

OPINION

Cult of machines and automation are incapable of preventing unwanted events

Can the world prevent even more bloody events? Even more expressions of hatred?

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Prevention is by many orders of [magnitude cheaper than reaction](#). And more effective. Oct. 7, a bloody reality difficult to accept, is proof – as much as 9/11 is.

America, the most powerful nation in the world, was [humiliated in a terrorist attack](#) that could and should have been prevented. The reaction price: over \$2 trillion. Plus, the discomfort of airport security, the NSA (and not only!) watching, defeat in Afghanistan. The terrorists won.

Israel's famous security service, and the no less famous IDF (Israel Defense Force), were demeaned. Terrorists, training for paraglider infiltration under the eyes of many secret services (U.S. included) succeeded against the technological miracle of a border void of living military, which was replaced by machines. It was automated—the highest achievement of determinism.

The cascade of failures that led to killing, maiming, taking hostages and destroying buildings will be subjected to scrutiny. But nobody can undo the horror of a war, in reaction to terror, that might be justified but in the end costs more lives of innocents.

[The focus in Israel](#) – as it was in the U.S. – is on reaction. It is supposed to be massive. The terrorists spent a fraction of what the reaction – \$250 million a day! – will eventually cost. This all points to a deeper reaching causality in which not so much the past determines the present – what is called *determinism* – but the possible future plays the most important role.

Anticipatory actions, informed by the possible future, would have saved lives and prevented wanton destruction.

In the embrace of the deterministic view of the world that afforded enormous progress – think about the state of technology today and the prosperity it made possible – the world continues to accumulate every imaginable means for reacting. Deterministic science and technology, embodied in the cult of machines and automation, is capable of generating the most sophisticated explanations of events – *after they took place*. But unfortunately, it is incapable of preventing them.

The U.S. had plenty of data prior to the 9/11 attack. Nevertheless, it failed to understand its meaning. Israel, after thwarting attack after attack, felt secure in its protective digital shield. But it eventually failed.

How and why did this happen? It should be clear by now that reality is not reducible to data and its processing, no matter at which scale. Life and death are about meaning. Machines, no matter how sophisticated, are agnostic of significance.

Any activity based on machines, regardless how sophisticated, can be emulated by other machines. If humans write a program, such as one to identify attempts at crossing the border or flying into the Twin Towers, another human being will be able to hack it. Instead of forcing themselves over the border, terrorists found an uncomplicated way to fly over it.

Why is the open-ended space of the possible, where prevention could be pursued, not investigated? Because determinism creates the illusion that what happened will be repeated.

Some years ago, a colleague from academia, congratulated me: *Your anticipatory research is now a thematic interest in IARPA: "Anticipatory Intelligence." The world is catching up with you. Congratulations!*

It did not. They wanted bigger hammers, not a different way of thinking. There was ZERO probability that 9/11 would take place. And again, ZERO that Hamas would bring Israel to its knees 50 years after the Yom Kippur war.

[Determinism adopted by Israel](#) in the form of technology deployed as a better border defense infers from the past. It prepared the country to fight old wars. Hamas worked in anticipatory mode: spying on those to be killed, making technology unusable, building tunnels, indoctrinating the young to the extent of translating Jew-hatred into accepting suicide missions.

An explanation: The current state of an anticipatory system is the outcome of not only past states, but also of possible future states. It is holistic.

Let us unpack the explanation by pointing out that anticipation is definitory of living entities – in individual actions or in aggregate behavior (swarms of birds or fish, packs of animals, communities, societies). Organisms survive due to anticipatory action. Immunity is not in reaction to pathogens, but in anticipation of them. Anticipatory actions result in adaptive behavior. Neither the U.S. nor Israel achieved the goal of adaptive defense processes of holistic nature.

The tragic events cannot be disconnected from the perceptions they triggered. The sobering reality of demonstrations, all around the world, not in solidarity with the victims, but with the perpetrators, points to a misunderstood liberalism expressed in deplorable immigration policies. This resulted in the *Trojan horse* effect: the enemy is now inside, no longer hidden among those who have a legitimate claim to safe haven.

The result: mass demonstrations, in European countries, in Australia, and in New Zealand, [chanting: Gas the Jews](#). Only a holistic view of the events can help understand the way the world has changed in the woke recent years, and why universities became the stomping grounds for indoctrination.

Reaction is reductionist: search for cause and effect, localize each separate incident and operate with it in isolation from the whole. After that, live with the illusion that all is fine – experts vouch for their machines. Specialization results in blindfolding. Prevention, as an outcome of anticipatory action, is holistic.

Imagine trying to understand a play, for instance, by seeing only one act, by not taking in the performance of the actors, by ignoring the reactions of the audience. The war in Afghanistan did not do away with terror in the world. Israel's wars in Gaza, each time the terrorists made life less than comfortable for Israelis, only created conditions for what the latter is going through.

If technology embodies the connection between causes and effects, living entities unfold according to a dynamic that is far more complex. The expert designed war machine gave Israel the edge in the conflict with enemies who want to annihilate the Jews living there.

Anticipatory actions unfold in a different time frame. An organism's healthy cells continuously guard against cancer. Stimulating bodily healing – as in the case of migraine headaches – takes longer than quick-fix medications, but is completely successful.

Israel, like the rest of the world, [chose the path of reaction](#) to the detriment of stimulating prevention processes. When its own stability is undermined – as is the case in the political cannibalism unfolding even during this war – those who never gave up their fanatic pursuit of Jew-hatred took advantage.

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The presumed best science and technology give people, at least in countries dedicated to freedom and opportunity, a prosperity that cannot be even imagined without them. But not the security they wish for. This applies as well to their health – if you [remember COVID-19](#). They invest in reactive means such as powerful air forces, rockets and bombs, surveillance or in mRNA vaccines of disputable effectiveness. But not in prevention.

Anyone prepared for the change-of-function genetic research to produce the new weapons of the fanatics? The question pertains to our society: time to integrate anticipatory thinking in our entire realm of activity. The age of the quick fixes is over. Unless we are prepared to surrender.

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