

# Have You Driven a Ford Lately?

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By Robbie Friedmann

A bomb shell exploded in the political arena in Israel last weekend. News broke that a group of Israelis and Palestinians reached an agreement to be "officially" signed in Geneva on 4 November 2003 (Rabin's assassination day). The bomb shell was in the form of a reported "breakthrough" whereby Palestinians have "given up" their claim for the "right of return," a known euphemism for the destruction of Israel ("New Peace Draft Includes End to Palestinian Right of Return," *Ha'aretz* Service and Agencies, 12 October 2003).

The ink has not yet dried on newspaper reports and a Palestinian participant (a former P.A. minister) denied "the right" was given up and initial tones of severe criticism from Israeli officials were heard ("[Justice Minister Lapid Calls Geneva Accord 'Failed Agreement,'](#)" Mazal Mualem, *Ha'aretz*, 13 October 2003). Later in the week and in weekend interviews the Israeli architect of the "Geneva understanding" was discussing a ceiling of 40,000 returning Palestinians and a Palestinian participant was discussing 150,000. The Israeli defended his Palestinian colleague by stating that he was not lying, it was just "his interpretation" of the understanding.

Interestingly enough participating Israelis hailed the agreement (reached over two and a half years of negotiations) as highly democratic and as one that augers well for the future of Israel as a democracy. Yet the same group of individuals has carried out these discussions with the enemy as if the enemy was not carrying out atrocities against Israelis during all this time. Moreover, the Israelis consisted of fringe politicians who were rejected by their own parties and who failed miserably in national elections. These are the same politicians who brought upon Israel the Oslo Accords which resulted in a hollow declaration of peace by Yasser Arafat followed by a violent strategy to destroy Israel by terrorism.

This "Geneva understanding" has drawn tremendous media attention and was kept in the headlines for a full week. It also drew the wrath not only of the Israeli Right but of others as well, including former Prime Minister Ehud Barak who denounced the plan as irresponsible. Official Israeli and Palestinian sources immediately denounced the plan ("Israeli, PA Ministers Slam 'Geneva Initiative,'" Tovah Lazaroff, Gil Hoffman and Khaled Abu Toameh, *The Jerusalem Post*, 14 October 2003).

An influential editorial cited the Logan Act of 1799 to characterize the "Geneva Initiative" (sponsored by the Swiss Government) as undermining Israeli security due to contact of citizens with agents of or with a foreign government ("Foreign Policy Freelancers," Editorial, *The Jerusalem Post*, 13 October 2003) and concluded that if the initiating individuals "want to run the affairs of state, first they must win an election."

Others pointed to this new initiative as even worse than Oslo ("Crossing the Red Lines," Isi Leibler, *israelinsider*, 16 October 2003): "The (Oslo) Accords were based on interim steps designed to test the Palestinian commitment to peace before fulfillment. In contrast, the Geneva

Initiative would have us jump to the end result at a time when in lieu of making reciprocal concessions, the Palestinians are openly demonstrating their contempt of any process short of a termination of our Jewish sovereignty."

As the week progressed Israeli officials started to tone down their criticism of the initiative for at least one reason; namely, it had attracted too much public attention and thus has acquired disproportional saliency and unwarranted importance. Both Israeli and U.S. government officials have clung to the Roadmap as the way to proceed and dismissed the initiative as a non-starter. Experts continued to criticize the program as illegal and anti-democratic ("[Perle Rips New Plan for Peace](#)," Paul Martin, *The Washington Times*, 15 October 2003). Here is yet another twist: the U.S. government extended official invitations to several of the Palestinian participants to travel to the U.S. with Israeli participants likely to follow ("'Geneva Accord' Palestinians Called to U.S. for Talks," Khaled Abu Toameh, *The Jerusalem Post*, 19 October 2003). Confused? Then expect even more confusion to follow.

