

NEWS BYTES

August 10, 2022

No. 1078

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“Let us be alert to the season in which we are living. It is the season of the Blessed Hope, calling for us to cut our ties with the world and build ourselves on this One who will soon appear. He is our hope—a Blessed Hope enabling us to rise above our times and fix our gaze upon Him.” Tozer

This took place on the 9th of Av. I always watch that date on the Israel calendar and look to see God’s hand I am never disappointed. Look up all the things that have happened to them throughout history on this observance and see for yourself. Only the main events are recorded online, but I have been watching this for many years. As they say in TV land, “But wait! There’s more!” -- MD

'Operation Breaking Dawn' Proved A Blowout For Israel



News Image BY YOAV LIMOR/JNS.ORG
AUGUST 09, 2022

A confluence of circumstances led the latest round of fighting to conclude as the most successful operation Israel has ever waged in Gaza. Palestinian Islamic Jihad suffered an unprecedentedly severe blow, while Israel emerged largely unscathed.

To borrow a sports phrase, this was a blowout. Islamic Jihad lost two senior field commanders in

Gaza--Tayseer Jabari and Khaled Mansour--along with numerous assets related to the manufacturing and storage of weapons, headquarters and outposts.

Meanwhile, the terrorist organization failed to inflict any serious damage at all inside Israel and also failed to drag Hamas, the Arabs of Israel and eastern Jerusalem or Hezbollah in the north into the fray, leaving it alone in the fight.

There are more than a few reasons for this extraordinary accomplishment. The first and main reason is the quality of the intelligence provided by the Shin Bet, which set the table for the two assassinations that decided the fight. It's rare to obtain intelligence information of this sort about terrorist commanders who have lived for years as targets and are aware of the dangers surrounding them. It's even rarer for this to occur when tensions are high and during actual fighting.

Last Thursday, when the head of the Shin Bet informed the political echelon about the opportunity to eliminate Jabari, he changed Israel's footing from a defensive to an offensive posture. The intelligence about Mansour was already the knockout punch, after which it was clear that if nothing irregular was to occur, the fight was won. From that point forward, it was just a matter of time until the Egyptians could draft a ceasefire, which Israel wanted after meeting all of its objectives.

One of these objectives was keeping Hamas out of the fray. It seems the largest armed group in Gaza and the sovereign entity there wasn't eager to pay a price--military, economic or civilian--for Islamic Jihad's lunacy, which all started because of an arrest in Judea and Samaria.

Perhaps Hamas also had an interest in Israel taking care of this constant headache, although this will be further tested down the road by Hamas' response to Islamic Jihad the next time it fires a rocket. In other words, Israel gave Hamas an opportunity to solidify its grip on Gaza and put a muzzle on this smaller, more extremist organization.

Another objective was to separate Judea and Samaria from Gaza. After the pummeling it received in Gaza, Islamic Jihad should think a thousand times before trying to shut down Gaza over every arrest in Judea and Samaria. This is a lesson for Hamas as well, which is also trying to blur the lines between the two sectors.

The fact that the Arabs of Israel remained peaceful and the Temple Mount didn't erupt into riots despite the thousands of Jews who visited the holy site on Tisha B'Av was particularly fortuitous, and should deter Hamas in the future.

The operation's success was also aided by the precision capabilities of the Israeli Air Force and GOC Southern Command. Operations of this nature, which are conducted in a small and crowded area like Gaza, can easily go sideways due to tactical errors.

The fact that every payload was delivered with surgical precision, together with the small number of non-combatant casualties, helped keep Hamas out of the picture and international criticism at bay. The fact that Palestinian civilian casualties were mostly caused by failed rocket launches also helped crystallize the Israeli message that one side is fighting terror and one side is harming civilians in both Israel and Gaza.

Four more points to consider: 1) The political echelon worked in complete synchronicity both internally and externally with the military echelon, sweeping away all the misconceptions about its ability to make security decisions. 2) The responsible behavior of civilians prevented unnecessary casualties on the home front. 3) The public-relations machine was effective and efficient, maximizing the accomplishments and neutralizing the landmines. 4) The Egyptian mediation, which again proved its effectiveness.

