

## Per-diem for Relatives of a "Humiliated" Terrorist

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By Robbie Friedmann

The daily attacks in Iraq and Israel (and elsewhere around the world including the latest in Saudi Arabia) continue unabated. But the most important counter-attack was not in rounds of ammunition or military raids (though some good ones were carried out last week) but in the speech that President George W. Bush gave on democracy earlier in the week ("President Bush Discusses Freedom in Iraq and Middle East: Remarks by the President at the 20th Anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy," United States Chamber of Commerce, Washington, D.C., 6 November 2003) which should help provide moral and diplomatic reasoning and strategy to support the troops and the military tactics they deploy ("Bush Challenges Iran, Syria, Egypt to Adopt Democracy," Reuters, *Ha'aretz*, 7 November 2003).

The President did not intend for Middle Eastern nations to fully adopt democracy Western-style but he encouraged - prodded ever so slightly - the consideration of change towards democracy ("[Bush Asks Lands in Mideast to Try Democratic Ways](#)," David E. Sanger, *The New York Times*, 7 November 2003).

While some juxtapose the speech with the difficult realities at hand ("[Idealism in The Face Of a Troubled Reality](#)," Robin Wright, *The Washington Post*, 7 November 2003) there is growing realization that the value of the speech lies in making it and in being rather specific on who the target for democratization is and that it is not limited to Iraq but rather constitutes an overarching American strategy for the area.

The value of the speech is in pushing forth ("marketing") the idea of democracy and breaking the myth that it is not compatible with Islam. Some, of course, argue that it is not ("[Stop Insulting Judaism and Christianity, Mr. President](#)," Diana West, *Jewish World Review*, 3 November 2003). The second important asset the speech has is in naming not only hostile countries such as Iran and Syria, but also those perceived as "staunch allies" (Saudi Arabia and Egypt for example) as countries in need of change.

In that sense, it does not matter whether democracy will ever be achieved in the Arab/Muslim world. What is important is that lines have been drawn that define friend and foe. Thus it will help interpret actions according to what they are and who they are intended against and send a message that support of terror is no longer tolerated, even - or particularly - when it is done or condoned by "allies."

Some reforms already taking place in the Arab/Muslim world are nothing more than cosmetic changes ("Reforms in the Arab World are Purely Cosmetic," Muhammad Muslih, *Gulf News*, 5 November 2003). Examples such as partial municipal elections in Saudi Arabia in 2004 may be perceived by the West as signs of reform but "all these measures are nothing but outward manifestations of reform granted by leaders who either feel that they are firmly enough established in power not to be threatened by them or who want to make a nod of good will to Washington's public statements about the need for democracy in the Arab world."

This way, the powerful rulers maintain total submission. They anticipate a long road being taken prior to any substantive changes that will bring about good governance and the protection of individual liberties, regardless of ethnic affiliation or religious orientation.

Instant experts on anything, such as newspaper columnists, buy into excuses and charges made by Arabs/Muslims too quickly to accurately discern their fallacies. The latest is the asinine notion that "humiliation" is the root of all evil and that the West is at fault for "humiliating" the Arabs even by its mere achievements if not by direct actions ("[The Humiliation Factor](#)," Thomas L. Friedman, *The New York Times*, 9 November 2003).

If anything, the West has coddled the Arabs for years, tolerating their excesses and they were not humiliated enough. Students are humiliated when they get a bad grade and new police and military recruits are humiliated in basic training. Yet the good student will do better next time and the wide majority of officers and soldiers perform as professionals after putting their humiliation in context and overcoming it. They do not use it as excuses for failure.

The West's attempts to win over the hearts and minds of the enemy and those who are sympathetic to the enemy will not be done by rhetoric alone ("The Persuasion Myth," Ralph Peters, *The New York Post*, 3 November 2003). The fact is, "...The cultures of the Middle East are so crippled that they can't even limp along without the psychological crutch of blaming all their ills on foreign devils. No amount of well-intentioned information disseminated by the United States will persuade the Arab masses that we're innocent of the cruelties their own leaders and social systems have inflicted upon them. Men and women everywhere believe their own kind first...They want revenge for self-created disasters. They want excuses for the inadequacy of their social, political and economic regimes. Arab civilization, especially, has backed itself into an historical corner where it deteriorates by the day. It's humiliating to them."

