

Caught Like a Rat

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By Robbie Friedmann

The most significant development - tangibly and symbolically - in the war against terrorism and the international threat to peace was without a doubt the capture of Saddam Hussein ("Saddam Hussein Captured in Iraq Hideout," Associated Press, 14 December 2003). Tangibly because one of the top figures of tyranny and ruthlessness and threat to the international community and his own people since Adolf Hitler was physically captured alive. Symbolically, because of how he was captured: like a rat (the words of Major General Ray Odierno on Saddam in Iraq) in a spider's hall, with weapons he did not use and with hundreds of thousands of dollars. He looked more pathetic than his pretentious image all over Iraq during the decades of his vicious wielding of power.

His demeanor with his interrogators resembles someone who is not only pathetic but not very stable. ("[Notes from Saddam in Custody: Saddam is talking, but he isn't cooperative. New details on his capture and his first Interrogation](#)," Brian Bennett/Baghdad, *Time Exclusive*, 14 December 2003). He surrendered without a fight and without doing harm to himself proving him to be rather narcissistic. One who sent millions to sacrifice their lives in his name and the name of Islam and the Arab cause did not practice what he preached. Even a Hamas statement from the Gaza strip expressed disappointment. That could be the best news in addition to his capture.

Yet as important as his capture is, by no means does it signify an end to the war. The terrorists are not resting (yet). They are not only plotting their next moves but widely communicating them to an already horrified world ("Arabic Daily: al-Qaeda Prepares Big Operation to Coincide with Eid Al-Adha [Feast of the Sacrifice] on Feb. 2, 2004 - New bin Laden Tape will Explain Details," MEMRI, Special Alert - Jihad and Terrorism Studies, 10 December 2003, No. 13).

It is worthwhile to view a scholarly article that examines the conceptual underpinnings of the modern international terror movement and the "who's who" among radical Islamic thinkers ("[Al-Qaeda's Intellectual Legacy: New Radical Islamic Thinking Justifying the Genocide of Infidels](#)," Jonathan D. Halevi, Jerusalem Viewpoints, No. 508, 1 December 2003). It is killing for the sake of killing: "Al-Qaeda has adopted a broader interpretation of the religious command concerning the killing of infidels. It is considered an absolute command that does not depend on political circumstances, the need or will to take revenge, or a wish to liberate Muslim lands from infidel rule."

Regrettably while some receive their financial support from dubious sources such as Saudi Arabia (surprise surprise; see the detailed expose "The Saudi Connection: How billions in oil money spawned a global terror network," David E. Kaplan, *U.S. News and World Report*, 15 December 2003) the Palestinians receive it directly from the international community ("EuroCash: What does the Palestinian Authority do with European money?" Rachel Ehrenfeld, *National Review*, 10 December 2003). While some call for greater accountability of the billions of dollars Arafat and his puppet PA have bilked from the international community to

date ("[Palestinian Aid Audit](#)," Rachel Ehrenfeld, *The Washington Times*, 13 December 2003) there are no signs this is likely to happen.

This is important to note because when poets write about *jihad* as a soul cleansing activity (in the pursuit of "inner struggle"), or football teams adopt it as their name, those who truly matter define *jihad* unambiguously as war against the infidels, and it is a war that demands killing ("[Jihad Means Only Killing: Azhar](#)," *The Indian Express*, 8 December 2003).

Indeed, a very alarming sign of the cultural and organizational impact of the Arab/Muslim violence has penetrated the U.S. and it does not auger well for the future. The same way that Palestinian streets, schools and summer camps are named after terrorists and violence (*Jihad, Shaheed*), Muslim youth groups in California have named their football teams *Mujahideen, Intifada, and Soldiers of Allah* ("[Taking the Intifada to the Football Field](#)," William Lobdell, *The Los Angeles Times*, 7 December 2003). Team members say ".. it [the name] describes a righteous fight against oppression, whether it is in the Middle East or in America." And that is exactly the problem. They have showed how they fight "oppression" by murdering unsuspecting citizens in Israel and other parts of the Middle East and now they want to fight "oppression" in the U.S. after already killing about 3,000 in the infamous September 11 atrocity.

Some recommend a change of name for these teams but dismiss the seriousness of this affair as youthful mischief and the concerns raised about these names as nothing more than a tempest in a tea pot ("Drop the Names -- and the Outrage," Dana Parsons, *The Los Angeles Times*, 12 December 2003). Apparently it must be very difficult for some to see the link between this kind of behavior and its lending legitimacy and inspiration to terrorism. By the time those who are dismissing it now give it the appropriate seriousness, it will be too late and too costly. If a team's name is "Soldiers of Allah" why would that be so different than the [Hitlerjugend](#) and his [Brown Shirts](#) (see "[Goebbels and Mass Mind Control](#);"? By no means should this be dismissed as an innocent youth sports team or a fashion statement by a shirt designer.