One might suggest this initiative reflects Israel's genuine yearning for peace even when under siege. But that is a given reaffirmed with every poll. It is contrasted with polls of Palestinians who express in similar proportion the exact opposite: their support of terrorism and their desire to take all of Israel. That is where the problem lies. The Palestinians have masterfully harnessed Israeli yearning for peace into a shrewd political game of forging "agreements" they readily sign but have a proven knack. Thus they have managed to light a fierce public debate in Israel hoping to achieve a split in the public spirit that will end up weakening the existing government and tear Israeli society apart. These negotiations are wrong for Israel for two reasons: first, negotiations imply Israel is incapable of coping with the violence against it. This sends out a message of weakness to be further exploited by the Palestinians and their Arab supporters. Second, these negotiations ignore (at best) and even reward (at worst) terrorism perpetrated against Israel.

Often one hears the argument that Israel is the strongest military power in the Middle East and a world power in high-tech. Yet repeatedly Israel is vulnerable to violent attacks by surrounding countries (and Palestinian terrorists) and by those who 55 years after its establishment still question its legitimacy right to exist. The latest verbal attack, under the guise of what passes for scholarship, is a New York University professor who supports a one state ("bi-ethnic") solution which curiously enough was the PLO's mantra in the 1960s and 70s as a euphuism to swallow and then destroy Israel ("'Jewish State' Has Become an Anachronism," Tony Judt, *Los Angeles Times*, 10 October 2003).

A rejoinder was offered on the same pages ("Only the Naive or the Malicious Would Urge a Binational Israel," Yossi Klein Halevi, *Los Angeles Times*, 10 October 2003) raising the same points and asking: "...why Jewish nationhood, alone among all forms of nationhood, is so problematic and distasteful. Is Israeli democracy, however flawed, a greater moral blight to humanity than the more perfect autocracies that surround it? Not that a binational state is not a lovely dream. But if we are already dreaming, then let's imagine a world without states. I would be happy to live in such a world. And that is about as realistic a hope as imagining that Arafat will create a binational democratic state in Palestine."

A more in-depth analysis repudiated the professor's background as well as his attack on Zionism and on "Israel as being an anachronism" (David Frum's Diary, 14 October: the Alternative). Frum argues that while Judd, of European origin and influence, declares himself as being against antisemitism, his views are nonetheless genocidal: "His intentions are high, his conscience is clear, he hates nobody. His solution, however, is one that would expose millions of Jews - and not just those living in the Middle East - to persecution, expropriation, political oppression, exile and murder. We cannot describe this outlook as antisemitism. We need some new term. Here is my nomination: "genocidal liberalism."

Indeed, this genocidal liberalism flourishes against a backdrop of an increased outright hatred of Jews and explicit rhetoric as well as action against Jews ("[The New Antisemitism: WND Probe Reveals Worldwide Explosion of Jew-hatred](#)," *Whistleblower Magazine*, WorldNetDaily.com, 14 October 2003) to the extent that "this is the scariest time for Jews since the Holocaust." Genocidal liberalism simply masks these sentiments and transfigures them from being anti-Jewish to being anti-Israel. Israel is constantly a target for those who want something "better" or "different" even when evidence for such models in the Middle East is hard to come by. One has yet to see an effort to suggest Japan is an anachronism or France for that matter.

This not so subtle move from attacking the individual Jew to attacking the country he and she built is abundantly found in a new series of reports on what the Ford Foundation is funding. With the notorious antisemitic history of Henry Ford (see Neil Baldwin's *Henry Ford and the Jews*) one should not be that surprised the Ford Foundation appears to walk in his footsteps albeit more stealthily this time.

It turns out that it funded anti-Israel activists in South Africa who turned the U.N. Conference on Racism to a stage for vitriolic attacks against Israel ("Anti-Israel Activists at Durban Were Funded by Ford Foundation," Edwin Black, JTA, 16 October 2003). This foundation disburses about \$500 million a year and while it is not easy to completely identify the total amount of funding for anti-Israel activities, it is clear that millions of dollars are allocated for anti-Israel activities in the name of promoting Palestinian "human rights" ("How Aware is Ford Foundation of Way its Funds are Being Used?" Edwin Black, JTA, 16 October 2003).