What might change the reality on the ground are results obtained not by being nice and compassionate but by being effective in instituting change.

As if to prove how long and hard the road to democratizing the Arab world is, examine the continued anti-American sentiments from a country that receives billions in military and economic aid from the U.S. ("[The Egyptian Press Against Ambassador Welch: 'The Arrogant \[U.S.\] Ambassador Representing the Imbecile Bush'](#)," MEMRI, Special Dispatch - Egypt/ U.S. and the Middle East, 4 November 2003, No. 602).

If the official Egyptian reaction to a speech by the U.S. Ambassador is any indication of what to expect with regard to President Bush's speech on democracy, examine the vitriolic statements interspersed in the Egyptian media. They speak for themselves: "Egypt is not a U.S. state ruled by the Pentagon;" "The arrogant [U.S.] ambassador represents the imbecile George W. Bush;" "The Egyptian press won't be silenced in cursing the neo-Nazis in D.C. and Tel Aviv;" "All Egyptian papers support martyrdom (suicide) operations;" and "The ambassador's criticism is a badge of honor."

It appears the more support received from the U.S. the greater the likelihood of developing anti-American sentiments. The Palestinians who receive financial support from the Americans, and

who have no greater supporter for the establishment of a state than the U.S., are at the same time aiming their poisoned arrows at the U.S. ("Palestinian Incitement to Kill and Hate Americans," Itamar Marcus, Palestinian Media Watch Bulletin, 5 November 2003).

And while busy spewing hate and carrying out terror one should not be surprised that corruption is no stranger. The latest discovery is that Arafat is funneling \$50,000 monthly to the Al-Aqsa "Martyr" Brigades "not to support terror but only to provide per-diem" for these terrorists that he himself sends on missions of "martyrdom" (i.e., murderous suicide-homicide). And to top this he also provides per-diem to his dear wife and daughter who live in Paris. One would think he sends her a couple thousand dollars for room and board - after all it is too crowded to live in a refugee camp - but no. He sends her amounts that are reminiscent of Imelda Marcos. After all, living in Paris has some spending requirements that will probably be part of the appendix to the Palestinian constitution when it is written ("Report: Arafat Funneling \$100,000 PA Aid Monthly to Wife," Nathan Guttman, *Ha'aretz*, 7 November 2003). Or is it simply a way to fight "humiliation" by spending sprees in Parisian boutiques?

And the Iranians? Evidence of Iranian direct involvement in terrorism unraveled last week in an Argentinian court testimony provided by a former Iranian security official ("Iranian Blames Tehran for Jewish Community Center Attack," *Ha'aretz*, 5 November 2003).

No one better recognizes the faults of the Arab/Muslim regimes (Iran is not an Arab country) and the Arab/Muslim media than Arab writers ("[Arab Liberal Writer: Blames Arab Media for Hatred of the U.S.](#)" MEMRI, Special Dispatch - Reform in the Arab and Muslim World, 7 November 2003, No. 605). One Arab writer charges that Arab media encourages hatred of the U.S. and does not let defenders of the U.S. speak, that the Arab world is awash in neo-reactionaries. The writer is convinced Arabs can actually learn from Israeli democracy, that the U.S. will rebuild Iraq as it restored Japan and Germany. He is also convinced that "had the Arabs possessed WMD they would have destroyed the world."

Indeed, his assessment is borne out daily when examining the rhetoric and actions of those who harness everything they have to destroy what they do not have. And they do so shamelessly. They demand not to attack on holidays yet they have a record of doing same to their "enemies" and indeed in this Muslim holiday of Ramadan they go on with their killing sprees in Iraq, Israel and Saudi Arabia ("Oh, the Hypocrisy! Ramadan has Frequently Been Used as a Time for War," Michael Coren, *Sun Media*, 1 November 2003).

