

Terror and Psychological Warfare

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This week marked two important developments on American soil. The first occurred on November 5 with mid-term elections resulting in a republican sweep and complete control of the Capitol ("[Shift in Power Emboldens Bush and G.O.P. Lawmakers.](#)" Alison Mitchell, The New York Times, November 7, 2002). The second occurred on November 8 with another sweep. This time the UN Security Council voted - in New York - 15:0 to adopt **Resolution 1441** which includes a provision that allows the United States to attack if weapons inspectors in Iraq say that Baghdad is not complying with the requirement that the Iraqi regime declare and destroy all weapons of mass destruction ("[Security Council Votes, 15-0, for Tough Iraq Resolution.](#)" Julia Preston, The New York Times, November 9, 2002). The New York Times headlined the outcome of the UN vote as "[Clock Ticks for Hussein After Security Council Vote](#)" (Patrick E. Tyler, November 9, 2002).

The importance of these two events cannot be minimized for future developments in the world. After all, the focus is on Iraq but by no means is it the only important player. Except now it appears that the US is stronger and better positioned following these two sweeps.

The Iraqis are "examining" the resolution and are expected to "respond" within a week. But meanwhile in Baghdad's 'The Mother of All Battles' mosque the preacher offered the usual high dose of vitriol to his followers, asking "Who Does Bush, the Little Dwarf, Think He is to Threaten the Descendants of Muhammad?" suggesting that "Jihad is Now a Personal Obligation of Every Muslim," welcoming "Death and Martyrdom," declaring that "The Month of Ramadan - The Month of Victory" and that only one source could do better than the Sadam: "Bush! Allah Will Settle His Account With You." ("[Ramadan Sermon From Iraq.](#)" MEMRI, Special Dispatch - Iraq/Jihad and Terrorism Studies, November 8, 2002, No. 438).

These clerics must be all going to the same school and attending the same "professional" conferences as the language of their preaching does not make it uniquely Iraqi, Egyptian, Iranian, Saudi, or Palestinian. Indeed, such a conference attended by scores of Islamist preachers in Jordan last week issued a series of religious rulings (fatwas) calling on Jordanians to wage jihad against the US declaring it "an enemy of God" ("[Jordan clerics issue fatwas against the US.](#)" Nicolas Pelham, The New York Times, November 3, 2002).

The hate is institutionalized in the highest echelons of government. In Saudi Arabia the Minister of Education and his deputies attacked what they called the American perception of "religious hard-liners' influence on boy's schooling" by shamelessly suggesting: "Why don't you go to Israeli math textbooks and see what they're saying 'If you kill 10 Arabs one day and 12 the next day, what would be the total?' 'If 5 or 8 percent of our curriculum has to be changed, then 80 to 90 percent of the content of American media has to be changed.'" ("[Under the Ramadan Moon.](#)" Maureen Dowd, The New York Times, November 6, 2002).

Dowd must have relied on her reader's maturity to discern from her report that such textbooks do not exist as she does not share with us whether she ever requested the top Saudi education officials to produce the books so as to back their claim.

Iran is also celebrating religious freedom and cultural progress by demanding that all dogs and their owners be arrested, by jailing a pollster and a reporter who shared with the Iranian public that "three quarters of the Iranian people want good relations with the United ("Great Satan") States, and that Khamenei is the most unpopular public figure in the country." They also demonstrated their official respect to others when President Khatami refused to attend a state dinner in Madrid with King Juan Carlos if there were wine on the table ("The Iranian Comedy Hour: In the U.S., the silence continues," Michael Ledeen, National Review, October 23, 2002).

These are all external symptoms of intolerance but Iran is reputed to have been actively supporting Al-Qaida and the Hizbullah who are responsible for the Bali bombing. Of course Indonesians (largely Muslims) blame the bombing on the CIA ("[Indonesians Say They Suspect C.I.A. in Bali Blast](#)," Jane Perlez, The New York Times, November 7, 2002).

