

In The Vise Grip

Does everyone know what a vise grip is? It is a pliers-like tool which is capable of tightly clamping onto an object. A lever enables the teeth of the vise grip to quickly release. It is one of the more useful tools around the home and shop.

Israel today, in the fourth week of our visit, finds itself in a vise grip.

Russia has created an arsenal in Syria, just to Israel's north, second to none in the world. Thanks to Russian armament and troops, Bashar al-Assad defeated a civil war in his country, killing over 400,000 of his own people in the process. Al-Assad is a member of a minority tribe in Syria. He was on the brink of extinction, until the Russians threw their fate with him. The Russians and al-Assad's military committed war crimes. No one was taken to the international court of justice, and no one ever will be for the atrocities that occurred in Syria.

Meanwhile, an uneasy and delicate arrangement between Israel and Russia has permitted the Israeli Air Force to stem the tide of Iranian armament to various terrorist groups in Syria and Lebanon, all bent on the destruction of Israel. Iran is an imperialist military Islamic state, which is a sworn enemy of Christendom and the State of Israel. How many armaments get through to the enemies of Israel, is not precisely known. Russia could shut down any time it wishes Israel's attempts to keep Iran at bay.

What puts Israel in the vise grip is the necessity to depend on Russian "goodwill," an oxymoron if there ever was one, and tepid United States support. While the United States Congress appropriates significant funds to Israel, most of that money represents funds that are paid the United States military arms manufacturers. Israel is equipped with American stealth fighter jets, which it pays for, and then rebuilds to make them better. Israel shares its iron dome anti-missile technology with the United States, purchasing many of its arms and munitions from the United States. Those who think that Israel receives foreign aid from the United States "for free" do not appreciate the amount of money that Israel spends on United States armament, far more than the foreign aid it receives.

Jeremiah warned the Kings of Israel against an alliance with Egypt, the great prophet realizing that Babylonia was a stronger power and ultimately would enable the rebuilding of the Israelite state. Today, the Jeremiahs in Israel warn their leadership against its shaky and unstable relationship with Russia.

Israel has no choice but to refrain from confronting Russia directly in Syria. Russia, for its part, does not directly encounter the Israeli military far away from its homebase. Israel does not operate with absolute freedom in attempting to prevent Iranian weapons from reaching terrorists throughout the Middle East.

The United States, has shown itself to be confused about its role in terms of being a world leader. The United States has a habit of exhibiting schizophrenia when it comes to foreign relations. Some administrations have isolationist tendencies, while others engage in wasteful nation building. A consistent United States policy based upon

preserving its own interests as a world leader, while not getting bogged down in regional conflicts, has been difficult for the U.S. to maintain.

In reality, United States interests are a combination of economic prosperity, culture influence throughout the world, and military preparedness. A strong economy at home helped to bring down the old Soviet Union. To the extent that Americans are distracted by internal sociopolitical conflicts, our enemies leap into the breach which we create by a lack of coherent cooperation domestically.

The vise grip that Israel finds itself in on a daily basis, with the teeth on one side of the tool representing Russia and the teeth on the other side of the tool being the United States, keeps this tiny nation locked in a perpetual state of insecurity. Surrounded by enemies who thirst for the blood of the Jewish people, Israel has little choice but to play the international game that consists of walking the razor's edge.

It is also important to remember, as Israelis do, that the United States' support for Israel has not always been consistent. In 1948, Harry Truman recognized the State of Israel and imposed an arms embargo. This created the current unsustainable borders for the State of Israel since Israel could not adequately defend itself from the Arab onslaught following the United Nation partition of the Holy Land. When the Arabs again attempted to destroy Israel, with Russian arms, in 1967 and 1973, the United States utilized weapon support as a tool to assure that an Israeli victory did not impede the supply of Arab oil to the United States. In 1969, Richard Nixon lifted the United States oil import quota, creating our current dependency on foreign oil.

During World War II, the United States created the nuclear bomb that ended that conflict in the Pacific over the course of a mere four years. We stand today at the threshold of fusion power, the energy of the sun created by the fusion of the hydrogen atom. While plenty of money is being spent on fusion power, a major United States effort in the field could create energy independence that would totally free us of polluting fossil fuels.

There is much work to be done to release democracies from the vise grip of totalitarian and authoritarian rulers, but we in the United States need to have a more clear vision, greater unity and realistic notions concerning our own needs.

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