As the menace of international terrorism continues to grow, its manifestations are not only training camps in Middle Eastern countries, sleeper networks in Europe, Canada, the Latin American triangle or the U.S. Nor is it limited to "innocent" football teams who adopt *jihad* as their team logo. Charges from responsible and knowledgeable sources of fifth-column activities are also very alarming. The latest is a systematic expose of the activities of an American conservative who is reported to have ties to a terror network that has shown itself to be dangerous and working on behalf of the radical Islamic front fund and thus has links to and supports the Islamic terror agenda ("[A Troubling Influence](#)," Frank J Gaffney Jr., *FrontPageMagazine.com*, 9 December 2003) to an extent that "The growing influence of this operation - and the larger Islamist enterprise principally funded by Saudia Arabia - has created a strategic vulnerability for the nation and a political liability for its President."

While terrorists have been busy planning (and luckily most being caught before carrying their plans out), the propagandists have not rested either. A vicious Syrian antisemitic propaganda TV film series - the usual canard of the Jews ruling the world and responsible for all its ills - was produced ("[Al-Shatat: The Syrian-Produced Ramadan 2003 TV Special](#)," MEMRI, Dispatch -

Syria/Arab Antisemitism Documentation Project, 12 December 2003, No. 627) and those responsible denied any antisemitism "because every single person who participated in the production, editing and broadcasting of the episodes was a Semite." Arabs are indeed Semites but the term "antisemitism" evolved to describe anti-Jewish actions, not those directed against Arabs. Segment 20 features the notorious blood libel in which a Christian child is depicted ritually murdered by Jews and his blood is used to bake Passover matzas (for text and video see: "[Syrian-Produced Hizbullah TV Ramadan Series: Video Clip of a 'Blood Libel,'](#)" MEMRI, Special Dispatch - Arab Antisemitism Documentation Project/Syria, 8 December 2003, No. 623).

Some Arab/Muslim sources are starting to understand that the problem is rooted well in their corner. A Somali journalist has written on the damage Wahhabism has brought to Somalia ("[Somali Muslim Journalist on the Detrimental Effects of Wahhabism on His Country,](#)" MEMRI, Special Dispatch - Saudi Arabia/Reform Project, 9 December 2003, No. 625) and an Ethiopian journalist about the same damage brought to Ethiopia ("[Ethiopian Journalist on the Detrimental Effects of Saudi Arabia's 'Poisonous Wahhabism on His Country,'](#)" MEMRI, Special Dispatch - Saudi Arabia/Reform Project, 9 December 2003, No. 624).

The European behavior in this regard is also alarming. While branding all Europeans as antisemitic would be a mistake, there are forces that suppress manifestations of antisemitism's dangers in favor of protecting a false "multiculturalism" ("As Rome Starts to Smoulder: European illusions of multiculturalism," Andrew Stuttaford, *National Review*, 9 December 2003): "combating antisemitism, it seems, is less important than preserving the dangerous illusions of multiculturalism and, probably, recognizing the demographics of a Europe where there are more Muslims to appease than Jews to protect."

Some understandably take offense at the constant toll antisemitism has brought upon the Jewish people and suggest it is the Jews who have been humiliated (and more) throughout history - a fact current Arab victimizers tend to invert by presenting themselves as the victims ("The Ongoing Humiliation of the Jews," Beth Goodtree). Frankly, we hear very little from millions of airline passengers who are humiliated daily when trying to take a flight by having to be searched, take their shoes off, be screened by security personnel and have their schedule and freedom of movement affected. Yet it is the Palestinians and the Arab world who are perpetually screaming "humiliation."

Of course, one of the worse shows of antisemitism takes place on the world's stage at the United Nations. Last week it withdrew a draft resolution on (condemning) antisemitism because of strong Arab/Muslim opposition ("The U.N.'s Dirty Little Secret: The international body refuses to condemn antisemitism," Anne Bayefsky, *The Wall Street Journal*, 8 December 2003). It was particularly disheartening - but by no means surprising - to see that Ireland which shepherded various religious tolerance resolutions was the one slamming the door against this one as it deemed Arab/Muslim interests more important than basic principles of human rights.

