

Peace at All Costs or a War of No Choice

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By Robbie Friedmann

In this 2002 wintery holiday season the temperatures are getting colder, the season is getting hotter, and the days are not so holy. Neither is the language used to describe them or what is taking place in this very season. The U.N. inspection in Iraq constitutes but a sad joke, a farce, a ritual that the West is undergoing to try to convince itself - yet one more time - that it really needs to convince itself that there is a serious problem with a vicious dictator who lies, cheats, and kills and intends to do more of it. And by the same token the world continues to behave as if it is sailing on a ship of fools.

Like Emperor Nero who was rumored in 64 AD to have ordered the torching of Rome and stood on the summit of the Palatine playing his lyre, President Jimmy Carter Jr. was serenaded by musicians and cheered by audiences, at the Nobel Prize award ceremony, yet his record is known - not rumored. Regrettably, the Nobel Peace Prize has become more of a political statement of the Committee than a recognition of the winner ("In a situation currently marked by threats of the use of power, Carter has stood by the principles that conflicts must as far as possible be resolved through mediation and international co-operation based on international law, respect for human rights, and economic development"). After all, Carter could have been awarded the prize in 1978 together with Israeli Prime Minister Begin and Egyptian President Sadat. True to his colors, Carter acquiesced to vanity more than to respecting national interests and a sitting president [George W. Bush] choosing the occasion to elevate the U.N. to levels it does not deserve and cannot uphold while urging against war on Iraq ("Carter Urges U.S. to Respect U.N. on Iraq," Alister Doyle, Reuters, Dec 9,2002).

This is interesting from at least one perspective: Carter has yet to be heard condemning the war instigated by terrorists or the threat coming from Iraq and other sources of danger (which he adamantly refuses to recognize). Carter is so committed to pursuing peace that he blames Israel as the problem that causes terrorism: "'One of the key factors that...arouses intense feelings of animosity in the world is the festering problem in the Holy Land, the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and the inability of Israel to live in peace with its neighbors....I think this is the single most disturbing element in animosities and misunderstandings and hatred and even violence in the world,...I think that is an exacerbating factor in dividing people, not only in the West Bank, Gaza and Israel, but also throughout the world.'" Indisputably Israel is unable to live in peace with its neighbors but it is because of the neighbors' doing not because of Israel.

And Carter puts his personal conviction (along with the misguided advice that may be coming his way) to work by arguing that the US policy (namely, the Bush Administration) in the Middle East is too much in favor of Israel and he volunteers to go to the Middle East to mediate peace again ("Carter offers to go to Mideast: He accuses Bush of pro-Israel bias," Karl Ritter, Associated Press, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, 12/13/02). With this public promotion of his own very bias against Israel he makes two cardinal mistakes: first, he is ungrateful to Israel without which he would have never succeeded at bringing "peace" between Israel and Egypt.

After all, Israel is the one that delivered the tangible goods and thus made it possible; Egypt has given up nothing. Second, his "blaming the victim" attitude should have been accompanied by an equalizer: How about the Jews having 22 countries and about 300 million people to somehow get up to par with the Arabs peace mongers so as for Carter [to be able] to mediate between two more equal parties?

His intentions are perhaps noble but his award is not. It takes far greater integrity for any real caliber leader to stand up to the Nobel Committee and refuse its tainted award. Carter missed a very rare opportunity to do exactly that. He would have exposed hypocrisy, appeasement, and politics for what they are. Now he is just part of that unsavory process. If he goes to the Middle East again, Atlanta can offer him its now popular vehicle that would fit him rather well: The Segway Human Transporter. It will take for him a very long time to arrive (and Air Force One is not available) but most important, it signifies that he is the only rider on this trip. He offers no room for the Israelis and it does not have enough space to deliver for the Palestinians what they want - the State of Israel.

Perhaps Carter should have read Hanson's article depicting the U.S. acting as its detractors do, in order to understand how ludicrous is it to pretend that there is some moral equivalence between perpetrator and victim ("America Upside Down: Imagine a world in which we were more like them," Victor David Hanson, National Review, December 6, 2002). It is one thing to aspire for peace and it is altogether another to recognize imperfections with one side but ignore them with the other (and it has much more than imperfections). In the theater of absurd of the current "politics of peace" it appears that Carter is an admiring fan of the Thomas Friedman club of international relations. Friedman of course is an arm-chair - sometimes flying - journalist who is willing to commit NATO troops to ensure peace in the Middle East ("[Go Slow-Mo, NATO.](#)" The New York Times, December 11, 2002).

