

# **I Stand with Israel**

By Don Sutherland

Saturday, October 7, 2023, was a horrible day in Israel. It was a brutal day for humanity and those who care for humanitarian principles.

Driven by an unyielding claim anchored in theological interpretation that Israel exists on land that is an “Islamic Waqf” and profound rejection of “so-called peaceful solutions,” armed terrorists from Hamas launched an unprovoked attack on Israel’s people. Civilians, first responders, police officers, and soldiers were attacked indiscriminately. Families, mothers, and children were taken hostage, many severely beaten. Women and young girls were raped, their bodies desecrated.

In the unprovoked attack, the world’s Jewish state was subjected to a massacre that dwarfed both the Pearl Harbor and September 11, 2001 attacks on a per capita population basis. The more than 600 fatalities as of Sunday morning were the equivalent of more than 21,000 fatalities in the United States with its much larger population. Yet again, the Jewish people were subjected to the kind of bloodshed that has been inflicted on them throughout Israel’s post-World War II existence and on them over and over again throughout the course of history.

Israel has an inherent right of self-defense. That right is unqualified. It is equal to that enjoyed by all sovereign states. There are no exceptions, limitations, or other caveats. I stand with Israel as it continues operations to clear its land of the barbaric invaders who inflicted such a devastating toll. I stand with Israel as it begins its efforts to diminish or destroy Hamas and its terrorist ecosystem. I will stand with Israel until its mission is complete, its land is secure, and its people are safe.

Despite its having achieved modernity and prosperity—a heroic feat on account of all the attacks and acts of aggression and terrorism carried out against it—Israel faces deep vulnerability from its lack of geographic depth, much larger hostile states along some of its borders, and well-armed vicious terrorist groups sponsored by rogue states such as Iran and Russia.

Israel’s survival is of paramount importance to the survival and wellbeing of the world’s Jewish people. Its survival is vital to the belief that the lives of people are precious and that every person enjoys basic rights.

How might people in Israel see the larger picture following the devastating terrorist attacks? How might they appreciate the enormous challenges that still confront Israel? One can gain a flavor from the timeless words of Foreign Minister Abba Eban’s June 19, 1967 address to the UN Security Council following Israel’s victory in the 1967 War. Although the hostile actors have changed, their malicious intent and brutal conduct have not.

Eban explained:

*To understand the full depth of pain and shock, it is necessary to grasp the full significance of what Israel’s danger meant. A small sovereign State had its existence threatened by lawless*

*violence. The threat to Israel was a menace to the very foundations of the international order. The State thus threatened bore a name which stirred the deepest memories of civilized mankind and the people of Israel, the remnant of millions, who, in living memory, had been wiped out by a dictatorship more powerful, though scarcely more malicious, than Nasser's Egypt. What Nasser had predicted, what he had worked for with undeflecting purpose, had come to pass—the noose was tightly drawn.*

*On the fateful morning of 5 June, when Egyptian forces moved by air and land against Israel's western coast and southern territory, our country's choice was plain. The choice was to live or perish, to defend the national existence or to forfeit it for all time.*

*From these dire moments Israel emerged in five heroic days from awful peril to successful and glorious resistance. Alone, unaided, neither seeking nor receiving help, our nation rose in self-defense. So long as men cherish freedom, so long as small States strive for the dignity of existence, the exploits of Israel's armies will be told from one generation to another with the deepest pride.*

Israel faces yet another dire moment in a history scarred by dire moments. It again faces the choice as to whether to live or perish. Again, as in the past, its people will choose to live. They will make the sacrifices necessary to overcome the challenges presented by the barbaric terrorist organization that assaulted its land and people.

May Israel emerge victorious. May the Jewish State and its people heal and prosper. May all those who lost their lives—and those whose lives will be lost in the latest fight for survival—never be forgotten. May their friends and family also find comfort in their courage and memories.