

Guess Which Terror Supporter is Coming to Dinner?

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By Robbie Friedmann

Don't envy reporters and editors these days. They are certainly biting off much more than they can chew. In the constant rush to bring "real" news to a "reading," "viewing," "listening," and "surfing" public one just remains wondering: where did they go to journalism school, what is it they have already forgotten and why is it they will never learn to avoid media malpractice. And in their defense, they do not have to go to great length for a "story." The problem is that while seemingly providing a "service" to those who "want to know" they make too much of what should never even have surfaced as news.

A group of lunatics claim that the moon landings were a fake and part of a government conspiracy ("Hoaxers vs. Rocket Scientists: Even NASA unsure how to counter claims of faked moon landings,") The Associated Press, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution: 12/22/02). The long-standing policy of ignoring the hoaxers is worrisome enough to scientists "who contend that someone needs to lead the fight against scientific illiteracy and the growing belief in pseudoscience like aliens and astrology."

Then there is the group that does not merely claim that a government project is a hoax but it perpetrates one of its own when it claimed more than a year ago it had cloned human embryos ("[Pro-cloning group claims to have embryos](#)," CNN, November 28, 2001) and it has just announced it "gave birth" to the first human clone ("[Group claims first cloned human born](#)," CNN, December 27, 2002). The French-affiliated cult claim - without any proof - is more than bizarre: "The group's founder says he met little green space aliens on a visit to a French volcano in the 1970s. That man -- a former French journalist named Claude Vorilhon, who now calls himself Rael -- says the extraterrestrials told him they created life on earth through genetic engineering." And this is taken seriously?

While technologically not out of the realm of possibility, such news would have been expected to come from serious universities/scientists (creating quite a controversy) not from someone who lacks any credibility and believes we have planets under our fingernails and that we were visited by little green aliens. Yet despite the lack of credibility what is typically reserved for tabloids has now captured the headlines, elicited reactions by ethicists, and even the White House. These stories show that too many people have overdosed on [Star Trek](#) and Captain James Tiberius Kirk. Do you see another science fiction Hollywood movie in the making?

Now how is this relevant to terrorism? To the imminent war on Iraq? Or the alarming developments in North Korea? Well, reporters are supposed to provide us with facts not mere claims. The problem with facts is not just with what they provide but also with what they do not and the context in which they are filtered to the news recipients. An article describing an Israeli military operation ("Israeli crackdown kills 7 Palestinians, stirs fear of revenge," Hadeel Wahdan - Associated Press, Atlanta Journal/Constitution, December 27, 2002) is creating an impression as if Israeli soldiers killed Palestinians randomly almost justifying additional Palestinian terror:

"But the largest Palestinian death toll in weeks raised concerns about new efforts by Palestinian militants, who have not staged a major terrorist attack in almost a month, to retaliate."

The factual error? Palestinian attacks were not staged not because of lack of desire, planning, or attempts, but because they were thwarted. And then does the reporter assume that when it is a "minor" attack (say 2 people are killed instead of 20) that is not considered terrorism? Obviously so, as the murder of an Israeli by Islamic Jihad terrorists last week was ignored. The reporter has filed his story too soon as in less than 24 hours the Palestinians have terrorized again murdering several Israelis ("4 Israelis Killed at Settlement," The Associated Press, The New York Times, December 27, 2002) and sending a car bomb which exploded in Jerusalem ("Car Bomb Explodes in Jerusalem, One Hurt - Police", Reuters, The New York Times, December 27, 2002). Luckily the one who was hurt is the suicide bomber but you wouldn't know it from the heading. Oh, yes, the "major" car bomb(s) in Chechnya was given "adequate" attention ("Suicide Bombers Kill 46 in Chechnya," The Associated Press, Chechnya News, 27 Dec 2002).

This links the problematic reporting of facts with the even more problematic merchandising of opinions. In a series of articles that explored "obstacles to peace in the Middle East" the reader is subjected to a litany of two sides who are mirroring each other so equally that it is hard to know which side the article is referring to unless it is named ("Trust is the greatest casualty in Mideast rift," Charles Radin, Boston Globe, 12/25/2002).

