

Hamas: The Truth and the 5 Myths That Obscure It

Hamas leader Khaled Meshal used his recent first visit to Gaza to tell a mass rally that he would never recognize Israel and pledged to “free the land of Palestine inch by inch.”

His words revealed (again) the true face of Hamas: “Palestine is ours from the river to the sea and from the south to the north. There will be no concession on an inch of the land,” he told the crowds, indicating that Hamas’ struggle is for all of the territory comprising modern-day Israel—hardly a formula for peaceful co-existence with Israel.

Did the “moderate” Mahmoud Abbas, head of the Palestinian Authority, condemn such language? Unfortunately, he was as silent about Hamas’ hateful rejection of peaceful compromise as he was about Hamas’ missile attacks on Israeli civilians last month . Such quiet complicity is not surprising, given that Abbas seeks unity with Iran-backed Hamas. Why does the world ignore or downplay such troubling facts? There are many possible explanations, but these five myths—often propagated by the mainstream media—are part of the answer.

1) The weaker party is always right. Sympathy for the underdog notwithstanding, the weaker party can still be the one at fault, as a visit to any children’s playground can readily reveal. The same is true in military conflicts: Al Queda is the weaker party against the U.S., but that hardly makes them right.

2) Israel uses disproportionate force. But what force is proportionate to thousands of missiles raining down on your citizens? Must Israel wait until a Palestinian rocket hits a school bus or a hospital, causing mass casualties, before its response can be proportionate? Where was world outrage when

Hamas fired 130 rockets and missiles at Israeli civilians in the weeks prior to Israel's targeted killing of Hamas commander Ahmed Jabari? Weren't those 130 attacks infinitely "disproportionate" because they targeted innocent civilians who were just going about their lives? Such attacks have been going on since 2001. What kind of force would the U.S. have used and how long would it have waited to use it? Critics also argue that Israel's lower casualty count proves that Israel uses disproportionate force. But such twisted logic implies that Israel's military response would have been acceptable if only Israel had done a lousier job of protecting its civilians or simply used them as human shields.

3) The parties in this "cycle of violence" are morally indistinguishable. But Hamas purposely targets Israeli civilians and uses Palestinian civilians as human shields to maximize their casualties and score sympathy points. Israel, on the other hand, protects civilians on both sides of the conflict by using bomb shelters and the Iron Dome defense system in Israel, and by warning civilians—with leaflets, texts, and phone calls—to clear targeted areas in Gaza. Israel also expends tremendous resources gathering military intelligence for pinpoint strikes on terrorist targets—operations that it sometimes abruptly aborts when civilians unexpectedly enter the targeted area. Critics forget that if Israel's goal were to massacre the Palestinians, Israel could do so in a few hours of indiscriminate bombardment (as Assad has done daily in Syria) rather than in days or weeks of precise military actions.

4) If Israel just gave up more land, the conflict with its neighbors would vanish. History reveals how dangerously naive this idea is. Although Jews accepted the U.N.'s 1947 Partition Plan to divide the British Mandate between Jews and Arabs, the response from Palestinians and neighboring Arab countries was the 1948 war that nearly eradicated the nascent Jewish state. Israel withdrew from Southern Lebanon in 2000, but in 2006

Hezbollah launched unprovoked attacks that led to war. When Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005, the Palestinians used it to fire 8,000 rockets at Israelis. Israel's withdrawal from Sinai is the only historical example of a territorial concession that brought peace to Israel, and the "Arab Spring" raises questions about how long even this cold peace will last.

5) Israel can make peace with Hamas. Can the U.S. make peace with Al Qaeda? Appeasing extremists only defers the day of reckoning as history has often demonstrated. Israeli Ambassador Michael Oren aptly describes Hamas as "a flagrantly anti-democratic, anti-Semitic, anti-Christian, anti-feminist and anti-gay movement dedicated to genocide." Real peace is impossible with such an organization and no prosperity will ever come to Gaza under the Hamas thugocracy that rules it. If world powers are genuinely concerned about Gaza, they should work to remove Hamas from power there.

Those who doubt that there is a serious bias in the mainstream media when it comes to Hamas should consider this example from the BBC's reporting on the Gaza conflict last month.

Indeed, the world must move beyond the media-driven myths above and recognize Hamas for what it really is: an Islamist terrorist organization dangerously allied with Iran in its mission to destroy Israel. Hamas states this goal in its charter and Iranian leaders declare their genocidal intentions publicly. These forces must be stopped before the doomsday described in my novel leaves the realm of fiction.

Noah Beck's novel, *The Last Israelis*, published last July, describes an attack by Iran-backed terror groups in Gaza that was similar to the attacks of last month, when Tel-Aviv was directly targeted by missiles.