

## Saturday (lunch massacre) at Maxim's

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By Robbie Friedmann

In Paris at Maxim's you can get fine French gastronomy products including champagne, wines, sweets, foie gras, caviar, frozen and fresh foods and cigars. The ambience is classy and elegant and extremely expensive (you can also find this restaurant in New York, Mexico, Monte-Carlo and China). In Haifa, Israel, at Maxim's (not part of the French chain) you can get fine Middle Eastern products including humus, tehina, salads, grilled lamb, beef, turkey, fries, excellent beer and great desserts. The ambience is popular, folksy and very affordable and there is a great view of the Mediterranean which is only feet away. The patrons of the one in Haifa met their atrocious fate brought about by a lunatic female bomber who wanted to have a choice of her future husband from among those who committed suicide before her and avenge the deaths her terrorist relatives have met. In the process she took the lives of at least 20 people and injured more than 50 ("Suicide Bombing at Haifa Restaurant," JPost.com Staff, 4 October 2003).

In this latest massacre that Palestinians perpetrated against Israelis they have annihilated three entire families and murdered several Arabs. Israel has thus far reacted by bombing a house in the Gaza strip where Yasser Arafat stays when he visits (not since he was placed under virtual house arrest in Ramallah) and bombed a terrorist training camp in Syria which the Arabs were quick to denounce because it was a "refugee camp." Not surprisingly the Egyptians quickly denounced the attack - "against their sister country" - and the visiting German Chancellor there added his condemnation of the attack as "unacceptable." Yes, yesterday many European foreign ministers have issued the perfunctory "disgust" about the terrorist attack at Maxim's but condemning Israel today renders their disgust less than genuine.

The terror attack at Maxim's continues to draw attention to the future of Arafat. Will he be killed, expelled, isolated (further), put in jail or tried as a war/common criminal? It is sensible to assume that something will (or better say should) be done about Arafat. However, because of his symbolic stature in the Arab world this kind of public debate detracts attention from the fact that with (some) end to Arafat there will not necessarily be an end to terrorism. Just observe the zeal with which Arab foreign ministers defended Palestinian terrorism at the 58th annual U.N. General Assembly ("Arab FMs at U.N. Defend Palestinian Terrorists," Melissa Radler, *The Jerusalem Post*, 30 September 2003).

The importance of Arafat as a perpetrator, instigator and fomentor of terrorism is no longer the "best hidden secret" of the Palestinians. This is well illustrated by his personal glorification of former Egyptian president Nasser ("[Arafat On the 33rd Anniversary of the Death of Egyptian President Abd Al-Nasser: 'The Warrior-President... is With Us in Self-Sacrifice in Battle'](#)" MEMRI, Special Dispatch Series - 2 October 2003, No. 581) or by his sponsorship of a soccer tournament where the competing teams have adopted names of known terrorists to glorify and immortalize them and thus sanctify suicide bombings ("Arafat and 13 PA Leaders Sponsor Soccer Tournament Honoring Terrorists," Itamar Marcus, *Palestinian Media Watch Bulletin*, 30 September 2003).

Yet the rhetoric and actions of the Palestinian authority illustrate that after Arafat's disappearance we can expect more of the same. Examine how instead of issuing rhetoric indicative of yearning for genuine peace, the PA is gloatingly and obsessively celebrating the entry into the fourth year of violence ("The Palestinian Authority Celebrates the Start of the Fourth Year of War," Itamar Marcus, Palestinian Media Watch Bulletin, 2 October 2003).

One of the rare voices from Arab/Muslims quarters was heard again when an official Egyptian columnist declared - **again** - that Jerusalem was never central to Islam ("[Egyptian Ministry of Culture Publication: The Al-Aqsa Mosque and Dome of the Rock were Built to Divert the Pilgrimage from Mecca; Jerusalem was Not the Center of Worship for the Followers of the Prophet Muhammad](#)," MEMRI, Special Dispatch - Egypt, 3 October 2003, No. 583). The importance in this declaration lies in the lessening of the value Jerusalem is supposed to hold for Islam and hence debasing claims that Arabs and Muslims are now making regarding the centrality of Jerusalem to them.

