

Terrorism *delenda est!* (With Thanks to Senator Cato)

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By Robbie Friedmann

When one looks at the kind of declarations coming out of the Middle East it is sometimes hard to decide whether one is watching a Shakespearean comedy or a Greek tragedy. Except in that part of the world it probably does not matter: You can laugh yourself to death in the former or cry/agonize to death in the latter. Following the Egyptian claim against "all the Jews in the world" for "stealing many tons" of Egyptian gold and utensils during the exodus from Egypt (and this is not in reference to the 1956, 1967, or 1973 exodus) the Syrians are having a hard time topping that. So now they claim all the recent devastating bombings in Iraq were the work of Israel ("[Syrian Gov't Media: Israel Bombed Baghdad's U.N. Headquarters, Jordanian Embassy, Abu Gharib Prison and Water Main](#)," MEMRI, Special Dispatch - Syria, 4 September 2003, No. 565) and its foreign minister justifies Lebanese terrorism against Israel and denies he is antisemitic despite his libelous book ("[Syrian Defense Minister: Lebanese Resistance Is Justified, My Book 'The Matzah of Zion' Is Not Antisemitic](#)," MEMRI, Special Dispatch - Syria, 4 September 2003, No. 566).

The Iranians are not left far behind. Since they know something about plotting and sending terrorists it is very easy for them to make charges that others are about to do what they routinely engage in. Now they charge that "Jews" want to assassinate the French president ("[Iranian Daily: 'Extremist Jews Plotting to Assassinate Chirac,' Mossad Agents Behind Najaf Blast](#)," MEMRI, Special Dispatch - Iran/Arab Antisemitism Documentation Project, 1 September 2003, No. 563) and they of course support Syrian claims that Israel is behind the bombings in Iraq. Of course, the Iranians have never had an eye on messing Iraq up more than it already was under Saddam Hussein (their war two decades ago notwithstanding) and they never sent their agents to kill and maim in various parts of the world. Only the Israelis say they do.

The Egyptians have a wider agenda. In addition to wanting "their" gold "back" they also have a tendency to admire their allies and supporters. So greatly they admire the U.S. (from which it receives \$2 billion a year) that they attribute to the U.S. the capability and intent that Arab terrorists could not possess and so according to them it is the Americans - not the Israelis - who are behind the Najaf bombing ("[Egyptian Government Daily Al-Ahram: The U.S. is Behind the Najaf Bombing](#)," MEMRI, Special Dispatch - Egypt/ U.S. & the Middle East, 1 September 2003, No. 562).

According to the theater of absurd that is the Middle East, Hamas is not a terrorist organization and Palestinian NGOs are of course the great hope for democracy. From statements by pundits who belong to the Tom Friedman school and the Franco-German leaders one might surmise the Palestinians serve as a proven role model for newly emerging democracies like the U.S., or Britain. Alas, it is not merely Arafat or his puppet prime minister (who blamed Israel for the "breakdown" of the Palestinian-declared "truce" and then submitted his "resignation" to Arafat who "accepted" it; see "Palestinian Prime Minister Offers to Resign," The Associated Press, *The New York Times*, 6 September 2003) but also the NGOs that refuse to stop terrorism even against

a very supporting U.S. government ("PA NGOs Defy U.S. - Refuse to Sign Anti Terror Document," Itamar Marcus, Palestinian Media Watch Bulletin, 3 September 2003).

It is therefore somewhat encouraging to see the realization that it is not just Arafat but the whole PLO that needs to be fought as the enemy and not only by Israel ("The PLO: America's Next Battle," Mike Evans, WorldNetDaily.com, 5 September 2003). After all, Abbas' "resignation" proved Arafat has been in control all along, that Israel and the U.S. were delusional when assuming they could deal with him in any meaningful way. This charade is not over yet as Arafat may appoint another "prime minister" or even be expelled by Israel.

