

The Has-Been Diplomats Meet the Culture of Death

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By Robbie Friedmann

The Arab obsession with death (as evident in Palestinian and Lebanese terror attacks "inspired" by Iran, Syria, Egypt and others) is deeply embedded in their societies as they indoctrinate their children to aspire for "holy" death, which will bring them to heaven ("Ask for Death!" The Indoctrination of Palestinian Children to Seek Death for Allah - Shahada, Itamar Marcus, Palestinian Media Watch).

Their clerics even pray that their leader - Yasser Arafat - will die as a "martyr" ("PA Imam Prays for Arafat's Death as Shahid,- Itamar Marcus, Palestinian Media Watch, 7 May 2004): "we will pray to Allah: Grant the President *Shahada* (Martyrdom) for you. Yes, we do not pray - like other preachers pray - for longevity for the rulers; here in Palestine we pray: Lord, grant the President *Shahada* for you." This by no means suggests that Arafat is ready to die, but it sends a message he is thus readying many others to die for him.

In the meantime, when they do not kill themselves and murder others in the process, they "bravely" ambush a single car, killing an 8-month pregnant woman and her four children - ages 11, 9, 7 and 2 - and then at close range they shoot them again to "ascertain" their death ("Mother, Her Four Children Killed in Terror Attack in Gaza," Amos Harel, *Ha'aretz*, 3 May 2004).

Sadly, National Public Radio reported on this heinous murder as if the woman and children deserved to be shot because their mere presence "provoked" the terrorists to murder them ("[NPR Blames Mother and Daughters for their own Murders](#)," Tamar Sternthal, CAMERA, 5 May 2004). Clearly, those who do not care enough about their own lives, and the lives of their intended victims, do not care about the lives of their own people either ("Their Own Enemy," Editorial, *Daily Telegraph*, 25 April 2004). Even the Barbarians were not known to behave like that.

The cold-blooded murder of the pregnant Israeli mother and her four children has shocked even Amnesty International, which rightfully condemned the murder as constituting "crimes against humanity." Yet throughout the press release AI refers to "Palestinian armed groups" and "gunmen," not to terrorist organizations, and to the murder site as "occupied territory," not disputed territory ("Israel/Occupied Territories: AI condemns murder of woman and her four daughters by Palestinian gunmen," Amnesty International Public Statement, 4 May 2004). Perhaps it is time that AI gives amnesty to the victims, not the perpetrators. It can start by changing its name.

The mills of justice grind slowly but they do grind. Case in point is a British effort to get at those who support terrorism. Charges were filed against relatives for not assisting authorities in what could have prevented a terrorist attack in Israel by two British citizens ("The Farewell E-mails of British Suicide Bomber: Relatives charged with failing to give information that could have prevented an attack," Sean O'Neill, *The Times* (UK), 27 April 2004).

Yet, the fact that the world did not burst into an outrage raises the question as to why ("[And the World Still Remains Silent](#)," Rachel Raskin-Zrihen, *Jewish World Review*, 4 May 2004). The two answers are not pleasant: "...there is a collective understanding that Jews are unimportant, expendable or worse, justifiable targets," and ...the Palestinian Arabs are simply incapable of civilized behavior. The latter explanation...has terrifying and far-reaching implications that I would prefer not to contemplate, and which people all over the world, in the United States in particular, are dismissing as impossible...If the international acquiescence to, or rationalization of, the murder of that Jewish family is not a function of antisemitism or a belief that no better behavior can be expected from Palestinian Arabs, then it can only be a fear, a terror as it were, that to speak out against the wholesale slaughter of innocent Jewish men, women and even children may bring the wrath of the proverbial Hun down upon the protester. If that's it we are all doomed, of course, because that means the terrorists have already won."

And in a sense they have. The Palestinians felt pride with this murder, calling it a "heroic act." Yet world leaders continue to state they are working to provide the Palestinians with a state - even if 2005 is not a "realistic" date. If this is not rewarding terrorism than what is? In all likelihood, historical irony would make it that the murderers will get the home of the murdered family as a reward for their crime, if indeed Israel moves on with its disengagement plan ("[Abandoning Gaza Won't End Terrorism](#)," Jeff Jacoby, *Boston Globe*, 6 May 2004).

Indeed, as a respected analyst sees it ("Gated Community," Ehud Ya'ari, *Jerusalem Report*, 17 May 2004): "The Palestinians see the planned evacuation of the Gaza Strip as a victory, as the realization of the undeclared goal of the intifada -- the acquisition of territory and a sort of sovereignty in the absence of an agreement and concessions to Israel." Ya'ari also sees a glimmer of chance that those in the Palestinian camp who understand this could be a strategic defeat will "finally go for the elusive confrontation against Arafat." A long shot indeed.

The fact remains that Arab goals in general - and specifically the Palestinian goals - are delusional as well as threatening and dangerous to Israel and the West ("To be 'pro-Palestinian' is to live in a world of delusions," Clifford D. May, *The Union Leader*, 3 May 2004). Well, so were Hitler's. He was defeated, but at what horrendous human cost?

