

# Waiting for the Green Light

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By Robbie Friedmann

Thirty-seven years ago, the Six-Day War broke out and changed the course of Middle East realities because it kept Israel alive and stronger than ever. It is important not only because of the valuable outcome (that is now taken for granted by the West), but because Israel was threatened and it fired the first shot of the war to defend itself against complete annihilation. The (5th and) 6th of June also commemorate [D-Day](#), which changed the course of World War II and resulted in the Allied victory over the Nazis. And the death last week of Ronald Reagan brought into focus a president who ably conducted the free world to defeat Communism. Truly significant markers and reminders as we are now battling threats that are perhaps even more existential in nature.

Israelis have had their share of Yasser Arafat (and what he represents) and they expressed their disillusionment with him by restricting his movement to virtual house arrest in his Ramallah compound. There is not a commandment out of the ten he did not violate, so the abuse of U.N. ambulances to transport terrorists may almost seem like a minor infraction. Yet it is not [and charges that Israel does the same ("Soldier Claims IDF Smuggled Troops in Ambulances," Amir Buhbut, *Ma'ariv*, 6 June 2004) do not necessarily mean that Israel behaves like the terrorists. One needs to be mindful who the aggressor is and not what the defender does; otherwise there is no ground to the notion of self-defense]. Even the Egyptians are fed up with him and threatened last week they may lift his "immunity" as a "live" leader ("Egypt Tells Arafat: Reform or Be Removed," Joseph Nasr, *The Jerusalem Post*, 31 May 2004).

If Arafat was impressed, his external conduct did not betray it. Rather he lashed out at the Egyptians. Yet at least one top aid has resigned, citing the increased lawlessness in Palestinian cities ("Chief Arafat Aide Resigns," Khaled Abu Toameh, *The Jerusalem Post*, 1 June 2004). Despite reports to that effect it appears the Palestinian wave of violence is far from over. The lack of eye-catching reports on terror incidents is due more to aggressive Israeli prevention efforts rather than lack of trying ("Palestinian Affairs: Death of an Intifada," Isabel Kershner, *Jerusalem Report*, 14 June 2004).

Indeed, Arafat and the PA draft women and children to do the fighting ("Engineering Civilian Casualties," Itamar Marcus & Barbara Crook, *Jerusalem Post*, 2 June 2004). He has been successful in large part because Israel and the rest of the world are still looking at Palestinians as posing a political problem that needs to be solved through negotiations, and because international law impedes the ability of democracies to effectively fight terrorism.

This point was proven when a senior Palestinian leader was sentenced in Israel to five consecutive life terms and it was proven he received his murderous orders directly from Arafat ("Barghouti Sentenced to 120 Years in Prison: Tel-Aviv District Court hands former Tanzim leader five consecutive life terms for murder of five Israelis plus 20 years for being member in terror organization," Adi Shalem, *Ma'ariv*, 6 June 2004).

As noted by a reputable legal scholar ("Rules of War Enable Terror," Alan M. Dershowitz, *Baltimore Sun*, 28 May 2004) international law and international conventions should reflect the changing times and recognize that 1) democracies must be legally empowered to attack terrorists who hide among civilians, so long as proportional force is employed; 2) a new category of prisoner should be recognized for captured terrorists and those who support them; 3) the law must come to realize that the traditional sharp line between combatants and civilians has been replaced by a continuum of civilian-ness; and 4) the treaties against all forms of torture must begin to recognize differences in degree among varying forms of rough interrogation (see "[The Dark Art of Interrogation](#)," Mark Bowden, *The Atlantic Monthly*, October 2003).

Even in murder there are gradations. A soldier shot dead is sad but the world has learned to live with realities of war and its outcomes. In the First World War soldiers used bayonets and gas. Yet somehow those realities change with greater atrocities pushing the envelope of human cruelty beyond previously unknown thresholds. The literal butchering of Daniel Pearl, Nick Berg, Russian soldiers, numerous Algerians and now the hostages in Saudi Arabia ("[Kidnappers 'cut Throats of Hostages](#)," AFP, 31 May 2004) bring home that point all too depressingly. Already the beheading of scores of hostages in Saudi Arabia received far less attention than the beheading of Pearl or Berg. No less depressing is the fact that these murderers were let go ("Saudi Security Forces 'Agreed to Let al-Qaeda Killers Escape,'" Robin Gedy, *Daily Telegraph*, 1 June 2004).

