

# **Generous humanitarian aid will only prolong the war**

written by Meir Ben Shabbat | 03.12.2023

It might be appropriate to adopt a more aggressive approach so as to reduce the risks to our forces, even if it runs against the wishes expressed by the White House

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## **The truce lasted long enough**

written by David M. Weinberg | 03.12.2023

Repeat pauses in the war are extraordinarily dangerous on many levels.

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## **Israel needs a “Doolittle raid”**

written by Dr. David Wurmser | 03.12.2023

On April 18, 1942, sixteen US B-25 bombers attacked Tokyo. Of those, two were shot down. The rest reached Chinese regions where anti-Imperial forces saved them. Only one of the original 16 landed, in Vladivostok in Russia. All the rest - precious assets for a US army stretched thinner than onion-skin - were shot down or ditched. The surviving crews, all of whom had been handpicked as the best of the best, were gone, captured, or unavailable for months. Eight among the crews were captured by the Japanese.

The result of the raid: marginal damage to Tokyo, and negligible damage to the industrial capacity of its empire. Every measure of tactics held this as an irresponsible waste of men and materiel at a time when America could ill afford to waste anything. And President Roosevelt - whose attentions and energy already

were stretched to the limit — sought the raid, monitored its preparations, and then ordered the raid with impatience. His general staff all thought him mentally unwell and irresponsible.

And yet, the Doolittle raid (as it came to be called after its commander, James Doolittle) was one of the most important actions undertaken by the Americans and arguably represented the war's turning point. It was tactically disastrous and useless, but strategically cataclysmic.

Because it turned around American morale. It overshadowed - even erased - the growing wallowing in misery of the memory of December 7 and replaced it with a defined goal of the war through actions, not just words. Americans understood where they were headed and invested their energies now totally into victory rather than sap their energy focused on their wounds. America had passed from fear and foreboding to becoming societally optimistic.

Japanese were unnerved because the impenetrable Islands - the islands which for 1500 years had never been penetrated because of the protective, mystical spirit of the Kamikaze wind - were penetrated and bombed. The Japanese general staff were humiliated, and their stature which rode so high in the five months since Pearl Harbor was tarnished. The killing of Japanese civilians in their capital, combined with the shame felt by the military command, created inescapable pressure to strike back in retribution. For Japan had understood that the raid had broken their full control of the situation, taken back some of the initiative and thus threatened to reverse its relentless strategic momentum.

The pressure took its toll: Japan advanced Admiral Yamamoto's invasion plans of Hawaii to retake the initiative and force a battle in Midway for which it had not fully prepared. In June 1942, only 7 months after Pearl Harbor, the Japanese were catastrophically defeated there by a far smaller force because Japan had prematurely rushed to avenge its honor. Its controlled competence had given way to a grave misstep. While it still took another three years, Midway changed the direction of the war. Japan's strategic momentum was never regained, and America was on the straight road to victory, which greatly relieved Britain and cast a dark doubt over Hitler's aspirations in Europe. Thus, those sixteen planes with few bombs set the course of the whole war.

What does this have to do with Israel?

Israel faced its Pearl Harbor on October 7. The wound had given the Iranian camp great strategic initiative and shown the region that it was the strong horse, while Israel was complacent and possibly even too weak to survive in the long term. What followed was very much like the five-month period between December 7, 1941 and April 18, 1942 in World War II, where tactically the US might have begun to mobilize, societally it began do what it had to do, but overall the strategic momentum had not been retaken. American morale was still sinking after the initial anger faded into the grim reality of a long war, and Japanese morale continued to rise as it withered America's.

Right now, Israel has considerable tactical initiative, but no strategic initiative. Hamas dictates the fate of the hostages and deals. Hamas governs the agenda of international pressures. The US state department controls the international diplomatic agenda. Hizballah defines the parameters of conflict on the Lebanese border. Yemen chooses when, where and how often it intervenes and caused international shipping to retreat into a defense crouch. Iraqi militias define how much the US and Israel can feel secure in Syria and on the Golan. Israel may possess tactical superiority in every theater, but it lacks strategic initiative and control in all of them. Iran is still driving everything.

