

WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO ABOUT GAZA?

The country is in a pickle. The rockets that have made life so unbearable for the few thousand people left in Sederot have decreased in quantity (from 40-50 a day to 6-10 a week) but they're certainly still a threat. And the addition of Russian Katyushas—official name is Grad, smuggled into Gaza from the Sinai when Hamas blew up the wall separating the Gaza Strip from the Sinai—has made Ashkelon itself vulnerable. Ashkelon for us means, apart from the town itself, the newest power plant in the country. A direct hit there would be a major disaster, and it is still a distinct possibility.

This is an intolerable situation, and everyone wants to know what to do about it. Some say the Army needs to go into Gaza with massive presence and clean out the rockets, their handlers, the Hamas government and the various terrorist groups, and then withdraw. But the Army doesn't want to do that; too many casualties. And a pretty clear idea what happens after they leave: the terrorist groups go back to shooting at us.

Others say the way to stop the rockets is to make the people there realize that shooting into Israel is not in their interest. This means closing off commerce and trade, and the water and the gas, the electricity, medicine and the food which we supply them until the people pressure their "government" to call it quits.

Trouble with this is, first, that martyrdom is quite acceptable in a society which worships death. Suffering is what the Palestinians DO. The second problem is that the world at large, prompted by fraudulent Hamas videos (like the supposed blackout with candles, which was clearly a fake) and reinforced by all kinds of organizations and people who love the Palestinians and dislike us no matter what, is unhappy with any humanitarian crisis. Which is what this action is causing. They say inflicting civilian suffering is against international law. And the governments that count in America and Europe—and the United Nations—support them in that. Which makes really bad pressure on us to ease off.

Third is the option of negotiating some kind of cease fire with Hamas in Gaza. This might work for a while, and maybe that's what is happening now, but is ultimately dangerous because as soon as we stop pounding them they will use every minute of peace and quiet to funnel in more arms and ammunition for the next round. Like Hezbollah in Lebanon. In addition, negotiating with Hamas is bound to undermine Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) and the Palestinian Authority, with whom we

and the Americans, Europeans, Russians etc. are supposed to be partners in the famous "peace process" (bad joke), the road map etc.

Well, I say...

Here comes a political statement, which I don't like to do; this Newsletter is supposed to be a kind of diary, not a rant. And I am not confident enough to put what I am going to write on Page 1, which is why it's here on Page 10.

1. I say that we first have to tackle the problem of International Law. We need to speak plainly and clearly and tell the world that as far as Israel is concerned the 4th Geneva Convention, "Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War", Geneva, 12 August 1949¹ is no longer a relevant document. A 5th convention must be called without delay because in the new war, war on terror, there is now no difference between civilian and military. The old convention, assuming that armies have organization, uniforms, etc., does not apply to the war against terror. Someone shooting from the playground of a kindergarten invites and deserves immediate and massive retaliation, and there is no longer any such thing as innocent civilians.

2. We need to remove the taboo against harming political leaders. (They should have shot Arafat 25 years ago and saved a lot of grief, not to mention lives.) People who lead terrorist entities are terrorists themselves, and there is no reason to protect Haniyya of Gaza, or Nasrallah of Lebanon, or Assad Junior of Syria. No immunity any more.

3. More complicated, though connected with the above, we need to insist on new international laws and beliefs about sovereignty and territorial integrity. There are no more borders and no more no-go zones. Terror now is like piracy was in the 18th and 19th century; we go anywhere and do anything in anyone's country to stomp it out. That needs to be said loud and clear, without pussyfooting around. And we can do it if we are determined to do it

4. We have to do a ton of politicking, communicating, negotiating, conferencing, informing, consulting, etc. vis-à-vis every government on earth about what we are going to do. Perhaps we can get allies that count. But it needs to be clear that we will do it on our own if need be. Again, this should be said straight and out loud: "Israel no longer recognizes the current state of International law." This is not the first time the Jews have (re-) invented the Law, and probably won't be the last.

We are in fact doing a lot of what needs doing, both in the West Bank and in Gaza. The Army is all over the former, and occasionally the latter

¹ You can find it on the International Red Cross web site: www.icrc.org

and the results have been impressive by any standard. The rockets have, mostly stopped, or at least slowed down a lot. Kill enough terrorists and that is what happens. Fact.

Seems to me that once we have got the theoretical basis sorted out, then we are free to do anything we think works, limited only by our own humanity (which I trust), by domestic (NOT international) political opinion, and by the results we see on the ground.

If we could get the whole world in this frame of mind, we might really be able to crush radical Islamic terror before it's too late.

End of rant (for now). ■