

2 Jan 2009

Greetings from Tyler,

The wild celebrations of the “New Year” have been punctuated by the reality of renewed war between Israel and Gaza. In truth, Hamas never ceased the regular barrage of unguided rockets aimed at Israeli towns and settlements within range, and the intensity over recent weeks had reached a level that Israel simply could not accept.

As usual in these conflicts, the United Nations and the world’s media concentrate heavily on bemoaning “civilian casualties.” But virtually all victims of Hamas rocket attacks have been civilians, and the world seems unimpressed. In the case of the Gaza conflict, mosques, homes and apartment buildings are used for stockpiling weapons and sometimes as locations for the launch of rockets, so targeting a launch site often results in the loss of civilian life.

It is no secret, and is often noted even in mainstream reports, that it is a common terrorist tactic use civilians, including the elderly and the very young as virtual human shields, so that the world (particularly the Muslim world) will react with visceral outrage at the loss of innocent life.

The biggest question at this point in time is whether or not the current conflict between the Israeli military and the terrorist community in Gaza will escalate. Protests have broken out all over the world, particularly in the Middle East. Jordan has had to break up demonstrations, as has Egypt. The anger is directed at both Israel and the United States, burning flags and chanting “Death to Israel, Death to America.”

They’ve gone wild in Iran, and the Iranian mullahs are threatening extreme retaliation if Israel should go into Gaza on the ground, which is widely believed to be the next step.

Iran is believed to be very near having enough enriched uranium to assemble at least one nuclear weapon, and is projected to have enough to build three or more by the end of 2009.

With the worldwide economic crisis, a fragile and faltering economy here in the U.S., and a growing list of vicious enemies we surely have a lot to keep track of as 2009 unfolds.

With the short workweek and the interruption of the New Year holiday our TV result tabulation is incomplete, and will be reported in the next update. We hope you’ll all have a good Sabbath and a productive week to follow.

Until next time,

Mark Armstrong