

Israel, and the Jewish people, will prevail

By Conrad Black

On the evening of Oct. 15, I had the honour of giving a brief opening rumination when the Canadian Antisemitism Education Foundation very appropriately honoured the editor of this newspaper, my friend Rob Roberts, for this newspaper's prodigious efforts to present a balanced picture of the tragic and tumultuous events in the Middle East over the last year.



IDF soldiers guard near a waving Israeli flag outside Kibbutz Kfar Aza, on Oct. 10, 2023. PHOTO BY ALEXI J. ROSENFELD/GETTY IMAGES

No one was there to hear me, and I faithfully confined myself to my brief allotted time, but did attempt to convey the qualified but comparative optimism I feel about

how the current hostilities will end. It is easy for Christian Anglo-Saxons to forget how solitary and outnumbered our Jewish friends feel in these troubled times. The State of Israel was founded out of the old League of Nations Palestine mandate in 1948 to provide a homeland for the Jewish people, whose entire worldwide population had been reduced by more than a third, six million souls (along with millions of non-Jews), in the

death camps of the Nazi Holocaust, which had just been ended by the victory of the Allied armies over Germany three years before.

As the Hamas invasion of Israel and massacre of over 1,000 Jews and seizure of over 200 hostages on October 7 of last year was the greatest violent loss of life the Jewish people have sustained since the Holocaust, and the terrorist threat to Israel has been so constant over the last year, and there has been so much malicious antisemitic agitation in the western democracies, it is natural that many Jews would be reminded fearfully of those horrifying earlier times. This is a reflex that has probably also been encouraged by the ignorant and defamatory bandying about of references to Hitler and the Nazis and fascists in contemporary American politics by the enemies of former president Donald Trump. Hillary Clinton has claimed that his huge rallies remind her of news film of the annual Nazi mass meetings in Nuremberg, and President Joe Biden has gone into the sunset warning America that the ambition to make the country great is really a fascist attempt to end elections. All of these flippant and shameful invocations of the Third Reich trivialize the scope and evil of its almost unimaginable atrocities. No matter how familiar one may be with the history of Nazi Germany, it remains almost inconceivable that the culture of Goethe and Beethoven was ever directed by such a murderous and satanic regime.

Trying and worrisome though the present conditions are, I reminded the audience that the Jewish people are now united in a powerful and successful state, that they enjoy the complete legitimacy of sovereignty and the prestige of having made the desert bloom, and that they are not facing the totalitarian government of one of the world's most powerful nations, but a ragtag group of terrorists propped up by the primitive and psychotic theocracy of Iran. Terrorist hostility is only engaged in by those entities that do not have the force and

the means to conduct a genuine war. Hamas and Hezbollah are not disciplined soldiers as Israel faced in bygone wars with Egypt, Jordan and Syria, but dehumanized robots that appall the Arab powers as much as they do Israel. I cited Winston Churchill, who warned that Nazi barbarism would lead to "a new dark age made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the lights of a perverted science." When Hitler ruled most of Europe, the Jews and others under Nazi occupation were helpless victims. In the Middle East today, Israel is the superpower; the state the Jewish people have built in the Land of Israel where they have lived for over 3,000 years, more than 1,500 years before the Prophet Muhammad was born, is a magnificent achievement and it will not be long or seriously threatened by a comparative handful of desperate homicidal maniacs manipulated from Tehran.

In 1948, as it was created, Israel had to fight all of the surrounding Arab countries. In 1967, it struck preemptively, just before Egypt and Jordan and Syria attacked, and in 1973, it fought the Egyptians and the Syrians. Now Israel is the natural ally of the Arab states against their ancient Persian foes. The Hamas invasion and massacre in October 2023 was an attempt to preempt the conclusion of a durable resolution of differences between Israel and Saudi Arabia; it has postponed that agreement but has not prevented it from occurring. All of the principal Arab powers will be delighted at Israel's continued success in killing off the terrorists, and no reprisal by Israel against the recent Iranian missile attack on it will bring anything but pleasure to the Arab powers. Nor have the antics of Iran and its deadly pawns enjoyed support from non-Arab Muslim countries such as Pakistan, Indonesia and Bangladesh. The antisemitic antics in the West are caused by some Middle Eastern immigrants abusing the hospitality of their host countries and faddish sophomores misdirected by inadequately supervised self-hating members of the professoriate. The weakness of western leadership has helped to perpetuate these conditions.

Both Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and former president Trump, have stated that they would not tolerate a nuclear-armed Iran. The implications of those statements are obvious. If Trump is re-elected, as is likely, that will be the end of the shameful collective stance of the West, including Canada, that the ceasefire that Hamas broke over a year ago should be resurrected, with a complete Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and the full resumption of massive Iranian military resupply of its terrorist puppets. That is a formula for permanent war, and it is unconscionable hypocrisy and stupidity for any civilized democracy to support any such course. One of the many benefits of Trump's victory will be to assure the conditions that will enable the complete destruction of the terrorist apparatus that has so long tormented the Jewish state. It will also assure that the retribution inflicted upon Iran, both military and economic, will be a mortal blow to the world's principal terrorism-supporting regime, a consummation that would bring jubilation to the vast majority of the Iranian people. Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre earned the respect and the support of most Canadians last week by advocating for the destruction of Iran's nuclear program.

It has been 76 years since the establishment of the State of Israel, not a long time in the history of that ancient, talented, vital and much-wronged people, who had been effectively stateless since the splintering and occupation by the Babylonians, Persians and then the Romans, beginning over 2,500 years ago. In this short time, Israel has effectively made its peace with the Arabs and thinned the ranks of its enemies to the world's most morally contemptible government and a motley assortment of homicidal maniacs, specializing in the murder of women and children and the elderly and scrambling about in the bowels of the earth like rats. This time, if I may use an odious expression, the final solution will be the elimination of the terrorists and the government that sponsors them, and we will not have long to wait for it.

Never again; l'chaim, at last.

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