At the same time other official Egyptian sources - the clergy - continue to issue the traditional inflammatory rhetoric justifying, legitimizing, sanctifying and glorifying jihad and suicide bombings as well as calling on Muslims in the U.S. armed services not to fight their Muslim brothers ("[The New Egyptian Mufti - Dr. Sheikh 'Ali Gum'a: Opinions About Jihad, Supporting Suicide Bombings, and Forbidding Muslims in the U.S. Military From Fighting Other Muslims](#)," MEMRI, Special Dispatch - Egypt/Jihad and Terrorism Studies, 1 October 2003, No. 580).

Perhaps the Egyptians are preparing an exit strategy in case the concept of international jihad fails but the fact remains that Arab/Muslim masses are far more susceptible to hateful preaching than to philosophical and historical arguments about the significance of Jerusalem. Thus far the clerics are winning. In Pakistan, schools indoctrinate students for world jihad ("[The 'University of Holy War](#)," Haroon Rashid, BBC News, 2 October 2003). In India, a key Muslim leader (of the very large Muslim minority there) supports the 9-11 atrocity, Osama bin Laden and opposes the U.S. ("Imam Bukhari Backs 9/11 Attacks," S. Balakrishnan, *Times of India*, 4 October 2003).

The Saudis continue to spread their fundamentalist Wahhabi Islamism in the U.S. - and elsewhere - ("Spreading Saudi Fundamentalism in U.S.: Network of Wahhabi Mosques, Schools, Web Sites Probed by FBI," Susan Schmidt, *Washington Post*, 2 October 2003) with some of its agents literally penetrating well into the armed forces ("Terrorism: Islamic Clerics at Guantanamo," Mark Hosenball, Michael Isikoff and Andrew Murr, *Newsweek*, 6 October 2003) while some in the U.S. administration seem to continue to be politically correct about it, taking their time recognizing the seriousness of the situation ("[Pentagon Jihadis](#)," Daniel Pipes, *Jewish World Review*, 29 September 2003).

In the meantime the operatives who seek to establish a new Muslim caliphate are marching on with their terror strategy but perhaps with one difference: they seem to have adopted a phased-approach to conquering the U.S. and the West rather than dueling directly with the U.S. as al-Qaida seemed to be doing a couple of years ago ("Al-Qaida's New Strategy," Amir Taheri, *The Jerusalem Post*, 2 October 2003). But there is a word of caution to those thinking the U.S. is now safe: "Al-Zawahiri's new strategy does not mean there will be no terror attacks inside the U.S. or

in Western Europe. The global Islamist movement consists of numerous groups with independent sources of finance and strategies. They were never totally controlled by al-Qaida and are less so today if only because al-Zawahiri and his gang are forced to spend the bulk of their energies avoiding capture."

While the U.S. is not shy of expressing displeasure of any criticism of its foreign policy - particularly with respect to its fight against terrorism - it repeatedly chastises Israel for taking offensive measures against terrorism (such as incursion into Palestinian towns to pursue terrorists) or defensive measures (such as building a protective fence). The latest salvo of the State Department is the threat it will deduct the cost of the fence from the loan guarantees to Israel ("[U.S. Eyes Israeli Aid Penalties](#)," Nicholas Kravov, *The Washington Times*, 1 October 2003).

While it may be only one limited move in a complex political chess game that signals to the Arabs U.S. displeasure with Israel but not necessarily disapproval of building the fence itself (which is after all a step Israel can/should make as a sovereign nation) the message sent to Israel and to others who fight terrorism (such as India) is that the U.S. is in the first class of fighting terrorism but Israel and others are flying coach. Eventually this would hurt the U.S. itself in that the synergy of fighting terrorism will not develop to its full potential given brakes the U.S. applies on its most natural allies.