It was also encouraging to find yet another ray of hope. An Egyptian publication offer a new interpretation of Muslim tradition suggesting that Muhammad's famous night journey was not (and could not be) to Jerusalem but to Medina (in Saudi Arabia) thus debasing a key tenet in Islam as well as relegating Jerusalem to a far less important (holy) site for Muslims than it is today ("[Egyptian Ministry of Culture Publication: The Prophet Muhammad's 'Night Journey' was Not to Jerusalem but to Medina](#)," MEMRI, Special Dispatch - Egypt, 3 September 2003, No. 564).

Logic implies that if this view is accepted it should minimize the importance of Jerusalem but there are no signs - yet - that this is indeed a revolution of sorts. Against this rare voice of originality and provocative thoughts, Egyptian official media is replete with the samples of antisemitism and anti-Americanism mentioned through this and many other newsletters. Even if this new Egyptian initiative (and it is no doubt a political initiative) holds ground for a while it has promise of yielding tangible results only many generations from now. So news for the long-term is hopeful but this weather forecast does not offer much solace to those in the eye of what is predicted to be a long-lasting storm.

If anything, the storm is only intensifying. One of the key elements in personal or national antisemitism is the focus on a target to hate. It enables one to demonize, vilify, and channel hostile sentiments by rationalizing that individuals (like Richard Pearl, Paul Wolfowitz, Ariel Sharon) a people ("The Jews"), or a nation (Israel) are inherently "bad." Regrettably a number of pundits make it a habit to bash Israel by promoting various - largely unfounded - charges against Israel, often times turning victim into offender and perpetrator into an innocent lamb ("Big, Bad Israel?" Tom Ambrose, WorldNetDaily.com, 2 September 2003).

Jonathan Gurwitz of Jewish World Review identifies terrorism as a process that when ignored at its onset grows stronger like cancer: "...deformity begins with the first excuse for hijacking airplanes, blowing up buses, murdering diplomats and Olympic athletes. The only chance to stop it is at the first moral justification for the intentional murder of civilians and the religious sanction to kill those sent to free a long-suffering people. It is a disease that starts by praising the destruction of "Zionists" or applauding a death sentence pronounced on a single author for blasphemy, but mutates and grows to encompass ever-growing groups Americans, Europeans, Christians, Westerners and their friends, secularists and insufficiently fundamentalist Muslims. It begins with the killing of one group Americans in the World Trade Center, American soldiers in Iraq but metastasizes to afflict the entire international body."

Part of the problem of handling terrorism lies in terminology. The language Laundromat where "harsh" terms of reference are "cleansed" into more "neutral/objective" terms causes serious damage to the fight against terrorism if but for one reason: it makes it difficult to know who the enemy is ("[A Terrorist by Any Other Name ...](#)", Sharon Kehnemui, Fox News, 1 September 2003). The Israelis know very well who is murdering them and under whose instructions. But for Western public opinion it is not easy to distinguish such actions by reading about "militants" without providing their affiliation. This is well illustrated when countries are still willing to "negotiate" with Arafat - despite his arch-terrorist stature - because the Palestinians are not seen as perpetrating terrorism but only "extremists."

It becomes even more difficult when distinctions between the "military wing" and "political wing" are being made as if one is not tied to the other. So while terrorist organizations (even if the French and Germans will not recognize them as such) certainly are engaged in charity work, such as providing social services and health care, they also send their operatives to murder Israelis and Americans. No amount of attaching a "human face" to the terrorists will make them have a genuine one, but images make a difference. And then there are the "support" organizations that under the guise of "peace activism" and "solidarity" are furthering the agenda of the extremists.

Indeed, those who offer moral support ("peace," "solidarity") to such terror groups may be better defined as really espousing "solidarity with Palestinians equals peace without Israel" ("[Enemy With A Human Face](#)," Alyssa A. Lappen, FrontPageMagazine.com, 2 September 2003): "Whether an official ISM partner or not, radical Islam stands to gain substantially. Disguised as peace activism, ISM is radical all the same. Its ideas often parallel those of radical Islam and are quickly seeping into the North American mainstream. As ISM moves from campuses to American churches, it concomitantly lowers the bar to principles outlined in the [Hamás Charter](#) *jihād*, death to Jews, delegitimization and destruction of Israel. Evidently, churchgoers do not realize Hamás also seeks global Islamic supremacy. Extremist young "activists" groom for broad political and social participation and harvest direct and indirect state and federal grants via public facilities, taxpayer funding and (highly questionable) charitable donations. Yet Americans are doing precious little to compete ideologically. Time is wasting."

