

Haniyeh's Debacle and Symphony of Reactions

By: Amil Imani

As the dust settles from the deceased top leader of Hamas, Ismail Haniyeh, the world's political stage has transformed into a theatre of varied reactions that a master of satire might well script. From fiery condemnation to ice-cold neutrality and occasional cheer, it is as if the global community was playing an intricate game of diplomatic charades, each actor vying for the best performance.

The Islamic Republic (IR), Middle Eastern indignation's grand maestro, has outdone itself this time. In a performance that could give Shakespeare's tragedies a run for their money, Tehran has vowed revenge with a dramatic flair that's practically Shakespearean in its intensity. One can almost hear the thunderous condemnation from Tehran echoing across the region. It's as though the Islamic Republic's scriptwriters are busy penning the next act of a high-stakes drama where revenge is not just a plot point but the entire storyline. One might think IR was in the middle of hosting a grand gala when Haniyeh's death interrupted their program.

Meanwhile, in a corner of the diplomatic universe, the neutral actors have decided to play their roles with a remarkable lack of enthusiasm. Saudi Arabia and Egypt, who traditionally prefer to keep their public statements as lukewarm as a tepid cup of coffee, have mastered the art of non-reaction. It's almost as if their reaction was pre-approved by a committee, ensuring that no one gets too excited about anything.

Ah, Saudi Arabia! – you'd think they'd have something to say about Haniyeh's demise, but no, they chose silence. Their silence is deafening, a political art form showcasing how

expertly one can sidestep controversy while maintaining a perfectly unruffled demeanor. Perhaps they figured it was better to keep the peace (or whatever passes for it) and avoid adding more fuel to the fire. Who needs drama when you can maintain your carefully balanced relationships? As for the Egyptians, they didn't make any peep regarding Haniyeh's death. Maybe they were too busy trying to untangle their complex regional relationships.

Coming to Turkey, the vocal critics of Israeli policies have often played the Hamas card. But this time, they took a surprisingly restrained approach. Perhaps they were preoccupied with their domestic dramas or budding relationship with the U.S. and the EU. Who knew they had more pressing matters than reacting to a high-profile assassination?

Their responses could be summed up as: "Nothing to see here, folks. Move along."

And then, in the most minor expected twist, we have the applause from those who usually wouldn't be caught dead on this side of the fence. Some factions and individuals within the broader Arab world, often wary of Hamas and its influence, have unexpectedly clapped for the action. It's as if they were handed a script in which Haniyeh's exit is a welcome plot development.

Hezbollah, the loyal ally of the Islamic Republic and self-proclaimed defender of Palestine, also kept mum after Haniyeh's killing. Maybe they decided that with their own domestic issues, it was best to avoid drawing attention to themselves. Escalating tensions is so last season, after all.

With its own regional and internal concerns, Jordan also opted for a low profile. Their response—or lack thereof—was likely motivated by a desire to keep things stable (or as stable as they can be in that neck of the woods). Why take a stand when you can blend into the background?

While the above players played the silent game, a different narrative unfolded among certain groups within the broader Islamic and Arab world. Surprisingly, some factions couldn't contain their approval for Haniyeh's untimely exit.

Some individuals within the Persian Gulf States, particularly those with a grudge against Hamas, may have quietly cheered the news. Sure, they might publicly express caution, but deep down, they've always been skeptical of Hamas due to its ties to the Muslim Brotherhood. There's nothing like a little private enthusiasm to spice up the day!

Then we have the secular Arab leaders, who – surprise, surprise – viewed Haniyeh's killing as a potential boon for regional stability. Who wouldn't want to eliminate a perceived threat to peace? It's all about keeping the status quo intact.

Let's not forget the rival Palestinian factions, particularly Fatah, who might have seen Haniyeh's exit as an opportunity to boost their political standing. After all, it's a long-standing power struggle, and what better way to gain the upper hand than by eliminating a key player?

Some moderate voices in the Arab world probably nodded approvingly, welcoming the action toward combating extremism. Who doesn't want a little pragmatism in the mess of Middle Eastern politics?

And finally, we have Israel's supporters, who, unsurprisingly, were likely thrilled about the whole affair. For them, Haniyeh's death was just another tick on the scoreboard in their ongoing battle against Hamas. There's nothing like a little state-sponsored cheerleading to keep morale high!

One can almost imagine these characters holding up "thumbs up" signs while simultaneously checking their watches, eagerly anticipating the next chapter in what they hope will be a more stable and less chaotic narrative.

In the end, the muted responses from critical players reflect the intricate balancing act they perform within the region. While some groups silently approved, others chose silence as their best course of action.

The global reaction to Haniyeh's death is like a high-stakes drama where every player vies for the limelight. From Iran's operatic rage to the calm silence of the neutral parties and the unexpected applause from unexpected quarters, it's a reminder of how theater and reality often blur in international politics. As the curtain falls on this particular act, one thing is clear: in the grand play of Middle Eastern geopolitics, everyone has their role, and the show must go on.

After all, in the chaotic world of Middle Eastern politics, sometimes the best reaction is no reaction at all.