Problem is, the allocation of funds, the activities done with those funds and reports about those activities lack transparency, and monies are often funneled into NGOs that support terrorism ("Transparency a Concern as Millions Go to Mideast," Edwin Black, JTA, 16 October 2003). Control of funding is rather lax, permitting the kind of activities that stand in contradistinction to the declared objectives of the Ford Foundation and test compliance with U.S. government regulations against supporting terrorism ("Audit of Palestinian Group Suggests Lax Funding Controls," Edwin Black, JTA, 16 October 2003). After all, it is hard to believe Ford would want to support boycotts against American products or condone boycotts of Israeli products. It is hard to believe Ford would support creation of an incitement website, the publishing of hateful reports or providing links to groups the State Department lists as terrorist organizations. Yet this is exactly what the Ford Foundation has been funding.

The onslaught of anti-Israel sentiments is also apparent in mainstream American media. For example: National Public Radio ("NPR: Anti-Israel All the Time," Andrea Levin, *The New York*

*Post*, 10 October 2003), or the Atlanta paper which has published, in less than a fortnight, three blatantly anti-Israel articles, an editorial and four anti-Israel articles disguised as supporting "justice and peace" (the Palestinian version) and only one letter in support of Israel. The latest such article is based on an interview with a professor who spent some time in Egypt and fell in love with the Arab culture. That is commendable. What is not is the one-sided portrayal by the professor of problems in the area viewed only from the perspective of the Arabs ("Stereotypes Dim Our View of Mideast," Martha Ezzard, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 14 October 2003).

The professor won the prestigious "genius" MacArthur Fellowship but what is so brilliant about saying in a society that is obsessed with and glorifies death, "I have a nine-year-old. If I were a Palestinian mother, I would be out of my mind with fear?" Had she stated that being a mother in the Middle East is wrought with fear it would have been more sensible. The professor has no clue. What should an Israeli mother say to this statement, that she and her fears are of no consequence that she and her child are not under fear, threat and danger? Or do Jews not count since the paper defined the article (via the published letters) as "balanced"? Perhaps the paper defines as "balanced" anything pro-Palestinian.

The height of antisemitic rhetoric was evident this past week on the world stage when the Malaysian prime minister addressed the opening session of the Organization of the Islamic Conference ("[Arabs Should Emulate Jews, Says Mahathir](#)," *The Age*, 16 October 2003) lamenting that "Jews rule the world, getting others to fight and die for them, but will not be able to defeat the world's 1.3 billion Muslims." His foreign minister tried to quickly control the damage of this known loose cannon ("Malaysia 'Sorry' for Flap over Jews," Patrick McDowell, Associated Press, 17 October 2003) but the prime minister stuck to his statement further, complaining that when "Muslims are criticized it is acceptable but when Jews are criticized it is called antisemitism..." Then the foreign minister promptly lined up with his prime minister defending his remarks ("Malaysia Says Reaction on Jews Remarks Misplaced," Reuters, *Ha'aretz*, 19 October 2003).

The trouble is not with a statement issued by a racist hater but with the position he occupies and who is he addressing. When Hitler was a painter his impact was limited. It was when he came to power that his genocidal impact was felt. The Malaysian prime minister is powerful and his words were enthusiastically received by the participants, all heads of states, sheikdoms and emirates of Islamic countries with massive coverage echoing his words to their respective constituencies. One could only wonder what the 1.3 billion Muslims would do if they did not have the Jews to kick around. And the Europeans, who had an opportunity to condemn this Islamic fanatic racism, abstained from doing so as the French president shamelessly objected to a European Union condemnation statement on this matter and the remaining European leaders shamefully obliged.

