

Hamas vs. Western civilization



Gaza is a significant battleground

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“Hey hey, ho ho, Western Civ has got to go.” That chant, frequently heard on American college campuses in the 1980s, protested courses on Greece, Rome, the Renaissance and the Enlightenment — the seeds from which the American experiment grew. Students were demanding a curriculum based on “multiculturalism,” the assertion that all civilizations are equal — with one less equal than others.

That would, of course, be the civilization that gave the world such revolutionary ideas as human rights, individual freedoms, representative democracy, and the selfdetermination of nations.

It’s also the civilization that first came to regard slavery and racism as evils and took steps to combat them.

Ignorant of that — or perhaps just ignoring it — champions of “social justice” soon declared Western civilization itself so malevolent that it, too, “has to go.”

And that, in brief, is how the illiberal left that now dominates on American campuses became an ally of anti-Western tyrants abroad.

Among them: Ali Khamenei, the supreme leader of Iran, whose ambition is to establish an Islamic empire to rival the great caliphates of the past and to defeat Western civilization.

A central tenet of his theology is that America, the West’s leader, is the “Great Satan,” and Israel, the lone outpost of Western values in the Middle East, is the “Little Satan.”

“When you chant ‘Death to America!’ it is not just a slogan,” Mr. Khamenei said in a speech last week. “It is a policy.”

On Oct. 7, Hamas, one of Tehran’s several pit bulls, demonstrated what such a policy looks like in practice: mass murder, rape, decapitation of infants. Hamas terrorists proudly recorded their barbarism on GoPro cameras (a Western invention) and posted the images on the internet (a Western invention).

Days later, Ghazi Hamad, a senior member of Hamas' politburo, told a Lebanese television interviewer: "We will repeat the October 7 attack, time and again, until Israel is annihilated."

This threat of genocide (a word coined in the West) is being parroted by Hamas supporters, some of whom chant "Gas the Jews!" (Australia), "2, 4, 6, 8, smash the Zionist settler state!" (Stanford University), and "From the river to the sea, Palestine shall be free!" (several venues).

That last chant refers to the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, between which lie Gaza — unfree under Hamas rule — and the West Bank — unfree under Palestinian Authority governance. There's also Israel, a free and imperfect democracy. (And what democracy isn't?)

So, what do Israel's enemies mean by "free"? They mean Jew-free. "Judenfrei"" is the word the Nazis used.

By the way, "from the river to the sea" is a loose translation from an Arabic chant: "From the water to the water, Palestine will remain Arab."

In other words, it is a call for ethnic cleansing. For the record, 25% of Israeli citizens are Arab, Muslim, Druze, Bedouin, and other minorities.

Taking a page from the Soviet propaganda playbook, Hamas supporters accuse Israelis of ethnic cleansing and genocide. The truth, of course, is that the populations of both Gaza and the West Bank have grown enormously over recent decades.

ILLUSTRATION BY GREG GROESCH

The war launched by Hamas has put the lives of Palestinians in Gaza in jeopardy. Israelis have dropped more than a million pamphlets and made more than 6 million phone calls advising Gaza residents uninterested in killing or dying to head south, away from Hamas' "center of gravity" in the northern section of the coastal enclave. Hamas prefers they stay and die. We are "proud to sacrifice martyrs," Mr. Hamad told the Lebanese TV interviewer. The use of human shields is a serious crime under international law (a Western concept).

The Biden administration, which has steadfastly supported Israel's right to selfdefense, has begun pressing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to declare temporary cease-fires. Mr. Netanyahu has said there will be no cessation of military operations "that does not include the release of our hostages." Among the hostages surviving (we hope) in Hamas' tunnels are infants and toddlers. And how exactly would a "humanitarian pause" work? Would Israeli troops in Gaza do crossword puzzles while keeping an eye out for terrorists popping out of

holes to shoot them? To further assist Gaza noncombatants' exodus from the north, Israeli forces last Saturday opened a humanitarian corridor.

Hamas attacked the Israelis with mortars and anti-tank missiles and shot Gaza residents who attempted to use the corridor. They then, of course, blamed the carnage on the Israelis. The more ground in Gaza that Israelis manage to clear, the more safe spaces there will be for noncombatants, and the more aid that can be supplied. Already, about 100 truckloads are arriving daily. Meanwhile, more than 200,000 Israelis have been displaced from communities near the Gaza and Lebanon borders — the biggest internal displacement in Israel's history. Northern Israel has been under sporadic attack from Hezbollah, Tehran's legion in Lebanon. For now, at least, Hezbollah appears reluctant to open a full-fledged second front.

I have a modest suggestion. Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh lives quite comfortably in Qatar. U.S. officials should ask Qatar's leaders to choose: Are you with us or against us?

If they are with us, they need to give Mr. Haniyeh an ultimatum: You have one week to get the hostages back from your Hamas friends.

Should that not happen, the U.S. would revoke Qatar's status as a "major non-NATO ally" and designate Qatar a state sponsor of terrorism. For Mr. Haniyeh, too, there must be consequences.

Of course, Hamas' surrender would save more lives more quickly. But I'm reminded of an old aphorism: "If you teach a cannibal to eat with a knife and fork, that's progress."

And Western civilization could use a little progress right now.

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