

# The Saddam-OBL-Arafat Dance of Death

February 25, 2003

By Robbie Friedmann

The U.S. (and British) forces around Iraq continue to grow in direct proportion to the lies and propaganda coming out of Iraq and the U.N. The latest in this international charade took place when the Tariq Aziz, Saddam's Deputy Prime Minister, visited the Pope in a PR "pilgrimage" blitz where he "insisted his country has no relationship with terrorists and warned Europe against joining Washington in a war, saying participation would be seen as a crusade against Arabs and Muslims." Earlier in the week Aziz, himself a Christian, "calmed" Israelis suggesting that Iraq is incapable of reaching Israel with long range missiles and that it does not have weapons of mass destruction. Surely, Israel must have rushed to dismantle its defense establishment given the Iraqi's credibility ranking. Yet when an Israeli reporter asked him a question to that effect he refused to respond because he did not come to Rome to "address the Israeli media" drawing jeers and boos from fellow journalists with some leaving the press conference in protest ("Tariq Aziz Warns Against New 'Crusade,'" Fox News, February 14, 2003. <http://foxnews.com/story/0,2933,78594,00.html>).

Such statements from Iraq whether addressed to inspectors, journalists, or diplomats, carry no credibility whatsoever and may deceive only the peace-mongers and the countries that have vested interests in the current Iraqi regime. Nor does it make much different that Hussein initiated legislation "banning the importation of weapons of mass destruction" as if anyone can import such weapons other than the Iraqi government to begin with. Even the Nazis used to lie with better conviction than Aziz and the Iraqi representatives who were paraded on TV last week responding to Secretary Powell's statements. Yet Iraq should not be underestimated for the cunning it displays. It is more than fair to assume a connection between the North Korean posturing and Iraqi intransigence as it serves the interests of both countries very well. Yet Iraq also harbors terrorists and supports instability in the Middle East and elsewhere. In short, if anything, Iraq should be taken even more seriously than it has been.

The Iraqi regime has stretched the concept lying to a level that perhaps requires its re-definition (lying that is; Iraq is on the verge of being re-defined). They lie, deny it, lie again, and then state repeatedly without any shame what they were charged of to begin with. They typically argue they have no weapons of mass destruction of any sort nor the delivery capability, yet they continually threaten the U.S. and Israel with the weapons they "do not have" and with what it will cost them should Iraq be attacked: "We'll Kill 100,000 Americans As We Killed 100,000 Englishmen" ("[The Iraq Crisis 1: Iraq Prepares for War](#)," Special Series on Iraq, Special Dispatch - Iraq, February 11, 2003, No. 467).

Perhaps this is one reason why the "Americans and the Englishmen" understand who is the enemy they have to face and why the Europeans, the residual communists, and the Muslim supporters are against the war on Iraq. The emergent opposition to U.S.-led use of force in Iraq is led by Germany and France and has more than drawn the ire of American journalists and elected officials. Americans remember the fallen soldiers in Normandy and see France as atrociously

ungrateful ("The Rat That Roared: Jacques Chirac has a lot of Gaul," Christopher Hitchens, Wall Street Journal, February 8, 2003).

This week's commentary against these two countries was particularly unmerciful. The Wall Street Journal went as far as calling them weasels who are rabidly dangerous to the world ("Rabid Weasels: The sickness of "old Europe" is a danger to the world," Brendan Miniter, February 11, 2003) and the New York Post's cover page on February 14 included a photo where Germany and France are depicted as weasels (See "Weasel Watch" on "Best of the Web," James Taranto, Wall Street Journal, February 14, 2003).

Others have suggested that France's contribution to this conflict was in replacing Polish jokes with French jokes ("Comic Relief: France liberates Poland from the grip of mockery," Daniel Henninger, February 14, 2003).

An Israeli column found it tempting enough to note the French hypocrisy in their support of the Palestinians and their demands that Israel relinquish the "occupied territories" which is not practiced when French occupied territories are concerned ("The occupied territories... France's, that is). It asks "Why does it continue to press its claims to far-off sea-turtle sanctuaries and frozen Antarctic wastelands rather than relinquish them forthwith?" And suggests that "The answer, it appears, lies in a remark made by author Mark Twain over a century ago. "France," he noted, "has neither winter nor summer, nor morals. Apart from these drawbacks, it is a fine country." Thanks to Chirac's pro-Iraqi and pro-Palestinian stance, even that observation, once made in jest, now seems right on target."

The Franco-German-led opposition to the U.S. seems to hold more trouble for the U.N. than for the U.S. After all, NATO is no longer as important - if at all - since its mission has drastically changed and today it is comprised of many of the countries it aimed to protect Europe from just a decade ago ("Iraq isn't the issue, it's the UN," Mark Steyn, The Jerusalem Post, Feb. 11, 2003): "Two or three dozen countries will join the war to liberate Iraq. If the Americans and British are wise, they'll play up the smaller fry, let their generals handle some of the press conferences, talk up their war heroics. All the late 20th century arrangements the European Union, NATO and most definitely the UN are about to be re-made."

