

Gaza Shows Again How The Underdog Can Be Wrong

Sometimes the underdog is wrong. The ruthlessly brutal regimes of Adolf Hitler, Pol Pot, Saddam Hussein and Idi Amin were all weaker than the forces that ultimately vanquished them.

But for decades the Palestinians have mastered the art of persuading everyone that because they die in greater numbers and have inferior arms, they are more deserving of sympathy and support in their conflict with Israel. Here's why they're wrong:

1. Israel's military edge safeguards its survival in the world's toughest neighborhood. But if a SWAT team is better armed than a wild gunman they must neutralize, does that mean that they're at fault when the gunman dies?

2. Israel's casualty figures are smaller because Israel tries to protect life by investing in anti-missile defense, shelters, and early warning systems to minimize the deaths caused by Palestinian rocket attacks.

3. By contrast, Palestinian terrorists purposely endanger life by targeting Israeli civilians while using Palestinian civilians as human shields (to maximize the PR benefits of any Israeli reprisals).

4. Israel's death toll should be adjusted for its tiny population, to feel the true "national pain" of each loss. When Hamas terrorists abducted and murdered three Israeli teenagers last month, that's like the murder and abduction of about 118 American teenagers. How many Taliban would die from a U.S. military response to the Taliban abduction and murder of 118 American teenagers?

5. Gaza-based terrorism is inflicting collective punishment on

about 8 million Israelis living under the constant threat of rocket attacks. How much could you focus on anything if blaring sirens regularly compelled you to seek shelter in under a minute? How much sleep could you get?

Drivers must get out of their cars, lie on the pavement face down with their hands over their heads, and wait 10 minutes until the danger has ostensibly passed. Many elderly or disabled persons must descend flights of stairs to access the shelter, and the scramble to safety can be as dangerous as staying unprotected (an Israeli woman in her 70s died while trying to take shelter from an incoming rocket in Haifa).

How long would the U.S. expect its citizens to live like that before deploying overwhelming firepower to eradicate the threat?

6. In the Middle East, the weak perish quickly, and Israel—the only Jewish state (with 8 million people in a New Jersey-sized territory) surrounded by 22 Arab Muslim states (totaling about 370 million people)—can't afford to lose a war. So the fact that Israel doesn't cause far greater casualties to strengthen its deterrence should highlight Israel's morality and restraint.

Most observers are oblivious to these key considerations, and simplistically look at comparative casualty figures before reflexively concluding that Israel is wrong. This cartoon aptly captures how Palestinians manipulate world opinion like a mischievous schoolboy misleading his teachers about who caused school spats.

When world leaders and media are duped into simplistic thinking, the result is a glaring double standard.

Consider the United Nations. On July 3, Israel gave Hamas 48 hours to stop firing rockets, even though 40 rockets had already been fired at Israel in the previous 24 hours. The Palestinian attacks continued until Israel finally took action

on July 8.

By the end of the day on July 10, over 350 rockets had been fired at Israel, the Israeli Air Force had carried out almost 900 airstrikes on the Gaza Strip, resulting in at least 90 Palestinians killed (according to Palestinian reports), and a UN Security Council emergency session to address the hostilities.

So when Israel launches a justified military operation against Palestinians, it takes just three days and 90 Palestinian dead for the U.N. Security Council to convene an emergency session about the issue. Note that there was no emergency session to address the scores of unprovoked rocket attacks that forced Israel to respond in the first place.

But in neighboring Syria, it took about 1,650 civilian deaths and 141 days (from March 15 to August 3, 2011) for the United Nations Security Council, in a non-binding statement, to make any pronouncement at all on the Syrian war (which has killed over 4,000 people per month on average). Are Syrian lives less valuable than Palestinian lives?

Incredibly, when the Palestinians are killed by Syrians or other Palestinians, this too is hardly noticed or addressed. It is only when Israelis are killing Palestinians—even if that killing is justified, accidental or actually caused by Hamas' use of human shields—that the diplomatic obsession with Palestinian security reaches a fever pitch.

The same double standards color the media's coverage of the conflict. Even after Israel's Ambassador Ron Dermer deftly exposed egregious journalistic failures by the *New York Times*, its biased and misleading coverage continues.

No matter how much restraint Israel may exercise, Palestinian propagandists and their pliant media sympathizers will vilify Israel. Mahmoud Abbas has already called Israel's Operation Protective Edge a "genocide" (as if it wouldn't be far easier

and faster for Israel to raze the entire Gaza Strip instead of using pinpoint strikes preceded by warnings telling residents to evacuate terrorist hideouts and weapons caches targeted for destruction).

Yet somehow Abbas' hyperbole—which cheapens the real genocide in neighboring Syria and elsewhere—in no way diminishes his credibility with the media and diplomats. He is still presumed to be some kind of honest partner for peace, even though—rather than disavow his government's partnership with the terrorists responsible for the current conflict—he attempts to score propaganda points on their behalf.

Even more outrageous, U.S. State Department spokesperson Jen Psaki admitted that the Obama administration is willing to continue funding a Palestinian government with ties to a terrorist group—something that violates U.S. law, betrays Israel, and harms U.S. interests by supporting terrorism, increasing regional instability, and signaling to other radical groups that terrorism sometimes pays.

In the end, Israel must simply defeat the evil to its south, regardless of the double standards that will be hurled at it. To that end, and to help Gazans realize that its time to overthrow the Islamist thugocracy strangling their society, Israel should stop supplying power and water to Gaza. What rule of international law says that a state must provide resources to a neighbor trying to kill its citizens?

Noah Beck is the author of *The Last Israelis*, an apocalyptic novel about Iranian nukes and other geopolitical issues in the Middle East.