As such, as nation and society, Israeli will remains high but there are signs already now of fraying of focus, internal stresses, and lack of faith in the final goals. Or even their definition. Rhetoric is also misaligned: Iran is seen and blamed as the puppet master in terms of an "either we or they survive" showdown, but the war is fought entirely locally against Hamas as if it is a limited conflict rather than part of such a twilight struggle against Iran.

Wars are won through strategy, not tactics. Israel has reached that point where it needs a Doolittle raid.

Israel not only needs to prop up Israeli moral to move beyond the shadow of October 7 (as the US had to move beyond the shadow of December 7), but to take actions that strategically signal this is about Iran. Perhaps action Iran regime itself but certainly against theaters right now languishing (Yemen, Iraq, Syria). Israel must take the strategic initiative and set the regional agenda to bear down on Tehran. Israel needs to take control of the agenda in every aspect and force Iran's hand into missteps. Israel needs a Doolittle raid, or several such raids.

# Hamas Massacre Proves Iran is Existential Threat

written by Dr. Raphael BenLevi | 03.12.2023

For the past two decades there has been a debate raging within Israel regarding the nature of the threat posed by a nuclear Iran. Some have argued that a nuclear-armed Iran would pose an existential threat to Israel, while others believed that it would indeed be severe, but not necessarily existential.

For many years, Benjamin Netanyahu led the 'existential threat' camp, drawing an analogy between Israel's current situation vis-a-vis Iran, to that of Europe in 1938, facing Nazi Germany. In this view, Israel stands before a fateful decision: will it act to confront its enemies on time despite the immediate costs, or will it hesitate and allow another holocaust?

Others in Israel's security establishment and political leadership rejected this analogy as wild and inappropriate to the current situation. Leading among them was Ehud Barak. Though he cooperated with Netanyahu in taking a strong stance against Iran as defense minister from 2009-2013, he consistently opposed the idea that they were dealing with an existential threat. As he relates in his 2018 autobiography:

"I was especially upset by Bibi's increasing use of Holocaust imagery in describing the threat from Iran... We're not in Europe in 1937. Or 1947. If it is a 'Holocaust,' what's our response: to fold up and go back to the diaspora? If Iran gets a bomb, it'll be bad. Very bad. But we'll still be here. And we will find a way of dealing with the new reality."

This seemingly semantic debate has very real policy implications, including the extent to which Israel should be willing to go in order to prevent Iran from crossing the nuclear threshold. If this is an existential threat, then Israel must be

willing to do everything in its power to prevent it - including, if necessary, taking action that carries the risk of a broader regional war and even if it means acting in defiance of the preferences of a US administration. But if it is a major threat, but not existential, then there are limits to what Israel should be willing to do, such as not acting without at least American acquiescence; weighing the value of a strike against the price of a war with Hezbollah and direct Iranian missile strikes; and ultimately, considering that instead of a costly war, Israel might shift toward a policy of attempting to deter Iran from ever using its newfound weaponry.

## **The Face of Evil**

The massacre of October the 7th, however, should settle this debate once and for all by clarifying for all sides what existential threat really means. Because it seems that even those who claim a nuclear Iran would constitute such a threat - Netanyahu himself included - have not taken themselves seriously enough, nor acted accordingly.

Before October 7th, we had trouble believing that the genocidal evil that we witnessed that day really existed. We may have said that it exists, we may have recited slogans saying that it exists, but we didn't entirely understand the meaning or the significance of it. We didn't really internalize that there are, in fact, people who would happily give their lives just so they could murder Jews; people for whom their greatest dream is to "destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews—young and old, women and children—on a single day," no matter what the cost.

Yes, we knew that this was possible in theory, as a matter of history. Certainly, in the country founded in the shadow of the ashes of the Holocaust, Israelis remember that the Nazi's were willing to risk it all to murder just one more Jew. But with the passage of time, we forgot that this was a real thing. The clarity of the lessons learned has been eroded over time, to the point which when it became a practical issue again, we didn't really know what was required.

