**Hamas in the Driving Seat**

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November 3, 2023

Israel is a settler colonial state. Zionist Israel is a racist, xenophobic and paranoid society which is full of hate against Palestinians.

Israel presents an entirely different image to the world with a four fold strategy: through the Jewish hold on pop culture, Arabs and Muslims were always portrayed as barbaric and violent; the western news media posited Israel as the victim and Palestinians as the terrorists; a holocaust industry was created to open doors for Jews everywhere and to create a soft spot for them, in western hearts; and finally a strong Israeli lobby was nurtured in the US, which diplomatically, financially, technologically, academically and militarily facilitated Israel.

Hamas – formed in 1987 – ineffectively resisted the Israeli occupation, while being labeled terrorists.

Hamas has now come of age, due to social media being instructive and educational. Hamas employed the OODA loop (Observe, Orient, Decide, Act) and brilliantly pushed Israel’s buttons. It is now in the driving seat.

The Hamas’ strike served multiple purposes: in one fell swoop it struck a huge blow to the stellar reputation of the IDF and Mossad; it caught the world’s attention, and has kept it riveted to the Palestinian cause for almost a month now; it has intimidated the IDF with its labyrinth of tunnels, daring it to come get it; and finally it has shown that the old school battle tactics trump hi-tech.

Israel is a tiny country planted in Arab lands, through Jewish terrorism and western imperialism. In 2010, Israeli historian and author Moshe Zimmermann, had stated, “Jewish history lets them (Israelis) draw the conclusion that refraining from the use of intimidation and control means weakness and catastrophe.”

The Palestinian genocide has thrust the movement to boycott, divest from, and sanction Israel, called BDS for short, into the spotlight again.

Israel hence over-reacted to the Hamas strike and refuses to negotiate with Hamas for the hostages. Israelis kept repeating sinister propaganda about Hamas fighters, only to be refuted by social media. Hamas then leveraged Israel’s propaganda frenzy for its own benefit. Hamas showcased two of its impressive fighters to the world, who could pass for US Navy SEALs. They accompanied two elderly hostage ladies, like dutiful grandsons. One lady shook the hand of the Hamas fighter and said Shalom or peace to him. She later spoke of her gentle treatment: simple but powerful optics.

Realizing the danger social media posed to Israel, electricity and internet connection was cut off from Gaza. International human rights organizations said that they could not communicate and coordinate due to it. Elon Musk immediately stepped up and offered to provide satellite based internet access. This infuriated the Israeli state minister who threatened to do everything in his power to prevent that.

The world watched this sequence unfold on social media, and it delivered a huge blow to Israel’s moral standing.

Only a moral military fighting a just war is a strong military. Israel’s claim to moral conduct is about giving advance warning of ten minutes to the inhabitants, before hitting a residential building with a missile.

Israel has been using its soldiers to terrorize families in their homes and men, women and children on the streets. Israel had upped its surveillance and cyber surveillance game. Every smart phone that enters Palestine, comes through Israel and is bugged by Israeli authorities. Israel mainly depends on IDF bullying and hi-tech instruments to occupy Palestine. The IDF mainly comprises reservists, unfit for combat.

General Lord Dannatt, the former British Army chief stated that Hamas have been “preparing for years” for an Israeli invasion and that the Gaza tunnels and the hostages kept therein, have created extremely difficult fighting conditions for Israel.

However, face saving is imperative for the IDF, hence the carpet bombing and a delayed limited ground offensive – mainly for domestic political consumption.

However, the strong US and western backing of Israel is ultimately its defense. Jewish American academics John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt exposed the Israel Lobby’s influence on the U.S. Foreign Policy. Israel’s other die-hard supporters are the Christian Zionists. They support the state of Israel to usher in the second coming of Jesus Christ (PBUH). Christian Zionists wield considerable political power, since even the POTUS Joe Biden is one.

About 1500 Hamas fidayeen fighters who were martyred on October 7, sacrificed their lives with the aim to neutralize these powerful lobbies. The Israeli overreaction which has taken over 10,000 Palestinian lives so far, is inflaming western public sentiments against Israel and their own governments.