It is more than disturbing that some high level U.S. officials chose the meeting of Arab representatives - U.S.-Arab Economic Forum in Detroit - to criticize Israel on the settlements to curry commercial favors with them ("Senior U.S. Diplomats Press Israel on Settlements," Zvi Zrahiya, *Ha'aretz*, 30 September 2003). It is rather telling that "Powell's 35-minute speech was interrupted by applause just twice, in a city with one of the largest Arab and Islamic populations outside the Middle East. One was when Powell reinforced the call for an end to Israeli settlement activity and the other when he urged an end to the opening of 'unauthorized outposts' by Israel." Given that Powell spoke against terrorism and that was not followed by even polite applause is also very telling and disturbing.

This point is well illustrated by the pundit-on-paid-duty at *The New York Times* who is willing to call France [Our Enemy](#) (for "offenses" far less serious than what the Palestinians do daily to Israel - after all the French export to the U.S. Evian and Perrier and do not send suicide bombers over here) but expects Israel to give up territory and dismantle settlements because obviously in his mind that is what is causing terrorism ("[Passions and Interests](#)," Thomas L. Friedman, *The New York Times*, 2 October 2003). The Atlanta paper went as far as re-titling his column to "Next Move Toward Middle East Peace is Up to Israelis" but published one letter to the editor that called the columnists to task for suggesting that "Arafat poses no strategic threat to Israel" ("Evidence is clear; Arafat a threat"). Perhaps Friedman was blinded by drinking too much Evian and Perrier.

And his editors may have been drinking from the same sources given their position on the settlements - unless Friedman wrote it himself ("[The Cost of Israeli Settlements](#)," Editorial, *The New York Times*, 3 October 2003). Secretary of State Powell has at least paid lip service to the need to curb terror against Israel but *The New York Times* wants Israel to unilaterally take steps

"towards peace" and apparently none of these steps include defensive measures or a call on the perpetrators of terror to stop it. Have they rehired their ill-reputed scandalous writers or do they still have a few more skeletons hiding under their desks? Or is the *Times* preparing to write a lengthy obituary column about Israel?

A far less expected source of support for the fence came out of England with a positive editorial ("Ring-fencing Security: A Barrier Causing Division Within Israel," *The Times*, 2 October 2003) that missed only on one point: the Palestinians do not have a country but the editorial referred to them as if they do ("The new Prime Minister must take the initiative against terrorism if he is not to see his country irrevocably split").

And back at *The New York Times* some voices of reason still abound. Another commentator actually describes the circumstances of the fence in far more practical and realistic terms than the lofty false ideologies that guide Friedman and his editorial colleagues ("[The Arafat Barrier](#)," William Safire, *The New York Times*, 1 October 2003): "Israelis are bracing for another attack by Arafat's commanding faction. In its aftermath, Israel's decision to extend the fence to defensible positions will be made." Indeed that wave of attacks was seen at Maxim and Israel has some 30 "hot alerts" of (still) live suicide bombers ticking out there.

Israel is not only terrorized by homicidal maniacs. The media in Europe and Canada is fiercely biased against Israel with pro-Israel stances being rare exceptions ("Media Bias and the Middle East," Leonard Asper, *National Post*, 1 October 2003). In the U.S. a longstanding anti-Israel bias is exposed again by a media watchdog group ("On the Oslo Anniversary, NPR as Usual," Andrea Levin, *The Jerusalem Post*, 1 October 2003): "National Public Radio cannot seem to help itself - whatever the Middle East subject, whatever the day, anti-Israel bias percolates. The week marking Oslo's 10th anniversary was typical."

There were no reviews of the failed peace effort hailed so enthusiastically for years by the network, no look at Yasser Arafat's central role in the violence that shadows the lives of millions of Israelis and Palestinians. And this media is often anti-American as well to the extent that one talented writer names them "Our Media Jihadis" (Bret Stephens, *The Jerusalem Post*, 4 October 2003).

