



Life in an Orwellian universe

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What other country, when attacked in an unprovoked aggression across a recognized international frontier, is then put on a countdown clock by the world, given a limited time window in which to fight back, regardless of whether it has restored its own security?

What other country sustains 1,500 indiscriminate rocket attacks into its cities – every one designed to kill, maim and terrorize civilians – and is then vilified by the world when it tries to destroy the enemy's infrastructure and strongholds with precision-guided munitions that sometimes have the unintended but unavoidable consequence of collateral civilian death and suffering?

Hearing the world pass judgment on the Israel-Hezbollah war as it unfolds is to live in an Orwellian moral universe. With a few significant exceptions (the leadership of

the United States, Britain, Australia, Canada and a very few others), the world – governments, the media, U.N. bureaucrats – has completely lost its moral bearings.

The word that obviates all thinking and magically inverts victim into aggressor is "disproportionate," as in the universally decried "disproportionate Israeli response."

When the United States was attacked at Pearl Harbor, it did not respond with a parallel "proportionate" attack on a Japanese naval base. It launched a four-year campaign that killed millions of Japanese, reduced Tokyo, Hiroshima and Nagasaki to a cinder, and turned the Japanese home islands to rubble and ruin. Disproportionate? No. When one is wantonly attacked by an aggressor, one has every right – legal and moral – to carry the fight until the aggressor is disarmed and so

disabled that it cannot threaten one's security again. That's what it took with Japan.

Britain was never invaded by Germany in World War II. Did it respond to the blitz and V-1 and V-2 rockets with "proportionate" aerial bombardment of Germany? Of course not. Churchill orchestrated the greatest land invasion in history that flattened and utterly destroyed Germany, killing untold innocent German women and children in the process.

The perversity of today's international outcry lies in the fact that there is indeed a disproportion in this war, a radical moral asymmetry between Hezbollah and Israel: Hezbollah is deliberately trying to create civilian casualties on both sides while Israel is deliberately trying to minimize civilian casualties, also on both sides.

In perhaps the most blatant terror campaign from the air since the London blitz, Hezbollah is raining rockets on Israeli cities and villages. These rockets are packed with ball bearings that can penetrate automobiles and shred human flesh. They are meant to kill and maim. And they do.

But it is a dual campaign. Israeli innocents must die in order for Israel to be terrorized. But Lebanese innocents must also die in order for Israel to be demonized, which is why Hezbollah hides its fighters, its rockets, its launchers, its entire infrastructure among civilians. Creating human shields is a war crime. It is

also a Hezbollah specialty.

On Wednesday, CNN cameras showed destruction in Tyre. What does Israel have against Tyre and its inhabitants? Nothing. But the long-range Hezbollah rockets that have been raining terror on Haifa are based in Tyre. What is Israel to do? Leave untouched the launch sites that are deliberately placed in built-up areas?

Had Israel wanted to destroy Lebanese civilian infrastructure, it would have turned out the lights in Beirut in the first hour of the war, destroying the billion-dollar power grid and setting back Lebanon 20 years. It did not do that. Instead, it attacked dual-use infrastructure — bridges, roads, airport runways — and blockaded Lebanon's ports to prevent the reinforcement and resupply of Hezbollah. Ten-thousand Katyusha rockets are enough. Israel was not going to allow Hezbollah 10,000 more.

Israel's response to Hezbollah has been to use the most precise weaponry and targeting it can. It has no interest, no desire to kill Lebanese civilians. Does anyone imagine that it could not have leveled south Lebanon, to say nothing of Beirut? Instead, in the bitter fight against Hezbollah in south Lebanon, it has repeatedly dropped leaflets, issued warnings, sent messages by radio and even phone text to Lebanese villagers to evacuate so that they would not be harmed.

Israel knows that these leaflets and warnings give the Hezbollah fight-

ers time to escape and regroup. The advance notification as to where the next attack is coming has allowed Hezbollah to set up elaborate ambushes. The result? Unexpectedly high Israeli infantry casualties. Mo-

ral scrupulousness paid in blood. Israeli soldiers die so that Lebanese civilians will not, and who does the international community condemn for disregarding civilian life?