The article is replete with gross errors to an extent that what the uninitiated reader gets is a tragic travesty of reality that transforms the victim into perpetrator and makes a victim out of the latter. If space hoaxers are given enough credit, and claimants to human clones are given a stage without proof why shouldn't a scribe have his opinions promoted - unfounded and unsound as they are? The damage is obvious as truth, fact, consistency, and corroboration are sacrificed for ignorance, conjecture and bias, to create ill-conceived "realities."

From bad facts and biased opinions it is only a short leap to international political bias. The UN has - with rare exceptions - sided with the terrorists and with aggressor countries in its frequent condemnation and bashing of Israel ("Immoral clarity at the UN," Editorial, The Jerusalem Post, Dec. 21, 2002). This is tantamount to juries rendering guilty verdicts against the victim instead of the offender. As the Jerusalem Post editorial has put it: "So long as the UN cannot find the modicum of courage necessary to issue a straightforward condemnation of Palestinian violence, its reputation for anti-Israel bias will remain intact. And the price of this double standard is far graver than just the impact on the Security Council's reputation. As we saw on Friday in the Gaza Strip, it can be measured in Jewish blood, too."

The notion of appeasing the offender - and doubly victimizing the victim - serves as the foundation for a new U.S. "peace initiative," called the "Road Map," which is enthusiastically supported by the United Nations (yes the same "objective" international body known for its "love" of Israel), the European Union (which has traditionally catered to the Arabs), and Russia (which has deep financial interests in Iraq) known together as the "quartet." According to this "Road Map" it does not matter where you travel as long as you realize that you cannot have two passengers on board. Terrorism and settlements. Dogs and Jews are not allowed. Sorry, if the dogs promise no to bark, let them join. This amounts to a direct justification of terrorism from

those who appear to condemn it "Road map to perdition," Caroline B. Glick, The Jerusalem Post, Dec. 20, 2002).

Indeed, no less an authority on Mid-East negotiations than Dennis Ross has added his criticism to the current "Road Map" ("[Mapping Out Peace in the Mideast: 'Quartet' needs to alter plan to move from conflict to Bush's solution](#)," Los Angeles Times, December 20, 2002). Arguing that it commits to the Palestinian strategic goals (but not to Israeli ones), it does not call for real responsibilities of Arab countries, and that it creates the illusion of specificity while leaving too much room for interpretation, Ross urges to amend the "Road Map" so as to equip President Bush with a more promising approach to secure a viable outcome.

Given the clear and present dangers in the Middle East the U.S. may need to do far more than amend the "Road Map." The situation in Iraq has an immediate impact on Israel in the form of Iraqi threats to use weapons of mass destruction (they claim not to have) against Israel. Given their record in the 1991 Gulf War of lobbing SCUDS at Israel they are most likely to do so again. Therefore, when Prime Minister Sharon publicly stated that Iraq has hidden its WMDs in Syria there was an outcry by the Iraqis and Syrians that this is an Israeli lie ("Syria rejects PM's claims it is hiding Iraqi weapons," Amos Harel, Ha'aretz and Reuters, December 26, 2002)

Of course, the fact that Iraq was hiding its fighter jets in Iran in 1991 (which, by the way, were never returned) does not add much to Iraqi or Syrian credibility. But surprisingly, former Israeli PM Shimon Peres was "doubtful" of this assertion. The upcoming elections in Israel must have added to Peres' "doubts" but persistent reports from credible sources seem to corroborate Sharon's statements ("Iraqi rockets sent to Syria for use by Hezbollah," Ze'ev Schiff, Ha'aretz, December 26, 2002): "Some of the equipment transferred from Iraq to Syria in recent weeks was apparently earmarked for Hezbollah in Lebanon, to be used in opening a northern front against Israel in the event of an American offensive in Iraq."

And while Israelis are preparing for an Iraqi attack against them, they are also preparing for an attack by Hezbollah from Lebanon. This is an Iranian-backed group that is controlled by Syria and supported by Iraq as well. After years of Israeli claims of the dangers posed by Hezbollah it appears that US intelligence sources have belatedly ranked that group not only as dangerous to Israel but also as a serious threat to the US and, in fact, even more dangerous than Al Qaeda ("[Hezbollah Becomes Potent Anti-U.S. Force](#)," Neil MacFarquhar, The New York Times, December 24, 2002): "Senior American officials have singled out Hezbollah as the "A team" of terrorism, more menacing than Al Qaeda."