Approximately 30 Israelis went to Arafat's headquarters in Ramallah to offer themselves as human shields to protect him from any potential harm ("Israeli 'Human Shields' Arrive in Ramallah to Guard Arafat," JPost.com Staff, 5 October 2003). Perhaps when we see 30 Palestinians volunteering to serve as human shields in Israel we will have a sense that the culture of death has been added some semblance of civilization.

While not as blatant as the useful idiots who threaten to serve as human shields, the "pilot's letter" in Israel last week has certainly thrown Israel into further turbulence precisely because it came from unexpected quarters. Some have suggested that the real debate is whether this act/letter makes Israel stronger or weaker. But most of the commentary focused around the letter itself. A scathing editorial ("Hijackers in the Cockpit," *The Jerusalem Post*, 29 September 2003) referred to the pilots as aristocrats who abuse democracy by mixing politics together with military operations. Others point out that the long tradition of introspection ought to place a hold

on self-bashing ("The Moral Paradox," Barbara Sofer, *The Jerusalem Post*, 1 October 2003): "The line between self-criticism and Israel-bashing is a narrow one, and in times of national danger we have to be scrupulous in not erring on the bashing side and abetting the enemy. Indeed, there are dangers in being Isaiah wannabes."

A legal opinion clearly points out why the pilots are wrong (not in their opinion but in the format they selected to express it). Accepting that their motives and intentions may be innocent (and not all accept that assumption) the end result was mixing political opinions with military operations ("[A Clearly Political Refusal to Serve](#)," Ze'ev Segal, *Ha'aretz*, 30 September 2003): "The political views of the signatories are clearly evident in the letter, notwithstanding the fact that all IAF personnel fully understand these grounds are irrelevant to the execution of their missions. The signatories' sweeping objections to any attack on civil population centers, even though this is certainly not being done to harm civilians but is directed at military targets that happen to be situated in population centers, constitutes the difference between their refusal to fly missions and what would be legitimate objections to carrying out a blatantly unlawful order."

Now the public in Israel is starting to comment on air force operations ("not enough," "too easy") and it is hard to convince anyone that much good is coming out of public discussion of air force operations. The opposite is the case. With the 30th anniversary of the Yom Kippur War this October another myth has penetrated Israeli public discussion. Namely, that just as the Egyptians "had to have a victory" in order to arrive at peace with Israel (a proposition now debunked by military analysts) the Palestinians also need a victory in order to agree to peace with Israel ("Losing for Peace," Saul Singer, *The Jerusalem Post*, 2 October 2003). This ridiculous conception suggests that Israel has to give this victory to the Palestinians in order to make peace with them. No one dreams of awarding an Olympic competitor a gold medal for losing to another competitor on purpose. Achievement is rewarded; chivalry may only garner sympathy for sportsmanship. Yet Israel is clearly expected to win for sportsmanship and lose the medal (of existence).

One ray of hope in the terrible predicament in which Israel finds itself was offered this past week from an "unusual quarter." India, which for years has distanced itself from Israel by being part of the "non-aligned block" is starting to emerge from it by pursuing its own national interests in an ever-changing world. Increasingly it is seeing the value of cooperating with Israel for two main reasons. First, both are victims of Arab/Muslim terrorism and second, India sees the direct value Israeli technology brings to the table in terms of strategic advantage ("The Long Shadow of Israel," Vinay Shankar, *The Asianage*, 2 October 2003).

The wasted efforts on diplomatic-speak such as the Roadmap (for "peace"), fence ("objection to building it"), settlements ("too costly") or even the term "peace" ("Israel has to pay for it but not the Palestinians") are only making the fight against terrorism more difficult not only for Israel but eventually for the U.S. as well. Pandering to hostile Arabs in the Detroit economic summit may have resulted in a few contracts/investments but has also demonstrated that the U.S. is willing to compromise on its principles of fighting terrorism. This is a far larger problem than catching Saddam Hussein, bin Laden and Arafat combined and it proves that even if they will be caught terrorism will be far from defeated. Only an unconditional, unwavering and comprehensive pursuit of terrorism on all fronts and with all allies will be successful.