Hate is channeled into action. Thus Syria plays a dual role as a terrorism instigator. It appears not only to have supported Iraq in the initial stages of the war but also to have helped stash huge sums of money Saddam bilked from Iraq and probably even his weapons of mass destruction ("[Saddam's Syrian Stash: Investigators Think They've Found Some of Hussein's Loot. Is the Money Funding Terrorist Attacks?](#)," Adam Zagorin, *Time*, 11 October 2003). And of course it

thumbs its nose at U.S. (and Israeli) efforts at curbing terrorist bases from Syrian land but admittedly it also is willingly being defied by the terrorist organizations themselves ("Defiant Bombers Turn Screw on Syria," Hala Jaber, *Times*, 12 October 2003).

These terror organizations have purposefully raised the ante by targeting American diplomats who came to Gaza to interview potential scholarship recipients ("[Explosion in Gaza Strip Kills Three Americans](#)," Fox News, 15 October 2003). This was the actual physical bomb that exploded by Palestinians in the Palestinian area and un-mistakenly aimed at Americans.

The terror groups did not hurry to claim responsibility as they usually do against Israel. Most denied they were involved. Some suggested it might be "renegade groups" (not "official organizations") and some blamed Israel for doing it using the 9-11 argument that this bomb was too sophisticated for Arabs to have planned it ("PA Blames Israel for Gaza Bombing," Khaled Abu Toameh, *The Jerusalem Post*, 16 October 2003). Undoubtedly, the carefully planned Palestinian terror against the U.S. was designed to create additional chaos on which these organizations thrive and perhaps enhance the possibility of sending in an international force ("Road to Perdition: The Gaza Killings are Intended to Create Chaos," *Times*, 16 October 2003).

Interestingly, while it is understood that the problems lie squarely with the Palestinians ("Poisoned by Fanaticism," Editorial, *Daily Telegraph*, 16 October 2003), the world still expects the new Palestinian prime minister-on-duty to do something about terrorism as if the same world cannot see (or better yet - prefers not to see) that it is the Palestinian leadership itself that instigates and perpetrates these terror acts.

The evidence for it is abundant. The news makes it appear as if this was the first attack on the U.S., but Palestinians have committed numerous such attacks before. Moreover, while on one hand denying their involvement and condemning (in English) the killing of Americans as a "loathsome crime," they simultaneously promote (in Arabic) strong anti-American sentiments and killing of Americans ("PA Promotes, Then Condemns Killing of Americans," Itamar Marcus, *Palestinian Media Watch Bulletin*, 15 October 2003).

Their web site promotes hatred of America and they sided with Iraq during the two Gulf wars, celebrating each time Americans are murdered whether it was 9-11 or American soldiers ambushed in Iraq. The hatred spewing from official Palestinian and Arab sources was translated into the crowd stoning the bombed convoy during the rescue attempt and shouting "God is great." While they constantly paint the Middle East and the world green to symbolize their aspiration for Islamic domination, they complain that the U.S. is trying to dominate the Middle East. There is little wonder American diplomats were murdered by Palestinians who have been fed on a diet of hate-mongering and calls for violence against Americans.

Of course, international terrorism is not limited to Yasser Arafat or his Palestinian comrades. In fact it has metastasized globally with newly wanted posters popping up on figures that are becoming the new notorious "most wanted." The latest such figure is for India what Arafat is for Israel and bin Laden for the U.S. and now recognized as such by American authorities as well ("[Dawood Ibrahim is a Global Terrorist: U.S.](#)" PTI, 17 October 2003).

