

Media Double Standards: An Anti-Israel Bias

I support France's military action in Mali. But the media's reaction to it—when contrasted with coverage of Israel's military actions in Gaza—reveals flagrant double standards.

I'll talk more on that after giving my reasons for supporting France's Mali operation.

Islamists—like those who overran Mali last March—reverse human progress and bring misery to those they subjugate: women, religious minorities, moderate Muslims, secularists, gays and anyone else who doesn't accept their primitive worldview. Islamists vitiate Islam, twisting its meaning and practice to advance their real aim: brute power. To that end, they break whatever Islamic and non-Islamic laws they please, engaging in drug smuggling, kidnapping, human trafficking, victimizing perceived opponents and murdering innocents.

They viciously disregard life, property, and culture. Al-Qaeda destroyed 3,000 American souls and the Twin Towers on 9/11. The Taliban pour acid on the faces of girls seeking an education. Ansar Dine, the Islamists in Mali, last summer ruined many of Timbuktu's archeological treasures after deeming them “idolatrous.” They also imposed Sharia “law,” flogging music listeners and women caught showing their hair, amputating the hands of accused thieves and stoning to death fornicators.

Islamists conquer and rule by terror, not virtue. They destroy ruthlessly but build nothing.

Any force with the moral clarity and courage to oppose such evil deserves plaudits. In the case of Mali, that force is the French.

Fortunately, these judgments are obvious to the world press. Maybe that explains the scant reports of civilian casualties and absent images of bloody devastation produced by French airstrikes in Operation Serval. The alternative explanation—that there are no civilian casualties for the media to report because French military intelligence and technology are perfectly precise—seems far-fetched.

When it comes to Islamists in Gaza, suddenly all moral clarity disappears in an avalanche of clichéd images and headlines ignoring the most basic truths. France can launch military attacks about 2,000 miles south of its border in response to an Islamist threat that endangers nobody in France, but Israel is vilified if it responds militarily to deadly rocket attacks targeting its civilians from two miles to its south.

Like their Islamist brethren in Afghanistan and Africa, the Hamas rulers of Gaza have no program for the future other than expanding their barbaric domain by force—first to the West Bank (which Islamists don't yet control) and eventually to Israel. Consider how Hamas came to rule Gaza in 2007 (by a bloody putsch against Fatah), and what it has done with its power since then (repress Gazans and attack Israel).

Human rights groups have accused Hamas of abysmal judicial abuses, replete with arbitrary arrests, torture, and unfair trials. Hamas mistreats journalists, terrorizes political opponents, restricts press freedoms, outlaws homosexuality, persecutes Christians, and condones honor killings against women—all practices that would delight Ansar Dine.

Hamas apologists blame Israel for Gaza's woes, even though Egypt controls Gaza's southern border, and Israel, which completely left Gaza in 2005, would much rather be developing trade with Gaza than defense systems to intercept thousands of unprovoked rocket attacks from there. But Hamas' charter seeks Israel's destruction, so how can Hamas lead its people or neighborhood towards anything positive?

Incidentally, Palestinian extremists have as little respect for non-Muslim holy sites as the Taliban had for the Bamiyan Buddhas. In 2002, they used the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem for military cover despite the obvious risk this posed to the Christian site. Last week (and in 2000), Palestinians desecrated Joseph's Tomb in Nablus—hateful vandalism overlooked by every major news organization. Again, it evokes the double standard.

From the attention and sympathy that the Palestinian cause attracts, one would think that millions have died, and that they must be paragons of innocent victimhood. Neither is true. The entire Arab-Israeli conflict—from the 1920 Arab riots until today, including all regional wars (1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, 1982, etc.)—has killed roughly 25,000 Jews and 95,000 Arabs. The maximum number of Palestinian Arabs killed during almost a century of conflict is probably about 20,000.

While that's not a number to scoff at, today's Syrian regime kills that many people in under a year. But a Google search for "Palestine genocide" produces about 10.7 million results while the term "Syria genocide" produces just 9.5 million results.

Such disproportionate attention and sympathy is unfair to the victims of far deadlier conflicts, and effectively whitewashes terrorism. But Palestinians are far from Tibetans in their preferred tactics: they have employed violent terrorism for decades.

So why is Palestinian victimhood prioritized? And if Hamas is similar to Ansar Dine, why does it get a pass?

Some might argue that—unlike Ansar Dine—Hamas represents its subjects. But Hamas represents only the power of its guns and its Iranian patron. Another argument: Mali's government and people wanted French help in ousting the Islamists. But Hamas would never seek assistance in dethroning itself. Who knows

what Gazans want when they're brutalized for speaking against Hamas?

Unfortunately, the media's double standard has a simple explanation: anti-Israel bias. Just ask the non-profits established to address the problem: , , and .

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