Like Carter, Friedman apparently maintains that Israel is the problem (the "settlements" again; maybe Friedman should be reading Joseph Farah for a change? "[The 'settlements' issue.](#)" WorldNetDaily.com, December 12, 2002). Neither Friedman nor Carter can see that the "settlements" were not an issue prior to 1967, yet decades of Arab opposition, terror, and war preceded what now is seen as an "obstacle to peace."

So Friedman must be thinking of NATO as another (incompetent) U.N. outpost. NATO troops in the Middle East are going to be subject to the same terror that Israel is experiencing and those troops will be mired there for years. With this mind-set is it any surprise that there is a call for "Friedman for president?" ("Bravo, Friedman," Joan King, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, 12/11/02). I can already envision "President Friedman" accepting the Nobel Peace Prize - on behalf of the New York Times? - for "tranquility" because the Arabs have rested for a few years after they succeeded in destroying Israel and are giving the world a brief respite before they move against it. Even for a very flicker of a nightmare this is something that should never recur, nor ever become a reality.

Hopefully there are enough people who can identify a virus on a cruise ship and try to prevent more fools from sailing on it before it gets cleaned. A Washington Times editorial has crisply identified the danger that Middle East terrorism is posing for the world when a leading terrorist

clearly states his threat to widen the scope of terror: "I encourage Palestinians to take suicide bombings worldwide. Don't be shy about it." ("Hezbollah's new threat," December 10, 2002). The editorial proposes to take the threat for what it stands: "Given Hezbollah's history of anti-American violence and ties with al Qaeda, Sheikh Nasrallah's threats must be taken very seriously indeed." This is joined by additional calls to see the war on terrorism as one single effort even when targets seem to be "unrelated" ("[A Single War.](#)" Max Boot, New York Post, December 2, 2002): "If we are ever to defeat them, we must see them as they see themselves. If we do, we'll realize that the Israeli conflict is not a "distraction" from the war on terrorism - it is the war on terrorism." After all, anyone who has any doubts about this could ask themselves if Israel is eliminated today, would it stop terrorism? The answer is obvious for those who are willing to recognize it. Or, is there another self-evident reason for the establishment of a "Palestinian state" other than the destruction of Israel? ("[Palestine, again.](#)" Joseph Farah, WorldNetDaily.com, December 10, 2002).

Consistently, the die-hard attempts (pun very intended) to appease the Palestinians - and doing so on the account of Israel - is backfiring (pun also intended) not only against Israel but against the rest of the world ("Sheep, wolves, and reality," Editorial, Mortimer B. Zuckerman, U.S. New & World Report, 12/16/02). As Zuckerman states: "Long before 1948, 1967, Israeli settlements, and suicide bombers, there were murderous attacks in the Holy Land against the Jews who lived there. Palestinians wanted them out. Period. Once Israel was a reality, the Palestinian goal was to destroy the Jewish state first by war, then by terrorism, then by deceptions like that at Oslo, which - it is now clear - the Palestinians had no intention of honoring." Therefore the continued futile push to accommodate the murderous designs of the Palestinians (and those whose interests they serve, such as the Saudis - see "Osama Bin Laden Vs. the Jews," Emanuel A. Winston, Arutz Sheva, December 09, 2002) will fail. Yet it will deceive everyone in the process and reward those who resort to terrorism: "American policy in the Middle East has been to try to formulate a workable "road map" that could serve as an outline for a dialogue between the Palestinians and the Israelis. The policy will not succeed - or deserve to succeed - unless it recognizes the brutal realities behind the code words and the determination to wage a campaign of terrorism against the only democratic state in the Middle East."

And indeed, the genocidal character of terrorism, and the propaganda promoting and supporting it, leaves very little room for interpreting its objectives in any other way. Palestinians, who a few years ago were talking about a "secular democratic state" (the one state solution that did NOT include Israel), are "suddenly" resorting to theological language in persecuting their campaign not only against Israel but against the Jews as is evident on official Palestinian TV ("Afflicting Jews is Muslim destiny - Palestinian Television Religious Sermon," Itamar Marcus, Palestinian Media Watch Bulletin, Dec. 11, 2002).

And the relentless genocidal campaign is still proceeding with a full swing. Despite some single voices in the wilderness, such as the marginal Egyptian Organization for Human Rights and one Saudi columnist who calls for a need for re-education ("[Saudi Columnist: "Our Youths Must be Re-educated... Violence Must be Discarded.](#)" MEMRI, Special Dispatch - Saudi Arabia/Reform in the Arab and Muslim World, December 11, 2002, No. 448), the widespread sentiment in the Arab world is one that clearly condones anti-Semitism and genocidal [attitudes] towards Jews and Israel even if sheepishly trying to argue that there is no such thing as anti-Semitism because

the whole world is actually Semite ("Arab Press Debates Antisemitic Egyptian Series "Knight Without a Horse" - Part III," MEMRI, Inquiry and Analysis - Iraq/Egypt/Arab Antisemitism, December 10, 2002, No. 114).