And the Saudis? Despite their feigning of efforts of fighting terrorism, persistent reports point to their continued support of it ("Saudis Funded Infiltration of U.S. Military," World Tribune.com, 17 October 2003) and the sons of Saudi Arabia join the world jihad efforts in droves along with their brothers from other Muslims countries ("Al-Qaida has 18,000 'jihadists' in 100 Nations," World Tribune.com, 16 October 2003). Little wonder the high level of terrorism in the region is closely associated with high marks on corruption ("Mideast Most Corrupt Region in the World," World Tribune.com, 12 October 2003). All this somehow eludes the expert columnist who prefers to portray Saudi Arabia as the next democracy in the Middle East after Iraq ("[Courageous Arab Thinkers](#)," Thomas L. Friedman, *The New York Times*, 19 October 2003).

Another diplomatic bombshell exploded this week with reports that Israel has acquired nuclear launching capabilities from the sea ("Israel Adds Fuel to Nuclear Dispute: Officials confirm that the nation can now launch atomic weapons from land, sea and air. The issue complicates efforts to rein in Iran," Douglas Frantz, *Los Angeles Times*, 12 October 2003). Military analysis suggested that Harpoon missiles are incapable of the needed payload but it appears Israel has been again thrown into the public discussion regarding its nuclear capability and given the developments in Iran (which is developing nuclear weapons) and Saudi Arabia (which wants to benefit from an umbrella of the Islamic - Pakistani - bomb to protect itself against Iran) this certainly adds to the high-stakes tensions in the area.

And back in the USA?

It appears the country is vulnerable to terrorist penetration on all fronts. One can more than lift an eyebrow in amazement at who is granted entry despite proven terrorist activity ("PLO Penetrates Homeland Security," Matthew Levitt, *The Jerusalem Post*, 11 October 2003).

One notorious "activist" who supports various terrorist groups and was almost deported by the INS in 1996 ("Arab-American Leader Wins Fight for Citizenship," Niraj Warikoo, *Detroit Free Press*, 21 August 2002) was considered by the FBI for a civic award ("FBI Abomination," Debbie Schlusel, *New York Post*, 18 September 2003). The nomination was dropped at the last minute following public attention but not before a personal meeting with the FBI director and being publicly praised by him ("FBI Director Firm on Activist's Rescinded Award," David Shepardson and Joel Kurth, *The Detroit News*, 17 October 2003): "Mr. Hamad has done a terrific job in this community...He has contributed to bridging the gap between the Muslim Americans, the Arab-Americans in Detroit and throughout the country, and for that we commend him." Note that Mr. Hamad was not praised for bridging the gap between some Arab/Muslim groups and all other Americans but apparently for having bridged the gap within Arab/Muslims groups.

And from Justice to State: A recent report describes the warm relationship Saudi Arabia enjoys with the State Department as highly questionable ("Foggy Bottom's Friends: Why is the State Department so Cozy with the Saudis?" Joel Mowbray, *Wall Street Journal*, 13 October 2003). And if we are still in bewilderment mode it appears the system is trying to correct itself after discovering that the way Muslim chaplains are selected could be responsible for the number of spies within the chaplaincy ("Pentagon Changes Way Chaplains are Selected," Eunice Moscoco, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 15 October 2003).

While vulnerable on several fronts, the impression that the U.S. is losing the war on terrorism is a terrible exaggeration of the naive, the mythical-driven or the politically interested ("Legends of the Fall: More Myths about the Current War," Victor Davis Hanson, *National Review*, 10 October 2003). Yes there are cries that the U.S. is involved in a costly war (is there a free or cheap one?) instead of addressing needs at home, there is an anti-war sentiment; there are claims that the U.S. is at this alone and that WMDs were not found (transformed into "there are no weapons and he had no weapons"). Yet as Hanson aptly points out, these are not only issues of perspective but perhaps lacking one. He demonstrates how to compare costs in a reasonable fashion that illustrates it is not excessive. He puts the anti-war sentiments in the context of who makes them. He proves the U.S. is not alone and shows that patience and context will become assets when more information becomes available regarding WMDs. In short, the news is much better than some would dare to admit.

That is why the theater of the absurd is such a successful show.