

## BRAMHALL'S WORLD

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# Defeating Hamas is must for Israel & the world

**S**keptics may question Israel's ability to defeat Hamas yet absolute defeat is not only possible but a necessity. Even barbaric, tyrannical forces like Nazi Germany or the Islamic State, can be eliminated with the appropriate use of power. Total destruction of entities renders the idea behind it ineffective, but ideas, starting with Nasserism and ending with ISIS, can be destroyed, too.

The Japanese militarist ideology in World War II was completely uprooted not only because of the atomic bomb but also because the bomb symbolized the total failure of the ideas. Post WWII, the rehabilitation included reeducation of the extreme ideologies found in Germany and Japan that most supported during the war. Both countries have been considered the most pacifist for decades now.

More importantly for our purposes, at the current stage defeating Hamas is not an option, but a necessity and an opportunity that is unlikely to return. Any other outcome that would leave Hamas beaten but undefeated would be a victory for it and its allies specifically, for jihadi culture at large. In such a case, the devastating consequences will reverberate far beyond Israel's borders.

The question of victory has come up at the end of every confrontation with

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Hamas since 2008 back in Operation Cast Lead. The answers were vague. Israel saw its strikes on Hamas an expression of its clear military advantage and determined the political achievement in "deterring Hamas" and increasing the periods of peace from one round to another.

What the Israeli security establishment itself characterized as the war between wars but without victory. On the other hand, Hamas, in its long-term jihadist concept, actually saw its survival in these rounds as intermediate victories on the way to the great victory that will collapse Israel. The Israeli strategic mistake was to see this concept as empty rhetoric, rather than a long-term plan that brought Hamas to the capacity it demonstrated on Oct. 7.

This became evident through the Muslim razzia of unconstrained violence, rape, and looting, in the tradition of Muhammad – proved again that Hamas, Islamic governance, and the Palestinian movement are addicted to violence. With a painful realization in retrospect – Hamas did indeed win by its very survival

each round, which allowed it to grow stronger.

This time, repeating the mistakes of the past will not end in another lull until the next clash, but will lead to a strategic disaster that its shock waves will be felt far beyond Israel's borders. Without a decisive destruction of Hamas, the people of southern Israel will not return to their homes and the trust in the state's ability to defend Israelis will be undermined.

The goal of the pro-Iranian Resistance Axis to break the spirit of Israel from within will be practically fulfilled. Hamas will grow stronger in the West Bank and probably also among radical Arab circles in Israel. Regionally, the strengthening of the pro-Iranian axis will weaken the pro-Western Arab countries, which will have to deal with a successful and dangerous ideological alternative.

Western countries will need to deal with a victorious combination of Islamic Jihadism with left-wing radicalism that already challenges the existing order and is sweeping the streets. Globally, Israeli failure will also be a defeat of the pro-American camp to the Russian, Chinese and Iranian camp which is already involved in the war with weapons, diplomacy and even spreading antisemitic propaganda.

Therefore, despite the military

challenge and the expected international criticism, Israel must take advantage of the current moment that is unlikely to return and bring about a strategic change. The elimination of Hamas will remove the most negative actor in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the past 30 years. Its unequivocal defeat will also present the idea of uncompromising jihad as a failure, and perhaps lead to its weakening similar to what no less strong ideas experienced like the Nazirite pan-Arabism that sank after the 1967 war.

Such a development will also have a positive effect on Israel's internal stability and its regional position as a country friendly to its moderate neighbors, and a threatening bully towards its enemies. The defeat of Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad will also dismantle a central pillar of the pro-Iranian axis of resistance that has been the main military challenge to Israel for decades, and will make clear to Hezbollah and Iran the limitations of their power.

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