In a balancing act to the attacks on Israel, increasingly support for Israel is coming from conservative corners ("Who Supports Israel?"). As Daniel Pipes suggests, "Twenty years ago, liberal or conservative outlooks had little bearing on one's views of Israel or other Middle East issues. During the Cold War, Middle Eastern problems stood largely outside the great debate of that era - policy toward the Soviet Union - so views of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Iraq, militant Islam and other topics were formed in isolation from larger principles. Today all that has changed. The Middle East has replaced the Soviet Union as the touchstone of politics and ideology. With increasing clarity, conservatives stand on one side of its issues and liberals on the other."

Nowhere is it more evident than in the new power play that Europeans are playing under the "leadership" of France and Germany. They refused to support the U.S. war efforts in Iraq yet now demand a U.N. (namely, Franco-German) role there. And the same countries have refused to recognize Hamás as a terrorist organization despite ample evidence to that effect ("Europe

Plays Catch with Hamas," Rachel Ehrenfeld, *The New York Sun*, 5 September 2003). The good news is that the Italians are leading the call (to the European foreign ministers) to define Hamas as a terrorist organization and the British foreign minister Jack Straw has also just advised his peers to do the same. So by no means is the European voice unanimously supportive of the Franco-German position.

Within a short period of 30 years what started as terrorism against Israel (which experienced it well before and after its establishment in 1948) has emerged into an international terrorism menace. What has been "limited" to hate and demonstrations has been channeled into blowing up civilians in their homes, buses, markets and streets. And then came the toppling of the World Trade Center. Now this terrorism has moved far beyond tactics and became an arm (pun intended) of states who are using terror as a strategy under the increasing cloud (pun also intended) of a real nuclear threat as was the case with Iraq and is the case with Iran ("Where are our friends?" Yossi Olmert, *The Jerusalem Post*, 31 August 2003): "THE IRAN of the Ayatollahs means business. Its leaders want to destroy Israel, and say so without any qualms. But many in Israel and in the West cannot bring themselves to grasp the depth of Iran's hatred. Legions of pundits and politicians would have us believe that the Iranians do not mean what they say."

With nuclear threats looming from North Korea and Iran (and the possibility of Pakistan joining the party) it is no surprise some experts are defining the challenges to the West as nothing less than existential ("Tough Choice for Civilization," Yehezkel Dror, *The Jerusalem Post*, 31 August 2003): "It is time to face the fact that the West is not doing enough to cope with the existential challenges posed by mass-murdering terrorism. What is needed is a grand strategy, one that takes into account historic processes as well as the magnitude of the danger... THE CHALLENGE posed by barbarians armed with weapons of mass killing is fundamentally not criminal or military but social, cultural and civilizational. The ability of fewer and fewer to kill more and more constitutes a rupture in history, one that has produced a radically new geostrategic reality. Plainly, the barbarians' willingness to kill and be killed provides them with an initial advantage."

There is growing realization and understanding that the war in Iraq has entered an attrition phase and it appears that media pundits are losing their patience. This sends an image to the enemy that the U.S. cannot persevere. To paraphrase the Roman Senator Cato - who at every opportunity found a way to mention his slogan that Carthage must be destroyed - *Carthago delenda est!* - the West needs to realize that terrorism must be destroyed, uprooted and vanquished. Terrorism *delenda est!* Or we will be. No costs should be spared in this effort.

Carthage was perceived as a threat to the Roman Empire and its political and mercantile interests. The U.S. and Israel are not empires and as Dror has indicated, they actually phase an existential threat - not merely a threat to supremacy faced by the Romans. That is Arafatism and bin Ladenism need to be fought and conquered, not tolerated or negotiated with.