

TEACHING HATRED

The news is full of stories of innocent Israelis being stabbed, shot and run over by enraged Arabs throughout Israel. Pundits and Monday morning quarterbacks are asking are these people really frustrated teenagers killing people as a result of naive frustration or are we witnessing a war against democracy in the Middle East?

When I first traveled to the Arab towns of Ramallah, Jenin and others, they were quiet and orderly. The relationship between Israelis and Arabs was good and in some cases friendships and business relations had developed well.

The West Bank of the Jordan River was originally a gift to the Hussein family of Jordan. The Gaza Strip was a gift to Egypt. Both nations did the best they could to ignore their protectorates. Jordan did not want any part of the Arabs in the West Bank because the ruling elite in that country are not of the same tribal caste as the majority of Jordanians. The majority of Jordanian Arabs are Palestinian and Jordan is quite properly the Palestinian state. Egypt considered Gaza an open sore and burden on its economy; an incubator for threats to the military rulers of Egypt.

In 1967 when almost half a dozen Arab nations attempted to eradicate Israel, for at least the second time, Israel gained possession of the West Bank of the Jordan River and the Gaza Strip. Jordan ceded any demand for control over the West Bank of the Jordan River after just a few years. It wanted nothing to do with the area and understood the area to be in the security interest of Israel. Egypt was glad to get rid of the pesky problem of the Gaza Strip.

Fast forward to Israel's many efforts over the years likewise to rid itself of the West Bank and Gaza. After the Oslo Accords, when Jericho was given to the Palestinian Arabs and self-rule permitted in almost the entire West Bank, violence and bloodshed followed. Jewish blood literally could be seen on the walls of buildings in Jericho and homicide bombers permeated throughout the State of Israel. Gaza became the nesting place for Hamas and its thousands of missile attacks upon Israel. The elections in both the West Bank of the Jordan River and Gaza placed in power political despots and dictators who have robbed scandalous amounts of money from their own people.

What is it that makes the Arabs on the West Bank and Gaza underdogs in the eyes of some? Is it because Israel has survived the several murderous wars waged against it while fellow Arabs have placed their "brothers" and "sisters" in refugee camps? Is it because Israel is responsible for the hate taught the Arabs by their religious leaders? Is it because Israel cannot sacrifice its safety and security to those with a horrid track record, like Assad in Syria who has killed 250,000 of his own people?

The war against Jews in Israel today is in many ways a replay of history. The Muslim world could never accept the cancer of Christianity or Judaism in the Middle East. Arab dictators and the Muslim mobs in the street fully understand that Israel will always be held to a different and higher standard than any other nation. In essence, Israel has to fight with one hand behind its back.

The former head of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin Dempsey expressed shock and amazement at how carefully Israel has tried to avoid civilian casualties in its attempt to prolong its existence in the region. The United States has not done such a good job in Afghanistan, Iraq or anywhere else where we have fought wars. We dealt with Native Americans by annihilating them. We carpet bombed civilian populations over Dresden, Berlin and other places in Germany during WWII. We incinerated two Japanese cities with the atomic bomb. An Arab Muslim once said to me: "The Christian Crusaders know how to wage war."

When an Eritrean bystander was accidentally killed during a terrorist attack in Israel, the mishap was condemned by politicians, rabbis and civilians within the State of Israel. When innocent Israeli civilians are the victims of terrorist attacks, it is praised by Arab leaders. This is the crucial difference between Israel and its enemies; Israel desires peace and watches its every step to assure compliance with Jewish values and the ethics of the world community. Those who lead West Bank and Gaza Arabs enjoy the blood fest and do everything they can to promote it.

Lately the political term "incitement" has been heard. What is going on in Israel today is not "incitement" but rather the direction of a military force against Israel. Just as airplanes were used as an instrument of war in the 9/11 attacks against the United States, women, children and teenagers are used as instruments of terror against the Jewish people. It is untruthful to believe for a moment that the current attacks against Israelis are random or represent justifiable frustration. The public statements of all Arab leaders confirm that warfare is being conducted against Israelis.

Characterizations of Jews as having filthy, bloody feet stepping upon Arab land and the other stereotypes regularly used are drawn from a deep culture of crude anti-Semitism.

Israel has been waging and will continue to wage a struggle for survival. Democracy, diversity, integrity and self-awareness will continue to be Israel's ethos. There will be those who claim that Israel fights too hard, struggles too loudly and is to be condemned for failing to lie down and be submissive. Classic Islam, reinvigorated by a modern Islamic terrorism, requires submission of Christians and Jews. The prophet Mohammed bragged about the killing of Jews in Saudi Arabia where there was once a vibrant, safe and prosperous Jewish community.

Just as the Jewish people have been driven out of every Arab land, wandering the Earth as refugees, until they were taken in by the State of Israel, the modern Arab

rulers would like to make refugees out of every Jew living in the Middle East. It is difficult for those who support liberal democracy to appreciate that sometimes democracies have to fight for their existence against very difficult odds.

Oftentimes I am asked what the longterm outcome will be. Israel must continue to be strong, to seek support from Western democracies. It encourages a Palestinian state in the West Bank of a reasonable size, self-governing, democratic, which does not teach hatred of its neighbors and which is totally demilitarized. Will the Arabs ever accept this willingly? Absolutely not unless the rest of the world appreciates what is at stake for their own future and fights against the terrorist threat which potentially undermines all of us.

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