So on one hand the Saudis sent Special Forces to rescue the hostages. On the other hand, their diplomats try to convince the West with determined rhetoric of the necessity to fight terrorism ("[Saudi Ambassador to Washington: 'We Must, as a State and as a People, Recognize the Truth about These Criminals... We Must All Obey Allah's Directive and Kill Those Who Spread Corruption in the Land](#)," MEMRI, Special Dispatch - Saudi Arabia, 3 June 2004, No. 725). Yet for internal consumption, the rhetoric quickly resorts to the old canards describing those responsible for the terror act as "95% sure that Zionism is behind the attacks." This is despite clear evidence as to who perpetrated the act, and their link to al-Qaeda ("[Saudi Officials Reinforce Crown Prince Abdallah's Accusation that Zionists Are Behind Terror Attacks in Saudi Arabia](#)," MEMRI, Special Dispatch - Saudi Arabia/Arab Antisemitism Documentation Project, 3 June 2004, No. 726).

This low-level propaganda has irked some commentators who point to the Saudis as the real enemy ("Reality Check on Saudi Arabia," Mark Steyn, *Spectator*, 5 June 2004): "Given that it's the Saudi government that funds all the madrassahs that form the ideological backbone of Islamist terrorism, is there any point in pretending that the House of Saud and al-Qaeda are on opposite sides rather than twin manifestations of the same problem? The West backs the Saudi regime as a bulwark against local destabilization, in return for which they underwrite destabilization of the West across the entire planet." Despite Saudi (and U.S.) rhetoric that they are America's ally their conduct clearly defies it ("The Saudi Connection: Their oil thicker than our blood," Rachel Ehrenfeld, *National Review*, 1 June 2004).

Even Tom Friedman recognizes the evil the Saudis represent, but his solution is to buy less oil from them ("[The ABC's of Hatred](#)," Thomas L. Friedman, *New York Times*, 3 June 2004). One is

hard-pressed to understand this logic as Friedman usually argues that we need to improve the economy of the "downtrodden." Therefore, if the Saudis are now doing economically well they should not be engaged in terrorism. And if they will have their economy worsened, then according to Friedman they will have "reason" to become terrorists. Hence, cutting imports will only make terrorism even worse. Friedman simply does not comprehend that in this global jihad the issue is power and domination, not merely economics. In short, "it is domination stupid."

These extremists use as excuses being "oppressed by 'infidels'" and they are quicker to express "rage" than an "infidel" sneezing ("To Hell with Arab Outrage!" Anonymous, MichNews.com, 1 June 2004). They are helped out by civil right advocacy groups and newspaper editorials when a Muslim lawyer is detained on suspicion of assistance to terrorism ("Fighting Radical Islam," Edward I. Koch, NewsMax.com, 5 June 2004). The fact remains that 1) he was a good "probable cause" ("[If You are Muslim, You are Suspect](#)," Daniel Pipes, Jewish World Review, 1 June 2004) and 2) he was released once it was determined the suspicion was not borne out by facts. Oh yes, his head is still attached to his body.

Generally, the West has tiptoed to avoid any direct blame of Islam and Muslims in general for the vileness of modern global terrorism. Yet the key Islamist leadership, illustrated by Iran, does not have any reservations about making blatant charges against its declared enemies ("[Iranian Leader: 'The Source of Human Torment and Suffering is Liberal Democracy'; Iranian President: 'The Root of All Terrorist Activity is the Violence of the Superpowers,'](#)" MEMRI, Special Dispatch - Iran, 4 June 2004, No. 727). Some of these include statements such as "liberal democracy is devoid of morality," "Islam encourages emulating others without losing Islamic identity," "Islamism is the core of the Iranian revolution" and "one day the U.S. too will be history."

The Iranians do not only talk. They put their plans into action. A recruiting group declared it has thousands of people signed up to commit suicide bombings ("Iran Group Says Thousands Ready for Suicide Raids," Reuters, 5 June 2004) and it is more than reasonable to assume they may resort to WMD. They had better be taken seriously. All they are waiting for is a green light from their leader.

