

Spiritual Leaders and Whiners: It's All Part of Terrorists Job Description

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By Robbie Friedmann

The ongoing saga of insanity in the Middle East continues with some of the spectators helping to promote it even further. Reuters reports that Arafat "does not see" Gibson's film as antisemitic ("Yasser Arafat Says Gibson Film Not Antisemitic," Reuters, 20 March 2004). The film's character is a matter for an entirely different discussion. The point is the credibility of the one asked to pass judgment on this topic. Asking Arafat to render judgment on this matter - and then report it - is tantamount to asking Hitler if the "final solution" was antisemitic or selecting a pedophile to serve on a jury of someone accused of child molestation.

This same leader who asked for a million so-called "martyrs" (they have given the term such a bad name) to give their life for the "march to Jerusalem" (namely the elimination of Israel) and who said he wants to be one too, is now fearful for his own life and who is he asking for help? He runs whining to the CIA with crocodile tears complaining the Israelis want to kill him instead of thanking them for keeping him alive this long ("U.S. Refuses to Guarantee Arafat's Well-being: Palestinian leader asks CIA for U.S. guarantee that he will not suffer the same fate as Yassin, but he was rebuffed," Amir Rapoport, *Ma'ariv*, 26 March 2004).

Arafat loves young boys so much (his own daughter is being pampered in Paris) that he willingly sacrifices them at a young age unless they are prevented from dying by watchful Israeli security forces ("[Israeli Soldiers Thwart a Boy's Suicide Bombing Attempt](#)," Greg Myre, *The New York Times*, 25 March 2004). Then the Palestinian propaganda machine complains the child was 16.5 and not 14.5 as the Israelis initially reported, as if this difference matters and as if homicidal child abuse is not taking place ("IDF Accused of Using Boy Bomber for Propaganda Purposes: Relatives of youngster charge army deliberately misrepresented boy's age," Marwan Atamana, *Ma'ariv*, 25 March 2004).

Arafat's propaganda machine goes a step further, blaming Israel as encouraging child-terror for its own purposes ("Palestinian Authority Libel: Israel encourages PA child terror for PR gain," Itamar Marcus and Barbara Crook, *Palestinian Media Watch Bulletin*, 25 March 2004) thus twisting facts in a relentless effort to portray themselves as victims.

Palestinians refer to terror incidents as "work" with a job description that includes wearing an explosive vest ("Wanted Militant Killed in Van Blast in West Bank Camp of Balata," Amos Harel and Arnon Regular, *Ha'aretz* and Agencies, 26 March 2004): "Palestinian sources confirmed Israel Defense Forces" claims that the explosion was the result of a work accident, saying that the militant had an explosives belt at the time of the blast."

News services add their own abuse of language when they report the explosive charge blew off "prematurely" ("Israelis Quell Attack from Sea," Jason Keyser, Associated Press, 27 March 2004). Unwittingly they are taking the point of view of the terrorist. Of course, from his vantage

point it blew up "prematurely" but from the vantage of point of scores of potential victims it blew up in a very timely fashion.

The biggest news last week was the elimination of Ahmad Yassin, head of the Hamas terrorist organization. Other than Hamas supporters and Israelis, for whom he was a notorious murderous figure - and a former prison inmate, the world knew little about him. In what was clearly an intelligence success ("Israel Sees Yassin Hit as Fruition of Gaza Intelligence Network," AFP, 23 March 2004) the Israelis were able to find a window of opportunity that sent the murderous Hamas leader Yassin early one morning on the way to meet 72 virgins.

In an amazing show of support for Yassin and Hamas (under the guise of objecting to this killing) the Europeans condemned the elimination of this terrorist. The same British Foreign Minister who justified the war in Iraq and the hunt for Osama bin Laden ("[War 'More Justified' Now Insists Straw](#)," BBC, 26 January 2004) all but characterized this elimination as a crime against humanity ("Europe Condemns Israel for Yassin Killing: Palestinians Threaten Retaliation Against U.S.," Fred Barbash, *Washington Post*, 22 March 2004) arguing that Israel ". . . is not entitled to go for this kind of unlawful killing, and we therefore condemn it. It's unacceptable, it's unjustified and it's very unlikely to achieve its objective."

