

# The Festival of Fools

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By Robbie Friedmann

Last week two awards were handed out at the Cannes film festival. One - for a fiction that was defined as a documentary - to Michael Moore for bashing U.S. President George W. Bush and the other to an Israeli director - for a film on the life of a prostitute, but probably more so for what she said at the award ceremony. In both cases the artistic value is more than questionable but there is no mistake as to the message the winners and those who awarded the prize wanted to make: "America and Israel bad - Palestinians good." Moore "dedicated" the prize "to all those in the world who suffer from our actions" and Yedaya stated that "I come from Israel and we are responsible for the slavery of 3 million Palestinians" ("[Festival de Cannes](#)," AFP, 23 May 2004).

Moore would have probably accused Churchill for causing suffering to the Germans, and Yedaya would have suggested the Jews who revolted in the Warsaw Ghetto against the Nazis impeded the progress of an enlightened regime.

A former advisor to President Bill Clinton argues that President George W. Bush is "effectively running a Gulag" and that Iraq for the U.S. is what Stalingrad was to Nazi Germany ("Just Like Stalingrad," Bret Stephens, *The Jerusalem Post*, 28 May 2004). These comparisons are not only unfounded and unwarranted but require a fairly long stretch of the imagination. Such propositions are making an effort at hoodwinking us into accepting realities that do not exist ("Middle East Madness," Barry Rubin, *Jerusalem Post*, 24 May 2004): "Whatever mistakes they make, the U.S. and Israel are democratic countries trying to cope with extraordinarily difficult situations using far more restraint and conscience than anyone else would have in these circumstances. As in World War II and the Cold War, their adversaries are far worse, nefarious forces who employ the most misleading propaganda to portray them as evil. Those in the West who buy these lies are fools." Perhaps the dedication of the World War II Memorial ("Memorial Dedicated Amid Tears, Joy," *Los Angeles Times*, 30 May 2004) in Washington D.C. serves as an excellent reminder of what the proportions of evil really are.

And indeed, the "world community" quickly acts to condemn Israel for defending itself ("A Double Standard on Gaza," Editorial, *Wall Street Journal*, 24 May 2004) despite the fact that "Contrary to popular opinion, international law is on Israel's side. Article 53 of the Fourth Geneva Convention indeed prohibits the destruction of private property by an occupying power. But Israel's critics as well as the U.N. resolution fail to quote the text in its entirety. Such actions are illegal, "except where such destruction is rendered absolutely necessary by military operations." Preventing terrorists from firing at Israelis from these houses and putting an end to the smuggling of explosives and rockets appear to us to be 'absolutely necessary' operations... It is the use of civilian structures by Palestinian terrorists for military attacks which violates international law. Those really concerned for Palestinian welfare should speak these truths instead of criticizing Israel for trying to defend itself."

But such a positive editorial does not mean everyone can be easily dismissed as a useful idiot. Examine the highly damaging positions taken by the European community as expressed by one of its parliamentarians ("What Europe Wants," Caroline Glick, *The Jerusalem Post*, 28 May 2004): "French EU parliamentarian Paul Marie Couteax made a stunning statement. After condemning Israel's actions to defend itself against Palestinian terrorism as the 'theocratic excesses of this religious state,' Couteax declared that Europe should supply the Arab world with nuclear weapons. In his words, 'I have no hesitation in saying that we must consider giving the Arab side a large enough force, including a large enough nuclear force, to persuade Israel that it cannot simply do whatever it wants. That is the policy my country [France] pursued in the 1970s when it gave Iraq a nuclear force.'" ...According to Glick, "the current policy of sweeping European hostility under the rug of diplo-speak cocktail parties and press conferences is detracting from Israel's national security interests. The government's policy of denial is legitimizing hateful voices and blocking voices of reason to be heard above the din of anti-Zionist propaganda. At the same time, Israeli tolerance for European hostility strengthens the forces of appeasement in the U.S. and weakens those allies who understand the strategic necessity of supporting Israel."

Add to this comments made last week by retired General Anthony Zinni raising serious charges against the Bush administration for nothing less than "dereliction of duty," adding "that the time has come for heads to roll" for failing in Iraq due to poor strategic thinking ("[Gen. Zinni: They've Screwed Up](#)", 60 Minutes, CBS, 21 May 2004). He is not the only general who criticized the administration, and perhaps one could legitimately consider the fact that his remarks have not left any of the impact that the previous expose of 60 Minutes on the Iraqi prison abuse had.