Indeed, a review of European history, character, and the forces that shape its political agenda and future is indicating that the U.S. may be having very serious problems from the same continent it successfully defended (England), liberated (most of Europe), and punished and then rebuilt (Germany, Italy) half a century ago. Europe is emerging as a competitive political and economic block to the U.S. yet it does not have the unifying national features that make the United States so united. The European differences far exceed any sense of unity there and while the Euro is clearly becoming a strong and recognized currency, the union it represents is weak, corrupt, torn, and has strong competition for leadership that is incapable of delivering what it needs ("What is Europe?" Bret Stephens, The Jerusalem Post, Feb. 13, 2003). Clearly, beyond the displeasure expressed on both sides of the Atlantic and the growing tensions, as political gaps are increasing - the intelligence cooperation still seem to be continuing.

Another wave of demonstrations "protesting" against the war in Iraq (and advocating for peace

on the part of the U.S. but not on the part of the real source of danger) is "industriously" organized across the world by communists, socialists, and Muslims, NGOs, and others who adamantly refuse to recognize the threats posed by Saddam and the terrorists and that this threat is increasing the longer any action is delayed. In fact, it appears they are doing everything they can to undermine any potential improvement in the lot of suffering people and for the likelihood of eliminating a menacing dictator. It is therefore fascinating to evidence a small tempest in this sewage pot. A "Rabbi" who is strongly anti-Israel but not enough to want its liquidation has been snubbed by the organizers of an anti-war rally ("Politics of meaning' guru confronts reality - and is Left a pariah," Sam Schulman, Jewish World Review, Feb. 12, 2003; see also: "Odds and ends," Bret Stephens, The Jerusalem Post, Feb. 13, 2003).

In a strange-media-bedfellows event, the same Rabbi then complains in an article - in no less a conservative paper than the Wall Street Journal - that he was snubbed because the anti-war crowd is antisemitic ("The Anti-War Antisemites: Peace protest organizers tolerate no Dissent," Michael Lerner, February 12, 2003). Of course, it bothers him that they are antisemitic only when they ban him but it does not bother him that they are antisemitic when he is not at the center of attention. They have not changed a bit and continue to spew their antisemitic venom that will not stop until Israel and the Jews are gone. To the uninitiated reader he may seem to make sense because most are not aware of his writings and statements (except perhaps those who subscribe to his pretentious magazine and are signature- happy-and-ready to thoughtlessly sign any protest). What is so despicable about his article and conduct is his groveling to the antisemites to still be allowed to be part of them. This must be truly a low moment in the history of Jewish pride and principle. At least he has done some service: He exposed the anti-war movement for what it is and exposed himself for what he is not.

The demonstrators, the left, the Europeans, would have probably been elated had the American president hired a speech writer who would have written for him a speech that would have included the following concluding lines ("What the world would like the President to say," Dennis Prager, Townhall.com, February 4, 2003): "...given my new belief that America's task in the world is not to lead but to be loved, I have decided to step down from the presidency as soon as Congress and the states pass a constitutional amendment allowing Al Gore to be president. He, my predecessor President Clinton, and the whole Democratic Party have long believed that America's purpose is to be loved. They should be governing. My fellow world citizens, peace and love."

In a sense, that speech writer has been active on the pages of the New York Times. Thomas Friedman unwittingly (or purposefully?) plays out Prager's satire ("[Present at . . . What?](#)" Thomas L. Friedman, The New York Times, February 12, 2003): "The Bush talk that we can fight this war with just a "coalition of the willing" meaning Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia is dangerous nonsense. There is only one coalition that matters to the average American and average world citizen. It is one approved by the U.N. and NATO. We may not be able to garner it, but we need to be doing everything we can everything to try before we go to war. Why? Because there is no war we can't win by ourselves, but there is no nation we can rebuild by ourselves especially Iraq."

Friedman does not get anything right here. The "coalition of the willing" includes some 18 countries and indirectly more than 30, not three. But Friedman not only does not know how to count. He also does not understand basic civics. There is no such entity as a "world citizen." I am yet to see such a passport. I consider myself a world citizen in the abstract sense but I pay taxes and hold a passport of a country not of an abstract non-entity. Lastly, Friedman is dangerously superficial in understanding political dynamics. Of course the U.S. can win the war alone but that is not the issue because it is not alone. But his assumption that the U.S. will have to rebuild Iraq on its own is absolutely unfounded. First it does not mean that Iraq will be destroyed (Friedman must have been thinking 1945 Germany); nation building could be easily given to the U.N. bodies. It might surprise everyone and truly mess up Iraq even more than it was before. Just look at the Palestinian areas under U.N. care. But more seriously, any major effort at "rebuilding" and regime change will very likely get the support and cooperation of most nations (by the way, the Friedman-Carter school had some support this week in the Atlanta paper. After scathing letters were published criticizing Carter last week, a few letters were published supporting him and chastising his critics but unable to wish away the clear impression that the critics outnumbered the defenders - see "Saturday Talk," The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, February 15, 2003).