This combination of rumor-mongering and religious vitriol have become a cottage industry that can be found in the ideology that sends people to commit suicide bombings and then justifies it at the highest religious authority. While emitting to the West messages that Islam is a "religion of peace" the clerics are quick to explain to their followers and even visitors what they mean by peace and jihad. Wall Street reporter Kenneth Timmerman interviewed ("A Mufti's View Of Islam and Terrorism" (article available only to Wall Street Journal on-line subscribers)) the new Grand Mufti of Egypt (apparently after the previous one has "embarrassed" President Mubarak) and was "shocked" with what he heard: "Having spent much of the past 20 years covering the Middle East conflict, I have heard my share of pronouncements that would be prosecuted as hate speech in the West. It still came as a bit of a shock to find out that senior government-appointed clerics, especially here in this second-largest receiver of U.S. foreign aid, Egypt, would not just tolerate hate speech, but have become its most dedicated practitioners."

Timmerman adds that "My interviews with these scholars made it clear that Westerners concerned by the violence in the Middle East need to understand that the two parties to this conflict do not use the same logic, nor do they believe in the same moral code. Those of us who have been brought up in the Judeo-Christian tradition have been taught that respect for life is one of God's most basic commandments... But according to these Islamic scholars -- and they are not alone -- the search for "justice" legitimizes the wanton targeting of innocent civilians. Targeting is the key word here. Civilians die in all wars, something known as "collateral deaths." But according to these scholars, Islam accepts purposely seeking out innocent civilians in order to sow terror in their society." And he concludes that "Obeying a different moral operating system, the Arab leaders who continue to promote and finance Palestinian suicide bombers will not stop until they have achieved total victory, or total defeat. Mr. Abu Laila put it well: "If the Israelis do not give in to Arab demands, the conflict in this area will continue until the end of time. We all believe in Armageddon."

Two different reports from Egypt suggest that not all Egyptians are content with the direction offered by the powerful clerics and some are speaking out against them. One poet literally places

the blame on the clerics ("Al-Azhar's Sheikhs and Egyptian Chief Muftis Are Responsible") identifies "The Need For a New Religious Discourse," complains and asks "How Have We Allowed These People to Speak in Our Name and in the Name of Islam?" and then concludes that "Muslims Must Use their Brains to Arrive at Appropriate Rulings" ("An Egyptian Intellectual Campaigns to Change the Religious Discourse Led by Al-Azhar," MEMRI, Special Dispatch - Egypt/Reform in the Arab and Muslim World, November 3, 2002, No. 436).

Egypt is one of the leading producers and disseminators of Nazi-like blood libels as its film and TV industry are harnessed in the service of the government to propagate the hate espoused by Saudi Arabia, Syria, the Palestinians and others with one source feeding the other in a never-ending loop. Even when there is debate in the Egyptian press the dominant voice is clearly not the one which stands for reason and truth. The anti-Semitic TV series airing now in Egypt (during the month of Ramadan) is based on the infamous Protocols of the Elders of Zion and it elicited a couple of columnists objections to it with one asking "What if Israel had Done the Same Thing?" and another arguing that "The Arab and Islamic Public is Stuck in the 19th Century" ("Arab Press Debates Antisemitic Egyptian Series 'A Knight Without a Horse,'" MEMRI, Inquiry and Analysis - Egypt/Arab Antisemitism, November 8, 2002, No. 109).

But these are (perhaps brave) voices in the wilderness. The Egyptian Censor approved the series, the government press argues vehemently that "The Series is Based on "Legitimate History," and the series producer claims that "The series tells part of our history in the Arab region, and what the Jews did... This work is unconnected to the Jewish religion and it does not encourage bloodshed and killing. The truth is that the series condemns terror... My message to the world is that the Islamic religion prohibits killing innocents, women, and children, but does not prevent us from waging Jihad and fighting to regain the land..." This "BUT" is the key to understand the statement and the popular mind-set because it "allows" the "believer" to claim he is "peaceful" yet it also offers him the "legitimacy" to be violent when he deems it serves his "holy" interests. Is there any wonder that the Palestinians urge their followers that "Watching the Program is a Pan-Arab Duty?" They probably give academic credits for their university students for watching.

