A War Against the Entire West

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By Rafael Bardaji and Joseph Raskas

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Increasingly, human rights organizations are attempting to make military forces operating under the purview of the Laws of Armed Conflict subject to persistent human rights claims in the civil sphere. Israeli soldiers have historically been made the mark -- much as they are being made now by the U.N. Human Rights Council. But such moves mask a broader agenda that should worry the entire West.

Consider: Last summer, courtesy of Iran, the Gaza-based terrorist group, Hamas, perpetrated the kidnapping and brutal murder of three Israeli teens, battered Israel with more than 450 rockets, and plotted what were intended to be strategic, mass-casualty attacks launched via tunnels emerging in Israel, in some cases near schools. In response to Hamas's unlawful aggression, Israel was forced to fight a war it did not want and sought for months to avoid -- but nevertheless, it was still roundly condemned and heavily pressured to halt its campaign.

A report issued by a high-level group of former diplomats and military officials recently concluded that if Israel sought to systematically kill civilians in Gaza, either Israel's military did not try nearly hard enough or it got very unlucky, because it failed spectacularly to achieve that supposed objective. The preliminary findings of the international group -- whose 11 members include the former NATO Military Committee Chairman Gen. Klaus Naumann of Germany; former Italian Foreign Minister Giulio Terzi; former U.S. State Department Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues Pierre-Richard Prosper; and the former commander of British Forces in Afghanistan, Col. Richard Kemp -- demonstrate the combat-to-civilian kill ratio was approximately 1:1 -- a significantly better score than the 3:1 ratio that U.N. estimates show for such conflicts worldwide.

However, by focusing exclusively on the civilian casualty count, rather than the strategic circumstances that brought them about, the so-called human rights campaign capably masks its wider aim: to fundamentally erode the moral imperative of certain Western wars.

Operating under the banner of socially concerned citizenry, these groups ascribe a singular importance to having wars fought by the rules that they seek to impose, at the expense of fighting the war to a victorious and convincing triumph.

This activism does not only place an imprimatur of human rights upon a misguided agenda. It also erodes the necessity and justness of such wars, while seeking to provide justification for even more misguided ideological campaigns. Moreover, the fear of legal action initiated or otherwise encouraged by these organizations hamstrings the prosecution of war by civilized societies.

Both Israel and the West are immersed in legitimate and necessary wars and face guerrilla forces -- which deliberately and indiscriminately target civilian populations and launch their battles from within civilian areas, with the expectation that the resulting carnage will provide fodder for human rights activists to bring about intervention in the wars.

Democratic armies -- those of Israel and the United States in particular -- work gallantly to hold civilian deaths to a minimum. But more and more they are being handicapped in fighting the war.

Citizens of the West need to be made aware of how their nations' democratic agendas, governmental objectives, and military campaigns are being undermined by ideologies and actors that are anathema to Western culture. Ignoring or failing to confront the perpetrators for fear of otherwise lending legitimacy to those conditions is understandable -- but the counterculture will only continue to grow.

We must give the enemy no quarter in demolishing his malicious propaganda. World leaders must continue to condemn as often as necessary the ongoing human rights violations committed by non-state actors against democratic states. Organizations -- governmental and otherwise -- that voice concern for the treatment of such malevolent actors should be exposed and labeled for what they truly are: apologists for terrorists.

The ruling that the so-called human rights campaign seeks to impose is not regarding what type of force Israel can impose on Hamas, but whether or not democratic armies of the West have the right to use force of any kind.

Western nations pursue war only after careful deliberation leading to a conclusion that war is necessary and just. Once that conclusion has been reached, however, a war must be fought to be won.