As always, the operation's success can only be assessed in the future, in terms of the degree and duration of the deterrence against Islamic Jihad and Hamas; how fast it rehabilitates itself; the internal restraint in Gaza; and the ability to keep the sectors separated.

The bottom line, however, is that nothing fundamentally changed in Gaza these past few days and anyone who believes so is in for a rude awakening. Even if a period of quiet does ensure, whether prolonged or extremely temporary, without deep-rooted solutions the shooting will eventually resume.

China Shakes

By Hal Lindsey

Nancy Pelosi is a physically unimposing 82-year-old. But her recent visit to Taiwan made the great and ancient nation of China quiver in its boots. Chinese leaders blustered and shouted; demanded and threatened. They made a great show of their military might, sending warships and aircraft into the area around Taiwan. They blasted missiles over the island, their smoke trails filling the Taiwanese sky.

It was not the reaction of a confident superpower, but of a nervous child trying to hide its impotence behind the bluster of shaking fists and threatening pronouncements. A spokesman for the Chinese Defense Ministry said, "The US-Taiwan collusion and provocation will only push Taiwan towards the abyss of disaster, bringing catastrophe to Taiwan compatriots."

Why would a visit from an American official "push Taiwan towards the abyss of disaster"? In recent years, many members of Congress have visited the island nation. It happens on a regular basis. She was not even the first Speaker of the House to visit. Newt Gingrich did it back in 1997, and it was no big deal.

What happened this time?

President Biden (like most of his presidential predecessors over the last fifty years) has bent over backwards to appease China. Much of corporate America stands firm with China, despite its abysmal record on human rights. Some of our biggest corporations are addicted to China's cheap labor, and they have high hopes for China as the ultimate market for their goods.

America's poorly planned exit from Afghanistan and continuing capitulation to the Taliban have given the world a sense of American weakness and timidity. While standing with Ukraine since the Russian

invasion, the US was hesitant to say or do anything that might offend Russia before the invasion. Over the last few years, China supported Russia, North Korea, and Iran in all their deadly misadventures, and felt no ill-effects from US foreign policy.

This time Chinese leaders thought they had the right combination of American weakness and vacillation to show the world their newfound power. So, when someone leaked that the Speaker might drop by Taiwan on her Asian tour, China put on a big show of imperiousness. They really seemed to think that they could intimidate the United States.

But their public bluster forced the Speaker's hand. If they really cared about her visit, quiet diplomacy would have almost certainly prevented it. But when China acted as if it could dictate a new US policy regarding travel to Taiwan, she had to go. Meanwhile, the sound and fury of the Chinese response weakened their international position.

China today is a troubled nation and, in this case, troubled means dangerous. China generates amazing amounts of money, but the people are still poor. Their government must use extreme technologies to keep them in line. Meanwhile, their economy remains highly vulnerable to global slowdown.

Bible prophecy speaks of the "Kings of the East" sending a vast army toward Israel and Armageddon in the last days of the tribulation period. China will almost certainly lead this coalition. The Bible speaks of it as a world power in the end time, but not a dominate one. That means China is not on the verge of taking over the world. But it is dangerous.

Emotion AI: A possible path to thought policing

Gary Grossman, Edelman



A recent VentureBeat article referenced Gartner analyst Whit Andrews saying that more and more companies are entering an era where artificial intelligence (AI) is an aspect of every new project. One such AI application uses facial recognition to analyze expressions based on a person's faceprint to detect their internal emotions or feelings, motivations and attitudes.

Known as emotion AI or affective computing, this application is based on the theory of "basic emotions", which states that people everywhere communicate six basic internal emotional states — happiness, surprise, fear, disgust, anger and sadness — using the same facial movements based on our biological and evolutionary origins.

On the surface, this assumption seems reasonable, as facial expressions are an essential aspect of nonverbal communications.

A recent paper from tech industry analyst firm AI Multiple states emotion AI is an emerging technology that “enables computers and systems to identify, process, and simulate human feelings and emotions.” It is an interdisciplinary field that blends computer science, psychology and cognitive science to aid businesses to make better decisions, often to improve reliability, consistency and efficiency.

