

## Virgins (Still) on His Mind

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By Robbie Friedmann

This was a week when Libya sent out signals (later denied) that it is interested in establishing peace with Israel and so did Syria (of course under their own "conditions") but a couple of vignettes from a visit to Israel last week would serve as better openers: First, a group - comprised of Israelis and supporters from the International Solidarity Movement - identifying itself as "anarchists" has sabotaged a gate in the security fence. During the event one of the "anarchists" was shot in the leg resulting in a public relations brouhaha for Israel ("Debate on Barrier Flares after Israeli in Protest is Shot," Greg Myre NYT, *International Herald Tribune*, 29 December 2003; and "Collateral Damage: The Army's rules of engagement come under fire after an Israeli protester is shot at the new security fence," Matt Rees, *Time*, 12 January 2004).

This story can be read in *Time Magazine* and in a sense it symbolized the bankruptcy of the "demonstrators," who care more about selective morality than about people being killed by terrorists. It also symbolizes the dilemmas and challenges a democracy has in coping with a threat against it. Second is a story you are not likely to read in *Time*: In an Israeli radio program to help a terminally ill patient obtain a needed but expensive operation, a caller who lost her husband a year earlier - and is currently unemployed - made a generous donation. This touching gesture, as well as the influx of massive aid to the victims of the devastating Iranian earthquake, proves there may be hope for humanity after all.

A related vignette was the Iranian refusal of Israeli help following the earthquake that killed tens of thousands, injured scores of others and destroyed an entire city. Iran even accepted help from the U.S. (although it would not go as far as having a diplomatic delegation). So Iran would rather have Muslims die than be saved by Israelis. To understand the Israeli humanitarian offer to Iran (which already threatened Israel with annihilation), it is as if the U.S. would have offered aid to Nazi Germany, to Imperial Japan during World War II or to Osama bin Laden now, and the U.S. is not under an existential threat ("Iran Clarifies the Middle East," Dennis Prager, TownHall.com, 30 December 2003). But one should not be surprised about Iran. It is now after French blood which - ironically - could be the best remedy to straighten out the French ("Tehran Worshipers Cry 'Death to France!' Over Head Scarves," Agence France-Presse, *International Herald Tribune*, 3 January 2004).

The increasingly growing and alarming expressions of antisemitism also give room for some to take a strong stand against it. It is natural for Jews and Israelis to be concerned about antisemitism, although one is continually baffled by how some Jews try to build a "Case for Israel" (such as Alan Dershowitz) while too many others in Israel and abroad are busy building a case against Israel (particularly many in academic circles). It is therefore doubly encouraging to see non-Jews - such as Spain's Pilar Rahola - take a strong stand and write a book *In Favor of Israel* to somehow try to equalize the barrage of Israel-bashing ("[The Euro-Socialists' Judeophobia](#)," Marc Tobiass, Front Page Magazine.com, 30 December 2003).

The Palestinians are laughing all the way to the bank about how successful they are in manipulating naive Israelis and Westerners. In the meantime they are busy on two fronts in their relentless war against Israel: First, they persist in spewing their venomous propaganda. They purposefully continue to confuse everyone (including themselves) with facts. Second, they make it appear as if they are seeking peace via a backdoor in Geneva and then fully admit it is a ploy. They repeatedly retract from its most important element - namely their "giving up" of what they claim to be their "right of return" ("[Increased Palestinian Adherence to Right of Return Following the Geneva Initiative](#)," MEMRI, Special Dispatch - Palestinian Authority/Arab-Israeli Conflict, 26 December 2003, No. 634).

It is therefore valuable to examine the sharp criticism raised against the Geneva initiative by an Israeli intellectual and former official who is identified as left of center. Professor Shlomo Avineri criticizes the procedure that culminated in the Geneva signatures but mostly he aims his darts at the content which he defines as nothing short of a "fatally flawed" proposal ("Fatally Flawed Peace Proposal: The Geneva proposal fails to commit Palestinians to accepting Israel as a state, or to giving up the right of return," Shlomo Avineri, *The Los Angeles Times*, 4 January 2004).

Indeed, the Palestinian shenanigans go on unabated. Earlier this week their Prime-Minister-on-duty threatened that the Palestinians will declare a state unilaterally (in response to Israel's threats of taking unilateral actions if terror is not stopped). The American administration nipped this one in the bud because it simply contradicts the principles of the Roadmap ("U.S. Set on Two-State Solution," Janine Zacharia, *Jerusalem Post*, 11 January 2004; for a full text of the Secretary of State Powell interview and comments from 8 January go to: Secretary Powell's Press Conference).

But this is of little consolation for Israel or even for the United States. This move by Powell might be best interpreted as giving some crumbs to those who rightfully complain about Palestinian intransigence and the catering to extracurricular processes such as the Geneva initiative (Jimmy Carter has yet to apologize for his post-Geneva statement regarding the "final solution"). Indeed, those described as hawks in Washington are also justifiably concerned about the joyous overtures the State Department is showing towards Iran (to reward it for agreeing to receive American aid for its earthquake disaster), North Korea (which did receive an American delegation but is still far from inhibiting its nuclear threats), Syria (for allowing transport planes to Iran while ignoring the Iranian and indeed the Syrian support of terrorism) and Libya (which seems to pay its way back to civilization by offering remuneration for lives lost in plane disasters it carried out and by promising to disarm its nuclear weapons - but being still far from delivering on the promise).