One would think that if Zinni is correct there would have been a groundswell of many more top ranking (retired) military personnel lining up behind him. The fact remains, his accusations were made and have dissipated. He maintains that neo-conservatives "are political ideologues who have hijacked American policy in Iraq...who saw the invasion of Iraq as a way to stabilize American interests in the region and strengthen the position of Israel." He also laments that he was accused of being antisemitic but his complaint seems less than genuine when the debate around the neo-conservatives in Washington had clear ethnic overtones. One wonders how he could have been effective as a diplomatic envoy to the Middle East with this kind of attitude. It is one thing to argue the merit of a strategy and quite another to blame the administration for wanting to "strengthen the position of Israel." His points would have been perhaps more convincing if the blame was for wanting to "strengthen the position of Iran...." Otherwise it almost appears as if he is portraying Israel as the enemy of the U.S.

For too many it is extremely difficult to understand the current warfare as a being a non-negotiable conflict. It is not even negotiable in terms of traditional war where one side (a government) submits and there is a clear winner and loser as the outcome of World War II so clearly indicated. In Middle East wars Arabs have always "won" even when they lost, as in 1967 and later in 1973. Now the "war on terrorism" is a far more nebulous enterprise because the enemy is far less clearly defined and the ties to governments are not as easily identifiable. But if anything, the difference is also indicative of a huge cultural divide, of very different mind-sets at play and the usage of very different terms of reference. Yet the West still somehow expects the

terrorists to be "like us" and every time they push the envelope further with more atrocious attacks or the beheading of a captive - in absolute violation of all laws and norms - we allow ourselves to be shocked anew, as if we did not know who we are dealing with.

We expect Arabs/Muslims to apologize and take responsibility, but they do not nurture a culture of doing so. In fact, they see apology as a sign of weakness ("Don't Expect Arab Apologies," Nonie Darwish, *The Jewish Week*, 28 May 2004), which proves again why apologizing for the Iraqi prison abuse was the wrong thing to do even if the abuse should not be condoned (assuming that humiliation is an unacceptable method of interrogation). It also proves why expressions of regrets (short of an apology) are also out of place in that environment ("Stop Saying Sorry! Israel Has Done Nothing Wrong," Efraim Inbar, *Jerusalem Post*, 30 May 2004).

The military operation in Gaza has kindled a fire of criticism from "human rights" advocacy groups which focused on the demolition of houses as constituting "war crimes". These advocacy groups have applied the Geneva Convention rather selectively and found the easy traditional route of blaming Israel for it, not taking into consideration the context and even the international law itself ("[Selective Use of International Law: Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Other NGO's on Israel's Rafah Operation](#)," NGO Monitor, 27 May 2004). By vilifying Israel these so-called human rights groups deny Israel the right to life and its right to defend itself. In other words, Amnesty International emphasizes amnesty to the real criminals - the Palestinian terrorists - and Human Rights Watch considers only some humans to have rights but not when they are Israelis.

The NGOs may focus on the wrong object to blame, but the West is trying to apply pressure for reform where it is truly needed. The mounting pressure for Arab/Muslim reform may yield the desired rhetoric. However, it ought to be carefully examined for "exit strategy", which eventually renders the promises of and commitment to reform useless to the extent that even some Arabs have criticized recent "efforts" as hollow ("[International Islamic Conference: Genuine Call for Tolerance or Reiteration of Hollow Slogans?](#)" MEMRI, Special Dispatch - Reform Project, 25 May 2004, No. 721).

For example, the International Islamic Conference, which met in Cairo in April, issued resolutions and recommendations that were "cliches that recur year after year." It ignored violence preached by Muslim forefathers, did not criticize violence against non-Muslims (as was so blatantly evident in the latest attack in Saudi Arabia), only against foreigners, and conference calls for a religious council are ignored by their respective governments. And the governments? Last week they met for the Arab Summit in Tunis and resolved to "reform" but the level of commitment is yet to be put to a real test ("[Doubts Cast over Arab Leaders' Resolution to Reform](#)," Brian Whitaker and agencies, *The Guardian*, 24 May 2004).