How far more complex the world situation that the focus-on-Iraq, can be seen when examining potential impacts of a "beyond Iraq" scenario. The noted Johns Hopkins scholar Fouad Ajami analyzes the circumstances in Iraq painting an optimistic scenario of changes in Iran after a U.S.-led success in Iraq. He sees this happening mostly because Iraq needs the change forced from the outside while he believes that the internal processes in Iran might bring about a desired change in Iran without using (external) force. He points to the previous Gulf War and the war in Afghanistan combined with an anticipated success in Iraq as evidence of what the Iranians will have to face up to - which will in turn, speed up the internal changes - a point often made in the past by Michael Ladeen ("Iran Expects: Will Iraq's liberation help free its neighbor too?" Fouad Ajami, The Wall Street Journal, February 13, 2003).

Some problems seem to have surfaced even within the administration in terms of how to handle perceived threats on the home front. One report identifies a split among conservatives as to how to deal with radical Islamists ("US conservatives split on support for radical Islamists," Caroline Glick, The Jerusalem Post, Feb. 11, 2003). This tension focuses on outreach attempts by the administration to some Muslim organizations and individuals who have been clearly associated with and linked to radical extremism. Whether innocent or cunning, there is a western tradition of attempting to reach out to adversaries. However, as Prager indicated in his satire, the U.S. is not in the "love me more" business and the likelihood that these groups will like America more or act in the service of the country is not high - to put it mildly. This is an important issue to watch because the supporters of such an outreach might be the ones making the cardinal mistake of supporting the Palestinians in their violent attempts to realize their bullying insatiable aspirations.

The Palestinians use every means possible to further their "cause." They have even successfully penetrated the YMCA/YWCA through the "YWCA of Palestine" and the "East Jerusalem YMCA" and have managed to politicize an organization that for more than a century and a half has refrained from being engaged in anything that is not defined as "common good." Clearly, the Palestinians have been successful in moving the conflict beyond religious boundaries to political

ones by radicalizing the Arab Christians amongst them by force and intimidation ("Angry Young Men: YMCA/YWCA Embark on Anti-Israel Campaign," Alan Schneider, B'nai B'rith Interactive, 10 February 2003).

The Palestinians managed to enrage one group in some unexpected corners. After a failed suicide bombing attempt that killed a donkey (who was used to carry the explosives) they received an angry fax from an animal advocacy group complaining about the cruelty to animals ("[Arafat gets ass-inine plea from PETA on intifada](#)," Kerry Dougherty, Jewish World Review, Feb. 10, 2003). Ironically, sadly, and maddeningly, the Palestinians were blamed for mistreating animals but not for the hundreds of Israelis they murdered, the thousand they have injured and the many of their own whom they knowingly and coldly sent to their death. Thus, the advocacy group managed to lower humanity to a level where animals matter and human beings do not. Of course, like the Nazis, they must be very dedicated to their defined mission and ignore any factors that detract them from obtaining it.

While it is doubtful that animal advocacy has made any difference in Palestinian hearts, some of their leaders are starting to realize belatedly that their terror-focused strategy has failed them in obtaining any political objectives. After successfully manipulating the media claiming that it was Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount that brought about the Arab violence ("he made us act violently") they now admit that their terror strategy actually brought his re-election as Israel's Prime Minister and they regret not accepting the Clinton proposal at Camp David ("[Palestinian Leaders: Our Strategy Brought Sharon Victory](#)," Special Dispatch - Palestinian Authority, February 13, 2003, No. 468).

This seems very much like a spoiled child who demands his food and then tosses it off because he does not like it and then demands it again and the poor parent is expected to accommodate his/her whims and tantrums. The more the parent acquiesces, the more such behavior patterns will be manifested by the child. The analogy is more serious than just the dinner-time family conflicts and the likelihood of raising a child that will have insatiable demands as an adult. Such children are also displaying violence towards their parent. The Palestinians fit this model and the question is at what point: Should the parent - or in this case the world community - stop being subjugated to such an abusive relationship? This becomes an even more important issue given the likelihood that with the regime changes in Iraq the State Department will try to move energetically forward with the establishment of a Palestinian state. Indeed this concern is well expressed by Cal Thomas who believes that Israel will pay the price ("After Iraq, Israel," Jewish World Review, Feb. 13, 2003):

"None of this will matter to Arabists in the State Department, who have blind faith that the cause of Middle East turmoil is Israel alone and only what Israel does determines whether there will be peace or unrest in the region. President Bush's conditions are minimums before any realistic peace might be attained. But the PA is not even meeting those minimal conditions. Based on past and present performance, it is safe to say that the intentions of the PA remain total annihilation of Israel by diplomatic hook or by terrorist crook." Assuming that the State Department is not interested in the destruction of Israel it appears that once the Iraqi crisis will be resolved what awaits the U.S. in the Palestinian arena might be even more serious because they have already been directing their aim at the U.S. with their clerics and politicians issuing threat after threat. By

now we know enough to take those threats seriously and sacrificing Israel would not diminish the threats even one bit. The biggest mistake the U.S. could make after a success in Iraq would be to follow the path with the Palestinians that are directed/prodded/staged by the Europeans. There is no difference between the threats of OBL, Saddam Hussein or the Palestinians. They all emanate from the same source and are aimed at the same targets.