almost invariably Israel since Israel doesn't initiate wars or act barbarously; to do nothing.

The violence in the Middle East now, apart from internecine factionalism, is almost entirely caused by those who will not accept the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish state, although it was created by the United Nations precisely with that purpose and vocation, and is a nation of unchallengeable legitimacy, if debatable borders.

Iran ordered the Hamas invasion and massacre, presumably to derail the impending agreement between Israel and Saudi Arabia. Israel responded to the act of war by promising to exterminate the Hamas terrorist apparatus. It is well along toward that objective. Despite the customary posturing, Hamas is receiving no assistance from the Arab powers and is just cannon-fodder for the terrorist theocracy in Iran.

There is no reason for Israel to restrain itself; that is a failed policy that just leads to more outrages. Having responded to an act of war with a declaration of war and then waging war, it was quite in order to kill Zahedi in Syria, where he was in a terrorist command centre, not, as Israel's enemies have claimed, in a diplomatic mission. It was stupid, but useful, for Iran to throw down the mask and enter combat directly and not just through its robotic terrorist proxies. Its massive air assault on Israel was no less an act of war against the civilian population of Israel because it was a

stupendous failure.

If, as had been ordered, Oahu in December 1941 had benefited from aerial reconnaissance out 250 miles in all directions in daylight hours, and the battle fleet had been protected by anti-torpedo nets, the Japanese attack would have been much less damaging but no less a provocative act of war.

The correct response for Israel would be a comprehensive air attack on Iran's missile and drone-launching installations, its nuclear military programme, and its oil extracting, pipeline, refining, and export facilities, with the diplomatic warning that if there were a further escalation by Iran, Israel would target the Iranian leadership. That would almost certainly induce "restraint" on the part of Iran and its puppet terror operations.

The complete elimination of Hamas as a terrorist operation would put an unnerving rod on the backs of Hezbollah, which has been deluging northern Israel with rocket fire, and on the Houthi of Yemen, who have almost shut down the Red Sea as a shipping route with their indiscriminate attacks on merchant vessels of all flags. Both terrorist groups are supplied and commanded by Iran.

The only policy that will lead to the peace the Western powers think they are serving by urging restraint on a much-wronged Israel which has shown Job-like restraint, is a combination of extermination of some of Israel's enemies and deterrence of the others.

President Biden signed an excellent [piece](#) in the *Wall Street Journal* on Wednesday, April 17, arguing in favour of his proposed assistance to Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan. Certainly, that measure should be approved. It would go some distance to living down his goofy admonition "Don't!" to the Iranians after he had learned through Turkish channels that Iran was about to stage its massive air attack. A forceful Israeli

counter-blow would redeem Biden's impotent warning, and, surgically targeted at legitimate strategic targets, might severely weaken this very unpopular regime.

The Democrats have been inexplicably incompetent at dealing with Iran, almost since Franklin D. Roosevelt left the Teheran Conference with Winston Churchill and Josef Stalin in December, 1943. President Truman didn't pay much attention to it, though his principal Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, saw Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh as the leftist shower that he was.

JFK and LBJ at least realised and appreciated what a fine and relatively progressive ally they had in the Shah. But Jimmy Carter, infatuated with the thought of democracy in a place that had never had it, and where the democratically favoured political option was anti-democratic, actively helped evict the Shah and usher in the dark age of bigotry and terror of the ayatollahs. Bill Clinton dealt with Iran sensibly, but Obama and Biden have been grovelling appeasers, and Biden still is.

Anyone with any strategic insight will hope that Israel declines to turn the other cheek. Now is the time for Israel to teach the ayatollahs a lesson that they and their followers will never forget.

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