As was reported from the summit, "While Arab leaders are happy to support reform in general, yesterday's declaration masked ongoing disagreements about specifics. Its real effect, according to one Arab diplomat, is to let individual countries carry out reforms, or not, at their own pace." And the Libyan dictator whom Tony Blair so quickly adopted back into civilization once more showed his true colors when he proclaimed: "What's the significance of this Arab gathering? How can this summit convene while there are two Arab presidents in jail?" making a reference to

Yasser Arafat and Saddam Hussein. If that is his complaint it shows how disconnected he is from reality and perhaps he ought to be with them (although Arafat is under "house-arrest," not jail).

Even the Palestinians have issued calls for the "halting of violence" but it needs to be seen as part of a strategy that turns violence on and off according to their interest. What they mean by peace is not what Switzerland or Canada mean by peace ("[New Palestinian Publication Calls for a Halt to Violence](#)," MEMRI, Special Dispatch No. 722, 26 May 2004): "The answer to the challenge that has been forced upon us, that is to be bound to the Roadmap and at the same time to resist an arrogant government whose goal is to murder and expropriate Palestinian lands, lies in a fundamental change in the violent nature of the resistance, such that it will bear a nonviolent character." So after three and a half years (or actually 40) now there is talk (only talk) about turning off the violence spigot.

What better proof that violence served them (the terror warlords) so well. And they are so obsessed with violence against Israelis that they do not hesitate to kill ("sacrifice") their own people in the process ("[Palestinian Moloch](#)," P. David Hornik, FrontPageMagazine, 27 May 2004). Despite their repeated claims that they do it out of "oppression" all evidence point to something else. Not only in Israel but also in Iraq, Saudi Arabia and elsewhere where suicide bombing has been used ("Does Oppression Cause Suicide Bombing?" Alan M. Dershowitz, *The Jerusalem Post*, 20 May 2004): "Suicide bombing is a tactic that is selected by privileged, educated and wealthy elitists because it has proven successful." Of course, if they opt to carry out suicide bombings then what is a little deception for them, such as using ambulances (real or fake) to smuggle arms and terrorists ("Police Seize Two Fake Palestinian Ambulances: Israel has been accusing Palestinians of using vehicles to move wanted terrorists and arms between Palestinian areas," Uri Glickman, *Ma'ariv*, 28 May 2004)?

This is why no signs about stopping the violence percolate into practical policy. Hamas continues to arm itself and to commit terror acts, and it is aided and abetted by Egypt. Perhaps Egypt is not playing an active a role as Iran is playing, but nonetheless the Egyptians are directly to blame for not halting Palestinian terror ("Hammas Developed Gaza Terrorist Infrastructure With Egyptian Help," Julie Stahl, CNSNews.com, 25 May 2004). After all, Iran is not sending its chief intelligence to meet with Palestinians and Israelis; it just gives directives and support to terror. Egypt should be expected to do more to curb terrorism and it is not. So if it is not doing enough, then a reasonable conclusion is that it does not want to and should therefore be considered a state-sponsor of terrorism. But thus far the real danger is coming from Iran.

If we believe bombing people on a bus (restaurant, mall or hotel) - murdering scores and injuring dozens - is horrendous, and the attack on the World Trade Center - which murdered thousands - was monstrous, we are correct. But not having enough time to fully comprehend the evil and degeneracy that precipitated these vile acts, it is important to realize that even worse horrors and atrocities are awaiting us from the same sources. The Iranians are now openly threatening that "We, the Muslim countries, must create a storm front against the U.S. and Israel. The half-million member organization that was created in Beirut [i.e., Hizbullah] is not sufficient. Many young Muslims are willing to carry out martyrdom operations against the American Crusaders." ("[Iran's Revolutionary Guards Official Threatens Suicide Operations: 'Our Missiles Are Ready to Strike at Anglo-Saxon Culture... There Are 29 Sensitive Sites in the U.S. and the](#)

[West..."](#) MEMRI, Special Dispatch - Iran/Jihad & Terrorism, Studies Project, 28 May 2004, No. 723).

Iran stands behind a significant amount of the global terrorism that has been taking place for the last few decades in Argentina, North Africa, Europe, Israel and recently in Iraq. It is becoming evident how Iran - via Syria, Hizbullah and numerous other terror organizations - is persistently attempting to become the dominant power in the Middle East ("Tehran's Tentacles of Terror," Aaron Mannes, *New York Post*, 25 May 2004). So when Iranian threats of attacking the U.S. and Israel are made along with a declaration of missiles and potential "sensitive" targets, and when Iranian efforts at developing a nuclear capability are in full swing, that danger needs to be taken far more seriously than leaving it in the hands of the International Atomic Energy Agency or the European community ("[Iran, Terrorists and Nukes](#)," *Washington Times*, Editorial, 26 May 2004).

