

Myths About the Israeli-Arab Conflict (II)

Is there such a thing as the “cycle of violence”?

In a recent one of our *hasbarah* (educating and clarifying) messages, we described how untruths and misinformation advanced by the Arabs have made many people, even well-intentioned ones, believe this propaganda. In that installment, we addressed the myth of “occupation” and its being the alleged cause of the conflict between Arabs and Israelis. Today, we look at another myth – repeated over and over again – that of the “cycle of violence.”

What are the facts?

The myth of the “cycle of violence.” Our government, the media and many people refer to and deplore the acts of violence raging between Israelis and Arabs. They believe that if that “cycle” could somehow be broken, peace and good will would prevail. But there is no such “cycle.” The Israelis, always exercising much restraint, are often forced to respond to such violence in order to protect their civilian population and their installations and infrastructure. Ask yourself how many Palestinian civilians have intentionally been killed by the Israelis? The answer is zero, nobody! And then ask yourself, how many Israeli civilians have been intentionally targeted and killed by the Arabs during that same period. The answer is: all of them! Any Palestinian civilian killed by Israel is an unintended victim. The Palestinians, on the other hand, target only Israeli civilians – shoppers in stores, teenagers in discotheques, celebrants at a bar mitzvah, a wedding, or a Passover Seder, or innocents riding in buses or other public transportation. The restraint of the Israelis in the face of never-ending provocation is almost unbelievable. What other country in the world would continue to suffer such sustained damage, such loss of life, without making every effort to eliminate its source? The sense of ethics that inspires the Israeli government and the Jewish people and, to be sure, also the pressure of public opinion, prevents Israel from unleashing its military potential and obliterating its tormentors once and for all. In the worst enemy attack on our country, the outrage of September 11, 2001, 3,000 Americans died. Our country, justifiably, went into full attack mode. Regrettably, our enemies are elusive, and we cannot bring our military

might to bear on them. We certainly would do so and do so mercilessly if we could. The over 1,000 civilian Israeli dead so far as a result of the current Palestinian “intifada,” correspond to about 65,000 American victims. Does anybody think that we would stand idly by if that were to happen to us? Of course not! What degree of forbearance does the world expect of Israel?

Evacuation of Gaza in vain.

Bowing to bad advice and the pressure of public opinion, Israel evacuated Gaza – not a single Israeli soldier or civilian remains there. But instead of the expected peace, violence erupted almost immediately. Israel was and continues to be subject to almost

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daily rocket attacks. In a most serious incident, the Gazans dug a tunnel into Israel, attacked an Israeli patrol, killed two Israeli soldiers and kidnapped one. An even more serious incident occurred on Israel’s northern border. In order to promote peace, Israel abandoned the southern Lebanon security strip, which it had maintained as a buffer against Hizbollah (the “party of God”). In a daring raid, Hizbollah invaded Israel, killed eight soldiers and kidnapped two. A violent war erupted as a result, during which Hizbollah launched thousands of sophisticated Iran-supplied rockets against Israel. It brought about enormous destruction and hundreds of dead in both Lebanon and Israel.

There is no “cycle of violence.” There is only the very measured response of the Israeli military to defend its civilian population and its vital installations against unending attacks by the Arabs. They are prepared to sacrifice their lives and that of their children and are willing to go to any lengths to achieve their goal of destroying Israel.

The Arab-Israel conflict has raged for almost 100 years. Israel has had to defend itself against attacks since the very day of its birth – and before. It has sustained casualties that, in proportion to its population, are far higher than that of any country in modern times, even those engaged in open warfare. The hatred of the Arabs against the Jews is bottomless. They will stop at nothing to inflict damage or, if possible, obliterate and “wipe Israel off the map.” The Palestinians live in abject misery, their economy is in shambles, and their youths, having not learned much more than the Koran, violence, and “martyrdom,” face a hopeless future. Had they accepted the offered partition of the country in 1948, or had they accepted the hand of friendship and peace that Israel has extended so many times since, they could now have had their own state, perhaps for as long as the Israelis – since 1948. They could have an advanced, peaceful and prosperous society, just as that of Israel, in partnership with and next to it. The concept of the “cycle of violence” would have never arisen.

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Facts and Logic About the Middle East
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