Some question this age-old scourge's return to the world stage in a vicious force, the worst since World War II ("[The Return of Antisemitism,](#)" Craig Horowitz, *New York Magazine*, 15 December 2003) and are trying to find effective ways to cope with it: "Antisemitism is being

spread through those who teach Islam, and it is metastasizing. It took Christianity 2,000 years to clean up its act and now it is being taught again through a religious system... Most American Jewish leaders believe they are up against huge forces around the world and that ultimately they cannot fight this fight alone. 'We have to make people understand that antisemitism is not a uniquely Jewish problem...It is a cancer which if left unchecked infects and ultimately kills democratic societies... That is the message we have to get out.'

Others recognize antisemitism's claws are dangerous, not only to Jews ("[The Hate that Shames Us](#)," Julie Burchill, *The Guardian*, 6 December 2003): "Make no mistake, the Jews are not hated because of Israel; they are hated for their very modernity, mobility, lust for life and love of knowledge. Their most basic toast, 'L'chaim!' (To Life!), is a red rag to those who make a fetish out of death because they have failed to take any joy from their life on earth. 'Not our Jews! Leave our Jews alone!' yelled the locals who turned out to fight the Mosleyites in Cable Street. It may be politically incorrect to call this ancient people 'ours,' but what the hell: they are tough, they can take it. And they are still *our Jews*, in that if they are wiped out in Israel or anywhere else, we will be wiped out too one day, all of the modern world and its achievements - swept back into the Dark Ages mulch from whence we came. The cry of Cable Street still rings true. 'Not our Jews!' But, this time, 'our' means mankind, and the very future of our species."

This view receives scholarly support that identifies elements common to both antisemitism and anti-Americanism ("[European Anti-Americanism and Antisemitism: Similarities and Differences: An Interview with Andrei S. Markovits](#)," Post-Holocaust and Anti-Semitism, No. 16, 1 January 2004): "Antisemitism in Europe goes back a thousand years. Anti-Americanism emerged more than 200 years ago among European elites. Current European prejudices are enhanced by the Europeans' perception of how America and Israel use power. America and Jews are seen by many Europeans as paragons of a modernity they dislike and distrust: money-driven, profit-hungry, urban, universalistic, individualistic, mobile, rootless, inauthentic and thus hostile to established traditions and values. Anti-Americanism fulfills a structural role in helping to create a European identity. Antisemitism does not necessarily do this, hence it might abate if and when peace is reached in the Middle East. Anti-Americanism and antisemitism are the only major icons shared by the European extreme left and far right, including neo-Nazis."

And look at the shock from the unexpected. The Iranian Nobel Peace Laureate was marketed by the media as a progressive force in her country, a "liberal" women who stood up to the tyranny of the Ayatollahs, only this version did not meet the expectation in its first international test. To the cheers of America-haters she found fault - in her acceptance speech - with the U.S. but not with the Iranian regime (only obliquely), not with terror supporters and not with dictatorships ("[In Speech, Nobel Winner Rebukes the U.S.](#)" Craig S. Smith, *The New York Times*, 11 December 2003). Clearly, this is not the first mistake the Nobel Peace Prize Committee has ever made. She joins a long list of others who were not worthy of the Prize, questioning the very credibility of the Prize itself.

Last week the U.S. administration found itself in an awkward position. It denied non-supporters of the coalition the opportunity to bid for lucrative projects of Iraq's reconstruction and at the same time went to the same countries asking them to forgo Iraq's international debt. In the meantime, U.S. forces in Iraq are reported to benefit from Israel's valuable military assistance

[\("Learning the Art of Occupation from Israel: The U.S. military is reportedly turning to Israel for tips on how to manage the insurgency in Iraq. Will it work?"\)](#) Tony Karon, *Time*, 9 December 2003) even if the report erroneously compares the ("occupation") situations and concludes that "Washington, may indeed find itself in a situation uncomfortably familiar to Israelis."

An even longer list of the value Israel has for the U.S. is reported by Reuters ("Israel Quietly Helps U.S. in Iraq, Aides Say," Adam Entous, Reuters, 11 December 2003): "Israel has been contributing intelligence, tactics and technology mostly in secret to avert an Arab backlash." The assistance includes aerial surveillance equipment, decoy drones and D-9 armored bulldozers, as well as sharing new training software designed for Israeli commanders stationed in Palestinian areas.

Despite Israel's obvious usefulness, there are those who do not spare their pen to make Israel the problem in the area, almost as if Israel is the enemy and the Palestinians are innocent victims ("[Breaking and Entering](#)," Thomas L. Friedman, *The New York Times*, 11 December 2003; titled "With Saddam Gone, Pressure Builds on Israel," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*).

Even when often at great cost, Israel has proven its case in the battlefield far more successfully than in the arena of public/international relations. The problem is that before, during and after wars are fought, their initiation, duration and outcome are directly impacted by Israel's current stature in the world. That is precisely why it has never been able to translate (decisive) military victory after victory into political gains, in order that they might prevent the likelihood of the next war breaking out. That is why it is not surprising to see strong and valid criticism on Israel's poor PR efforts.

