

# Butt Out Jimmy! Help Around the House Tom!

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By Robbie Friedmann

The bombing of two synagogues in Istanbul, Turkey, with the killing of dozens and maiming of hundreds ("Israel, Turkey Begin Hunt for Bombers," Herb Keinon and News Agencies, *The Jerusalem Post*, 15 November 2003) is seen as an obvious campaign against Jews and as part of international jihad against them. Martin Kramer characterized it as such 10 years ago ("A Latent Prejudice Grows Virulent, Then Violent. The Jihad against the Jews," Martin Kramer, *Commentary*).

How else could one interpret this campaign that bombed one of these very same synagogues in 1986, bombed Argentinean Jewish community centers on two occasions, a synagogue in Tunis recently and just today burned a Jewish school in Paris ("Fire at Jewish School Near Paris Seen as Act of Antisemitism," the Associated Press, *Ha'aretz*, 15 November 2003)? Examine the chronology of recent attacks against Jews ("A Chronology of Attacks on Jewish Targets and Israelis Abroad," Reuters, *Ha'aretz*, 15 November). All this has been carried out abroad while continuing a murderous campaign against Israelis lasting more than 55 years.

The Europeans are not helpful in the fight against terrorism. While clearly the Istanbul attack was aimed at Jews, it was also aimed at a Turkish Muslim government and at the European member of NATO and hence at Europe. "For all its high moral and strategic pretensions, the European strategy amounts to this: lie low. Maybe the bullets will fly overhead. Maybe the outlaws will not train their guns on us. This would be a fine strategy for nations without power, influence or dignity. In fact, it would be understandable and even acceptable if it did not detract from the sheriff's ability to hunt down the outlaws. The problem is that Europe is not just a cowering, innocent bystander, but more like someone who is not only hiding behind the sheriff, but holding one of the sheriff's hands behind his back. The longer Europe waits to join the fight in earnest, the more it risks not only its own security, but what it seems to value more - its standing as the world's self-appointed moral arbiter. Lying low at the end of the day is not a terribly effective way to maintain one's stake on the high moral ground." ("The Circle Widens," editorial, *The Jerusalem Post*, 15 November 2003).

It is rather disheartening to note that sympathy and support for terrorism receives emotional and intellectual solace from circles that should know better yet harness pseudo-intellectual arguments, an identification with a false underdog and a fascination with a culture they know little about ("[The Left's Love Affair With the Palestinians](#)," Paul Hollander, *FrontPageMagazine.com*, 6 November 2003): "In all probability, the current denigration of Israel is part of a similar, broad rejection of all things Western. Israel in the eyes of leftist radicals (and arguably even in those of less radical leftists), is identified with everything they abhor in the West: capitalism, consumerism, individualism, scientific rationalism and other Western intellectual and philosophical traditions." Against this backdrop, another Palestinian government and another prime minister to head it who is "committed to peace" (without Israel that is) hit the news agencies. Obviously many did not share the euphoria that permeated the Palestinian media.

In fact, Israelis preferred to see action (to dismantle the terror infrastructure) and the Americans expressed disappointment that Palestinian leaders have not committed to taking any real steps to combat terrorism ("We Want Action, Not Words," Herb Keinon and Lamia Lahoud, *The Jerusalem Post*, 13 November 2003). One could of course raise a question: Why would anyone expect a terrorist to stop being one when he reaps so many dividends from it?

The dividends are not only power and the pleasure of abuse that comes with it. It is real money that is estimated to be between \$1-\$3 billion. Of that, Arafat is setting aside a reported \$100,000 per month (\$1.2 million a year) to his wife Suha so she can roam the Paris boutiques and live in a standard fitting of Imelda Marcos ("[Arafat's Billions](#)," 60 Minutes, CBS, 9 November 2003).

Neither were the Israelis impressed with the promise of new talks about another so-called cease-fire (" Hamas Talks of New 'Hudna,'" Khaled Abu Toameh, *The Jerusalem Post*, 14 November 2003). After all, Israelis and Americans have learned a hard lesson from believing those who have no intentions of keeping their word, and for good reason. Here there is talk about "negotiations" and no less a figure than the old/new Arafat security advisor is calling to intensify the resistance to American "occupation" in Iraq ("Rajoub to Arabs: Resist U.S. in Iraq," Khaled Abu Toameh, *The Jerusalem Post*, 10 November 2003).