How influential and deep-seated this propaganda is can be learned from statements made by people in more unsuspecting corners. An American visitor attended a conference in Cairo last month. While on tour of the pyramids, the tour guide asked if anyone in the group was Jewish. When nobody responded in the affirmative, she went on to say that there is a false history about who built the pyramids. She said the pyramids were designed and built by Egyptians, and that Jews had nothing to do with them. In fact, she said, "Jews were never a presence in Egypt." One could dismiss this as absolute nonsense - which of course it is - but the problem lies exactly in the fact that there is a constant attempt to debase any historical and religious narrative of the Jews. Little does the brain-washed tour guide realize that the Egyptians of today have very little to do with those who inhabited that land in the days of the Pharaohs.

And closer to Israel? The Palestinians are feverishly engaged in continued hate and vilification along the lines they have learned so well from the Nazis and their offspring. The November 1 sermon on Palestinian Authority TV blared that ""Jews are monkeys and pigs, conceited,

arrogant, disloyal and treacherous, and will be tortured on Judgment Day" (Itamar Marcus, Palestinian Media Watch Bulletin, November 4, 2002). And then taking their cue from the Egyptian TV series it is evident how pervasive their propaganda machine is. PMW documents how the official PA daily cited precise quotes from Protocols 2 and 12 to explain Israeli policy; how the "Protocols" are presented as the Jews' road map in building Israel; how America is following the dictates of the "Protocols;" how Israeli military action is defined as following the script of the "Protocols;" claims that the Jews changed the Bible, wrote the Talmud and concluded with the Protocols; and how PA academics and historians refer to the Protocols as a truthful Jewish plot on PA educational television ("The Protocols of the Elders of Zion" - in Palestinian Authority ideology, Itamar Marcus, PMW Special Report 41, November, 2002).

The Palestinians have not invented racial and religious invective. They have bought into it and have articulated it along the lines spewed all over the Arab world. If Egyptian, Iranian, Iraqi, and Jordanian clerics say that jihad is acceptable even for peace-loving people then all the Palestinians have to do is state they are peace loving but have to carry out jihad against those who offend them. Sort of the Wild West bandit who shoots people because he does not like their moustache. It is exactly this rhetoric that is now directly transmitted from the Palestinian political circles where the new Palestinian Authority Interior Minister Dr. Hani al-Hassan explained that "as far as he is concerned, murdering Israeli civilians who live in Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip is a legitimate operation of "resistance" against "occupation."" thus plainly and clearly legitimizing murder ("Still apologizing for terror, Editorial, The Jerusalem Post Nov. 2, 2002). One could only wonder how would have the world reacted if the Japanese Emperor or Prime Minister would say something to this effect against - say the French - today.

This is not merely rhetoric but part of an identifiable strategic objective. Ehud Ya'ari describes it perhaps best ("Bumps on the Road: Arafat's strategic goal is runaway statehood that is not born out of peace and will not live in peace. And in this, he has to fail," Jerusalem Report, 11-18-2003) when he argues "That's what this war has been about for the past two years. The question now is not whether there will be a Palestinian state or not, but whether the Palestinian state will be born in peace, or to abort it." In this context it is helpful to note that when the propaganda is so vicious it is fairly understandable that the Palestinians (and their supporters) will resort to lies. One such lie (the lines between lies and propaganda are rather blurred) was the claim of the "massacre in Jenin" and when there was no massacre the Palestinians did not take their words back. Therefore it was not surprising to read in a liberal paper an article about Jenin that expressed sympathy to the Palestinians ("[Letter From Jenin.](#)" Sylvana Foa, The Village Voice, November 6 - 12, 2002). Yet, at the same time it reported about a de-mining team that is trying to clear explosive ordnance from the city: ""We found 4668 items, of which 804 were live,...The first load we buried in 30 cubic meters of concrete. Now we blow everything up...There was a lot of Israeli stuff, including missiles which they said they didn't use,...But most of it was Palestinian. We found six factory sites with components for making bombs. They were even making their own gunpowder." The uninitiated might have thought that Israel had no reason to enter Jenin.