A similar pattern is revealed vis-a-vis India with an interesting symmetry of victim-blamer that emerges from an unexpected corner. The same way Israel is blamed by Arabs (mainly for existing and causing all their "troubles") India is blamed by Muslim groups who have grand designs not only on Kashmir. In the same way various Western sympathizers blindly support the Palestinians, similar groups side with the Muslim attackers of India as is the case when dubious moralists criticize the Indian government ("[Selective Outrage, Suspect Ethics](#)," Ramesh Rao, *FrontPageMagazine.com*, 4 November 2003).

And in America? Another high profile Arab-American leader - Al-Amudi - pleaded not guilty and will be tried in February on charges of smuggling cash into the U.S. to fund/establish one or more terrorist organizations. ("[U.S. Links Money Laundering, Terrorists](#)," Jerry Seper,

the *Washington Times*, 3 November 2003). He was so high profile that he met with former President Clinton and with George Bush when he campaigned for the presidency.

Al-Amudi is also indirectly linked to al-Qaeda, which has just issued its latest threat against the U.S. while taking care to warn Muslims to get out of major American cities ("[Al-Qaeda Website Issues Ramadan Warning of Imminent Attacks: Calls on Muslims in DC, NY and LA to Leave Those Cities](#)," MEMRI, Special Alert - No. 12, 4 November 2003).

The money trail is not limited to the U.S. in and out-flow. In the same manner that more Nazi literature is produced in the U.S. because it is forbidden in Germany, Europe - and particularly England - has become the hub of radical Muslim activity from which hate is manufactured, terrorists are recruited and operations are inspired or coordinated ("Spreading Hate: Jihadists in London, in Print," Rachel Ehrenfeld, *National Review*, 4 November 2003).

Indeed some argue that money is no longer a hindrance to terror activity (be it al-Qaeda, Palestinian terrorist groups, or the jihadists and Ba'athists fighting coalition forces in Iraq) as it is available in unlimited quantities ("Untangling the Web: Crossovers among International Terrorist Groups," Matthew Levitt, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Number 799, 24 October 2003): "The principal terrorist threat today stems from the web of shadowy relationships between loosely affiliated groups. The sponsors of such groups further complicate the web, be they states or sub-state actors. Indeed, there is no precise organizational or command structure to the assemblage of groups that cooperate with al-Qaeda or fall under the organization's umbrella. Given the multifarious links between international terrorist groups and their relationships with state sponsors of terrorism such as Iran and Syria, the war on terror will be most effective if it has a strategic focus on the full matrix of international terrorism rather than a tactical focus on al-Qaeda. Prosecuting the war on terror, whether on the battlefield or in the courtroom, demands greater attention to the web of interaction among these various groups and state sponsors."

This is further reinforced by two of the terror-sponsoring states that also comprise two thirds of the Axis of Evil; they pose a danger of using nuclear weapons either directly or by proxy. While Europeans perceive Israel as a greater threat to peace, the fact remains that Iran and North Korea are posing a tangible and credible threat that is so assessed by intelligence services and from open records where they declare flat out their intentions to use WMDs ("The Terror Ahead," Gabriel Schoenfeld, *Commentary*, November 2003).

A great deal of support of terror and the hate that fuels it continues to emanate from Saudi Arabia ("[The Islamic Terrorism Club - From the November 10, 2003 issue: And other jihad-recruitment websites](#)," Stephen Schwartz, *The Weekly Standard*, Volume 009, Issue 09, 10 November 2003). While the Saudis carefully - if not hermetically - censor the information their citizens see (newspapers, TV and the Web), they feed them with vile images. These images solemnly promote the views of Wahhabi clerics - that Shia Muslims are infidels, that Western culture is dangerous, and that what the rest of the world calls terrorism is legitimate resistance and glorifying "martyrdom."

