Neither the savage attacks on Israelis over the past two weeks nor the sadistic celebrations of them in Palestinian quarters was anything new. For Israelis, the killings of their innocents took on a dreadful familiarity long ago, and the same is true of the scenes of Palestinians rejoicing in those deaths by honking horns and handing out candy.

In Jerusalem, bombs packed with nails and ball bearings so as to shred Israeli flesh to the maximum extent possible were detonated at two bus stops, murdering a 15-year-old boy and a 50-year-old Ethiopian immigrant and maiming over 20 others. A police official described the death tools as “two high quality, powerful devices (capable of) a high level of damage,” and a high level of damage is what they did. Just ask the victims’ families. This came just days after a Palestinian stabbed some eight Israelis in an industrial zone, killing three.

There has been a wave of these sorts of murders in recent months, and for Israelis they evoke the period from 2000 to 2005 when, encouraged by Palestinian leaders, bombings carried out on buses and in cafes killed almost 1,100 Israelis and wounded about 8,300 more. That’s the proportional equivalent of about 40,000 Americans killed and 320,000 wounded. Guess how Americans would feel if that had happened on our streets. That’s exactly how Israelis feel.

Which leads to the lamentations greeting the return to power of right-wing Israeli leader Benjamin Netanyahu and, in particular, the hard right coalition the incoming Prime Minister is putting together to form a parliamentary majority. The critical problems with the lamentations are two-fold.

First, Netanyahu won in a free, fair and typically robust democratically-conducted election in a country that takes its democratic elections very seriously indeed.

Second, those doing all of the lamenting have Palestinian attacks to thank for the choice made by the Israeli electorate, which above all wants to be kept safe and which lacks the confidence that their centrist parties, let alone their left-leaning ones, can do the job.

Israel’s relations with many of its Arab neighbors have openly warmed, and its ties to others have expanded, even if less openly. But the Palestinian-Israeli conflict remains stuck in gridlock. On the West Bank, the supposedly governing Palestinian Authority is a hot mess. In the Gaza Strip, Hamas continues to hold Palestinians hostage. No two-state solution, and no fundamental progress at all, is possible until that siege lifts.

Stalemate, however, is no license for hubris, let alone arrogance. Some in Israel’s political right wing seem to think that whatever the Israeli government does or doesn’t do has little bearing on American popular support for their country. They are wrong.

During the period from 2009 to 2021, when Netanyahu last served as Prime Minister, support for Israel among Democratic constituencies — younger voters, women, voters of color and self-described progressives — hemorrhaged. The damage was serious, and yet some in Israel’s governing circles, as well as in certain segments of America’s pro-Israel communities, comforted themselves with denials or shrugs.

It remains to be seen whether Netanyahu’s new government will embrace the old hubris or learn from it. If Netanyahu uses his return to office to sidestep or override the judicial processes underway to determine whether he is guilty of crimes, the stain on the country he loves will be next to impossible to remove.

Settler violence against Palestinians is going to have to be prosecuted, not coddled. If fanatics and racists with whom Netanyahu has bonded for the purpose of forming his new government are permitted to subvert Israel’s democratic values, the price paid by Israel among Americans who care about those values will be very high.

Few countries face a greater assortment of profound challenges than Israel. Add to those challenges the need to reinforce the underpinnings of bipartisan support for America’s only genuine ally in the Middle East, a need which one hopes Benjamin Netanyahu and his new government take seriously.

Jeff Robbins is a former assistant United States attorney and United States delegate to the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva.

Flaggers an insult to hard-working officers

When compared to other police forces across the country, the Boston Police Department has gone from being a cesspool of corruption, racism, and inefficiency to being the best in the business. Why? Because of the dedication of local politicians, the community, and devoted police brass.

Unfortunately, like with every police force in Democrat-controlled cities across the country, the handcuffs are on the cops rather than the criminals.

The Boston police force has also fallen victim to this disturbing pattern. Officers in Boston have to protect a mayor who doesn’t appreciate or support them while also being headed by a commissioner who doesn’t know what he’s doing, always being surveilled by bodycams and amateur cop watchers, and receiving disrespectful treatment from the general public.

Our officers’ morale is in shambles, and a much-appreciated perk of the job will be torn away from them like their dignity has been by politicians who simply hate them for existing.

Construction details not only give extra money for police officers to feed themselves and their families, but they also provide an additional layer of security to the community.

The police are paid by the construction companies, and no tax dollars are used. Doesn’t that sound fantastic? Not, for cop-hating city councilor Ken McDougall, followed by her supporting cast of like-minded councilors.

Lara truly desires to be the straw that breaks the camel’s back, removing the only thing keeping our police officers on the force and out of a condition of complete unadulterated agony. Lara wishes to introduce a civilian flaggers scheme, in which civilians would take the place of cops on construction details.

This is yet another equity and diversity ploy, progressive buzzwords that mean some form of discrimination, racism will occur soon, or people with common sense will suffer immensely.

Suffering Immensely is one of the three taking place here, and the people suffering are the ones with common sense, the community, and cops. As a bonus to keeping criminals at bay, the detail officers have also made numerous arrests and responded quickly to countless emergencies.

Lara, claims this will “benefit the Black community, which was particularly hard hit by job losses during COVID-19 and which has borne the brunt of “state violence, overpolicing and mass incarceration.” State violence? Is Lara confusing Boston with Iran?

Lara doesn’t care about increasing employment because she has no influence over labor unions or construction companies. If this proposal passes, construction companies will hire their own personnel and pay them less than cops because cops bring greater qualifications to the table than the average construction worker.

Some of these flaggers won’t even be Massachusetts natives, let alone Bostonians. Someone from New Hampshire, or Rhode Island would be doing it, and they would be glad to make some money.

I think it’s excellent that many construction companies and unions hire people who have served time in prison; everyone deserves a second opportunity at a productive life. That’s not the problem, though; this is. Imagine if a formally incarcerated individual gets a flagger job, and here you are overworked, tired, police officer struggling to make ends meet, and you so happen to drive by a construction site and see somebody you arrested in the past now has taken your job.

How might you feel? I’d be fuming with rage.

Lara is aware of all of this, but she doesn’t care because her main goal is to punish the dedicated officers of the Boston Police Department. This flaggers program does have the potential to become the law it has the votes. It’s a scary reality to be faced with.