The threat of Hezbollah should not be a surprise to the US as it was responsible for the October 23, 1983, attack in Beirut that killed 241 US Marines and more than 70 French soldiers of the multi-national "peacekeeping" force. Not reacting forcefully then, and coupled with the hurried withdrawal of Israel from South Lebanon, contributed to the flourishing of this terror organization to the extent that it is now a model for Al-Qaeda, and the Palestinians, and it serves the interest of the states that sponsor it to the detriment of the West ("The Franchising of Hezbollah," Avi Davis, Arutz Sheva, 25 December 2002).

With Sean Penn gracing Iraq and the international powers with his personal contribution to peace as a concerned Secretary of State posturing, or better say, acting, as if he can "alleviate" the complex international tension, Hollywood does not remain far behind. While very silent on real problems and real victims, particularly when they are Israeli ("The silence of the Hollywood lambs," Jack Engelhard, The Jerusalem Post, Dec. 21, 2002).

Hollywood parades its "assets" with pious expressions on their faces as if they have a monopoly on peace and can impact the outcome if they will only be listened to. The problem is that it takes two to make peace. So here comes Jane - Hanoi - Fonda, marching in to equally visit Israeli victims of terror and Palestinian "victims" of we are not sure what (a job-related-accident?). Israelis were flooded with wet memories of Barbarella and her aerobic exercises with one leading newspaper going out of its way (or actually being true to its way) to glorify Fonda as if she is still the Queen of the Galaxy ("Jane and Eve in the Holy Land," Orna Coussin, Ha'aretz, December 23, 2002) along with Eve Ensler (who came with her to promote the Israeli production of the "Vagina Monologues").

The "reporter's" bias is all too obvious throughout the article but its conclusion demonstrates that she is still stuck in her 60s (the era, not Fonda's age): "That evening, like the entire visit, included a talk about the violence in the territories, violence against women around the world, rape, despair, oppression and depression but, in the best tradition of the '60s, there was also a moment when everyone sang, together with singer Amal Morcos, "We Shall Overcome." Fonda and Ensler joined in full-throatedly." Fonda's visit was not as smooth as she and her handlers wanted it to be and not everyone went ga-ga with her treasonous charm as at least one Israeli activist tried to educate Israelis and the press about who Fonda is ("[Jane in Jerusalem](#)," Nadia Matar, Jewish World Review, Dec. 23, 2002). Plenty of e-mails from Vietnam veterans are a guarantee that her infamy will be remembered.

As Lenin would have commented, people like Penn and Fonda serve the purpose of a "useful idiot" ("Useful Idiot: Sean Penn learned little on his Baghdad visit," Clifford D. May, Wall Street Journal, December 24, 2002).

Whether they believe in their cause or are duped to believe in it, knowingly or unknowingly they end up helping the cause of the enemy. Instead of entertaining the troops like Bob Hope or the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders, they are cheering the enemy and are demoralizing the troops. Fonda may have helped a few dreamy-eyed Israeli left-wingers and the PR-savvy Palestinians but other than self-promotion she has made very little contribution to peace. Perhaps some Israelis should send a mediator to listen to her own marital problems and try to negotiate peace in her own home before she gives advice to others. Surely, the village idiot has been promoted to play a much more dangerous role in the era of the global village.

How encouraging would it be to hear these actors read from a different script - for a change - the one that spews hatred and has no promises of Nobels or Oscars. Arab hatred and anti-Semitic activities continue relentlessly. MEMRI now has on its web site cartoons from Arabic newspapers. These deal with Jews and Israelis as Nazis and Hitler, with Jews and Israelis "Controlling" the U.S. Government, and with "Common" Antisemitic Cartoons. It is worth examining these to gain further insight into the twisted minds and corrupting ideology that is so

pervasive in the Arab world. After all, it is the poverty of the mind, not the poverty of the pocket that brings about terrorism and wars.

But it is not limited to the Arab world. It creeps up in places previously thought of as "immune" to such intellectual refuse, like, oh, Canada. But somehow "in the wake of 9/11, it has become... bizarrely okay to beat up on Jews, to pull Judaism and Israel into the maelstrom of terrorist politics and radical militancy" ("Latest rant part of new wave of Anti-Semitism," Rosie Dimanno, Toronto Star, Dec. 20, 2002).

