

Let's Not be Intimidated by the World

Giora Eiland, Yedioth Ahronoth, November 19, 2023

Heading Towards the Collapsing of Hamas

The debate over Israel's compliance with international demands to allow entry of fuel into Gaza reflects a fundamental conflict between Israel and the U.S. regarding the correct narrative.

According to the American narrative, there are two groups of people in Gaza. One is the Hamas fighters, who are brutal terrorists and must, therefore, die. Most of the people in Gaza belong to a second group, innocent civilians who suffer for no fault of their own. Therefore Israel must not only avoid harming them as much as possible but also act to make their lives easier.

The other, and more correct, narrative is as follows: Israel is not fighting a terrorist organization but against the State of Gaza. The State of Gaza is indeed under Hamas leadership, and this organization managed to mobilize all the resources of its state, the support of the majority of its citizens, and the absolute loyalty of its civil administration around Sinwar's leadership while fully supporting his ideology. In this sense, Gaza is very similar to Nazi Germany, where a similar process also took place. Being that this is the accurate description of the situation, so it is also correct to wage the war accordingly.

A war between states is not only won by military combat but also by the ability of one side to break the opposing side's system, and the economic ability, first and foremost the ability to provide energy, is of the utmost importance. The collapse of Germany at the beginning of 1945 was mainly due to the loss of Romania's oil fields, and once Germany didn't have enough fuel for its planes and tanks — the war was won.

Israel must, therefore, not provide the other side with any capability that prolongs its life. Moreover, we tell ourselves that Sinwar is so evil that he does not care if all the residents of Gaza die. Such a presentation is inaccurate since who are the "poor" women of Gaza? They are all the mothers, sisters, or wives of Hamas murderers. On the one hand, they are part of the infrastructure that supports the organization, and on the other hand, if they experience a humanitarian disaster, then it can be assumed that some of the Hamas fighters and the more junior commanders will begin to understand that the war is futile and that it is better to prevent irreversible harm to their families.

The way to win the war faster and at a lower cost for us requires a system collapse on the other side and not the mere killing of more Hamas fighters. The international community warns us of a humanitarian disaster in Gaza and of severe epidemics. We must not shy

away from this, as difficult as that may be. After all, severe epidemics in the south of the Gaza Strip will bring victory closer and reduce casualties among IDF soldiers. And no, this is not about cruelty for cruelty's sake since we don't support the suffering of the other side as an end but as a means.

The other side is given the option to end the suffering if they surrender. Sinwar will not surrender, but there is no reason for the Hamas militia commanders in the southern Gaza Strip not to surrender when they have no fuel and no water, and when the epidemics reach them as well, and when the danger to the lives of their women increases. The Israeli cabinet must take a harder line with the Americans and at least have the ability to say the following: as long as all the hostages are not returned to Israel, do not talk to us about the humanitarian aspects.

And yes, we believe that humanitarian pressure is also a legitimate means of increasing the chance of seeing the hostages alive. But we must not, absolutely must not adopt the American narrative that "permits" us to fight only against Hamas fighters instead of doing the right thing — to fight against the entire opposing system because it is precisely its civil collapse that will bring the end of the war closer. When senior Israeli figures tell the media, "It's either us or them," we should clarify the question of who is "them." "They" are not only Hamas fighters with weapons but also all the "civilian" officials, including hospital administrators and school administrators, and also the entire Gaza population that enthusiastically supported Hamas and cheered on its atrocities on October 7.

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