And the vitriol is not directed solely against Jews and Israelis. Repeatedly rhetoric and action is directed against Christians. Amitai Etzioni has documented many of the terrorists attacks and categorizes them ("Killing Christians: The underreported story of Islamist violence around the

world," Weekly Standard, Nov.2/02) as acts against whom the terrorists define as "infidels" and suggests that "It is true that other religions have passed through violent and intolerant phases. And it is possible that moderate interpretations of Islam may again come to predominate. But we shall be unable to recognize and foster that development if we refuse to acknowledge that the violence currently erupting in many parts of the Islamic world is aimed not simply at the political and economic leadership of the West but also at its Judeo-Christian tradition. When Christians and Jews are no longer characterized as Kuffr ("infidel"), we shall know we have turned a corner."

And indeed the terrorists reach various corners of the world and recently attention has been focused on Paraguay which has become a hotbed of extremist activity as well as a target for hunting them. Recent news report that a conference of terrorist organizations took place there and that the area serves as an important bridgehead to Latin American and the western hemisphere ("U.S. Terrorist Search Reaches Paraguay: Black Market Border Hub Called Key Finance Center for Middle East Extremists," Anthony Faiola, Washington Post Foreign Service, October 13, 2001).

And the western media? Reading various accounts and reports of terrorism one is hard-pressed to find unadulterated facts as they are often either ignored, exaggerated, not properly contextualized, or framed in a manner which leads more to bias than to helpful information. This is prevalent in some of the most respected media outlets and it has been increasingly noted by various watchdog groups. The ADL has recently issued its "concern" about biases displayed by National Public Radio (["ADL Analysis: Concerns with NPR's The Mideast: A Century of Conflict,"](#) November 5, 2002) focusing specifically on imbalances with regards to the Israeli/Palestinian Policy on Negotiations and to Terrorism. ADL also noted that NPR's discussion on "key issues is incomplete" when it comes to the refugees, Camp David, and Palestinian Violence.

NPR is also getting attention from commentators like Mona Charen ("National biased radio," Town-hall, November 5, 2002) who relies on the work of CAMERA which has been documenting NPR's biases ("NPR at War - with History," October 14, 2002). CAMERA commented on the recent series on the Middle East wars that: " The fourth part of NPR's Middle East series focused on the Six Day War of 1967, and, like previous segments, was marred by material errors and omissions, many of which portrayed Israel in an unjustifiably negative light. In contrast, there were no errors which portrayed the Arabs or Palestinians in an unjustifiably negative light." And CAMERA's Andrea Levin in a recent article ("New Yorker bests Times on anti-Semitism coverage," The Jerusalem Post, Nov. 4, 2002) thunders at the New York Times for its blatant biased coverage and compares it to the New Yorker which does a much better job. She still acknowledges the recent story the Times did on the Egyptian anti-Semitic TV series in the hope that its "honesty...was not a solitary event" (don't bank on it).

Others are taking issue with political correctness running rampant in the media when it comes to the characterization of the perpetrators of crime and terror. Ann Coulter lambasts the media ("Media Muslim Makeovers!" October 30, 2002) for avoiding the characterization of terrorists as Muslims when it is warranted (the sniper, the Moscow theater) as she argues that "America is at war with Islamic fanatics... But in a prolix front-page article about the "hostage siege" in Russia,

the Times referred to the Islamic fanatics who stormed the theater exclusively as the "captors," the "separatists" and the "guerrillas." And Diana West describes the biases in the media and the academic world and argues ("What's in a name when the name is Muhammad?" [Jewish World Review](#), Nov. 4, 2002) that "Only decades of political correctness and cultural relativism could have brought us to the point where there's even a contest between these alien schools of thought. It should be clear by now that the outcome, still undecided, will be far from academic."

Mark Steyn forcefully proposes to "Stop making excuses for Muslim extremists" ([Jewish World Review](#), Oct. 30, 2002) and he takes issue with those who make a moral equivalence between the atrocities of present day extremists and co-religionists: "You get the picture: Sure, Muslim fundamentalists can be pretty extreme, but what about all our Christian fundamentalists? Unfortunately, for the old moral equivalence to hold up, the Christians really need to get off their fundamentalist butts and start killing more people. At the moment, the brilliantly versatile Muslim fundamentalists are gunning down Maryland school kids and bus drivers, hijacking Moscow musicals, self-detonating in Israeli pizza parlours, blowing up French oil tankers in Yemen, and slaughtering nightclubbers in Bali, while Christian fundamentalists are, er, sounding extremely strident in their calls for the return of prayer in school."