One Israeli editor argued this is an untenable position that also reflects a condescending attitude towards the Palestinians by considering them as less than human beings capable of any responsibility because it does not demand they stop the killing ("The Fear Factor: Palestinians want us to forget that they're human," Bret Stephens, *The Wall Street Journal*, 23 March 2004): "But if Mr. Straw and his colleagues do not do so, it is not from an excess of respect for the Palestinians, but rather its lack. They will, after all, be viewing them merely as weeds, not as humans capable of acting in their own best interests."

This should have been the last straw (pun intended) but instead this sycophant position appears to have been made to appease Arabs, as the Brits were afraid the elimination of Yassin might have "marred" the prospects for a successful visit of their Prime Minister to Ghaddafi's tent in Libya. Even the Chinese raised an eyebrow as to the nature of the visit, which sends the message to terrorists: you can blow up an airplane above our land, kill our citizens but we will deal with you and accept you back to civilization ("[Why Blair Shakes Hands with Gaddafi?](#)" *People's Daily*, 26 March 2004).

MEMRI has enumerated the unsurprising reaction from the Arab/Muslim world ("On the Killing of Sheikh Ahmad Yassin," News Tickers, 22 March 2004). Arafat hailed him as a "fighting hero sheikh" (while their "representative to the U.S." argued - from the West Bank - that he was disabled, blind and was hardly able to talk...). The Iranian leader stated, "The blood of Ahmed Yassin will nourish the Islamic resistance and will further flame Palestinians' anger. His [killing] will hoist the flag of the Palestinians' oppression... The occupying criminals should know their stupid showdown is the greatest witness to their failure and weakness. The Zionist regime is doomed to annihilation." The "moderate" Egyptian president expressed "Deep sorrow for the death of Sheikh Yassin and warned of the dire consequences of the completely meaningless and miscalculated Israeli action." Admittedly, all things considered his statement is far more moderate than the one by British Foreign Minister Jack Straw.

The "criticism," condemnations and "concerns," raised with respect to Yassin's elimination focus on four issues; 1) The Yassin strike will escalate the violence; 2) Yassin was an impotent old man; 3) Yassin was a "spiritual leader" who deserved immunity; and 4) Israel's strike creates a Western threat of Islamic terror. A media watch group debunks these as hollow myths arguing that it is Yassin who escalated terror; he was a disabled man but certainly very potent when it came to leading a murderous terror campaign. He was no more of a spiritual leader than war criminals convicted and executed after World War II. The threat of terror to the West was there years before Israel did anything to Yassin or Hamas ("[Sheikh Yassin's 'Happiest Day:' Media outlets perpetuate four myths about the late Hamas leader](#)," HonestReporting, Communique, 23 March 2004).

At the same time, the preposterous posturing by Arabs, Islamists and Western apologists - such as the British Foreign Minister and representatives of the European Union - by no means remain unchallenged. Numerous editorials and articles fully justify the Israeli action. One editorial looks at Hamas and Yassin as criminals who take advantage of the charities they distribute to perpetrate their murderous agenda, and compare Yassin to the Chicago mafia boss Al Capone ("[Gaza's Capone](#)," Editorial, *The Washington Times*, 25 March 2004). Strange as it may seem - and without defending Capone - Yassin and Hamas are far worse in scope, intent and glorification of the culture of death. The comparison of Yassin to a criminal is far more appropriate than elevating him to the level of "spiritual leader."