It is beyond belief (only idiomatically speaking - yet so consistently typical) that he would denigrate the one country which supports the Palestinian aspiration for a state ("[Arafat's National Security Advisor Jibril Rjoub: 'The U.S. Administration is a Fascist Administration,' 'The Iraqi Opposition to the American Occupation Must be Increased,'](#)" MEMRI, Special Dispatch - PA, 12 November 2003, No. 607).

Yet, he extols relations with Russia (there is then a reason to be concerned about Russia). He does not endorse the Geneva Initiative and is far less excited about it than Jimmy Carter and Thomas Friedman. He maintains that extremist Palestinian terrorists groups like Hamas are "part of the Palestinian people, and are part of the national liberation movement. They are active and important cells in the Palestinian political and social fabric." But he is against killing civilians (interesting since clearly the PA is in favor of and is doing so) Does the West really expect this security chief to dismantle terrorist organizations?

Given Rajoub's preference for pure democratic ideals and his loathing of fascism (except of course when it is perpetrated by Palestinians as then it becomes a holy duty) he may have a hard time understanding why Canada has done the right thing by adding three Palestinian groups (Palestine Liberation Front, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the PFLP-General Command) to its list of 34 outlawed organizations ("Ottawa Outlaws 3 Palestinian Groups," Tom Godfrey, *Toronto Sun*, 14 November 2003).

Currently much attention is being given to the insurgency in Iraq against American and Coalition forces because of the high frequency with which they occur. Yet the ongoing threat from terrorist groups and terror-sponsoring states is not going unnoticed. The threat from Pakistan is noted in India and the axis with Saudi Arabia is alarming to both Israel and the United States. The fact that China is playing a role in the background is very discouraging ("[Axis of Evidence: The Beijing-Islamabad-Riyadh Nuclear Nexus Poses New Challenges](#)," G. Parthasarathy, *The Indian*

*Express*, 14 November 2003). And Libya's intentions to acquire nuclear capability are by no means adding any sense of comfort to Middle East watchers.

Iran has already threatened to use its nuclear power (when it acquires it, still in the same breath denying it aims at developing it) against Israel and recently added a diplomatic statement that the existence of Israel is against the national interest of Iran ("Existence of Israel Contrary to Iranian Interests," IranMania.com, 10 November 2003).

And al-Qaeda continues brazenly to threaten the West with yet another mega-terror event ("[Al-Qaeda Commander in Iraq: 'A Terror Attack against the U.S. With 100,000 Deaths is Imminent; We Ordered the Riyadh Bombing.:'](#)" MEMRI, Special Dispatch - Jihad and Terrorism Studies, 14 November 2003, No. 609).

This week a letter to the editor of the Atlanta paper was titled "Butt out, Jimmy" (*Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 15 November 2003). It was not about the Middle East. The reader lamented former President Jimmy Carter's intervention in an administrative scandal brewing at the University of Georgia. But it should have been [about the Middle East]. Carter's failed presidency and the bad advice he got on the Middle East from "experts" who caused damage to U.S. policy (re: Iran fiasco) as well as to Israel (re: Palestinians) is lingering to date. He now supports an "alternative" in the form of a "peace agreement" to be signed between insignificant parties (whom he calls "influential") in defiance of democratic principles and against the interest of Israel and the U.S. administration ("Peace Plan That's a Duet Sounds Like a Real Winner," Jimmy Carter, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 10 November 2003).

Carter is still stuck in the old notion of "land for peace" a formula that died with Oslo and has no diplomatic value or hope in the 21st century (other than for those who want to destroy Israel) and regrettably he sees terrorist and victim as equal. The only statement Carter has not yet made is that the U.S. should negotiate peace with Osama bin Laden.

