

# Omission

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By Robbie Friedmann

It is said that diplomats on foreign missions are instructed not to discuss religion, politics and sex so as not to offend their hosts or counterparts. Then what else is there to talk about? Mel Gibson's most talked about movie on Jesus deals with religion, politics and has sexual metaphors. It has certainly elicited much discussion about biblical accuracy, culture wars, challenge to biblical scholarship and charges that the movie is blatantly antisemitic ("Is European-Style Antisemitism Coming Our Way? Beyond the Cineplex," Gabriel Schoenfeld, *National Review*, 5 March 2004).

So wise diplomats should not discuss the movie at all, right? Not so. The movie can be discussed for what it does not include - Arabs or Muslims ("'Passion' Is Really Pro-Israel Arafat, Take Note: Lots of Jews & Romans, Not One Arab," Zev Chafets, *New York Daily News*, 29 February 2004).

At first this might strike one as an odd "omission" to even bring up. But it is not so in the context of Middle East realities. In the theater of the absurd where Yasser Arafat professes to be the "protector" of Christian holy places (so much so that in 30 years Bethlehem's 80% Christian majority dwindled to 20%). He claims that Jesus was a Palestinian and that there were no Jews, no Jewish Temple in Jerusalem 2000 years ago, and no Jewish connection to the city. The Arafats of the world turn history upside down when they say that Islam impacted the aborigines in Australia who lived there thousands of years before [Islam emerged in the 7th century](#), when they deny Jewish history, or when they invent Arab/Muslim "realities" that have never existed.

Therefore, having a movie about Jesus that does not include any Arabs and Muslims is one of the positive unintended consequences of the movie and therefore ought to be of major concern to the propagandists who deny Jewish existence in the Holy Land ("[The Omission of the Christ](#)," Aaron J. Shuster, *Israel national News*, 1 March 2004). They will surely find another tree to bark up. For those concerned about the potential negative ramifications of the movie and want to find something positive about it then look at what it did not include.

Another omission was glaringly evident last week in CBS's "60 Minutes" segment showing school children in North Korea being taught to view America as the enemy. The technique applied to teach impressionable pupils about America's decadence is comparing it to Nazi Germany. The *Diary of Anne Frank* is used as a symbol of someone who fights for freedom against a cruel enemy. Except this picture, in which North Koreans consider themselves the "good guys" and America the enemy ("[If Anne Frank Only Knew ...Lost In Translation](#)," "60 Minutes," CBS, 29 February 2004), is brazenly propagandist.

It is a twist of fate that a Nazi-like regime such as North Korea uses [Anne Frank](#) to represent itself to its own people. But what is most striking about this segment is the narrow focus of the narrator. Mike Wallace seemed to be genuinely shocked by the crude picture young North

Koreans have of the U.S. Glaringly he omitted comparing this with like rhetoric and the same vile imagery that is used by the Palestinians in an identical indoctrination effort. The last sentence in the segment was: "For world peace, America will have to be destroyed...Only then, will Anne's wonderful dream of peace come true." The Palestinians constantly say that for Palestinian "rights" to be achieved Israel must be destroyed. And the terrorists of al-Qaeda and related groups say that Islam will be victorious only when the West will be destroyed. "60 Minutes" could have done a great public service by showing these parallels.

Perhaps "60 Minutes" ought to finally provide a link of its coverage of Islamists on one hand and the coverage of neo-Nazis on the other. This is not a new relationship, as it goes back to the historical linkage - of what otherwise would have been rather strange bed-fellows - of strong cooperation between Nazi and Muslim leaders and their operatives. Indeed some are suggesting ("Al-Qaeda's Neo-Nazi Connections," William Grim, *Jewish Press*, 25 February 2004) that with the limitations imposed on al-Qaeda's operational capability, the organization could use murder-for-hire from sister terror organizations: "The next 9/11-style terrorist attack may not be attempted by a keffiyah-wearing Arab terrorist spouting quotations from the Koran, but by ...a terrorist whose services were purchased by a Left-wing European intellectual attending a Middle Eastern Studies caucus of some Leftist academic group during an annual conference in Omaha or Chicago or San Francisco." Ironically, the terrorists who say they abhor globalization seem to harness its principles all too well when it suits their objectives.

Those surprised at the terrorist attacks in Iraq need to look at who benefits from them and who guides them. But more than that, they need to focus on the cold and calculated assault on Muslims by Muslims in order to further the pursuit of power. Related to al-Qaeda and in all likelihood manipulated by Iran for purposes of external control, Zarkawi - a key al-Qaeda operative - "promised" more suicide attacks in an attempt to draw the Shiites into war to destabilize Iraq and hence American influence there ("The Predictable Terrorist Attacks," Claude Salhani, UPI International, 2 March 2004).