Israelis are used to criticism when taking an initiative. They were rebuked for the 1981 attack on the Osirak Iraqi nuclear site, or for building the security fence to protect against terrorists, and now for eliminating terrorists the same way the U.S. did recently in Yemen and has tried to do in the past against Osama bin Laden. Some called Yassin their bin Laden ("Our bin Laden," Editorial, *The Jerusalem Post*, 22 March 2004), dismissed outright the European hypocrisy on this issue and reminded the world the Europeans were rather brutal in their former colonies. They ask what else is left for Israelis to do to defend themselves against terrorism ("How Else is Israel Meant to Deal with Terror? A targeted killing," Uri Dromi, *International Herald Tribune*, 24 March 2004).

It is interesting and encouraging to see the Detroit paper endorsing the Israeli action, given that the Detroit area is home to the largest Arab/Islamic community in the U.S. ("Hamas Sheik Earned His Violent Death: Ahmed Yassin encouraged and directed suicide bombings aimed at innocent civilians," Editorial, *The Detroit News*, 23 March 2004). A leading Canadian paper sees positive results for the long run ("To Kill a Terrorist," *National Post*, Editorial, 23 March 2004)

The respected *London Times* shows no sympathy to terrorists and uses strong words comparing the terror threat to the Nazi threat the Brits experienced and the Israeli elimination of Yassin to the elimination of the Nazi leader Heydrich in May of 1942 ("Shed No Tears over the Killing of the Sheikh of Hate," Michael Gove, *The London Times*, 23 March 2004): "Some people in the BBC may consider it witty to call for the elimination of the Jewish people from their homeland. Others might consider it the charming hallmark of a deeply religious man to recruit, incite and inspire young men to kill civilians. And clearly it is no bar to success in Arab journalism to define as 'moderate' someone who thought the Jews started both world wars and continue to run the globe through their manipulation of the media and the all-powerful Rotary International. I may therefore risk putting myself out on a limb in the media community saying this, but I am

afraid I find the ambition to wipe Israel off the map repellent, the worship of death indefensible and efforts made to halt Hamas' uncompromising campaign of terror completely understandable."

The official U.S. reaction was complex. The President showed understanding to Israel's right to defend itself but warned that it needs to consider the consequences ("U.S. Says Israel Has Right to Self Defense," Adam Entous, Reuters, 22 March 2004). The National Security Advisor was "deeply troubled" and called for calm ("U.S. 'Troubled' by Israeli Attack: White House Working to Ease Damage to Foreign Policy Efforts," Robin Wright, *Washington Post*, 23 March 2004). The White House Spokesman also expressed understanding, but the State Department Spokesman was very critical.

One by-product of murderous terrorism is also cultural and linguistic terrorism. Various groups commandeer the language and abuse it to further their objective and the media plays along (to further its objectives). The U.N. and various "peace activist" groups certainly fall into this category ("[The Counterfeit Human Rights Industry](#)," Amnon Rubinstein, *Ha'aretz*, 21 March 2004). So, as expected, the pretentious U.N. Commission on Human Rights condemned Israel's elimination of Yassin ("[U.N. Rights Panel Condemns Israel's Killing of Hamas Leader](#)," Warren Hoge, *The New York Times*, 25 March 2004). The U.N. Security Council also wanted to rebuke Israel but a U.S. veto prevented that ("U.S. Vetoes U.N. Resolution Censuring Israel for Yassin Killing," Shlomo Shamir and Reuters, *Ha'aretz*, 26 March 2004).

In a pointed retort to Arab/Muslim, British, European and U.N. charges that eliminating Yassin was against international law, two legal scholars argue that the action was completely legal ("What Israeli Illegality? The Yassin assassination was perfectly lawful," Lee A. Casey & David B. Rivkin Jr., *National Review*, 25 March 2004). They also aptly argue that: "There is now little doubt that, in the years to come, transnational guerillas will be one of the most difficult challenges faced by civilized societies in the West - and in the East, North and South. Adopting legal rules designed to profit mid-20th-century national-liberation movements, and attempting to impose those rules on states that wisely eschewed them, is in no one's interest - except the terrorists." Whatever political chits European leaders may collect today by attacking Israel will very likely be paid for later in innocent blood. Sheik Yassin's death certainly revealed a humanitarian crisis - but in the cabinet rooms of Europe, not the streets of Gaza."