Interestingly enough, the PR campaign that is infecting us with Saudi posturing of "peaceful intentions" was able to influence a San Francisco co-op that decided to boycott Israeli products (but of course not Saudi oil; wouldn't it be fascinating to see this country boycotting Saudi oil?) yet claimed it had nothing to do with anti-Semitism ("Food fight in tofu-land," Debra J. Saunders, San Francisco Chronicle, Thursday, December 5, 2002). The ship of fools must have docked in their port for a while.

But the short-term effect on some SF misguided idealists is not picking sufficient grass (eh, roots) momentum to convince most Americans that we need nothing else to buy from the Saudis than oil, and they have nothing else to export to us than genocidal murderers. Their professional slick "foreign advisor" only manages to achieve an all time low public perception not only among conservative opinion makers (["Sultan of Spin: The dishonesty of Saudi PR flack Adel al-Jubeir,"](#) David Tell, Weekly Standard, 12/16/2002) but also among circles traditionally highly sympathetic to Arab causes such as Time magazine (["Person of the Week: Adel al-Jubeir The Saudi spin doctor spent this week looking to turn the tide of American skepticism. But he faces tough odds,"](#) Tony Karon, Dec. 05, 2002).

But even more importantly, those who have influence within administration circles are repeatedly making the argument (unheard of prior to the 9-11 atrocity) that the Saudis are not exactly our friends (["Saudi Arabia: No Friend of Ours,"](#) Ken Adelman, Fox News, December 11, 2002): "The Saudis have long funded groups promoting terrorism -- to the tune of \$3 billion to \$4 billion yearly -- but as an export item, and not for home use. This grand deal has worked just dandy. Once the whispers of diplomats and dealings among officials determined everything. A few men, with all the power, dealt with another few men from another country. Each small group controlled the knowledge, weapons and big decisions of its people. That world's gone. The most critical knowledge has spread beyond the corridors of government. Destructive weaponry obviously is no longer the monopoly of governments, as we've been reminded recently in Mombasa and Bali. Big decisions in most of the world are made by rough consensus -- often molded by great leaders, for sure -- but nonetheless sticking only if widely accepted. What counts nowadays is what happens beyond government-to-government dealings. That's where the bulk of power has gone. The Saudis may be with us officially, but they're sure not with us where it counts nowadays."

Some very important attention to the international threat of terrorism and the preparations for war was diverted during these past few days in the U.S. due to some other shooting. This time the firing shots were made by incoming (what a pun!) Senate Majority Leader for 108th Congress, Trent Lott. He not only shot himself in the foot but shot the nation in its back by not thinking prior to making statements during what otherwise would have been a forgotten event in the Guinness World records: The 100 birthday celebration of another senator storm, eh, Strom (Thurmond). Yet Lott found himself in the unpleasant situation of realizing that the difference between a wise and a fool is that the latter does not know how to get out of a situation the former does not get into.

This brings us back a full circle to the peace mongers. These weeks many are impatient with the progress in the fight against terrorism (Osama has not been caught yet - is the mantra of those who measure success against terrorism by his vital signs) and object to the war against Iraq (as if the US is incapable of fighting more than one war at a time) as Hollywood goes to Bagdad to find out why we should not go to war against Saddam. Others are claiming that North Korea is worse than Iraq (didn't Bush place them in the same club?), and so is Iran (member as well). And Al Qaeda is now indeed all over the place. In the same way that a ticketed driver complains to the officer that many others are speeding and it is not an acceptable excuse, the war detractors are not only suggesting that better "proof" is needed before an attack on Iraq, but they imply - unwittingly but correctly - that Iraq is not the only problem out there. And they are right. Now if they can see it themselves, stop flip-flopping and offer some spirited support instead it might do all us some good.

For some reason, the appeasers of today seem worse than in years past. Rome was built better and stronger (until it fell) after it was burned in 64 AD. Carter may be known for being a decent engineer (better than a president and a peace maker). Let's hope that his engineering services will not be needed to re-build what might be destroyed - in Israel or anywhere else. Like with Senator Lott, thinking prior to talking might do many of the peace proponents some good. It is high time to move away from empty slogans and understand the dangers that are directed against us and do something about it, not only before it will be too late but before it will be even more costly than necessary.