**Grave mistake**

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Israel and the United States are not only diplomatically isolated, but their governments are out of touch with their own people. As Israel prepared to launch its ground invasion of Gaza, a Maariv poll of Israelis found that public support for an immediate large-scale ground offensive of Gaza had fallen from 65 per cent on October 17th to only 29 per cent a week later.

Israelis, like the rest of the world, are watching the horrors of the massacre in Gaza, and have realized that their government has no real plan beyond massive, indiscriminate violence for its stated goal of destroying Hamas, which may well be unachievable no matter how many Israeli soldiers, prisoners captured on October 7 and Palestinian civilians it is ready to sacrifice.

In the United States, a Data for Progress poll, published on October 20, found that 66 per cent of Americans wanted their government to “call for a ceasefire and a deescalation of violence in Gaza,” and to “leverage its close diplomatic relationship with Israel to prevent further violence and civilian deaths.”

Support was across party lines, but, for a Democratic administration and Democratic members of Congress, the 80 per cent of Democrats who agreed with the poll’s statement should have been a wake-up call. Evidently they slept through the alarm, as Congress passed a bill promising unconditional military support for Israel’s campaign in Gaza by 412 votes to 10 on October 24, a green light for the anticipated escalation that followed.

By October 30, only 18 members of Congress had signed the resolution introduced by Rep. Cori Bush calling for an “immediate de-escalation and ceasefire.” The new House Speaker Mike Johnson has pledged that the first piece of binding legislation he will put to the floor is one to spend $14 billion to resupply Israel with weapons, a bill that is likely to sail through with overwhelming support from both parties.

The impotence of the US government to contain the chaos its policies have unleashed can hardly be exaggerated. The US embassy in Beirut has posted a message to all US citizens to leave Lebanon immediately. It says, “You should have a plan of action for crisis situations that does not rely on US government assistance,” and tells them they will have to sign a promissory note to reimburse the US government if it helps to evacuate them.

So the results of the US government’s massive investments in the power to kill and destroy have left it unable to protect or help its own citizens around the world. It instead directs them to a State Department web page titled “What the Department of State Can and Can’t Do in a Crisis.”

The current international isolation of the United States stands in sharp contrast to the way that Biden’s defeat of Trump in 2020 was welcomed around the world. Biden promised a new era of US diplomacy, an end to US wars in the Middle East, and renewed international cooperation on the most serious problems facing the world.

Instead, his policies are the worst of all worlds, continuing Trump’s ratcheting up of military spending and his illegal sanctions against Iran, Cuba and a dozen other countries, while shifting Trump’s Cold War with Russia and China into overdrive, and now fueling and escalating catastrophic proxy wars in Ukraine and Palestine.

But alternatives to American ‘leadership’ are finally emerging. The UN Security Council is immobilized by self-serving US and Russian vetoes, and exclusive rich boys’ clubs like the G7 and the World Economic Forum have only further entrenched neocolonialism and inequality. But now the world is turning to more representative fora like the UN General Assembly, the G20, G77, BRICS and regional groupings like the African Union, ASEAN and CELAC to more honestly debate our common problems and find new ways to solve them.

As the world comes together to build a post-neocolonial, multipolar world, US propaganda is losing its power to shape the way people look at each new crisis. Israeli and US officials, including Biden, have done their best to cast doubt on the death toll in Gaza, but these numbers are meticulously documented by Palestinian health authorities and accepted by the World Health Organization, UN agencies and NGOs that work there.

US officials and media are more inclined to listen to Israeli officials than Palestinian ones, but this only increases US isolation by making it complicit in Israeli propaganda, both in fact and in the eyes of people and governments around the world.

King Abdullah of Jordan, President Sisi of Egypt and Palestinian leader Abu Mazen canceled a meeting with Biden after Israel apparently killed hundreds of people with what appeared to be an air-burst bomb, as they sheltered at the Anglican Church’s Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza City. Biden validated Abdullah, Sisi and Abu Mazen’s decision by doing exactly as they feared and publicly claiming that “the other team” was responsible for the hospital bombing.

While Palestinian officials have identified over 8,000 people killed in Gaza, Israeli officials have so far only identified 933 of the 1,300 or 1,400 people they say were killed in the Palestinian attack on October 7th.

The Ha’aretz newspaper in Israel has a web page with photos, names, ages and some personal details of the people killed in Israel who have been identified. At the prompting of the Israeli military, many Western politicians and media have painted the Palestinian attack as a massacre of civilians, so it may come as a surprise to see that at least 361 of the 933 dead so far identified were in fact soldiers, police and security officers.

But Hamas, Islamic Jihad and other Palestinian fighters also killed hundreds of civilians on October 7, as surely as Israel’s air strikes have killed thousands of civilians in Gaza. The prisoners they took back to Gaza also included both soldiers and civilians.

Ha’aretz’s records also raise questions about another story that has been widely repeated by Western media and politicians, including President Biden, which is that Israeli soldiers found 40 dead babies who had been decapitated by Hamas. There are 7 children below the age of 10 among the 572 civilian dead identified in Ha’aretz, but the youngest was 4 years old, not a baby. As with all these questions, we don’t know the answers, but we should be skeptical of unverified atrocity claims, especially since Israel has lied about previous war crimes and resisted independent, international investigations of them.

Since the fall of the Soviet Union left the United States with no rival to act as a check on its leaders’ unbridled and often unrealistic ambitions for global power, the US has squandered a historic chance to build a peaceful, just and sustainable country, with shared prosperity for us and our neighbors around the world.

Excerpted: ‘US Stands Isolated in Backing Gaza Massacre’.

Courtesy: Counterpunch.org