One of the few commentators who consistently shows a deep understanding as to the complexity of challenges that terrorism poses argues ("We Are Finishing the War: Anatomy of our struggle against the Islamicists," Victor Davis Hanson, *National Review Online*, 26 March 2004) that "...we are witnessing a grand struggle between those who create things and those who can only destroy them, between those who are confident and build civilizations and those who have failed and turned vicious... We should remember that this war of barbarism against civilization is global and connected. Poor Mr. Villepin may ignore that his country's appeasement and profit-making in Iraq were helpful to Saddam Hussein's state-sponsored terrorism and he may believe that things are worse in Baghdad now. But he will learn that past French double-dealing, flamboyant anti-Americanism and obsequiousness to Iranian theocrats will win him no reprieve from these purveyors of a new Dark Age. The extremists will be just as likely to murder French children over banning headscarves as they would have had three Gallic divisions fought in Iraq."

Fiction writers insist the problem is not Islam but rather an extreme version of it - Wahhabism ("Desert Sect Sowed Seeds of Hatred," Frederick Forsyth, *The Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 19 March 2004). But some scholars argue that it is exactly Islam that is the problem ("Islam Plays for Keeps," Rachel Neuwirth, *The American Thinker*, 24 March 2004). For example the Islamic expert scholar [Hugh Fitzgerald](#) is quoted as maintaining that "...when it comes to Infidels, though the teaching in the schools of hatred for all Infidels is perhaps strongest in Wahhabi Islam, it is part of orthodox, mainstream Islam and should be understood as such...It was foolish to claim that the current crisis is the result of a 'handful of extremists'... It is not. Jihad is rooted in such central tenets of Islam as the uncompromising hostility between *dar al-Islam* and *dar al-Harb*, and the requirement that the war between the two go on forever until the final triumph of the former over the latter. ...These tenets are common to all of mainstream Islam, and any Muslim denying it is engaging in *taqiyya* or *kitman*, the religiously-sanctioned deception that explains so much of the lying about the nature of Islam that goes on all about us."

Neuwirth links Islamic hate for the "Little Satan" (Israel) and the "Big Satan" (the U.S.) but also notes that "...there is also some hypocrisy here. While America aggressively fights terrorists, she denies Israel the right to fight her own war against these same savages. This sends a message to the Arab-Islamic terrorists that America's war on terror is not completely sincere, nor is her heart totally in it. For if America were truly committed to 'root out terrorists,' she would turn the Israel Defense Forces loose on Yasser Arafat and his so-called Palestinian Authority, Hamas, Al-Aqsa Brigades, Hizbullah, Tanzim, PFLP, etc. And if Israel were unable or unwilling to do this, then America would do it for Israel...Israel's enemies are America's enemies, and Israel's enemies are also enemies of the shrinking civilized world."

To reinforce the point about the inherent nature of fanaticism in the Islamic world, if not the depravity of it, just view new rulings of Islamic clerics that delineate and regulate wife-beating ("Muslim Clerics on the Religious Rulings Regarding Wife-Beating," Steven Stalinsky & Y. Yehoshua, MEMRI, Special Report - Reform Project, 22 March 2004, No. 27).

The battle against terrorism is not only being fought in the streets of Gaza, the West Bank, inside Israel, Afghanistan or Iraq. Like movies, it will be fought anywhere, as it is likely to come to a "theater near you." It needs to be fought in the homeland as well. One of the most reputable Middle East scholars warns we are not careful enough in examining who we associate with and who we give undeserved legitimacy when we do that for groups that have proven links to terrorists. Such is the case of the U.S. Institute of Peace associating with the Washington-based Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy ("[The U.S. Institute of Peace Stumbles](#)," Daniel Pipes, *New York Sun*, 23 March 2004).