Just imagine that Carter would have been president today and Tom Friedman as his national security advisor. Friedman's latest pseudo-intellectual exercise is to suggest that Saudi-Arabia and Israel have mutual interests. While not totally out of line, as enemies have collaborated before against a worse enemy, he shows an offensive misunderstanding by calling a democratically elected government in Israel "The House of Sharon" (Sharon has not succeeded any family member and one of his sons is an elected member of parliament - hardly a dynasty) equating it to the "House of Saud" (a corrupt royal dynasty).

And to top this he calls the Israeli settlers "Wahhabi" ("[A Saudi-Israeli Deal](#)," Thomas L. Friedman, *The New York Times*, 13 November 2003). This is like suggesting that Churchill was no less of a Nazi than Hitler. It would be more appropriate to equate Friedman to Joseph Goebbels a vicious [antisemite propagandist](#). After all, he is the one who said "A lie frequently repeated will gradually gain acceptance." Friedman's repeating opinions as facts is just as bad. One does not need to be sympathetic to Israel and to the settlers to abhor the position taken by Friedman.

And he penned another one ("[Wanted: Fanatical Moderates](#)," Thomas L. Friedman, *The New*

*York Times*, 16 November 2003; *The Atlanta Journal Constitution* titled it: "Israelis Have Little Right to Carp about Peace "Deal"." This is alarming given the 11 anti-Israeli articles and editorials the paper had printed in the last months) parroting Carter's support of the "Geneva Initiative," blaming the Israeli government for not being moderate enough and for crying foul when its own wrongdoing "was exposed." Not a word about three years of terror, not a word about Palestinians not keeping their own commitment. Instead, he finds fault with the Sharon government. He confesses that he gets mad when his wife tells him he is not helping around the house. (There is nothing more enraging than someone exposing your faults and being right.) Well, his pseudo-intellectual faults have been exposed and it is about time he helps around his own house and ceases to deal with what he so egregiously calls the "House of Sharon."

Friedman criticizes the Arab world but he and Carter somehow see the solution for its problems in weakening or blaming Israel. Perhaps they should read Arab columns emanating from Kuwait that place blame directly where it belongs and Israel is not even mentioned by them ("[Editor of the Kuwaiti Daily \*Al-Siyassa\*: The New Iraq Will Be 'the Beacon of Freedom, Democracy, and Respect to Human Rights in the Middle East.'](#)" MEMRI, Special Dispatch - Iraq/ Reform Project, 10 November 2003, No. 606). According to one Kuwaiti source, "The Middle East is dominated by wilting and exhausted regimes."

A measure of sanity to counteract such dangerous nonsense is offered by Victor David Hanson ("The Truth Will Set Us Free: What this war is not about," *National Review*, 7 November 2003) who is highly critical of those who purposefully misunderstand the nature of the current threat not only to Israel but to civilization itself. He agrees that the war is not against Islam but he points out the obvious that it is Islamic radicals who are perpetrating it. He argues that the war against terrorism cannot be half-hearted. It is either to be fought to win or we have already lost it. A half fight is a waste of effort: "All the peace marches, *New York Times* editorials or near-slander from Democratic presidential contenders cannot change that reality, and so the decision really is either to cease and desist or to wage war and finish the conflict. Anything in between is madness." He argues that while al-Qaeda is comprised of crazies who pose dangers no less serious than those posed by Hitler, "...we can still lose this war unless we remember September 11, acknowledge the awful nature of our enemies and always, always accept the truth that civilization itself hangs in the balance."

Hanson is correct about truth, but part of the problem lies not merely in people refusing to see it but in the desire to win a popularity contest. The problem is that being liked is not always tantamount to doing the right thing. Movie actors may be bad yet popular, or may be good and popular. They need to attract audiences irrespective of their qualities as actors. Countries which are threatened might be helped by being popular but if the mere fact of their existence is what makes them disliked and targets for hostilities, then being liked is a misplaced objective ("[To Hell with Sympathy: The goodwill America earned on 9/11 was illusory. Get over it,](#)" Charles Krauthammer, *Time*, 17 November 2003).

