The laundromat trap

written by David M. Weinberg | 31.05.2024

A Washington-led Western laundry service is working overtime to rinse and sanitize a series of soiled, failed concepts and press them on Israel. Israel must resist since these would lead to long-term strategic defeat.

Among the laundered concepts are a "revitalized Palestinian Authority," "international security guarantees," "accommodation with Iran," and "regional integration." The first is a fantasy, the second ridiculous, the third ruinous, the fourth premature.

Relying on Mahmoud Abbas' corrupt and impotent, poisonous and terror-glorifying, Palestinian Authority as a ruling alternative to Hamas would be insane. The PA is both incapable and unwilling to be the moderating force in Palestinian politics that everybody is yearning for. The notion that it can be sufficiently "revitalized" or "reformed" and then be an anchor of the "day after" in Gaza is indeed a fantasy.

And yet, old, hackneyed peace-processor professional elite that brought us the misguided Oslo Accords and unilateral withdrawal paradigms is back at it, promoting a conjured-up "moderate Palestinian Authority leading to establishment of a demilitarized Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip that does not pose a security threat to Israel." Just see the opinion article on these pages earlier this week by the managing director of the Tel Aviv-based Institute for National Security Studies.

As if 30 years of Oslo peace processing in any way moderated the Palestinian national movement; as if 30 years of Palestinian governments in Judea, Samaria and Gaza have led to anything but the most militarized and armed-to-the-teeth Palestinian authorities ever imagined.

"International security guarantees" are being bandied about for a host of arenas. For example, the Philadelphi Corridor along the Egypt-Gaza border, and southern Lebanon. European Union cops (instead of Israeli or Egyptian troops) supposedly would halt the smuggling of weapons into Gaza, and UN forces purportedly would ensure the withdrawal of Hezbollah forces 10 or 20 or 40 kilometers back from the border with Israel.

Right. Been there, done that, tried that. International forces of any and all types have failed to provide real security for Israel.

Accommodation with Iran was Obama administration policy and clearly is the Biden administration's goal too. This has led to near-nuclear-breakout status for Teheran, alongside the most aggressive Iranian hegemonic march across the Middle East. This week, Washington acted to prevent IAEA criticism of Iran's latest nuclear violations and advances – which are so egregious and frightening that even European countries wanted to scold Iran.

But to mollify the Iranians and get them to call-off their Houthi and Hezbollah proxies, the US wants Israel to ceasefire in Gaza and ignore the shattering moment for regional and international insecurity of a nuclear-bomb equipped Iran.

Regional integration is the new scaled-down euphemism for "normalization" of Saudi-Israeli relations. Integration is something less than full peace between the countries, a thingamajig that according the US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken would enable construction of a "more potent regional coalition against Iran."

All Israel needs to do to bring about this blessed but still backhanded union is end its war against Hamas and offer a "credible pathway" to Palestinian statehood including Palestinian Authority governance in Gaza as an alternative to Hamas. And then, by and by, Israeli hostages held by Hamas hypothetically will be released, Hamas' Nukhba terrorists will disappear never to fight another day, Palestinian terrorist strongholds in Jenin, Nablus and more will dissipate into thin air, Hezbollah's Radwan forces will retreat from Israel's northern border, the Houthis of Yemen will end their assault on global shipping lanes, and other magical goodies that help Biden get reelected (like a massive Saudi cut in oil prices) will appear too.

I'm all for peace with Saudi Arabia and a coordinated regional front against Iran, but not at the price stipulated and dictated by this administration, and not at the current moment.

The main problem with all the above concepts coming out of the Washingtonian and western European laundromat is that they squelch and sideline the most important strategic goal of the moment, which is Israeli victory; the necessity of

crushing Israeli victory over Hamas and Hezbollah. Without that, Israel's deterrent power is forever shot to hell, and no stable peace can come to the Middle East, never mind to Gaza.

Thus, gambits for "revitalized" Palestinian statehood (and planning for rehabilitation of Gaza) and magnanimous soft deals with Iran that magically will make all regional wars go away from Saana to Beirut and Rafah – are dangerous. They distract from the central, necessary goals of this war; in fact, they detract from Israel's chances of winning decisively.

Who will rule Gaza once Hamas is annihilated? What is the endgame? I don't know. This is going to be a long war, as Israel peels away and destroys layer after layer of Hamas military capabilities. Israel is rightfully fixated on its entrance and victory strategy, not on exit strategies and Palestinian rehabilitation.

In fact, the demand that Israel answer these questions now must be rebuffed, because it is meant to pointedly prevent Israel from doing what needs to be done in Gaza – outright military victory.

Alas, the world seems hell-bent on emasculating Israel, of preventing Israel from achieving its necessary and justified war goals of crushing Hamas and restoring Israel's regional deterrent power.

The emasculation begins with small matters like insisting that Israel's "primary goal" must be provision of humanitarian aid to an enemy population in wartime, which is an absurdity never broached before in the history of wars.

It continues further with American attempts to micromanage IDF operations, neighborhood by neighborhood, house-by-house, bullet-by-bullet; handcuffing Israel and driving it, G-d forbid, into another disastrous draw against Hamas.

The debilitation of Israel continues yet still with arrogant moves to unilaterally recognize Palestinian statehood and anoint the decrepit Palestinian Authority as a stabilizing force in Gaza. It continues with moves to deny arms and munitions to Israel (while unlocking tens of billions of dollars in funds for the ayatollahs of Iran).

IT IS NOT an exaggeration to say that Israel stands at a moment of grand diplomatic inflexion, a pivotal moment with historical implications for Israel's

sovereignty and long-term security.

Again, at issue is not (just) the question of how and when to destroy four remaining Hamas brigades in Rafah in Gaza. Nor is the issue more 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 Moslem Brotherhood state ever established (Hamas in Gaza), a state which 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 is 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.

Finishing-off Hamas and maintaining long-term control of a security envelope including Judea, Samaria, and Gaza is an essential goal that justifies Israeli defiance of the world. The State of Israel does not shrink from long and knotty journeys.

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