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Fool's Game

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The killing of civilians has always been a tragic byproduct of war — an end to that killing is the proper objective of a decent society. On that we can all agree. Blame for that killing is another thing. The Arab world blindly blames Israel. It stirs up passions in the Arab Street, and another generation of uneducated youth dwell in ignorance and hatred as their societies and economies continue to descend into ruin.

Does it matter to them that many of the civilians in Lebanon who were killed were used as shields and cover by terrorists who hid behind their skirts? Does it matter that they were prevented from taking shelter in a safer place by those who claim to be fighting for their freedom? Does it matter that Israeli raids come as a response against a prior rain of fire against Israeli civilians, without reason or provocation except a desire to destroy the Jewish state?

Hezbollah leaders proclaim that they are winning great victories against Israel much as they claimed that Israel's unilateral withdrawals from Lebanon and from Gaza were great victories for Islam. And the poor, benighted Arab masses believe them and celebrate in the streets. They do not realize that continuing to seek Israel's destruction is a fool's game; when threatened with annihilation, Israel is obliged to defend its borders and to prevent its enemies from ever again launching the kinds of attacks Hezbollah and Hamas started. Israel cannot afford again to face the risk of renewed attacks of terrorists supplied and financed by states committed to Israel's destruction. A cease-fire alone will not put that genie back in the bottle. If the world cannot see that logic it has a lot to learn.

A simple cease-fire that would permit Hezbollah to rearm and commence future assaults against Israel will send the message that Hezbollah has achieved a victory and that terrorism succeeds. It is a message America's enemies would welcome and may be expected to act upon.

The response of the Arab world and most of the international community reflects the disorder in those quarters. While most of the leadership of Arab countries disapprove of Hezbollah and would like to see it eliminated, few of them have said so publicly. Instead, they mouth praise for Hezbollah and offer moral support in an effort to placate the Arab masses. The Arab street has leapt to the defense of the terrorist outlaws and have exulted in the sending of unguided missiles and rockets against the citizens of Israel.

The sight of such bloodthirsty joy reveals the sickness of Arab society, which should more properly be hanging its head in shame. The purpose of Hezbollah and their ilk is to kill Jews and destroy the State of Israel in the name of Allah. Most Arabs world leaders and much of the international community reveal their hypocrisy by failing to support Israel's determination to deny a victory to Hezbollah in order to discourage a likely renewal of terror. Much of the world heaps criticism on Israel's strong defense, which may necessarily involve the killing of innocent Lebanese civilians. The blame for those deaths properly rests on the head of Hezbollah. Yet much of the world sees no difference between the terrorists who provoke the bloodshed and the Israelis who are engaged in an existential defense of the country. As pointed out elsewhere by Mort Zuckerman, it is the failure to distinguish between the arsonist and the firefighter.

The United States government and some of our allies do understand these great issues and properly have insisted that

any cease-fire must involve the termination of terror and guarantees that Hezbollah will be disarmed and will never again be in a position to commence at will assaults against Israel or its civilian population. If that is not done, the world can only expect renewal of the conflict that now rages.

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