"Sympathy is fine. But if we "squander" it when we go to war to avenge our dead and prevent the next crop of dead, then to hell with sympathy. The fact is the world hates us for our wealth, our success, our power. They hate us into incoherence. The Europeans...disdain us for our excessive religiosity (manifest, they imagine, by evolution being expelled from schools while prayer is

ushered back in)--while the Arab world despises us as purveyors of secularism. We cannot win for losing. We are widely reviled as enemies of Islam. The search for logic in anti-Americanism is fruitless. It is in the air the world breathes. Its roots are envy and self-loathing by peoples who, yearning for modernity but having failed at it, find their one satisfaction in despising modernity's great exemplar." This applies equally well to the U.S. and to Israel.

Recently a poll of Europeans found 60% view Israel as posing the greatest threat to peace. Then the British Conservative party elected its first Jewish leader and some argued that this is proof that Europe is not as antisemitic as the poll suggests. But a writer who closely follows these matters in Britain strongly disagrees ("[The Chosen Person](#)," Melanie Phillips, *Jewish World Review*, 10 November 2003): "The idea that British Jews are not really 'one of us' is deeply rooted in British society. Even though prejudice based on Jewish identity went underground after the Holocaust, the successful dehumanization of Israel by the media has legitimized the revival of the ancient canard of world Jewish power and other familiar tropes of Jew-hatred. British Jews, who have always trodden an existential tightrope, nevertheless believed until very recently they were as British as anyone else. Now they find themselves in the hideous position of being forced to denounce their own or bite their tongues as the price of social acceptance."

And indeed, a week after *US News and World Report* came out with a cover story on antisemitism, *Time Magazine* discovered the issue as well ("[An Old Evil Raises Its Weary Head: Sixty years after the Holocaust, Europe still wrestles with antisemitism](#)," Josef Joffe, *Time*, 17 November 2003). It concludes that while antisemitism is troubling, it is not as bad as its classical version used to be. It asks: "Is antisemitism on a roll in Germany, 60 years after Auschwitz?" And its response? "No." Yet a careful reading of the article points out that classical antisemitism has undergone sublimation: "To hate Jews is not permissible in polite society, but to loathe Israel and especially its Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, carries no such stigma." Given the short time Sharon has been in office articles such as Carter's and Friedman's only help promote propaganda against Israel and hence against Jews. If in doubt, examine the Palestinian cartoon that depicts Israel and Judaism as "strangling the world" (Itamar Marcus, *Palestinian Media Watch Bulletin*, 9 November 2003).

The onslaught of antisemitism in Europe and the Arab/Islamic world is reminiscent of darker ages in modern and medieval history when Jews had to fight against existential threats, be it religious persecution or physical annihilation. A recent paper describes how Israel finds itself in the awkward position that 55 years after the establishment of the Jewish State it still struggles to justify what for all other nations is taken for granted: its very right to exist ("[An Answer to the New Anti-Zionists: the Rights of the Jewish People to a Sovereign State in Their Historic Homeland](#)," Dore Gold and Jeff Helmreich, *Jerusalem Viewpoints*, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, No. 507, 16 November 2003). The paper examines the history, the law and the facts surrounding Israel's existence as a Jewish state and then makes the case for Israel. While on one hand concluding, "The antisemitic threat, unfortunately, is alive and well," it also suggests that the existence of Israel is essential for the survival of the Jewish people and is also seen as a source of contribution to world society in the 21st century.

Clearly, the mere fact that Israel's existence is questioned rather than being taken for granted is a problem in itself and makes its future less promising. After all, no Arab state is under any threat

of questioning its "right to exist." Neither is France, Germany, Libya or Syria. Some regimes may be in danger of needing a Saddam-like treatment but their people have nothing to worry about regarding their future. Germany and Japan are the best proof of that. Therefore, the solution is not in working towards achieving peace but achieving peace is the solution and it will not happen until terrorism is vanquished.

In other words, no permanent arrangements, no border settlements, no dispute resolution will ever be possible unless the destroyers (by force or by rhetoric) are made to understand that if their existence relies on negating the other's right to exist it is unacceptable ("Existential Questions: Destroying Israel is Not a Legitimate Mideast Option," Saul Singer, *National Review*, 10 November 2003). Perhaps the only way to change this faulty equation forever is to make absolutely clear that by questioning and threatening someone else's right to exist there will be immediate consequences for their very own existence.