According to Zarkawi's own note (assuming it is authentic) "We need to bring the Shi'a into the battle because it is the only way to prolong the duration of the fight between the infidels and us... Fighting the Shi'a is the way to take the nation to battle. The Shi'a have taken on the dress of the army, police and the Iraqi security forces, and have raised the banner of protecting the nation and the citizens." Yet, interestingly, Iran blames al-Qaeda for the terror attacks ("[Iran Blames al-Qaeda for Shiite Attacks](#)," Ali Akbar Dareini, The Associated Press, 2 March 2004).

This manipulated "blame game" fits well with the interests of Iran. Fearing a potential arrangement in Iraq that is not to Iran's liking (anything with an American stamp on it is not) the Iranians may have used al-Qaeda to perform the attacks (or have taken advantage of them once they happened) so they can support the Shiites more openly. Indeed this political context explains why, even if bin Laden is caught or killed, terrorism will not end with him. Some correctly suggest the fight against terrorism needs to focus on new elements that go beyond traditional military thinking ("[Terrorism Will Stalk Long After bin Laden's Gone](#)," Robert Andrews, *USA Today*, 2 March 2004). This must include demolishing the terrorists' theological sanctuary, supporting moderate Muslims and encouraging an Islamic reformation. These are missions that infantry, armored Corps, aircraft carriers and fighter jets are not suited to handle.

The Iranian "stamp" is well felt in the region, be it in their neighbor to the west, Iraq, or their "enemy" further way, Israel. Iran threatens to back Syria if Israel attacks as if Israel has a reason to attack a non-threatening Syria ("Iran Pledges to Back Syria if Israel Attacks Iranian Defense Minister Meets Nassrallah in Beirut, Vows: 'Enemy will think a thousand times before attacking Lebanon,'" Jackie Hogi, *Ma'ariv*, 29 February 2004). Iran also encourages terrorist acts against Israel, acting as if it is an absolute right against which Israel and the free world are not entitled to defend themselves ("Jihad Vows 'Blackest Days in Israel's History,'" Arnon Regular and Amos Harel, *Ha'aretz* Service and The Associated Press, 29 February 2004).

The Palestinians who have for years overplayed the role of "victims" do not blink an eye when they tirelessly murder civilians. And it takes one of their very own to admit they use similar tactics against their brethren, relegating them to life in a corrupt, gang-like environment ("[Palestinian Human Rights Activist: The Al-Aqsa Brigades Run Daily Life in the Cities, Threatening, Beating, and Killing](#)," MEMRI, Special Dispatch - PA/Reform Project, 5 March 2004, No. 675).

They have elevated murder to an artful business. They carry it out, are proud of it and deny it at the same time. How do they do it? By speaking in Arabic to their constituents and hence promoting murder and death as supreme values and then speaking in English, shedding crocodile tears about their youngsters who were caught on their way to become suicide bombers ("PA Minister Saeb Erekat's Duplicity: Glorify Suicide Terrorism in Arabic, Condemn it in English," Itamar Marcus and Barbara Crook, *Palestinian Media Watch Bulletin*, 4 March 2004; See also "Use of Young Recruits Upsets Palestinians," Ali Daraghme, *Associated Press*, 29 February 2004).

Examine the glorification of death that is expressed not just by Palestinian leaders but by a mother of terrorists ("[Umm Nidal: 'The Mother of The Shahids](#),'" MEMRI, Special Dispatch - PA/Jihad & Terrorism Studies, 4 March 2004, No. 673). Or, for that matter, the systematic abuse of Palestinian children if not as terrorists then as shields to terrorists ("[The War Crimes of the Palestinians](#)," Ted Lapkin, *FrontPageMagazine.com*, 27 February 2004): "The gambit of using children as pawns in front line combat is predicated on a calculus in which cynicism is surpassed only by media savvy. The Palestinians have developed a communications strategy that is predicated on the simple premise that the size of a headline will be inversely proportional to the age of the casualty involved. So because a dead 13-year old child will attract much more journalistic attention than a dead 33-year old gunman, it is deemed legitimate to sacrifice youngsters on the altar of Israel's demonization. This macabre Palestinian publicity scheme is both singularly immoral and doubly illegal. Article 51 of the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Convention prohibits combatants from using civilians to: 'shield military objectives from attacks or to shield, favor or impede military operations...The exploitation of pubescent youths as front line cannon fodder exemplifies a Palestinian cult of death that not only debases the value of human life, but also serves as a primary impediment to peace in the Middle East.'"

Yet there is an over-focus on Arafat. The fact is Iranian tentacles long ago achieved a stronghold on the Lebanese-based Hizbullah terrorist group, which has successfully inserted itself into the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and even Israel ("The Hizbullah Within Us: Palestinian terrorism has

a new boss: Master terrorist Imad Mughnieh, Nasrallah's deputy of operations," Amit Cohen, *Ma'ariv*, 5 March 2004).