But now, after October 7th, we have again witnessed the face of evil. We have encountered it anew and must internalize its meaning anew. The meaning is that we can no longer claim that Iran is animated primarily by national interests, or that its threats are mere rhetoric, not to be taken seriously. We can no longer

claim that Iran couldn't possibly risk the survival of the Islamist regime by undertaking a nuclear attack on Israel, or that it would never risk the destruction of entire Iranian cities that would result from an Israeli counter-attack. Rather, the meaning is that it could and it most likely would.

### The Price of Error: National Annihilation

The Hamas massacre must make clear that people who are consumed by Islamist ideologies, be it the Sunni or Shiite versions, really are willing to commit collective suicide if they could only take Israel down with them. And if we do not recognize this truth and instead continue to believe that our enemies hold the same value system as we do, we will pay the price for this strategic failure, and the price is national annihilation. Because if Israel fails to see this threat with clarity and act appropriately, there will be no more politicians to apologize for the blunder and resign, and there will be no one to demand a committee of public inquiry and no one to report the findings to. This is the meaning of existential threat; it is the type of threat that forces us to choose whether to continue existing or not.

For years, Israel has wrestled with the question of where precisely is the red line beyond which decisive action is imperative. Twenty years ago, some said the very existence of clandestine uranium enrichment facilities justified action. Later, it was the accumulation of any highly enriched uranium, meaning to 20% purity. By 2012, Israel's red line was the accumulation of 250 kg of 20% enriched uranium. According to the most recent IAEA reports, Iran currently has over 500 kg of 20% and an additional 128 kg and counting of uranium enriched to 60%. As of the outset of 2023, Israel's new red line has apparently become a point just short of military grade, meaning 90%. At each juncture, the question was raised: "why act now if we can continue to deter Iran from any further progress?"; "there is still time to act before they have enough for a bomb, and then some more time before they can weaponize it." Iran now has anywhere from a few weeks to a few months between it and an operational weapon, given a decision to break out. Perhaps this was good enough before October 7th. Today, it should be considered well beyond the red line.

Now is the time to revisit the roots of the so-called 'Begin doctrine'. It was Menachem Begin, who lived in a generation which had not yet forgotten the reality of genocidal evil, who wrote in 1978 the following passage and applied it in

practice just a few years later: “The lesson today and for the future is: First, if an enemy of the Jews comes and says that he desires, with all his heart and blood, to destroy them - do not dismiss him, do not disparage him, do not doubt him. Rather you must take his intentions with completely sincerity, and take his utterances with all the gravity they embody. Believe him. This enemy wants to destroy the Jews. You must prevent from him the power to destroy them. You must prepare yourself every day for the time of action, but you must never again say: ‘They don’t really mean it.’ ”

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## **The Day After in Gaza**

written by Dr. Raphael BenLevi | 03.12.2023

Installing the Palestinian Authority in Gaza would inevitably lead to the re-emergence of a terror state.

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## **Understanding the psyche of Hamas massacre masterminds**

written by Ruth Wasserman Lande | 03.12.2023

Although it momentarily serves the Iranian goal, Hamas has its own interests.

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# **Israel must keep its war machine running during the ceasefire**

written by Meir Ben Shabbat | 03.12.2023

Undoubtedly, Hamas would like to see the ceasefire as a turning point in the conflict.

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## **Guns for grandmothers**

written by David M. Weinberg | 03.12.2023

Arming Israel's citizenry is part of a broader struggle to reshape Israel's strategic realities

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## **What was - shall be no more: Israel must shatter Hamas' hopes of a return to the Oct. 6 reality**

written by Meir Ben Shabbat | 03.12.2023

Hamas likely believed that had Israel subscribed to small-scale approach, they could build on the success of October 7 and effect a change that would result in a new "equation" between the organization and the Jewish state.

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# Hamas' grave miscalculation on how Israel would react

written by Brig. Gen. (res.) Yossi Kuperwasser | 03.12.2023

Hamas likely believed that had Israel subscribed to small-scale approach, they could build on the success of October 7 and effect a change that would result in a new "equation" between the organization and the Jewish state. Meaning, the release of the imprisoned terrorists, lifting the blockade, and stopping the normalization process between Israel and Saudi Arabia.