The challenge is not only to realize the gravity of the threat and danger but also to assess and predict the long-term cost so the sooner they are defeated the better. There is no luxury permitted in this battle ("Al-Qaeda's Poison Gas: The foiled attack in Jordan might have killed thousands," Editorial, *The Wall Street Journal*, 29 April 2004). Belatedly, yet in small doses, Israel has shown itself and the world how to handle this challenge ("EU vs. Hamas: Israel's doing what so many other nations signed on to do," Joshua Muravchik, *National Review*, 27 April 2004).

The Saudis must be frustrated. They thought that homegrown terrorism is to be uni-directionally exported against the West. They did not count on terrorism actively spawning on Saudi soil. So how do they explain it? They blame the Jews ("[Saudi Crown Prince on Yunbu Attack: Zionism is Behind Terrorist Actions in the Kingdom... I am 95% Sure of That](#)," MEMRI, Special Dispatch - Saudi Arabia/Arab Antisemitism Documentation Project, 3 May 2004, No. 706).

It was reported that Bush administration officials were "stunned" by this scurrilous statement. And to add fuel to the fire, a Saudi princess has expressed her "rage" regarding the criticism raised against the Saudis ("[Saudi Princess Responds to Charges of Antisemitism in Saudi Royal Family](#)," MEMRI, Special Dispatch - Saudi Arabia/Arab Antisemitism Documentation Project, 6 May 2004, No. 708) by charging that "enough is enough." She uses the classical guise that anti-Zionism is not antisemitism and the Saudis could not be antisemitic because they themselves are Semites (as if the term antisemitism was coined to denote Arabs). To support her point she cites a rabid antisemite as a "source." This is like getting a kosher stamp for and from a pig. She then goes on to suggest that surely the world would prefer the friendship of 1.5 billion Muslims over the tiny state of Israel. Perhaps we should thank her for outlining the zero-sum game approach the Arabs bring to this conflict, along with their resolve not to stop at anything short of achieving their objectives.

But fewer Americans than ever see the Saudis as friends and allies. A leading Texas paper has unmasked the Saudi fable by criticizing a veteran Saudi operative in the U.S., no other than their ambassador, Bandar. The paper calls Saudi Arabia part of the problem ("Saudi Terrorism Double Talk: Saudi diplomat's charm fails him - 'Saudi Arabia Is Part of the Problem of Terrorism -Not the Solution,'" *Dallas Morning News*, 30 April 2004). This paper is reported to be one of five placed on President Bush's desk every morning. Surely he will read it carefully given that the Saudis aim at more than Israel. Indeed, they actively seek to topple him ("The Saudi War on George Bush," Ed Lasky, *The American Thinker*, 10 March 2004).

To date Australia is the only continent that has not experienced a direct terrorist attack on its soil (not counting Australian victims in Bali). But no one is immune to the propaganda blitz that turns perpetrator into victim and victim to an evil war-criminal. In the U.S. Muslim advocacy groups are after anyone who dares to criticize terrorists and their supporters ("[CAIR's War on Conservative Radio](#)," Michelle Malkin, Townhall.com, 5 May 2004). Indeed, this is even acknowledged by Muslims in America who are concerned about the extremist take-over of their religious institutions ("[Hate at the Local Mosque](#)," Asra Q. Nomani, *The New York Times*, 6 May 2004).

Muslim advocacy groups shed slimy crocodile tears for their constituents under the guise of their "civil rights" being "violated" but never find it worthwhile to condemn the violation of civil rights of those who are victims of terrorism. Yet their brethren continue their blatant campaign of jihad against their host countries ("[Militants in Europe Openly Call for Jihad and the Rule of Islam](#)," Patrick E. Tyler and Don Van Natta Jr., *The New York Times*, 26 April 2004) or preposterously deflect cause and effect attributions when claiming the very terrorists are in the service of the U.S. government ("[Lebanese Member of Parliament Walid Jumblatt Interview: Al-Qaeda and bin Laden are Tools of U.S. Intelligence Agencies](#)," MEMRI, Special Dispatch - Lebanon/Jihad & Terrorism Studies Project, 28 April 2004, No. 702).

This forked-tongued approach to vilifying the victim while pretending to hold the same values the victim cherishes is also reflected in the way in which Arab leaders (particularly from Egypt and Saudi Arabia) present themselves as "friends and allies" of the U.S. At the same time they conduct a longstanding hate and vilification campaign - through the media, government statements, clergy and academia - portraying the U.S. (and of course Israel) as the enemy

("America-Hatred Among the Arabs: Time to put an end to the madness," Jeff Jacoby, *Jewish World Review*, 26 April 2004). A hate video clip from Egypt is rather illustrative ("Egyptian Video Clip: Hate USA and Israel," Itamar Marcus and Barbara Crook, *Palestinian Media Watch Bulletin*, 6 May 2004).

