

*The Commentator*  
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**It's Hamas, stupid**  
**Lawrence J. Haas**

President Obama's strong vocal support for Israel's right to self-defense in the wake of its aerial bombardment of weapons sites in Gaza reflects an apparent, and welcome, evolution in Obama's thinking about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that contrasts sharply with his initial approach toward the Jewish State.

To his credit, the President resisted the traditional temptation of Western leaders and TV pundits, as exemplified by CNN's Piers Morgan a few days ago, to blame Israel for the stepped-up, Gaza-based rocket attacks of recent weeks.

Perhaps Obama knows what Morgan still must learn: that the rocket fire from Gaza reflects not the economic and political hardship of Gazans but, instead, the genocidal aspirations of Hamas and its terrorist partners.

"Israel has every right to expect that it does not have missiles fired into its territory," Obama said as he began his Asia trip. Jerusalem, he said, justifiably responded to "an ever escalating number of missiles that were landing not just in Israeli territory, but in areas that are populated. And there's no country on earth that would tolerate missiles raining down on its citizens from outside its borders."

Notably, Obama neither bemoaned Israel's November 14th killing of Hamas military commander Ahmed Jabari, who had the blood of hundreds of Israelis on his hands, nor pressured Jerusalem to avoid bombing raids that would invariably cause civilian deaths because of where Hamas hides its people and its weapons.

Contrast that with what Morgan said in his November 16th interview with Ron Prozor, Israel's ambassador to the United Nations, in prefacing a question about where the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was headed.

"This clear repression, oppression, whatever you want to call it on the Gaza Strip, these people are desperate," Morgan said with an anguished voice. "And when there are desperate people with desperate policy, and no hope, they often turn to terrorist groups, whoever, to foment their fury and anger."

Wrong, Piers.

The rocket fire from Gaza is driven not by Palestinian hardship, but by Hamas's Jew hating. Moreover, Hamas's strategy is designed not to help the people of Gaza but to exploit them; not to improve their lives but to ensure that more of them die in order to turn global opinion against Israel; not to achieve a Palestinian a state but to keep Gazans enslaved within a narrow strip of land.

As former Deputy National Security Advisor Elliott Abrams writes in the current *Weekly Standard*, “ Hamas leaders ... have a ‘policy’ on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and that it is not to prove they are effective negotiators in U.N. salons or efficient administrators of the statelet they now rule. They are not irrational, but they are terrorists, enthralled by blood, death, and martyrdom.”

Why else would Hamas not just accept, but actually cultivate the death of innocent civilians in Gaza?

Hamas hides its foot soldiers and weapons in homes, schools, mosques, and hospitals, ensuring that, despite Israel’s warnings to the Palestinian people to avoid the company of terrorists, its targeting of individual terrorists and weapons caches will unavoidably cause the collateral damage of civilian death.

Why else would Hamas be preparing the next generation of foot soldiers in its war with the Jewish State?

In Gaza’s high schools, Hamas’s Education Ministry launched a program for boys this year whose goals, according to an official poster, include, “Preparing the believing youth for a life of loyalty, honesty, faith, courage, sacrifice and love of jihad...; raising awareness of [the values of] resistance, in order to cultivate a generation of young people capable of serving the resistance, once they join it... and preparing the pupils in terms of faith and physical [fitness] to [serve as] resistance fighters.”

Why else would Hamas be nourishing Palestinian support for its current campaign by trumpeting destruction rather than statehood?

Palestinian websites in recent days aired a music video, “Strike a Blow at Tel Aviv,” that was “accompanied by still images of rockets being fired, a plane being shot out of the sky, and Israelis injured and bracing for imminent landing of rockets, among others,” the Middle East Media Research Institute reported.

Here are a few telling verses:

“Strike a blow at Tel Aviv.  
Strike a blow at Tel Aviv.  
Strike a blow at Tel Aviv and frighten the Zionists.  
The more you build it the more we will destroy it.

“Strike a blow at Tel Aviv.  
Strike a blow at Tel Aviv.  
You need to know, oh occupier, that the Palestinians won’t be humiliated.  
We don’t want no truce or solution...

“Strike a blow at Tel Aviv.

Strike a blow at Tel Aviv.  
We don't want no truce or bargain.  
We have sworn in Gaza only to wage resistance..."

For the global leaders and pundits who ask not just when the current flare-up will cease but, more broadly, when the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will end, here's the answer: when Israel no longer has an armed terrorist group, with genocidal aspirations, running a "statelet" on its border.

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