The same scholar also exposed foreign hostile interests in supporting academic endowed chairs in American universities, specifically the Edward Said Chair at Columbia University ("[Columbia U. Releases Edward Said Chair Donors: Names Arab Government](#)," Campus Watch.org, 19 March 2004): "Columbia is already known for the [lack of balance](#) in Middle East studies. The list of donors to the Edward Said Chair only confirms the problem. Particularly worrisome is the presence of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) among the donors. In brief, at Columbia right now, a political activist professor, paid in part by an Arab state, currently administers funds from U.S. taxpayers, in part for the purpose of 'outreach' to the public. Both Columbia alumni and taxpayers should find this shocking."

Some express concern that in this political election season the war on terrorism falls prey to political interests that only help in aiding the terrorists ("Comforting the Enemy," Ralph Peters, *The New York Post*, 25 March 2004).

Terrorists seem to take full advantage of open democracies offer in North America and Europe ("[As Europe Hunts for Terrorists, the Hunted Press Advantages](#)," Tim Golden, Desmond Butler and Don Van Natta Jr., *The New York Times*, 22 March 2004). Militant radical clerics in the heart of European capitals find fertile ground to sow the seeds of jihad with restless youth. The suspects are elusive, taking advantage of porous borders and making it very difficult for investigators to assemble clues. Not a very promising scenario for the upcoming summer Olympic games in Greece.

Indeed, the problem is not being able to or not willing to recognize the enemy. In old and modern wars there were flags, countries, uniforms and objectives that defined the boundaries of war. Terror as a strategy is something that experts understand, civilians fear, but politicians (and psychiatrists) do not yet know how to handle ("[The Secret War: On the North-West Frontier, soldiers are trying to tighten the noose around bin Laden's forces. But in Europe and America, there is no clear enemy to fight - yet every expert knows that a terrorist atrocity is coming](#)," Mark Townsend in Tangier, John Hooper in Madrid, Greg Bearup in Peshawar, Paul Harris in Washington, Peter Beaumont in Baghdad, Antony Barnett, Martin Bright, Jason Burke and Nick Pelham in London, *The Observer*, 21 March 2004).

For terrorists, everything is a target-rich environment. "For an increasing number of young Muslims, resistance to Western values is now a way of life. Most are not terrorists and those who are do not accept the term, because they believe they are fighting imperialism by Western infidels." Terrorists operate freely in Europe and between Europe and various Arab/Muslim countries. The London Police Commissioner revealed a definite link between al-Qaeda operatives in the UK and those who carried out the bombings in Madrid (through the extremist Syrian cleric Abu Dahdah, who is in jail in Spain).

The mastermind of the Madrid attack is considered to be al-Zarqawi, who from Madrid and Istanbul to Karbala and Nairobi, appears to have become the figurehead behind the bombings. And while the hunt after him is in full gear, experts assume that future bombers, like those who struck in Madrid, will be in a position to strike again. So in Pakistan they are hunting for holed up al-Qaeda operatives who probably managed to escape through some previously unknown tunnels and will show their faces (or voices) again in no time.

Thought you had enough absurdities this week? Here is one more to consider: A French lawyer who defended a Nazi war criminal and a known international terrorist (and lost both cases) has been selected by Saddam Hussein's "relatives" to defend him in his upcoming trial. How chic ("French Lawyer who Defended Klaus Barbie to Defend Saddam," Reuters, *Ha'aretz*, 27 March 2004).

Apparently he is not only a follower of the legal profession but [Jacques Verges](#) is also quite well-known in France as one of the richest lawyers there. That is of course not a crime but it is worth noticing his notoriety to be associated with shady characters. He has started his career as a

lawyer for Islamist/Communist Algerian terrorists in the late 1950s. His brother is a local communist politician and was charged for murdering his father's political opponent. He spent two years in Cambodia with Pol Pot and Khieu Sampan, who were his friends from college. He advocated against the existence of the State of Israel. Again, perhaps nothing criminal here but certainly not much to be proud of either. Unless of course you have the standards and character of Saddam Hussein. The two fit hand in glove.

Stay tuned.