The big chill sets in, once again

written by David M. Weinberg | 29.03.2024

In June 2014, then-US president Barack Obama green-lighted a Fatah-Hamas unity coalition, leaving Israel ominously isolated. Israel stood by its solitary self in absolute opposition to the government cunningly created by Mahmoud Abbas and Ismail Haniyeh.

Just about every Western leader was prepared to swallow the Palestinian deception in which "technocrats" were to run government ministries as stand-ins for the real power brokers in Palestinian politics (i.e., Hamas). Just about everybody was prepared to play dumb and pretend that Iranian-backed jihadists committed to the genocide of the Jewish People in the Land of Israel weren't going to be the recipients of Western aid and diplomatic cooperation.

Nobody was prepared to admit that the Palestinian Authority had gone defunct; that Palestinian statehood had become a hazardous idea; and that Israel had no genuine Palestinian partner for a peaceful two-state scenario.

Obama and the Europeans were unable to acknowledge any of this since they had invested so heavily in the PA and Abbas, and it was so much simpler to vilify Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu as the obstacle to peace.

Indeed, distancing America from Israel had been Obama's modus operandi from day one. He infamously warned in March 2014 that Israel could expect to face international isolation and sanctions from countries and companies across the world if Netanyahu failed to endorse his bid for Palestinian statehood.

He proceeded to lament the fact that America, in his words, did not any longer have absolute power in this "diffuse" world, and that he would not be able to "manage" the coming anti-Israel fallout.

There wasn't really much anguish in Obama's voice. Obama wasn't too upset about Israel's "impending isolation" or the fact that America "would have reduced influence in issues that are of interest to Israel."

It was all very artificial. Obama was merely feigning dismay at the possible isolation of Israel, while in practice purposefully paving the way towards Israel's

isolation and an American distancing from Israel.

The give-away was Obama's total failure to place any responsibility on Palestinian leaders for retardation of peace. There was not a smidgeon of answerability that he attached to Abbas or Hamas. He had nothing to say about Hamas stockpiling of Iranian missiles and RPGs. He issued no warnings of PA diplomatic isolation or economic collapse if Abbas did not compromise and advance the peace process. Only to Netanyahu.

But of course, Obama truly "wished he had the influence" to arrest the isolation of Israel. Yeah, right. The big chill was on.

The situation today is a repeat of the Obama era

THIS HISTORY is relevant to the current moment when Israel is being threatened once again with "international isolation" and even an arms boycott by a US administration filled with Obama acolytes.

US-Israel relations are indeed at a watershed moment following the administration's decision this week to abstain on (i.e., not veto) a rotten UN Security Council resolution that thoroughly delegitimizes Israel's necessary and continuing war effort to eliminate Hamas in Gaza.

Next will be a long series of demonizing and criminalizing anti-Israel resolutions in UN agencies and international courts. (The Human Rights Council discussed four vicious reports on Israel this week and is to front several resolutions including a finding of "genocide" supposedly being committed by Israel against Palestinians in Gaza.)

Internationalizing the conflict and criminalizing Israel always was a central Palestinian strategy. Alas, US President Joe Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken are now acquiescing in this horrible scheme, in order to wedge Israel into their fantasy framework for a swift, dangerously indecisive, end to the Gaza war.

This includes a gambit for "revitalized" Palestinian statehood and a magnanimous soft deal with Iran that magically will make all regional wars go away, from Sana'a to Beirut and Rafah.

Like Obama, Biden and Blinken will be "unable to manage" or mount a defense of

Israel if Israel does not bend to their will.

The big chill again coming from Washington is uncomfortable, but Israel has no choice but to resist. It is not an exaggeration to say that Israel stands at a moment of grand diplomatic inflection, a pivotal moment with historical implications for Israel's sovereignty and long-term security.

At issue is not just the question of how and when to destroy the remaining four Hamas brigades in Rafah in Gaza. Nor is the issue humanitarian aid to Palestinians trapped in the hell created by Hamas.

At issue is the regional and international perception of Israel as a country capable of resoundingly winning an existential war of self-defense; a war against the first Muslim Brotherhood state ever established (Hamas in Gaza), a state that has genocidal plans for Israel long into the future again and again – unless eliminated.

At issue is the regional and international perception of Israel as a country with the determination to rout the Iranian-backed Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Hezbollah proxies that have forced Israel into repeated rounds of draining warfare, and which now have depopulated and destroyed significant parts of southern and northern Israel.

At issue is the regional and international perception of Israel as a nation that cannot be steamrolled into diplomatic or military defeat; that is able to act on its essential security imperatives and free all of Israel (including Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Judea and Samaria) of terrorist violence and rocket attacks.

At issue are regional and international perceptions of Israel as a society that is unified, resolute, and just; whose moral compass in wartime is unwavering; and whose partnership is reliable.

WHAT THE Biden administration all of a sudden does not seem to understand (perhaps due to narrow electoral reasons), is that Israelis are mobilized and united to unambiguously win, with crushing certainty. This is not just "Netanyahu's war," as Western wags have slurred.

For all of Biden's true personal commitment to Israel, his administration also does not seem to comprehend that Western civilization itself is under attack from radical Islamist barbarians – with the Hamas war on Israel (alongside Hezbollah

and Houthi attacks) being only the frontline of a broader assault on “Rome,” i.e., all the West.

This is truly a world war that cannot be nicely dialed down by accommodationist diplomacy. And this is a war that best can be won if Washington stands by natural allies like Israel instead of punishing them.

Israel cannot knuckle under. Israel stands quite alone, but what is new about that? “Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations” (Numbers 23:9). Being “unreckoned” is unnerving but familiar territory for the People and the State of Israel.

This is not a desirable situation, nor should Israel accept this as a permanent reality. There is much Israel must do to overcome gaps between its perception of the immediate and long-term challenges and those of other nations. There is much that Israel can and will do by resolute action that will force a grudging, positive reassessment by other nations, in due time.

Published in The Jerusalem Post 29.03.2024 and Israel Hayom 31.03.2024.