



Stop appeasing Abu Mazen

(Published in *Jerusalem Post*, July 4, 2007)

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Colaboraciones n° 1829

July 16, 2007

As events unfold in the wake of the Hamas Gaza takeover, there is a sense of *deja vu*. Despite the bloody consequences of our largely self-inflicted policies, we seem not to have learned any lessons from the bitter past.

Our leaders mindlessly repeat drivel about Mahmoud Abbas being a man of peace and moderation. Yet Abbas, who speaks with a forked tongue, heads a corrupt terrorist organization which is on the edge of unraveling.

Does our government believe that the Aksa Martyrs Brigade have become peaceful? That the PA-administered schools have ceased brainwashing children to become martyrs? That Abbas no longer sanctifies suicide bombers and ceases to pay pensions to their fami-

lies?

President George W. Bush may be obliged to refer to Abbas as a "peace partner," but must the prime minister of Israel be party to such a charade? More importantly, without receiving even a hint of assurance for the future, we have resumed paying the PA taxes and funds denied since the Hamas takeover.

We are being urged to remove checkpoints to provide greater Palestinian freedom of movement inside the West Bank, despite IDF protestations that this will endanger Israelis.

And, if that were not enough, we are now contemplating providing Abbas with additional weapons, including armored cars, despite knowing that arms previously provided to the Palestinians were ulti-

mately employed to murder Israelis. Indeed only a few months ago, Abbas was appealing to Hamas to stop directing their weapons against fellow Palestinians and unite with Fatah against the Israelis.

To top this insanity, the PA announced that Abbas's Aksa Brigades - which murdered more Israelis than Hamas and remains adamantly committed to promoting terrorism - will be absorbed into the Palestinian police force, which is already, per capita, the largest in the world.

With the standing of Abbas at an all-time low, we are also being implored not to make even minimal demands on him lest we "further weaken" him by making him appear a "collaborator."

And as a sign of good faith, we will release, gratis, 250 prisoners who could have been included in a future deal for the return of our kidnapped soldiers.

Yes, we should inform Abbas of our willingness to assist him. But not at the price of appeasement. There can be no further concessions without total reciprocity and genuine progress. Either Abbas commits himself to controlling terror or he should stew in his own juices.

It is public knowledge that billions of dollars, constituting more aid per capita than any other country, has been donated to the Palestinians by the international community. Yet large proportions of these handouts either disappeared into secret bank accounts or were diverted to finance

terror. We must therefore insist that controls are introduced to ensure that such funds be employed exclusively for the welfare of Palestinians.

Now is also an opportune time to deal with Hamastan and overcome the sense of impotence currently pervading our government. We continually hear the mantra "There is no answer to Kassam attacks."

The long-suffering citizens in Sderot, who have been transformed into refugees in their own country, are being told by our government to stoically adjust their lifestyles to a regime of daily "Russian-roulette" missile attacks, or evacuate.

This depressing state of affairs has its genesis in the abandonment of the principal axioms of Israeli defense strategy. They include the obligation of the IDF to protect its civilians, even at the price of painful casualties; confronting the enemy on his own territory; and never endangering Israeli civilian lives or compromising our security in order to placate international public opinion.

Alas, in addition to living in dreamland, our leadership has become obsessed with a desire to demonstrate to the world that we are "nice" people. But the "nicer" we are, the worse it gets.

Consider the bitter harvest reaped since our unilateral disengagement from Gaza. Contrast our position now with the days when Israel was regarded as a tough nation unwilling to compromise with terrorists,

and was respected and admired. Paradoxically, appeasement and unilateral concessions have simply paved the way for unprecedented waves of global anti-Israeli hatred and a rejuvenation of anti-Semitism.

Today there are opportunities to prove our mettle. Gaza is no longer "occupied" and is effectively a mini-state.

We should therefore dismiss the insane idea of parachuting supplies into Gaza. Could we visualize the allies during the Second World War parachuting supplies to German civilians for "humanitarian reasons"? We should proclaim that we are sensitive to the humanitarian plight of Palestinians in Hamastan, but so long as Hamas continues orchestrating suicide bombings and launching rockets on Israeli civilians, we will not lift a finger to help them.

On the contrary, unless the terror is reined in, we will start applying the screws. We should inform the world that we intend to respond as would any other nation whose citizens are under missile attack. While seeking to minimize innocent civilian casualties, if terrorists oblige us to choose between the lives of our citizens and those of Palestinians we have a moral obligation to defend our own.

Israel's deterrent effect must be restored. It is immoral, even obscene, for our government to consciously delay tough responses against the missile assaults. Must we await a strike on a kindergarten, hospital or

key infrastructure before acting? Only a miracle has averted a calamity to date.

In the wake of each individual missile attack, we should, in a calibrated manner, commence cutting off electricity, fuel and water to Gaza and seal border crossings. It is surely bizarre to continue supplying services to neighbors whose leaders orchestrate missile attacks and openly boast that their non-negotiable objective remains to kill "the descendants of apes and pigs."

We also need to regain control of the Philadelphi Corridor in order to contain the flow of lethal Iranian armaments pouring across the border.

Targeted assassinations should be intensified against those orchestrating the attacks, including political leaders. This will possibly incur civilian casualties and we will no doubt be accused of responding "disproportionately." However proportionality cannot be a prime consideration when endeavoring to create deterrence to offset ongoing unprovoked attacks on civilians, which are acts of war.

As to morality, even setting aside comparisons to the behavior of other nations, there comes a point in a confrontation where one says: Enough is enough. That point has long been passed. In war a government must be motivated by one objective: to protect its civilians and minimize its military casualties. That is consistent with international law, common sense and morality

and must override public relations. The message to Gaza is neither brutal nor heartless. It is simple and constructive: Stop directing missiles, or bear the inevitable consequences. In fact, a tough Israeli response may encourage Palestinians to exert pressure on their leaders and, in the long run, even save Palestinian li-

lives.

We must also dispel the illusion that appeasing jihadists can ever bear fruit. In fact, retreats and unilateral withdrawals under fire have without exception emboldened jihadists into intensifying violence, and have served as a prescription for greater subsequent conflagrations.