

Why Iran's 'sharp power' public relations campaign is failing

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On 21 April 1993, some 25 years ago, daily newspapers were published but nothing of significance can be remembered of the headlines or the thousands of articles on local and international affairs. On 21 April 2018 daily newspapers were published but in 25 years time nothing will be remembered of significance from the headlines or the thousands of articles on local and international affairs. So why should [General Moussavi think otherwise](#). Pause I say, 25 years from now? What about now? Who is this General?

To cut a short story even shorter, he is the man in Iran who is working to annihilate the Zionist regime in 25 years from 21 April 2018. That would be 21 April 2043. It will be a Tuesday. Everyone knows nothing happens on Tuesdays!

A person more known is Hassan Nasrallah, who has been tag-team wrestling in the rhetoric and is not prepared to wait 25 years, maybe because he is old and sick and will be buried by then. He wants immediate action since he claims his missiles can hit any target in Israel.

That is actually good news. But I am not going to say why because this might compromise the tactics and strategy that will bring an end to the Ayatollah in Teheran, and an end to his proxies: Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza.

Rather I am going to indulge in a rant about “Sharp Power” that is actually rather blunt in the hands of the Ayatollah. Iran has been using Hamas as a tool in attempts to use this type of power but it has failed. Ehh? What is “Sharp Power”? Start with “Hard Power” that is coercion, diplomacy, threats and the use of force then consider “Soft Power” that is attraction, culture and values. End with “Sharp Power” that is a type of “Hard Power” to force cultures and values, using psychological warfare on an adversaries leaders and population.

Still not clear? In other words “Sharp Power” is a matter based on the manipulation, deception, and deceit with the case of an Iranian authoritarian entity against an Israeli liberal democracy. It is not surprising that the Ayatollahs are failing to achieve strategic objectives because in democracies including Israel the citizens don’t normally believe any media, the press. False persuasion based upon values, ethics and culture may well work in authoritarian states to influence public opinion; and may indeed in these achieve the purpose to deprive freedom of expression and human and civil rights but inherently won’t harm, disrupt, and disintegrate democratic states.

For example, over the last 11 years, Hamas has not only failed to disseminate false information within the population of Gaza but also in the conflicts with Israel. Since Hamas took violent control of Gaza in June 2007, it has tried to use deceptive force against Israel in conflicts in 2008-9, 2012 and 2014, and now in the “Return March” protests held on Fridays on the border fence with Israel. In all, Hamas has tried to use deceit, manipulation, and deception in order to exacerbate disputes in Israel, to win international sympathy amongst Western governments, and international organizations such as the United Nations' UN Human Rights Council.

However the more that lies are perpetuated the less support that Hamas gains. For example, Hamas, in its “Sharp Power” is presenting the “March of Return” as a mass popular protest and an innocent

demonstration initiated by citizens suffering from economic distress. In reality Hamas prompted by Iran is planting its own forces in the demonstrations that provoke violence causing Israeli fire. As always, Hamas uses women and children as human shields. The casualties are intended to denounce Israel as a war criminal. So every Friday less and less people have demonstrated, and it is not surprising to understand why.

Hence “Sharp Power” by Hamas is misleading headlines, partial reports, false data, omission of important aspects, and blame of Israel for using excessive force that are all intended to distort reality. Do you remember General Moussavi? It has only been less than a minute since I told you that he is making claims about 25 years from now. But you have already forgotten what he said and who he is? Hold on, I never said who he was, but that’s not really important. Generals in Iran don’t stay in power long because the insecure Ayatollah feels threatened by them and soon disposes of them.

Now to the important part and that is all about human rights. When confronted by “Sharp Power” it is “Smart Power” that can confront innocent protesters. That is to say the IDF because it is a “Humble Power” rather than Hamas who are a “Humiliating Power.” The heavy artillery of public diplomacy shows that Hamas as the sole governance of Gaza is responsible for the economic distress in Gaza as a matter of fact. It invests huge resources in rockets and tunnels and disputes with the Palestinian Authority, and not in education and health care. To dispatch women and children to be killed as human shields will only result in one outcome and that is not the “Return of Palestinian refugees.”

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