It is therefore worth noting the formula for winning the war on terror by not giving up the will to fight and by declaring clearly-defined targets not only as terror-performing and terror-supporting entities (namely Islamic and Arab nations) but also identifying those entities that are becoming an increasing threat to the U.S., such as France and Saudi Arabia - long considered "allies" ("Hawks Tell Bush How to Win War on Terror," David Rennie, *The Daily Telegraph*, 31 December 2003).

Syria has indeed been in the Middle East and international press lately with "overture" to the U.S. and even to Israel. But a Syrian Communist Party official reports major discrepancies between what the Syrian leader tells foreigners and what he shares with his own people. The Syrian version is hiding the parts on the opposition and corruption mentioned in the American version ("[Assad Tampers with New York Times Interview: One message to Americans, another to Syrians](#)," MEMRI, Special Dispatch - Syria/Reform in the Arab & Muslim World, 7 January 2004, No. 638).

A Lebanese source reveals that Syria's Assad seems not only to doctor his American and Syrian versions of the same interview but to also hide Saddam's WMDs that the U.S. has so fervently been seeking, apparently in the wrong place ("A Senior Syrian Journalist Reports Iraq's WMD Located in Three Syrian Sites," AFP, 6 January 2004). Against this backdrop it appears Assad may have understood he is in trouble with the U.S., although at this point he seems to be so deeply involved there is little he can do to change the known facts about him or the image of his regime.

Since 9-11, we have learned the U.S. is no longer immune to vicious terror acts. But what we have yet to learn is the backdrop against which such terror acts mushroom (pun intended). Constantly anticipating the next physical blow, we tend to suppress - or simply ignore - news about terror-supporting activities such as propaganda and conferences that take place on Western (particularly American) grounds. It is important to note the active participation of key agitators who under the guise of "mainstream" Islamic organizations preach support for suicide bombers, for terrorist organizations and seek "global victory" (Islam in America, Part 1; "[WND Goes Inside 'Mainstream' Muslim Conference: Extremist leaders who support terror stir up crowd at Florida event](#)," Sherrie Gossett, WorldNet Daily, 3 January 2004).

By no means is this gathering an innocent expression of civil opinions. In addition to exposing the true beliefs of the extremists behind the American-based Islamic movement, there is indication that American-raised money finds its way to the Middle East and actively supports terror activities (Islam in America, Part 2; "[How U.S. Extremists Fund Terror: Money trail linked to Muslim conference circuit leads to Mideast](#)," Sherrie Gossett, WorldNet Daily, 5 January 2004). That same extremism targets its way to neighboring Canada ("[Muslim Confab Invited Antisemitic Cleric: Toronto event advertised presence of controversial Saudi sheikh](#)," Sherrie Gossett, 7 January 2004, WorldNet Daily.com).

Arab and Muslim advocacy groups brought together by a conference initiated by the U.S.- base Brookings Institute continue to complain about the special relationship between the U.S. and Israel like a baby who wants to take a toy away from another baby. The Arabs/Muslims want the U.S. to shed its support of Israel demanding their "rights" be stressing Israel has none ("Israel at Center of Annual U.S.-Muslim Forum: Washington criticized for strategic relationship," CNN, 10 January 2004).

Regrettably, this pathetic - yet very real and dangerous - position attests to the fact that Arabs feel they can make progress only by the elimination of Israel. It is as if their very own "existence" depends on the demise of Israel. And what will they do if Israel is indeed eliminated? Would that also eliminate the corruption, backwardness, lack of productivity and the various other maladies that are so sadly associated with current Arab existence? Of course not.

If these activities will not be heeded they will clearly lead to more terror acts the same way the Palestinian propaganda machine oils its terror agenda. They again promote the notion that many virgins await the one who kills many while "sacrificing" himself in the process ("The 72 'Dark-Eyed' Maidens as Rewards for Shahids, Taught again in PA Media," Itamar Marcus, Palestinian Media Watch, 7 January 2004; view "Maidens of Paradise"). The Palestinians do not shy away from blood libels and their latest is blaming the Israelis for terror acts against Jewish targets that are known to have been carried out by Arabs or Muslims ("PA Editor: Israel attacked Paris synagogue to encourage French Jews to come to Israel," Itamar Marcus, Palestinian Media Watch Bulletin, 11 January 2004).

Indeed a three-year survey conducted by a media watch group provides ample evidence of the cumulative destructive effect of such institutionalized preaching of hate and death. It is particularly noteworthy that preachers are paid employees of the Palestinian Authority; sermons are broadcast live every Friday at noon from mosques under control of the PA and are shown on PA television. The themes of the sermons focus on calls for the destruction of the U.S., the perceived American Crusader war against Islam, honoring Shahids and the rewards of the martyrs, educating children to martyrdom and antisemitism, including calls for killing Jews ("[Palestinian Authority Sermons 2000-2003](#)," Steven Stalinsky, MEMRI, Special Report - PA, 28 December 2003, No. 24).

So while the U.S. is raising and then lowering its terror alert level and Israel is facing challenges without and within, the terrorists continue to plot, and they have a strong support base in many corners of the world as well as bases in the Western world. It is imperative to understand that terrorism cannot just be wished away and that being "nice" is going to make little difference in whether or not we become a target. This is a battle that has to be fought on moral, ideological, political and military fronts and not necessarily by "winning the hearts and minds" of the enemy.