The American Jewish lobby who benefit most from the cultural pluralism in the United States -the land of opportunity – uses the fruits of that opportunity to further the cause of an apartheid and genocidal Israel.

However, Jews outside the circles of political power, are now very vocal about condemning Israel’s genocide. Jewish academics, intellectuals, journalists, authors, social activists, actors, students and common citizens are increasingly speaking out against Israel. They include American, Israeli-American, British and even a few Israeli jews. A large mainly Jewish crowd of over a thousand blocked the Grand Central subway station in New York City, this week. Many wore T-shirts with “Not in my name,” printed on them. This was the third such Jewish protest calling for a ceasefire, and the numbers keep growing.

Former UK Supreme Court Jewish president Lord Neuberger and seven other high-profile Jewish lawyers wrote an open letter in the Financial Times. They urged that “collective punishment is prohibited by the laws of war” and that “international law requires combatants to ensure minimum destruction to civilian life and infrastructure.” They also condemned dehumanizing language.

Protest and rebuke by the Jewish diaspora destroys the good old Israeli trope that conflates any criticism of Israel with anti-semitism. Israel can also no longer use the holocaust to garner western sympathies, when other Jews condemn its actions. Finally, American Jewish intellectual standing and activism credentials boost the Palestinian cause.

The Black Lives movement, South Africans and the Irish have found intersectionality with the Palestinians, in addition to feminists. As more groups join the foray, the Palestinian cause will gain traction in mainstream America.

The world is turning against Israel. Pro-palestinian protests are taking place in Europe and the US. The largest ever public demonstration against Israel in the US, is scheduled for November 4, 2023, as people will arrive from all over the country.

When the first condemnation of Israel came from Harvard, the protesting students were doxxed and intimidated into silence. However, on Oct. 25, college students at more than 100 campuses across the United States and Canada staged a walkout to call for a ceasefire in Gaza and protest their universities’ responses and ties to the ongoing unrest in the Middle East.

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Before the Hamas strike, people in the US were busy in their own lives, oblivious of Palestine. A 2022 Pew survey found that 84% of Americans were largely unaware of the BDS campaign launched in 2005. However, now Americans on X (formerly Twitter) and Tiktok, are using the hashtag #BDSMovement. People are naming brands with ties to Israel and calling for boycotts. Social media clips of an Israeli McDonald’s offering free food to the Israeli military, led to a boycott of America’s favorite eatery.

BDS takes direct inspiration from the South African anti-apartheid struggle and the US civil rights movement, which effectively used boycotts.

US advocacy groups are aligned with BDS, including the Jewish Voice for Peace, Democratic Socialists of America, and the US Campaign for Palestinian Rights. Public figures who have expressed support for BDS include musicians, artists, writers, and prominent activists such as Naomi Klein, and Arundhati Roy.

BDS’ three core demands are: that Israel end its occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem; give full rights to the Palestinian citizens of Israel; and allow Palestinian refugees to return to their homes.

Personal actions, like boycotting certain goods and companies, creates hype but causes limited harm to Israel. A 2015 Rand Corporation report estimated a $15 billion GDP loss due to nonviolent Palestinian resistance, which includes BDS – a tiny portion of Israel’s present-day GDP of over $500 billion.

The call to divest is about not investing in the Israeli economy. No business with Israeli companies and firms, and no investment of capital, from investors, banks and pension funds. In the past, pension funds in Luxembourg, New Zealand, and Norway divested from Israel, thanks to BDS.

The calls for sanctions against Israel are the most important. They include an embargo on providing weapons and military aid, and also a cessation of trade and diplomacy with Israel. A recent American CBS News poll showed that fewer than half of respondents wanted to send weapons and supplies to Israel. Momentum in this regard is the most effective weapon against Israel.

This week Bolivia cut diplomatic ties with Israel, alleging crimes and human rights abuses in Gaza, and Chile and Colombia have recalled ambassadors. The October 7 Hamas strike is thus a master stroke.

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