The world (still) steadfastly refuses to understand how sinister the current threat is to the extent that it surpasses the Nazi menace. With far more overwhelming numbers than the Nazis ever had, modern terrorists are not uniformed, have no (single) country of origin or even a central headquarter, and they believe they are sanctioned directly by god. Therefore, appeasing terrorists by retreating from fighting them is the worst mistake the free world could make ("[How We Will Lose the Islamo-Fascist War](#)," Greg Crosby, Jewish World Review, 1 June 2004).

This world is only too quick to blame Israel not because Israel is really "guilty," but because the constant blame is made in an attempt to erode and weaken Israel's standing in the world community ("Last Word in Antisemitism: The epithet is hurled at Israel in a bid to make hatred of Jews respectable," Walter Reich, *Los Angeles Times*, 28 May 2004). Yet the West also steadfastly avoids blaming "all" Muslims for the havoc that Islamist terrorists are wreaking on the world or even understand ("The Religious Sources of Islamic Terrorism," Shmuel Bar, *Policy Review*, June, 2004). But unless such understanding is developed and unless an internal religious

struggle within Islam takes place to exorcize radical Islamism from it, the flow of perpetrators of evil will continue in the (false) name of their religion: "A strategy to cope with radical Islamic ideology cannot take shape without a reinterpretation of Western concepts of the boundaries of the freedoms of religion and speech, definitions of religious incitement and criminal culpability of religious leaders for the acts of their flock as a result of their spiritual influence. Such a reinterpretation impinges on basic principles of Western civilization and law. Under the circumstances, it is the lesser evil."

This is evident not only inside Saudi Arabia but also by its tentacles in the U.S. Under the guise of a benign student organization that caters to Islamic needs, the emergent Muslim Student Association proves itself far more sinister and threatening ("[Islamism's Campus Club: The Muslim Students' Association](#)," Jonathan Dowd-Gailey, *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2004): "There is overwhelming evidence that the MSA, far from being a benign student society, is an overtly political organization seeking to create a single Muslim voice on U.S. campuses a voice espousing Wahhabism, anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism, agitating aggressively against U.S. Middle East policy and expressing solidarity with militant Islamist ideologies, sometimes with criminal results." The MSA resulted from Saudi-backed efforts to found Islamic bodies internationally in the 1960s. Yet, "ironically, although one of the founding missions of the MSA is to increase favorable awareness of Muslim life among non-Muslims, the effect of the MSA's activities is the opposite: they confirm the worst suspicions of American society at large."

There is indeed something sinister and ironic about a "student organization" that is comprised of largely foreign students who supposedly came to the U.S. to benefit from American higher education and yet want to destroy their host country by turning it into a Muslim nation. They also receive aid and comfort from their potential victims who do not yet realize their intended status ("No Excuse for Anti-Americanism," Armstrong Williams, TownHall.com, 1 June 2004). Such conduct has earned an apt description: "...this self-loathing and empathy for our attackers is worse than decadent, it is dangerous insofar as it reinforces to the radicals that attacking the United States is the best way to win concessions."

Instead of focusing on the real enemy, various sorts of scarecrows are erected to claim there is "no plan" in Iraq, blaming "neo-conservatives," now a euphemism for bashing Jews, ("[Wartime Witch Hunt: Blaming Israel for the Iraq War](#)," Dore Gold, Jerusalem Issue Brief, Vol. 3, No. 25, 3 June 2004) and blaring the mantra that there is "no link between Iraq and al-Qaeda" ("The New Defeatism: Are we giving up, even as we're succeeding?" Victor Davis Hanson, *National Review*, 4 June 2004). Not surprisingly, some are questioning whether "we are becoming a crazed culture of cheap criticism and pious moralizing, and in our self-absorption may well lose what we inherited from a better generation. Our groaning and hissing elite indulges itself, while better but forgotten folks risk their lives on our behalf in pretty horrible places."

And if we think we have problems in the U.S. (and we do) they pale compared with the total immersion of European appeasement in a platitude of denial of the real threat. The French displayed their ungratefulness by having a reporter state that U.S. President George W. Bush is no better than Saddam Hussein and the terrorists. The French now want the dead U.S. soldiers out of the cemeteries in their country. And French voices in connection with commemorating D-Day complain the U.S. used "too much fire power" in D-Day and that French citizens were not

"warned" prior to the bombardment. They make victims out of the Nazis ("they suffered too") and claim that Americans were not really liberators. How pathetic.