For purposes of plausible deniability the Iranians might first proliferate nuclear capabilities by using their affiliated terrorist groups and then later (if given a chance) will use it themselves. One can already envision that if Israel and the U.S. preemptively strike at Iran, a public debate will rise about whether Iran "really" had WMDs or "really" intended to use them. One can hope that if an attack on Iran will take place, a symbolic date such as 4 October be selected to allow for the establishment of a Ten-Four commission... Having such a commission is a small price to pay for a beneficial preemptive strike. The alternative is to wait until they strike at us. After all, they already said they will and no one should be able to get away with such threats and see the light of day.

Some of these threats are coming from within jihadi circles in the U.S. Isn't free speech wonderful? Of course it is. But under the guise of free speech, hate, vilification and incitement to violence and terror have raised their ugly heads Perhaps not so surprisingly, university campuses provide a convenient backdrop for such activity that remains un-counteracted ("[Berkeley Intifada](#)," Anneli Rufus, *FrontPageMagazine*, 24 May 2004).

As a demonstrator at Berkeley shouted in reference to Israelis being blown up by a bomb on a bus: "They should have been killed! They should have been killed because it wasn't their land! They should have been killed and it should have been more." The climate on campus is fraught with hate, intolerance and arrogant agendas from students, activists and faculty members alike and not just against Israel and Jews but against America as well: "We must be in power. . . when it's all over, the only one standing is gonna be us." And the crowd responded in unison: '*Allahu akbar*.' And then: "We ain't gonna lose. We must implement Islam as a totality in which Allah controls every place -- the home, the classroom, the science lab, the halls of Congress."

Some express deep enough concern over inside calls for war against the U.S. that they rightly characterize this action as the perpetrators call it: "a jihad against America." And then ways are offered to cope with this peril. The remedy is certainly not politically correct and may not pass the media muster, but with the likelihood of additional atrocities perpetrated against America on its own soil, with "responsibility claims" by those who freely chose to live here and then undermine the country, and seeing cheers whenever Americans (and other non-Muslims) are purposefully hurt, these suggestions will also likely become more palatable ("[How to Defeat Jihad in America](#)," Lawrence Auster, *FrontPageMagazine*, 26 May 2004): 1) End all mass

immigration of Muslims into the United States, whether from Muslim countries or elsewhere; 2) Deport all Muslim illegal aliens; 3) Deport all legal resident aliens with ties or loyalties to radical Islam; 4) Remove the citizenship of and deport all naturalized and native-born citizens who are supporters of jihad; 5) Publicly renounce and abjure multiculturalism as a societal philosophy.

Sadly many "helpers" (knaves and fools alike) position themselves in the front line of these agitators proposing that terrorists are the victims and the victims are the aggressors. Some of them are Jews who want to prove they can hate their brethren better than the enemy can (or at least as much). They are also in the front lines of provocateurs who preach divestiture from Israel. Some inside Israel also believe they have the luxury of consoling the enemy perhaps believing that it might endear them when the sword will wave in the direction of their throats ("Objectively Pro-Terrorist," Sarah Honig, *The Jerusalem Post*, 20 May 2004).

Some might be well intended but do not have sufficient understanding of the depth of the villainy that terrorism is all about and suggest it has to do with nihilism ("[The Search for P.M.D.'s](#)," Thomas L. Friedman, *The New York Times*, 23 May 2004). Nothing could be further from the truth. The fact that terrorists in Iraq do not declare their purpose and do not "claim responsibility" does not mean they do not know what they are doing. Wanting America to fail is not nihilism - it is a clear political objective that serves Iran best.

Whether we wish to recognize it or not we are under a threat more vile and atrocious than anything we have known in history (yes it includes World War II). Our civilization is at an existential risk. Some are starting to understand it but they are severely criticized by those who either do not understand it yet, do not want to understand it or are simply trying to wish the problem away. The sooner we unite, the quicker victory will come and at a far cheaper cost in life and property. Help is not going to come from film festivals in Cannes; there the insane are running the asylum.