



PERSPECTIVES

by **Rinaldo S. Brutoco**

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Thank You Joey-Boy! *A Victory for Quiet Diplomacy*

This column is sort of an “apology” to **President Joe Biden**. I became a bit critical of President Biden last Wednesday, June 19th as the shelling in the Middle East continued unabated. I spoke to Congressman **Salud Carbajal** to express my frustration that Biden, who had been doing fairly well in my view up until then, was letting his old friend **Benjamin “Bibi” Netanyahu** off the hook too easily by staying quiet in the face of the conflagration in Israel and Gaza.

It seemed to me that only the US could bring enough pressure to bear on Netanyahu (whose personal popularity is soaring since the attack at the Al Aqsa Mosque) to accept the ceasefire Hamas at that point was willing to accept. Having failed four times in two years to form a consensus government, and the “smart money” saying he would fail on the now pending fifth try, everyone thought that Bibi would finally lose power and have to face numerous criminal corruption charges the Israeli government had brought against him—until he attacked Al Aqsa.

It is difficult for me to understand how the Palestinian people could believe Hamas had strengthened their political position because of the over 4,000 rockets fired at Israel knowing that only one percent were likely to get through and knowing that Israel would retaliate with devastating precision airstrikes. The Palestinian rockets were virtually all intercepted by the “Iron Dome” missile defense the US helped provide. We should all be glad it worked so well.

No country should have to fear a naked vulnerability to destruction from the air by guided missiles. Hopefully, the enormous success that the missile defense system provided will deter future uses of missiles that are very expensive and are now properly viewed as ineffective. The US and Israel should agree to furnish a similar Iron Dome system to any country in the world that needs one.

According to the highest-ranking military officers in charge of the United States’ laser weapon systems, a

similar system could be developed to detect and destroy an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (“ICBM”) in about seven seconds of launch from a stationery high altitude sensor platform sitting at 70,000 feet over any country in the world foolish enough to launch one. Seven seconds after launch means the ICBM would disintegrate over the very country that fired it and the resulting nuclear pollution would permanently damage a significant portion of the country. Such a stationery laser-based system would render nuclear missiles obsolete, as President Regan had hoped, and be far easier to accomplish than Regan’s “brilliant pebbles” Strategic Defense Initiative—which since its announcement in 1983 has *never* worked!

Yes, the world should collectively welcome the creation of an Iron Dome type system for ICBMs, Hamas-type rockets, and all other forms of aerial bombardment that would otherwise devastate a civilian. We should celebrate the evolution of missile defense systems globally to stop the reign of terror from the skies’ population. Sitting over North Korea such a high-altitude laser detection and destruction system (the “Guardian”) would be the end of dictator **Kim Jong-un’s** constant saber-rattling and Russia’s adventurism!

In the case of Israel, there was no serious destruction from Hamas’ rockets and, thankfully, only 12 dead (including two children) over the entire 11 days of conflict. The damage to Israeli infrastructure was almost zero. Contrast that with the 243 Palestinian dead (including 100 women and children), and 3,000+ wounded, from the 1,000+ precision jet airstrikes Israel that flattened Gaza and reduced it to one very large pile of rubble. Hamas needs to lead Palestinians to peace, not to destruction.

We **MUST STOP** the indiscriminate use of rockets and airplanes against civilian populations. Period. We all should remember with crystal clarity and collective determination to embody President Eisenhower’s

admonition in the famous “Chance for Peace” (aka the “Cross of Iron”) on April 16, 1953:

“Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies...a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed.”

Hamas needs to understand that the world knows the Palestinian people are fighting against an incredible barrage of apartheid conditions, and the world knows that a majority of Israelis want to flatten Gaza and everyone in it (over 70 percent of Israeli’s polled last week wanted the fighter jet delivered carnage to continue pummeling Gaza even as the ceasefire started).

Hamas unfortunately plays off the fact that Palestinians are a people left with no hope of ever ending the occupation, no hope for a “Two State” solution, and no hope to ever be equal citizens within Israel as a democratic secular state. Israel will, for the foreseeable future, continue to advance as a theocratic state until it looks more like Iran than it does a Western democracy.

Hamas, you are not solving anything and only gaining political power at the cost of your own citizens’ bloodshed and the civilian infrastructure destruction. You need to start leading the Palestinians to harness the small but vocal minority in Palestine and Israel who genuinely seek co-existence.

How can such a miracle occur? Apparently, it starts with “quiet diplomacy” rather than more saber rattling and bombast. President Biden had already earned high marks for an outstandingly successful rollout of the United States’ vaccination program that has, for most purposes, begun to end the pandemic and re-open the country. Congratulations on how well you directed that effort and how you brought in everyone from FEMA to retired medical personnel and the military to set up massive inoculation sites. As we go to press, we can see our communities being reborn in a springtime of commerce and social engagement. Hearty congratulations as well Mr. President for using budget reconciliation to successfully drive the “Cares Act” into law which has already begun to jump-start the economy.

My apology is for complaining that you weren’t doing enough to stop Bibi’s power grab. We became acclimated to bombast during the last four years, but you demonstrated that Quiet Diplomacy inaugurated the ceasefire. I sincerely apologize for doubting you cared enough, or lacked the courage to act, when you and your Administration were in fact so effective behind the

scene. You acted courageously and humbly in a way that has taught us all a lesson. Quiet Diplomacy “trumps” saber-rattling and ego chest pumping. Your dad would be proud. Thank you, Joey-Boy, for all of it.

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