Interestingly enough there are some signs that some Muslim communities around the world take issue with those who claim to represent them. Reports from Australia suggests - perhaps prematurely - ("[Muslims damn fanatics](#), Larry Schwartz, *The Age*, November 3 2002) that "Leaders of Australia's 300,000-strong Muslim community are banding together to publicly condemn terrorist attacks by religious extremists in their first united stand on the issue. The formal statement, which is in the final stages of drafting, will warn extremist groups that they are wrong to think they are acting in the name of the broader Muslim community." However, one should be cautious in writing such reports as what counts is the actual phrasing of the condemnation. Given the paucity of unequivocal condemnations of Islamist terrorism it would have been helpful to await the actual statement not merely report about it being formulated. A search of Australian papers in the 6 days that have passed since this report first appeared did not reveal any written statements emanating from that gathering.

There are thought condemnations by Muslims in Western media. But it condemns those who seem to be "persecuting" the "innocent Muslims." San Franciscan Asthma Gull Hasan writes ("[Learning a Lesson for Ramadan](#)," *The New York Times*, November 6, 2002) that "I have a hard time believing many things this Ramadan: that my mother's donation to feed a Muslim family in Bosnia probably landed her name on a list at the Justice Department; that my grandmother can't ask a relative to take money to the shrines of Sufi saints in Pakistan and India like she always does for fear of coming under suspicion for laundering money for terrorist causes; that I can't attend a mosque gathering to open the holiday without worrying that my license plate number will be put in a file of mosque-goers. If self control means resolving my frustration at not feeling free to practice my faith as I did as a little girl, if self control means not being able to give to charity at the precise time my God has asked me to help others, then I now know why God wanted Muslims to learn self control." Of course, devoid of any context she purposefully ignores the deeds in the name of peace lovers and does not suggest that perhaps the "militants" also exercise some self-control over their never-ending urge to kill.

And other apologists also adopt the "blame the victim" attitude sheepishly suggesting inherent bias against Islam and Muslims ("Unfair to direct blame at Islam," Ebrahim Moosa, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution: 11/6/02). "A pattern is emerging. When Jeffrey Dahmer, David Berkowitz or Adolf Hitler killed people, they were held accountable as individuals. But if Mohammed Atta or John Allen Muhammad kill, then suddenly all of Islam is culpable." Moosa then further articulates: "Even if John Allen Muhammad claims that he killed people because of his belief in Islam, we still cannot accept it as a fact. We can only do so when we know for sure that Islam as a religion teaches individuals to engage in assassinations....But since we do know for sure that "thou shall not kill" is also part of Islamic teachings, any attempt to blame Islam for Muhammad's senseless deeds is an act of deep prejudice and malice, nothing less." Since when did Dahmer and Berkowitz have a (collective) ideology and since when was Hitler accountable only as an individual? Apparently Moosa forgot to quote the clerics mentioned earlier who permit such killings and fully justify and glorify them (oh, yes, in the name of Islam).

The shrewdest propaganda is offered by long-time apologist and supporter of Arab causes, the soft spoken and well-written James Zogby ("What do Arabs think about?" Arab News, Saudi Arabia's First English Daily, 07 November 2002). For him "racism and perverse self absorption" exist only with others: "To the anti-Arab polemicists of the world, the answer is simple: the Arabs are driven by their hatred of Israel and the West. Three decades ago, Golda Meir, then prime minister of Israel, captured the racism and perverse self-absorption inherent in this view when she observed that she pitied the Arabs because while Israelis had fun, enjoyed life and created art and music, all the Arabs did was hate and make war." He maintains that "The tragedy, of course, is that after decades of anti-Arab public relations propaganda this racist view of the Arab world has taken hold."

Zogby tries to portray the Arabs as peace-loving humans who " Like people everywhere they go to bed at night thinking about their children and wake up worrying about their jobs." And then he sneaks it in: "When they think about Israel at all, it is because they feel the pain it has inflicted on their people who, if it were not for Israel's behavior, would be able to live free and prosper, and able to worry about things unrelated to Israel and what it is doing to them." He is of course not racist and not self-absorbed. Just a "social-scientist" sharing his findings with us. Clearly his writings have more than a trace of a detectable sentiment that Israel is the only one responsible for the "misery" of the "Arabs who are only worried about their jobs" and if he could only wish Israel away all the problems of the Arabs would magically disappear. Surely none of those Arabs ever think about 72 virgins awaiting for them in heaven and none ever promotes violence.

