



Minstrel Boy

"The Minstrel Boy to the war is gone In the ranks of death you will find him; His father's sword he hath girded on, And his wild harp slung behind him; "Land of Song!" said the warrior bard, "Tho' all the world betrays thee, One sword, at least, thy rights shall guard, One faithful harp shall praise thee!" -- Verse from the Minstrel Boy

SUNDAY, JANUARY 11, 2009

➔ War and Piece: Anthony Cordesman on Gaza

War and Piece: ... "Has Israel somehow blundered into a steadily escalating war without a clear strategic goal or at least one it can credibly achieve? Will Israel end in empowering an enemy in political terms that it defeated in tactical terms? Will Israel's actions seriously damage the US position in the region, any hope of peace, as well as moderate Arab regimes and voices in the process?

To blunt, the answer so far seems to be yes. To paraphrase a comment about the British government's management of the British Army in World War I, lions seem to be led by donkeys. If Israel has a credible ceasefire plan that could really secure Gaza, it is not apparent. If Israel has a plan that could credibly destroy and replace Hamas, it is not apparent. If Israel has any plan to help the Gazans and move them back towards peace, it is not apparent. If Israel has any plan to use US or other friendly influence productively, it not apparent.

As we have seen all too clearly from US mistakes, **any leader can take a tough stand and claim that tactical gains are a meaningful victory.** If this is all that Olmert, Livni, and Barak have for an answer, then they have disgraced themselves and damaged their country and their friends. If there is more, it is time to make such goals public and demonstrate how they can be achieved. The question is not whether the IDF learned the tactical lessons of the fighting in 2006. It is whether Israel's top political leadership has even minimal competence to lead them.

[bth: one has to consider whether this entire undertaking is not about Hamas or Israel's security, but about February elections in Israel itself. I do not see how this will end well. I do not see how 15 dead from rockets in 8 years justifies this level of punishment. Punishment without purpose is not a strategy.]

Posted by Minstrel Boy at [5:32 AM](#)



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Minstrel Boy

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