In an interesting twist it appears Egypt is urging Arafat to follow in the footsteps of former Egyptian President Anwar Sadat who signed a peace accord with Israel ("[Renowned Egyptian Author and Columnist Calls Upon Arafat to Follow in Sadat's Footsteps](#)," MEMRI, Special Dispatch - Egypt/PA/Reform Project, 5 March 2004, No. 674). Yet one wonders why, if the Egyptians agree with Arafat, they urge him to "negotiate?" Perhaps they wish upon him the same fate of Sadat.

Given Palestinian corruption and genocidal practices, the likelihood of a Palestinian state diminishes with time. Indeed, there is a growing realization in Israel that supporting a Palestinian state is a mortal mistake to the future of Israel and these voices call for increased disengagement from Palestinians. This may not bring peace, but the status quo is certainly not likely to bring it either. Neither will the various plans for "peace" out there such as the Roadmap or the Saudi plan. In fact, some scholars argue that peace with the Palestinians is impossible in the foreseeable future not because Israel does not seek or want it but because the Palestinians are not interested in it unless Israel is destroyed ("Forget About a Palestinian State," Efraim Inbar, *The Jerusalem Post*, 29 February 2004).

In the last five years Arab/Muslim sources have increasingly treated the U.S. as the "big Satan" and Israel as "little Satan." Indeed, given the constant vitriol against Israel, one might think Israel is actually the "big Satan" in Muslim eyes. It is therefore important to note occasional articles that recognize the essential role Israel plays in the defense of the West. A couple of years ago Israel was portrayed as the "[Canary in Europe's Mine](#)" (Jeff Jacoby, *The Boston Globe*, 28 April 2002).

Last month Israel was compared to the "Blue Traffic Lights" ("Blue Traffic Lights: Israeli Struggle Inspires the U.S.; In a World Full of Death, America Watches One Small Nation with Hope," Joey Tartakovsky, *Daily Nexus*, 23 February 2004). Israel became the target of hate and propaganda directed at it in an absolute disproportional measure: "Muslims are now clashing in a dozen places with nearly every religious group - with Catholics in Nigeria and the Philippines; African animists in Sudan; Orthodox Christians in Russia and Serbia; Confucians in Xinjiang, China; Buddhists in Thailand; Hindus in India and Bangladesh - and often with far bloodier results. So why single out Israel?"

The answer as Tartakovsky implies is that "Americans support Israel not just because we watched Palestinians dancing in the streets on 9/11, not just because we see a mirror of our own society in Israel and not just because we refuse to equate terrorism with fighting terrorism. Americans watch with admiration that a tiny country, its population the size of the Bay area's, which has been the victim of five decades of terrorism and is surrounded by tens of millions of malcontents in unstable societies, still retains its democratic character and its hope."

It is not surprising, if Neo-Nazis and Islamists are cooperating on an operational level that evidence of similar strange bed-fellows appears also on the ideological level when it comes to antisemitism and anti-Israel sentiments. The exception is this time it is between Islamists and the

Left. As one scholar of European society notes ("The New Israelophobes," Robert Wistrich, *The Jerusalem Post*, 2 March 2004): "One of the more distinctive manifestations of this pathology is the sudden convergence of militant Islamists and the hard Left. Islamists may fundamentally disagree with radical Trotskyists about feminism, homosexuality or secularism, but they share an anti-Western, anti-globalist and anti-Zionist agenda. Moreover, opposition to Tony Blair's war in Iraq as well as commitment to the Palestinian cause has helped bring together these strange bedfellows."

Even some (U.S.) internal debate often (improperly) places Israel as the "bait" that drives national policies or against those who criticize Israel ("Israel Frenzy," William F. Buckley Jr., *The Sacramento Bee*, 3 March 2004). But by no means is this "frenzy" limited to the paranoid ranting of a Pat Buchanan ("[Trading Away America](#)," *The American Conservative*, 15 March 2004). Coping with the hateful propaganda by faculty and students across U.S. campuses is at times - ironically - left to commentators who have psychiatric training yet cannot speak cogently against terrorism and those supporting it ("*Post Columnist: 'Hope' for Israel*," Shruti Mathur John Hopkins Newsletter, 27 February 2004).

In this complex world of hate, murder, cynical pursuit of power and relentless dehumanization of people whose sins amount to who they are or how successful they have become, it is sad that the obvious has to be pointed out to media leaders who somehow shy away from exposing terrorists and their ideologies for what they are. It is also sad that one has to look hard to find a consoling point in a violent movie only to realize the point is found by not being included in it. This is a difficult world to live in, one that needs to be adjusted to, or better said, needs some serious readjustment.