Yet even in France there are some sane voices or, better say, prophets of wrath. In an eye-opener (for those needing it) the editor of an influential French daily paper laments U.S.-bashing and defines himself unabashedly as an Americanophile (a lover of America). He compares Islamic ideology to Nazism and points out that a world war was declared on the West ["The New Insult," Ivan Rioufol, *Le Figaro*, (translated) 4 June 2004]: "The Islamic ideology, similar to Nazism in many aspects (cult of the superior man, slavery to the dogma, hate of the Jews) can win the third World War that was declared on the 11th of September 2001. The West is effectively ready to admit to faults it did not commit, even at the expense of its Christian roots. It is because the Arab-Muslim world did not want to open up to the modernity of science, to democracy and capitalism that it distanced itself all along the centuries. The Occident has done nothing to bring about its regression that feeds speeches of humiliated (persons) among the fanatics, who gather in the Koran reasons to make war."

Some other rays of hope in the ghastly culture of death that dominates the Islamists narrative come from (yet) untarnished corners. For example, Arab NGOs openly criticize the hollow declarations of "reform" made at the recent Arab Summit ("[Arab NGOs: Arab League Summit Declarations are Not for Reform, But for Deceiving Arab Public Opinion and the International Community](#)," MEMRI, Special Dispatch - Reform Project, 2 June 2004, No. 724).

In the U.S., the American Islamic Forum for Democracy is showing that even if belated and modest in scope, there are voices of moderate Muslims who support democracy and condemn terror as the narrative of Islam ("Taking Back Islam: Moderate Muslims say their faith is compatible with freedom," Erick Stakelbeck & Nir Boms, *National Review*, 3 June 2004).

Not less significant is the position taken by some Muslim scholars. In a recent interview Professor Khaleel Mohammed of San Diego State University cited the Koran as legitimizing Israel's right over its land as part of a Biblical covenant that the Koran is based on ("[The Koran and the Jews](#)," Jamie Glazov, *FrontPageMagazine*, 3 June 2004): "...the thrust of my analysis is where Moses says that the Holy Land is that which God has 'written' for the Israelites...So the simple fact is then, from a faith-based point of view: If God has 'written' Israel for the people of Moses, who can change this?"

As encouraging and refreshing is the addition of activism to a religious opinion. A group called "Arabs for Israel" believes that "We can support the State of Israel and the Jewish religion and still treasure our Arab and Islamic culture." It takes a courageous posture when stating: "We salute and commend Arab and Muslim writers, scholars and speakers, who found the strength, commitment and honesty in their hearts to speak out in support of Israel. We thank you for being the pioneers that you are and for holding such sophisticated and advanced views in the realm of Arab and Muslim thinking. You are inspiring us all." These are such exceptions that one is still hard-pressed to look at the text twice to believe it as *they* are so eloquently adding their voice to those who make the case for Israel ("Making the Case for Israel," Alan M. Dershowitz, *FrontPageMagazine*, 1 June 2004).

An article on their site ("Israel - a State of Mind," Tashbih Sayyed) reveals what was needed to be said by Arabs and Muslims for so long and could serve as a wonderful inspiration for Arab-Muslim leadership to adopt: "I consider the creation of the Jewish state as a blessing for the Muslims. Israel has provided us an opportunity to show to the world the Jewish state of mind in action; a mind that yearns to be free; a mind that longs to see the humanity enjoy life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. If the American civic faith has given the world a hope to be able to live with dignity, self respect and honor in peace, the Jewish traditions and culture of pluralism, debate, acceptance of dissension and difference of opinion have manifested themselves in the shape of the State of Israel to present the oppressed Muslim world with a paradigm to emulate. And if we want this world to be free of any kind of terror, we will have to defend this state of mind, whether it is seen in the shape of Israel or in the form of the United States of America." Indeed nothing less should be acceptable.

A paradigm to emulate. That is exactly what the Islamo-terrorists do not want. And this exactly why it should be encouraged, nurtured and defended before the green light is given to terrorists to cause even more harm.