

Scott Horton: It's all about provoking your reaction



Palestinians search for bodies and survivors in the rubble of a residential building leveled in an Israeli airstrike, in Al Shati refugee camp Thursday, Oct. 12, 2023. Israel's retaliation has escalated after Gaza's

militant Hamas rulers launched an unprecedented attack on Israel Saturday, killing over 1,200 Israelis and taking captive dozens. Heavy Israeli airstrikes on the enclave has killed over 1,200 Palestinians. (AP Photo/Fatima Shbair)



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So wise up!

With terrorism, as with all asymmetric political action, “the action is in the reaction of the opposition,” as Saul Alinsky, the leftist activist, put it in his book *Rules for Radicals*.

This isn't conspiracy stuff, nor impossible “4th dimensional chess” – it's just plain, old 2-dimensional chess. That's all.

Hamas, al Qaeda, and similar groups slaughter civilians – beheaded babies or not, they certainly murdered hundreds and hundreds of innocent, civilian Israeli non-combatants in this one (including an extended family member of mine) just as they slaughtered thousands on September 11 – for a reason, not simply because they are angry or devils. It's a tactic. They are trying to provoke a reaction.

They are trying to make you angry, to make you hate, even drive you crazy. Yes – yes – for the purpose of making the more powerful force (i.e. the United States, Israel) do *even worse to their own people*, such as getting the U.S. to invade Afghanistan and getting Israel to bomb the Gaza strip. Not that al Qaeda was from Afghanistan, but that's where they were and that's who they knew were gonna get it. (Also, by the way, U.S. support for Israel's crimes in Palestine and Lebanon was a huge part of the motive for al Qaeda's war against the United States in the first place, including for some of the most important pilot hijackers and organizers of the plot.)

This is then meant to provoke still further counter-reactions. It “heightens the contradictions” as the commies used to say. It forces leaders of Muslim states and armed groups everywhere to take a stand. It destroys stability and negotiations and progress, radicalizes new groups and forces everyone back into the fight on one side or the other. It makes every sock-puppet princeling of the Gulf take a stand in support like the Ayatollah or sell out in silence in the most embarrassing way, like Crown Prince bin Salman, etc.

It's the same reason Bosnian Muslim forces butchered Serbs and Chechen Muslim forces butchered Russians and ISIS slaughtered Shi'ites: to provoke a worse crisis for everyone in the hopes that the overall situation changes to their advantage.

I would note that terrorism is usually as stupid as it is evil; see Bosnia, where they got less and less; Chechnya, Syria and Iraq Wars II and III where they lost outright. Osama's nemesis, the Saudi monarchy, still stands, and with as degenerate a self-worshiper in the Crown Prince position as he could have ever feared. Hamas may very well not survive this.

But for Israel to completely destroy them would require a level of violence that the civilian population of the Gaza strip, one half of them under 18 years old – all of them trapped with no where to go—simply cannot withstand. Hundreds have already been killed.

Ramzy Baroud argues that a land invasion of the strip will be a catastrophe for Israel too.

The longer this goes on, the greater the danger to the Israeli hostages as well.

By widening the war into a full-scale invasion of Gaza, the Israelis risk spreading the war to a full-scale uprising on the West Bank, a fight with Hezbollah in Lebanon or even northern Israel, which could then lead to things going sideways in Iraq – where George W. Bush installed a very Iran – and Hezbollah-friendly Shi'ite theocracy in power – and who-knows what.

Powerful Muslim states who are friendly to Israel, such as Turkey and Egypt, must be allowed to step in and play a negotiating role here. Stop reacting. And stop posturing like a bunch of little girls on TikTok. Pull the brakes before it's too late.

I know calling your congressmen feels like pissing in the wind. But do what you can to make your voice heard and call for cease-fire and talks as soon as possible.

Ultimately the Palestinians must have independence or citizenship. Otherwise, as Ariel Sharon's man, former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said, they're left with an untenable apartheid state.

And the United States should stop sharing in the responsibility for this shame immediately by ending all aid and military support for the occupation—and for that matter in all cases, everywhere.

Also, *USS Gerald Ford*: watch your six.

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