The criticism focuses on Israel's "failing to speak in a coherent and confident voice" suggesting this "is an assured recipe for disaster" ("Foreign to the Cause," Efraim Karsh, *The Jerusalem Post*, 4 December 2003). After all, the problem is not merely with facts but how those facts are placed in a perspective. One commendable effort in this direction is the attempt to make a case for Israel. That such an effort is even required attests to Israel's predicament. A famous attorney argues that it is necessary to show elements of Israel's case on which there is a wide consensus among Israelis and outsiders [with the obvious exception of Arabs] ("The Consensus Case," Alan M. Dershowitz, *The Jerusalem Post*, 4 December 2003). Of course, how to reach such a consensus - assuming one is reached - and how it would be communicated effectively, remain the challenges for the day.

The repercussions of the so-called "Geneva Agreement" continue to reverberate. Interestingly enough, opponents are on both sides. For the Palestinians, opposition is nothing but a tactic. They are also taking advantage of the golden opportunity to voice their objections to things they never agreed to in the first place, thus reaping a double PR advantage. Most Israelis are genuinely concerned about the implications of the Geneva Initiative on future developments.

Others question the credibility and the motives of those behind the initiative and they aim their arrows particularly at Israel's Yossi Beilin and at Jimmy Carter, suggesting both are suffering from a sort of a "Stockholm Syndrome" ("[Carter Attacks the 'Road to Peace.'](#)") Lowell Ponte, *FrontPageMagazine.com*, 12 December 2003). Equally interesting are relevant points that focus

on the consequences for the Palestinians for not coming to the negotiating table. They might end up with even less than they have now ("The Price of Intransigence," Mortimer B. Zuckerman, *U.S. News and World Report*, 15 December 2003).

Media presentation of the situation in the Middle East is not helpful to Israel's case as one media watchdog group has noted ("[Security Fence Distortions](#)," HonestReporting, Communique: 7 December 2003). This is followed by two important recognitions. First, concessions are counterproductive because they only reinforce the perception that terrorism pays ("Concessions Don't Help," Barry Rubin, *The Jerusalem Post*, 9 December 2003): "This is neither a colonial problem nor the mere result of an oppressive occupation. It is an ideological issue on the Arab side, one of how the conflict is defined and the methods deemed worthy of pursuing it. By continuing to insist the problem is that Israel has not offered enough, Israelis do not prove their goodwill but rather seem to suggest that they are the guilty party. This is also part of the reason for the world's hostility. These unfamiliar concepts for the West should be becoming more familiar from having to deal with such Middle Eastern phenomena as the Iranian revolution, Saddam Hussein, Osama bin Laden and radical Islam."

"Previous generations supposedly learned such lessons in dealing with fascism and communism: Not everyone is a pragmatist eager for conciliation with those who prove their good intentions, willingness to make concessions and kind natures. These are hard words to say, but they are needed to explain why this conflict has gone on for endless decades, bred so much hate and cost so many lives."

Indeed. The second observation concisely suggests that the problems lie with terrorism as the pivotal cause of the modern era's problems ("[It's the Terrorists, Stupid](#)," Moshe Arens, *Ha'aretz*, 9 December 2003): "Palestinian terrorists hold the peace process hostage and no meaningful progress toward peace can be made until their murderous activity is ended. It does not matter if the Palestinian interlocutor is Yasser Arafat, Abu Mazen, Abu Ala or Abed Rabo - nothing significant will be achieved as long as Jews are being killed by Palestinian terrorists in our streets and on our buses. The idea that negotiations and a readiness by Israel to make extensive concessions will lead these terrorists to cease their murderous activities is absurd and has been proved wrong time and again at great cost."

"Terrorism, deliberately directed against civilians with the intention of causing mass casualties, has become a worldwide scourge in recent years. If not controlled, it threatens the very existence of states as we have come to know them in the past century. It is the intention of terrorists associated with Islamic fundamentalism to shake the foundations of the states whose civilian populations they attack, whether it be in the United States, Turkey, Israel or Saudi Arabia - they want to prove that these states have lost their 'monopoly on domestic violence' and cannot protect their citizens. Their success would call into question the existence of these states as we now know them and could plunge the whole world into anarchy."

The fight against terror and tyranny received a tremendous boost with the capture of Saddam Hussein. There are a number of other top leaders who need to be captured or killed before this war gets to an end. But even more important is the absolute need to combat the vicious antisemitic and anti-American propaganda which is the breeding ground for terror activities.