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The not-quite-so-useful idiot at NPR

By Mary Grabar

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I listen to National Public Radio so you don't have to.

Why do I do it? The bias and faux intellectualism can be infuriating.

But, then again, there are some moments of humor, when the reporter attempting his in-depth questioning in hopes of getting the interviewee into a gotcha! moment inadvertently reveals his own agenda and gives credibility to the other side.

This happened on Tuesday evening as Robert Siegel interviewed Mark Regev, the spokesman for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Siegel introduced Regev by noting that "He insists that yesterday's action (the commando raid on the Turkish 'aid' ship) was both justified and legal."

Regev cited the United Nations charter, which recognizes blockades as legitimate during times of conflict. Israel's blockade is intended to stop weapons from Syria or Iran from reaching Hamas terrorists in Gaza.

Siegel pressed on, noting that the vessel was from Turkey, a nation that has good relations with Israel. He then charged whether any weapons had been found.

Regev replied that there had not but then brought up the quite logical point that the purpose of the mandatory inspections was so that weapons would not get through.

Regev patiently repeated that humanitarian aid was welcomed and charged that the pro-Hamas organizers had said that their "primary goal is to break the blockade of Gaza."

Israel was "forced to intercept."

Siegel had no comeback to the logical point about why a ship bringing humanitarian aid would not voluntarily undergo inspection.

So he put his critical thinking cap on and posited, "Given where this incident occurred and that these people were not on a warship, what would be immoral about those people resisting armed commandos?"

Uh, sorry, if I'm on a ship and armed commandos come down, I will not resist unless I want to commit suicide.

But such a thought linking Hamas supporters and suicide never occurs to the intellectuals at NPR.

Regev patiently and professionally explained that there had already been six interceptions and that the "humanitarians" (my choice of word) attacked the soldiers with machetes, knives and iron rods.

The soldiers responded appropriately as police would to the use of "deadly force."

NPR reporters are known for digging deep, so Siegel said that this sounded like a military assault and not a police intervention.

Regev had to explain once again that the men were instructed to act with restraint but were met with deadly force.

"But," continued Siegel, "the Israeli blockade of Gaza, while it may have the aim of preventing material arriving in Gaza that could be used as a more effective rocket or missile is also a political policy that's aimed at depriving the Hamas movement of credibility and legitimacy."

(I interrupt for a comment: Uh, yaah. If it's a terrorist movement, it is illegitimate.)

Siegel continued, revealing the true purpose of the ship with "humanitarian" aid:

"On that score from the world reaction you see today ... is it fair to say that the Israeli policy of blockade is failing? That indeed the authorities in Gaza are achieving more sympathy today than Israel from people all around the world?"

(My response, yes, if the useful -- sometimes useless -- idiots like you are spreading the news to the brainwashed masses who send you money during pledge drives.)

Regev admitted that the press was sympathetic to the Palestinians but emphasized that Israel had to protect her people.

(That whooshing sound is the sound of that important idea flying over Siegel's head.)

At this point Siegel wisely thanked his guest and ended the interview on the usual note of professional self-satisfied smugness.

But I can just picture Siegel turning off the mike and running into the other

room, no longer able to keep his true feelings inside, and shouting out, "Death to Israel!"

An assistant then must have high-fived him and congratulated him on a brilliant interview that exposed for listeners Israel's murderous aims.

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