Moreover, Canada's tolerance is perceived as being conducive to the emergence of this rant as Dimanno writes: "That's the environment we've created in Canada by repeatedly and smugly bashing Israel. We've encouraged the hate-mongers, those who've never accepted Israel's right to exist, to come out into the open, to bask in our tolerance. So they proclaim their righteous anti-Semitism in tones of escalating vehemence... I am alarmed by the new wave of anti-Semitism sweeping across a world not six decades removed from the Holocaust."

This is classical antisemitism taken to a power of holocaust magnitude when those who claim to speak for the "religion of peace" issue an edict straight from a Cairo university that the "Muslim Nation must acquire Nuclear weaponry" because it "is a religious obligation" ("New Islamic Ruling Calls for Nuclear Weapon Armament," IDF, December 24th, 2002). And they did not mean Pakistan (which is Muslim and has nuclear weapons).

Clearly the Islamic clerics who have issued this ruling are more concerned about the Islamic gap in the arms race rather than in such areas as economy, health, and welfare, or science: "All Islamic nations are required to seize nuclear weaponry, giving the nation the utmost respect. We see how far behind our nation is as a result of not being prepared as well as it should be, while the enemy has equipped itself with the best weaponry there is, which it will use to harm and destroy Muslims."

In the meantime, the lovers of peace are not aiming only at Jews and Israel. Time after time they target Christians and often while praying in Churches ("Three killed in church attack in Pakistan," Reuters, Ha'aretz, December 26, 2002).

So, as the US is detaining and deporting suspected terrorists and their supporters, while it is recognizing the growing menace of terrorism and extremists groups, its diplomats in Europe serve as hosts to "guess who's coming to dinner?" (with a thousand apologies to Stanley Kramer, Sidney Poitier, Spencer Tracy, and Katharine Hepburn, for this analogy). Non other than Azzam Tamimi, a Palestinian radical who is linked to Hamas ("Palestinian radical was guest of US ambassador," Jeevan Vasagar, The Guardian, December 21, 2002).

So, is there a silver lining in this? One ray of hope is offered by Iranian students who are emerging as an alternative to Iran's clerical ruling. The students issued a strong statement critical of Islamist terror groups and antisemitism in the Arab and Muslim world ("[Iranian Students' Movement: 'Leave Palestine Alone, Think About Us!'](#)" MEMRI, Special Dispatch - Iran/Reform in the Arab and Muslim World, December 22, 2002, No. 451).

This statement, directed at the Iranian rulers, interjects an important element often missing and much sought after in the current conflict. It unequivocally condemns antisemitism, terror, and violence, and it promotes freedom: "The defense of peace and calm in the Middle East is not attainable through support for terrorists and war-mongering groups; rather, it is to be attained through the pursuit of political dialog between the two sides while simultaneously removing the roots of fundamentalism, terror, and violence...The Student Movement Coordination Committee for Democracy in Iran believes that in accordance with international charters, both the nations of Israel and Palestine have the right and the capability to live alongside one another as two free and independent states. This committee, while condemning the agitating acts of the Islamic Republic, requests that the freedom-loving and struggling nation of Iran, especially the youth and the students, [give] a crushing response to the promoters of antisemitism and terrorism by boycotting the sham and mandatory demonstration of the so-called World-Wide Day of Ghods....Long live Freedom! Long live Secularism!"

So the Palestinians had a bad weather day. Is there anyone to blame? Sure, the Jews are just around the corner. They have a religious party, they seed clouds, they talk to God directly. So if they are not "allowed" to take revenge and "retaliate" against a defensive measure by the Israelis - that took place because they have perpetrated murder in the first place - they feel aggrieved. And the terrorist who target the US? They will find any excuse to blame the US for their own crimes. And the bleeding hearts? They will continue to blame everyone except the terrorists.

Therefore, unless the terrorists are stopped from perpetrating violence and terror as acceptable solutions to perceived grievances the rest of the world will suffer as much or more from the franchising of terror. Hollywood and the pseudo-intellectuals could actually help by focusing their energy on doing what is right for a change.