

# A Fence is Built, an Expulsion That Wasn't, and a Two-year old 9-11

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By Robbie Friedmann

After sipping coffee with the rulers of Saudi Arabia and the influential clergy in Iraq, Tom Friedman decided it is time to smell the coffee in Israel as well. He is absolutely correct in suggesting that suicide bombing is a danger not only to Israel but also to the United States. However, his diagnosis of the settlements as the "problem" is erroneous - and unwarranted - particularly when it appears that it gives grounds to terrorism as having a just cause ("[Breaking Death's Grip](#)," Thomas L. Friedman, *The New York Times*, 11 September 2003). Friedman surely knows that giving up the settlements will not stop the appetite for terrorism.

He drove to see the security fence Israel is trying to build. While his concerns for the future of Israel are commendable, his arguments are again untenable. Building a fence is not determining final boundaries and will not create an Arab majority in Israel that he so fears. Far stronger and longer fences have been torn down (i.e. the Berlin Wall) but what is so disconcerting about his writing is that he does not seem to offer an alternative to protecting Israeli lives which are constantly threatened by waves of human weapons ("[One Wall, One Man, One Vote](#)," Thomas L. Friedman, *The New York Times*, 14 September 2003). Yet others actually do see the fence as a helpful defense against these murderers ("The Missed Opportunity," Charles Krauthammer, *The Washington Post*, 12 September 2003).

Palestinian murder and hate is not directed at Israel only from the "occupied territories" but increasingly Arab summer camps and Arab schools within Israel that teach Arab children to hate Israel and love Palestine ("Teaching Israeli Arabs to Love Palestine," Itamar Marcus, *The Jerusalem Post*, 11 September 2003).

This is important for one reason, namely when the Palestinians see fit they will turn a fifth of the Israeli population against the country of which they are citizens.

By the same token, Americans and other Westerners ought to pay closer attention to the hate spewing from Palestinian quarters as for years it has not been directed at Israel alone. In spite of increasing U.S. aid to the Palestinians and support for a Palestinian state, the U.S. is being "rewarded" by institutionalized hate expressed in articles, cartoons and official religious sermons ("Palestinian Authority Hatred of USA Continues," Itamar Marcus, *Palestinian Media Watch Bulletin*, 11 September 2003).

Such threats are not coming only from Palestinians. The Syrians are working overtime producing slogans glorifying the culture of death and making them conducive to further acts of terror against Israel and other targets ("[Syrian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Glorifies Martyrs and Martyrdom](#)," MEMRI, Special Dispatch - Syria/Jihad and Terrorism Studies, 10 September 2003, No. 570).

This is important because seeds of future conflicts and future wars are contained within the hate now directed at Israel from within and against the U.S. from those who receive her aid and political support ("[The War Didn't Begin on 9/11](#)," Jeff Jacoby, *The Boston Globe*, 11 September 2003). It is not clear if the West will be able to stomach the magnitude of the threats to come ("Are You a 'September 10 American'?" Lawrence F. Kaplan, *The Wall Street Journal*, 11 September 2003).

Two years have passed since the most atrocious terrorist attack in history. Yet, the same world that does not question the legitimacy of pursuing terrorists, and those who support them, actively advocates a double standard when terrorism hits "someone else." The European foreign ministers "struggled" to finally declare Hamas a terrorist organization but virtually everyone from the U.S., Europe, the U.N. and of course the chorus of traditional Arab supporters vehemently objects to handling one of the world's arch-terrorists - Yasser Arafat.

True to their colors, Arab leaders from Israel - including members of the Knesset - made their customary pilgrimage to Arafat's "besieged" headquarters offering very vocal support including expressions of great pleasure at Syria's deceleration of support to Arafat. Even Israeli Jewish support was offered by Uri Avnery, a narcissist former member of parliament, to protect Arafat with his "own body." Even within the security establishment in Israel there is understanding of the cost and benefits of a potential expulsion/killing of Arafat with many suggesting that it could do more harm than good. One of course could ask what is so good about the current situation where human weapons blow themselves up to kill as many civilians as possible.

Yet, a striking editorial in *The Jerusalem Post* has compared the current situation to the 1967 blockade on Israel, which resulted in Israel's decision to defend itself (the victorious Six Day War) and to the Iraqi nuclear threat that resulted in Israel bombing the French-built Iraqi nuclear facility. The *Post's* editorial unabashedly calls for killing Arafat who is identified as a major obstacle to security and safety, not only of peace ("Enough," Editorial: *The Jerusalem Post*, 10 September 2003).

More than getting rid of Arafat is on the table. As one commentator suggests, the lesson of the last decade is to not negotiate with terrorists ("Israel Should Never Again Negotiate Peace With Terrorists: The havoc that followed the famous 1993 handshake bears a bitter lesson," Yossi Klein Halevi, *The Los Angeles Times*, 12 September 2003).

Indeed, what used to be Israel's policy in the '50s and '60s gave way to false hopes that have backfired. The U.S. does not desire to negotiate with terrorists as long as they are seen as anti-American terrorists. Such a status is acquired only after directly causing harm to America on its own soil as in the case of the 9-11 atrocity. Indeed, the many smaller scale atrocities against the U.S. such as kidnapping and killing American diplomats, hijacking and bombing planes, killing American citizens were not perceived as anti-American "enough" to warrant the "uncompromising" approach (at least as of yet).

Assuming that a wild beast who lives on eating his prey will somehow turn into a docile vegetarian has no factual or historical support. Not understanding this is the best recipe for the beast's next dinner (cook, waiter and owner included).