An Australian paper picked up what it calls a European apology for the opinion poll that ranked Israel as the greatest threat to world peace ("[Europe Apologizes to Israel for Poll](#)," Ed

O'Loughlin, *The Age*, 5 November 2003) but it looks more like a condemnation of the poll's results than an apology.

The paper quotes Natan Sharansky, Israel's Minister for Jerusalem and the Jewish Diaspora (former Soviet dissident and political prisoner) who defined the poll as nothing more than expressing European antisemitic sentiments. Indeed, in a lengthy article Sharansky enumerates the dangers and scope of antisemitism, yet also argues that for the long-term Israel (and Jews) will persevere ("On Hating the Jews," Natan Sharansky, *Commentary*, November 2003): "The Jewish state... is a tiny island in an exceedingly dangerous sea, and its citizens will need every particle of strength they can muster for the trials ahead. It is their own people's astounding perseverance, despite centuries of suffering at the hands of faiths, ideologies, peoples and individuals who have hated them and set out to do them in, that inspires one with confidence that the Jews will once again outlast their enemies."

The Europeans may perceive Israel to be the "greatest threat" to peace but it also appears that American intelligence sources erroneously believe they can appease the Arabs by pressuring Israel on the settlement issue ("[American Spy Chiefs Want More Pressure on Settlements](#)," Amir Oren, *Ha'aretz*, 3 November 2003) and thus "are expected to significantly reduce negative feelings toward the U.S. in the region" by delivering Israel to the Arabs.

Interestingly enough the groom desires the bride but the bride is not very responsive to this flattering courting. The Palestinians themselves have publicly rejected the American offer to pressure Israel ("Fatah Scorns U.S. Crackdown Bid," Khaled Abu Toameh, *The Jerusalem Post*, 2 November 2003) not because they oppose the pressuring of Israel but because "no Palestinian would be able to take measures against Hamas and Islamic Jihad as long as the "occupation" continues." In short, they may welcome any pressure on Israel but will make political capital out of arguing they will not crack down on terrorism as long as Israel "occupies their land." It is important to mention that a key element of the roadmap calls for the Palestinians to do exactly that and they have avoided fulfilling what is undoubtedly a pre-condition to any potential diplomatic accord.

And as Israel is in a fight for its very existence it has unintentionally and clumsily revealed some of its secret defense arsenal to the enemy last week. Too sophisticated? Israeli hi-tech is now well-reputed around the world but it looks like this advantage is at times a double-edged sword when common security principles are taken for granted or ignored. Last week a top security missile test was broadcast "open-circuit" for all enemies to see ("IAI Missile Test Launch Unknowingly Broadcast to the World," Margot Dudkevitch and Arieh O'Sullivan, *The Jerusalem Post*, 6 November 2003). One would seriously doubt Israel wanted its enemies to know its top security officials, code names and test content that badly. Back to the drawing board on security protocols and training.

The Israeli government has just approved a decision to release more than 400 Palestinian terrorists in a deal with Hizbullah in return for one kidnapped Israeli and three dead - kidnapped and murdered - Israeli soldiers ("Families of 3 Abducted Soldiers: Ministers Made Brave Decision," Aluf Benn, Gideon Alon, Anshel Pfeffer and Yoav Stern, *Ha'aretz*, 9 November 2003). It does not mean the deal will be consummated as Hizbullah will likely continue to heap obstacles until the last minute before it blinks. Yet, the highly controversial decision epitomizes

the predicament Israel is in and points more than anything to the power of terror, as no doubt the terrorist organization will be emboldened by this deal. They have already promised to kidnap more Israelis.

So the first strategic arrow was shot by President Bush last week but a great deal of work is to be done before it inextricably hits its target. The hope embedded in the President's speech is not so much the hope that Arab/Muslim countries will turn to democracy, as much as it secures the future survival and flourishing of current democracies. It has made one thing clear: It is high time for Western democracies not to negotiate themselves to death.