

Israel-Palestine: Guess Who Cheers When Cease-Fires Collapse

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Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)

In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

Among those who cheer when a cease-fire ends and killing resumes are those who want more Palestinians slaughtered as a form of mass punishment for fictional offenses. Also among those cheering are certain mainstream U.S. newspaper columnists. In fact, at least one person is clearly in both of the above categories.

My local newspaper in Charlottesville, Va., printed a column on Friday from Thomas Sowell, distributed by Creators Syndicate but actually written for the right-wing Jewish World Review. Sowell writes:

“It is understandable that today many people in many lands just want the fighting between the Israelis and the Palestinians to stop. Calls for a cease-fire are ringing out from the United Nations and from Washington, as well as from ordinary people in many places around the world. According to the New York Times, Secretary of State John Kerry is hoping for a cease-fire to ‘open the door to Israeli and Palestinian negotiations for a long-term solution.’ President Obama has urged Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to have an ‘immediate, unconditional humanitarian cease-fire’ — again, with the idea of pursuing some long-lasting agreement.”

Here is where Sowell might logically object to Washington shipping Israel more weaponry in the midst of proposing cease-fires and mumbling quietly about the inappropriateness of particular bits of the mass-murder underway. John Kerry doesn’t hope for a long-term solution any more than he knew Syria used chemical weapons or Putin shot down a plane or Iraq deserved to be destroyed before it didn’t but after it did. John Kerry knows the U.S. provides the weaponry and the criminal immunity to a nation intent on completing the process of eliminating its native peoples, as Kerry’s own nation effectively did long ago. There’s no solution possible in that context other than a Final Solution for Palestinians. But this is not what Sowell goes on to say.

“If this was the first outbreak of violence between the Palestinians and the Israelis, such hopes might make sense. But where have the U.N., Kerry and Obama been during all these decades of endlessly repeated Middle East carnage?”

Well, the same place all of their Republican and Democratic predecessors have been, supporting endless armaments for Israel and most of its neighbors, and vetoing any U.N. resolutions that would impose any consequences for Israel’s occupation, blockade, and Apartheid repression on the basis of religion and race.

“The Middle East must lead the world in cease-fires. If cease-fires were the road to peace, the Middle East would easily be the most peaceful place on the planet.”

Stop for a moment and appreciate the unfathomable stupidity of that remark. One might as well say the Middle East must lead the world in U.S. weapons imports or the Middle East must lead the world in wars. If these were paths to peace, the Middle East would easily be the most peaceful place on the planet. One might also just as easily say the Middle East must lead the world in the brevity of its cease-fires, with cease-fires elsewhere lasting longer, and with as many broken agreements lying in the sand of the Middle East as anywhere since the last big batch of promises made to Native Americans. One might even just as easily say the Middle East must lead the world in resumptions of fighting, rather than in halts to fighting. But that’s not where Sowell is headed. He’s out to reverse Benjamin Franklin’s notion that there has never been a good war or a bad peace.

“‘Cease-fire’ and ‘negotiations’ are magic words to ‘the international community.’ But just what do cease-fires actually accomplish? In the short run, they save some lives. But in the long run they cost far more lives, by lowering the cost of aggression.”

Here it comes. Just as the Jewish World Review wants to make poor people “self-sufficient” by denying them any assistance, Sowell wants to teach the people of Palestine a lesson for their own good. Of course people dispossessed of their land, made refugees, entrapped and blockaded, and targeted with missiles that level their homes and explode in their schools and hospitals and shelters are unusual suspects to accuse of aggression. And for those who shoot rockets, so ineffectively and counter-productively, into Israel, the lesson Sowell wants to teach through mass slaughter is demonstrably not taught. Everyone in Gaza will tell you that Israeli violence increases support for Palestinian violence. Not every Palestinian understands that the reverse is also true, that the rockets fuel Israeli attacks, but that hardly justifies their murder or creates a lesson where Sowell imagines Israeli missiles teaching one.

“At one time, launching a military attack on another nation risked not only retaliation but annihilation. When Carthage attacked Rome, that was the end of Carthage.”

Ah, the good old days, when any colony or challenger that stepped out of line could be wiped out, starved out, and cleansed from the earth.

“But when Hamas or some other terrorist group launches an attack on Israel, they know in advance that whatever Israel does in response will be limited by calls for a cease-fire, backed by political and economic pressures from the United States.”

The political pressure of Kerry groveling before Netanyahu? Of Susan Rice explaining to the world that Kerry never meant to negotiate and has always been 100% in Israel’s camp? Of Obama joining Sowell in blaming the victims? The economic pressure of the free weapons continuing to flow from the U.S. to Israel? What sort of fantasy is this?

One possibility is that it's a fantasy of racism or culturalism. Americans are rational beings in this fantasy. It would only make sense to apply obvious points of pressure for a cease-fire once you've proposed one. Arming the Middle East for peace would be insanity. So, Sowell perhaps fantasizes that sanity and rationality prevail. Except in places like Palestine or Iran:

"Those who say that we can contain a nuclear Iran, as we contained a nuclear Soviet Union, are acting as if they are discussing abstract people in an abstract world. Whatever the Soviets were, they were not suicidal fanatics, ready to see their own cities destroyed in order to destroy ours. . . . Even if the Israelis were all saints — and sainthood is not common in any branch of the human race — the cold fact is that they are far more advanced than their neighbors, and groups that cannot tolerate even subordinate Christian minorities can hardly be expected to tolerate an independent, and more advanced, Jewish state that is a daily rebuke to their egos."

Since when does Iran not tolerate minorities? Since when is it populated by 76 million suicidal fanatics?

You see, not only do the Gazans want to die, in the view of Sowell and so many others we've been hearing from via our so-called public airwaves, because it makes good footage, because they have a culture of martyrdom — you've heard all the explanations for Gazans stubbornly remaining in their homes and hospitals rather than swimming to Cyprus as normal people would do — but the source of Gazans' irrational aggression against the benevolent power that stole their land and starves their children and bans the importation of books is — wait for it — jealousy. It's wounded egos. Just as poor Americans are jealous of the success of those with the wisdom and fortitude to be born into the families of billionaires, so Palestinians resent the superiority, the Übermenschness of the people who have been clever enough to get born into Pentagon subsidies.

As a contrasting view of the world to Sowell's allow me to offer this new Willie Nelson video (<http://youtu.be/MezGqmMCrwo>):

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