Israel can go all out against Hamas – with the world's backing

written by Meir Ben Shabbat | 27.10.2023

"People do not choose war; they are forced into it. Those who do not know how to submit and subordinate everything to the needs of the war, when there is no other option, are doomed. War is the ultimate test not only of strength but of the will to live." These words, by Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, were spoken a few months before the declaration of the state in 1948. They still resonate strongly, 75 years later.

Israel is at the beginning of a difficult and protracted war, in many respects a continuation of the War of Independence. The terrible price Israel paid upon entering the war is sufficient to provide it with the essential thing it needs to rebuild its deterrence and effect a fundamental change in Gaza: legitimacy at home and abroad for aggressive and protracted action, the justification to mobilize all willpower, the readiness for sacrifice, and unwavering resolve over time.

The Israeli society, in its entirety, has proved its mettle on both the front and rear. Everyone shares the over-arching goal: We must win.

The time that has passed, the actions already taken, and the numerous discussions on the many details related to the challenges of the war should not divert us from the proper goals that have been set: the elimination of Hamas' rule, the destruction of its military capabilities, and maximum effort to bring back the Israeli captives held in the Gaza Strip.

It's a process; not an event

Achieving the goals that Israel has defined will take a long time. The elimination of Hamas' rule and the destruction of its military capabilities will not be achieved in a single defined and limited operation. They will be the results of a process that will involve many prolonged and continuous actions. It is important to formulate plans and manage expectations accordingly.

Disable the centers of power of the Hamas government

Among the objectives, it appears that the elimination of Hamas' rule is the least difficult to achieve. The centers of power of the government include government ministries, communication facilities, police stations, the internal security mechanism, municipal authorities, and other command and control centers.

Eliminating these, through physical attacks or other means, will severely impact Hamas' ability to manage the situation and control the population. This will indeed increase the chaos in the strip and also the pressure on the humanitarian front, but it is an essential step towards the defined goal.

Qatar – Hast thou murdered and also inherited?

The tweet from National Security Council head Tzachi Hanegbi on the importance of Qatar's efforts to promote "humanitarian solutions" provides a glimpse into some of the dilemmas that the political echelon faces.

Israel, rightly, seeks to maximize the chances of the quick release of the captives. The path to this passes through Qatar, the sheikhdom that hosts the leaders of the murderous terrorist organization supports them and allows *Al-Jazeera* to influence the Arab street in their favor.

Qatar identifies a dual opportunity in the reality that has arisen – to save Hamas from Israel's hands and to upgrade its diplomatic status while gaining points for its humanitarian activity. While it is part of the problem, it places itself as part of the solution.

This is not just a symbolic matter: Hamas will try to exploit Qatar's involvement to buy time, create difficulties, and disrupt Israel's operational moves. It can be assumed that the political echelon and the security establishment are aware of these risks and have accordingly determined the nature of the cooperation with Qatar.

Humanitarian assistance: The bare minimum

The humanitarian aid that Israel allows for the population is intended to alleviate the political pressures on this matter. The benefit that Hamas derives from this is clear. First and foremost, from its perspective, it relieves it of concern for the population – "the world takes care of the civilians, and I take care of myself."

Moreover, it can provide a source for supplies and provisioning.

For these reasons, and to avoid compromising the effectiveness of the siege on Hamas, it is advisable to allow humanitarian assistance to a very limited extent and under scrutiny to ensure what goes in, how much, and where.

This goes against the basic generosity we have all been brought up on, but in this war, we must view a siege as one of the means of warfare. No less than that.

Do not belittle the enemy; do not make it look stronger than it is

The Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency) has done a good job in disseminating the interrogation videos of Hamas terrorists who participated in attacks on Israel and survived. Beyond the authentic descriptions of the heinous acts they committed, one could be struck by the terrorists' despicable nature, their lust for blood, and their financial greed, which served as an additional incentive for their actions. They also had difficulty justifying the disparity between their actions and Islamic religious precepts, especially since their superiors, who did not put themselves at risk, were giving the orders. In no way should we underestimate this enemy, but their conduct should have us disabused of the notion that Hamas has managed to create deterrence through its horrific slaughter.

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