How emotion AI is being utilized

Among its current uses, emotion AI software is widely deployed for scoring video interviews with job candidates for characteristics such as “enthusiasm,” “willingness to learn,” “conscientiousness and responsibility” and “personal stability.” The software is also used by border guards to detect threats at border checkpoints, as an aid for detection and diagnosis of patients for mood disorders, to monitor classrooms for boredom or disruption, and to monitor human behavior during video calls.

The use of such technology is growing in popularity. In South Korea, for example, the use of emotion AI has become so common in job interviews that job coaches often make their clients practice going through AI interviews. Startup EmotionTrac markets software for lawyers to analyze expressions in real time to figure out what arguments will land with potential jurors. Tel Aviv University developed a technique to detect a lie through facial muscle analysis and claimed 73% accuracy. Apple has been granted a patent for “modifying operation of an intelligent agent in response to facial expressions and/or emotions.”

Emotion AI is based on pseudoscience

However, emotion AI is rife with ambiguity and controversy, not least because researchers have determined that facial expressions vary widely between contexts and cultures. And there is considerable evidence that facial movements vary too widely to be consistent signals of emotional meaning. Some argue that alleged universal expressions upon which recognition systems are built simply represent cultural stereotypes. Moreover, there is growing evidence that the science upon which emotion detection is built is wrong, claiming there is insufficient evidence to support the thesis that facial configurations accurately, reliably and specifically reflect emotional states.

Quoting Sandra Wachter, futurist Tracey Follows tweeted:

“emotion AI has “at its best no proven basis in science and at its worst is absolute pseudoscience.” Its application in the private sector, she said, is “deeply troubling.”

AI ethics scholar Kate Crawford goes a step further, concluding there is no good evidence that facial expressions reveal a person’s feelings. Thus, decisions taken based on emotion AI are fraught with uncertainty.

This concern is causing at least some companies to pull back from developing or deploying emotion AI. Microsoft recently updated their Responsible AI Standard framework that guides how they build AI systems to ensure more beneficial and equitable outcomes and foster trustworthy AI. One outcome of their internal review of AI products and services using this framework is the “retiring” of capabilities within Azure Face “that infer emotional states and identity attributes.” According to the company, the decision was based on a lack of expert consensus on how to infer emotions from appearance, especially across demographics and use cases, and because of privacy concerns. In short, the company is demonstrating responsible use of AI or at least how to avoid possibly deleterious impacts from the technology.

Even with these evident concerns, the market for emotion AI is surging, forecast to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 12% through 2028. Venture capital is continuing to flow into the field. For example,

Uniphore, a company that currently offers software incorporating emotion AI, recently closed \$400 million in series E funding with a valuation of \$2.5 billion.

Pandora's box

Similar emotion AI technology has been in use by businesses to improve productivity for several years. An Insider article reported that employers in China use “emotional surveillance technology” to modify workflows, including employee placement and breaks, to increase productivity and profits.

It is not only businesses that are interested in this technology. According to recently published reports, the Institute of Artificial Intelligence at Hefei Comprehensive National Science Center in China created an AI program that reads facial expressions and brain waves to “discern the level of acceptance for ideological and political education.” Test subjects were shown videos about the ruling party while the AI program collected and processed the data. It then returned a score that indicated whether the subject needed more political education and assessed whether they were sufficiently loyal. According to The Telegraph article, the scoring included the subject’s “determination to be grateful to the party, listen to the party and follow the party.”

Every wave of innovation creates winners and losers and brings elements that can harm segments of the population. In the case of emotion AI, many of the uses are a combination of intrusive surveillance and Taylorism, which is a questionable mixture. Moreover, the field is based upon a shaky and likely false scientific premise. Nevertheless, the application of emotion AI is unfettered except by public opinion, since AI uses remain largely unregulated around the world.

Neuroscience News asks the relevant question of whether we would want such intimate surveillance in our lives even if emotion AI could be engineered to accurately read everyone’s feelings. This question goes to the central issue of privacy. While there may be positive use cases for emotion AI – assuming it was based on valid science – it nevertheless presents a slippery slope that could lead toward Orwellian Thought Police.