And this is not merely propaganda and rhetoric. Just examine who supports anti-Israeli and anti-American gatherings such as the recent Second Annual Palestinian Students Divestment Conference at the University of Michigan. A recent article suggests ("Who funded the Michigan hate-fest?" Debbie Schlusel, The Jerusalem Post Oct. 31, 2002) that "In addition to university buildings, paid for by taxpayers, and a stipend, paid for by Michigan students' tuition, the conference of anti-Semitic, anti-American hate speakers, including Islamic Jihad founder Sami Al-Arian, was funded by some frightening sources" such as The Islamic Association for Palestine (IAP); The Muslim Community Association of Ann Arbor (MCA); and The Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS). It is worth reading what these organizations are involved in.

Perhaps one of the best responses to the hypocritical articulation of the "innocence" of Muslims, and how "peace-loving" Islam is, can be found in an article by Dennis Prager ("Of course, the great majority of Muslims are peaceful -- so what?" Jewish World Review, Nov. 5, 2002 / 30) who argues that even if indeed the majority of Muslims are peaceful (which he does not challenge) it is irrelevant. "That is why it is meaningless at best and dishonest at worst to deny the threat to civilization coming from various Muslim countries by noting that most Muslims are not violent. Only a handful of Saudis terrorized America on 9-11-01, but a large majority of Saudis support Osama bin Laden. Few Palestinians strap bombs onto their children's bodies, but the majority of them support such evil and none others publicly morally condemn it.... For all these reasons, one's moral assessment of what is taking place in the Muslim world must be made independent of the fact that the great majority of Muslims are peaceful people. Their peaceful lifestyle is not influencing the bellicose trends in their religion."

Indeed "...what is most frightening is not that there are Muslim terrorists, but by how little criticism of Islamic terror emanates from normative Islamic groups. While some Muslim groups have condemned individual acts of Islamic terror such as 9-11, not one significant Muslim group in the world, including here in free America, has condemned Islamic terror generally. And the leaders of Al-Azhar University, the most prestigious institution of Islamic learning, have actually morally and religiously come out in support of Islamic suicide terror against Israelis.... So the fact that the majority of those living in the Islamic countries are good people is of no consequence. Unless they do something to condemn and to isolate the Muslim totalitarians and terrorists in their midst, history will judge them as it has all the good Germans during the Holocaust."

Oh, talking about the Germans, our roving reporter from the New York Times visited Germany recently and became all ecstatic about the freedom there that he has not personally seen since the fall of the Berlin Wall ("[Let Them Come to Berlin.](#)" Thomas L. Friedman, November 3, 2002): "With a nod to J.F.K., my motto today is simple: "Ich bin ein New Yorker." We are all New Yorkers now. Wherever you live, if you believe in the open society, if you cherish a world of freedom, you are now in World War III a war against the new totalitarians, who strike at our businesses, discos, airports and theaters in an attempt to get us to shut ourselves in and our societies down. Either we fight this war together, or we lose it together. To those who forgot what it takes to defend the open society, let them come to Berlin let them walk the winding path where the Wall once stood and recall the collective effort that brought it down."

Would it be too much to ask him to remember next time that Berlin without the wall is not the only beacon of freedom? Of course we are all New Yorkers as we identify with the victims of the 9-11 atrocity; but would it be too much to ask him to consider that we are also all Israelis? Or in his mind Israel does not belong to those fighting a "war against the new totalitarians, who strike at our businesses, discos, airports and theaters in an attempt to get us to shut ourselves in and our societies down." Perhaps he ought to come to Jerusalem again and visit a city whose liberty is being threatened by forces much worse than those which erected the wall he so celebrates its demise.

The old saying "beware of your friends because you know who your enemies are" should be slightly adjusted to modern times (after all even sexual relations were redefined by a high level

government official). It appears that too many need to beware not only of friends but also make very certain they understand who the enemy is and act accordingly before it is too late. This week marked an important step in doing precisely that.