Blocking the Road Is Civil Terrorism

**By Tal Fortgang**

The anti-Israel demonstrators who have blocked traffic in major cities across the country know that their victims are decent people. There is little risk that the drivers who can’t get to their jobs, families and other obligations will run them over because those drivers are careful to avoid harming others and breaking the law – even as they face down people who flagrantly do both.

It is no coincidence that only one side in the clash between Israel’s friends and foes in the West behaves this way. Those who reacted to Hamas’s Oct. 7 attack by doubling down on calls for Israel’s elimination emulate Hamas by inflicting suffering on innocent people to achieve their political ends, albeit at a much smaller scale. Seeing their own clause as righteous, they are blind to the cruelty of their own actions and prey upon those too decent to respond with deterrent force. They think they are engaging in civil disobedience, the tacti that exposed the injustice of racial segregation. But they aren’t trying to draw attention to the wrongness of the laws they are breaking; they are trying to draw attention to an unrelate political issue. These demonstrators would more accurately be called civil terrorists.

Why would anti-Israel activists think infuriating thousands of their fellow citizens with useless stunts will win allies for the cause? That question is based on the incorrect assumption that these activists are trying to persuade or win sympathy from those on the fence. Rather, the demonstrators, like Hamas and other “decolonization” groups, are trying to make civilian life miserable, while forcing people to draw a mental connection between that misery and some political status quo.

If the costs of continuing to support Israel are too high, they figure, Americans will start lobbying their elected officials to capitulate to terrorists at home and abroad. Just as Americans put their cars in park rather than plow ahead, the radicals bet that peaceful Americans will try to end these disruptions through politics instead of a crackdown on petter street crime.

Law-abiding Americans can signal that such an outcome is impossible by raising the cost of future demonstrations by enforcing the law. When localities plagued by civil terrorism do so, they send the message that they won’t let bad actors take advantage of good citizens. Thes crimes don’t warrant deadly force, but decent people count on law enforcement to restore order.

So far, the demonstrators’ cynical faith in the kindness of Americans has proved correct. Though police have recently begun arresting demonstrators blocking majors, there is little reason to believe that those arrested will face consequences significant enough to deter this trend. Since blocking traffic is at most a misdemeanor in most states, district attorneys likely see little use in dedicating resources to prosecute these acts of domestic terror.

Until there are significant consequences in the form of prison time and fines, the trend of blocking interstates, bridges and airports isn’t likely to abate.