A recent conference on antisemitism in Europe dealt with the classical forms of this curse but not with its modern offspring. Israel has now replaced the individual Jew as a vilification object and candidate for extinction ("Europe Still Doesn't Get It," David Matas, *Globe and Mail*, 5 May 2004).

To a large extent this happened because the Arabs were successful in turning perpetrator into victim and victim into offender. They managed to portray the Palestinians as David and Israel as Goliath. Some irony in reversing these historical roles of the ancient Philistine, but even more so considering the existence of 22 Arab countries, hundreds of millions of Arabs in the area and a billion and a half Muslims around the world ("Appearance and Reality in the Middle East - Distinguishing David From Goliath," Louis Rene Beres, *The Jewish Press*, 14 April 2004).

The Arabs were also successful in eliciting the willing help of the Left (along with the traditional extreme Right) in Europe, the U.S. and even Israel to bring back the cry of "Hep" (*Hierosolyma est perdita* - Jerusalem is Destroyed) that so many thought had perished in the aftermath of World War II ("The Modern 'Hep! Hep! Hep!'" Cynthia Ozick, *The New York Observer*, 7 May 2004): The riddle of antisemitism - why always the Jews? - survives as an apparently eternal irritant. The German-Jewish philosopher Franz Rosenzweig, writing in 1916 of "hatred of the Jews," remarked to a friend, "You know as well as I do that all its realistic arguments are only fashionable cloaks." The state of Israel is our era's fashionable cloak mainly on the Left in the West, and centrally and endemically among the populations of the Muslim despotisms. But if one cannot account for the tenacity of antisemitism, one can readily identify it. It wears its chic disguises. It breeds on the tongues of liars. The lies may be noisy and primitive and preposterous, like the widespread Islamist charge (doggerelized by New Jersey's poet laureate) that a Jewish conspiracy leveled the Twin Towers. Or the lies may take the form of skilled patter in a respectable timbre while retailing sleight-of-hand trickeries - such as the hallucinatory notion that defensive measures of a perennially beleaguered people constitute colonization and victimization; or that the Jewish state is to blame for aggressions committed against it. Lies shoot up from the rioters in Gaza and Ramallah. Insinuations ripple out of the high tables of Oxbridge. And steadily, whether from the street or the salon, one hears the enduring old cry: "Hep! Hep! Hep!"

Just look at how institutionalized it has become in organizations such as the United Nations, which is clearly united against Israel ("Business as Usual: No love for Israel in Geneva," *National Review*, Anne Bayefsky, 26 April 2004), and whose chief emissaries call Israel the "greatest poison" in the area and get away with legitimizing the globalization of antisemitism ("The Real Mideast 'Poison,'" Charles Krauthammer, *The Washington Post*, 30 April 2004).

Now dozens of former British diplomats have chastised their prime minister for supporting the American policy in the Middle East ("The Seven Pillars of Chutzpah," *Wall St Journal--Europe*,

28 April 2004). The problem is that what these former diplomats have supported for over 40 years amounted to failed policy prescriptions. The cocktail crowd may be out of touch with reality but certainly not with their colleagues overseas. A few well-coordinated phone calls between glasses of sherry and lo and behold their American colleagues have almost simultaneously issued the same rebuke (["Bush Under Fire from U.S. Ex-Envoys: About 50 retired U.S. diplomats have written to President George W Bush to criticize current American policy towards the Middle East,"](#) BBC News, 4 May 2004).

Not all former diplomats have bought into this not-so-innocent initiative ("My Fellow Ex-Ambassadors are Not an Attractive Sight," Robin Renwick, *Daily Telegraph*, 2 May 2004) as after all, they have all failed to mention where their livelihood is coming from and hence where their sympathies lie. They ought to consider that the statements they issued might constitute supporting the enemy, certainly not the interest of their government ("Diplomats Failed to Disclose Their Own Arab Links," Chris Hastings, David Bamber and Roya Nikkhah, *Daily Telegraph*, 2 May 2004).

Greased by Arab money, the former diplomats made themselves nothing more than a shameless special interest group in the interest of the Arab/Muslim flag, certainly not the civil servants their own governments deserve. No offense, but this is analogous to judges of fine wine tasting events one would not expect to also serve as judges of hot chili competitions.

Indeed, the former envoys' statements across both sides of the pond reveal a deep lack of understanding of policies and politics in the Middle East. The preserve-a-despot-at-all-cost under the guise of "stability" is exactly what causes the problems in the area. Catering to the whims of the despots might fill the pockets of the diplomats, but empty the coffers of their countries and weaken their standing and objectives (["Mideast Instability? Bring it on,"](#) Mark Steyn, *Jewish World Review*, 26 April 2004).

As one of the leading scholars on Islam suggested, every word and signal from the West is scrutinized for signs of weakness or uncertainty ("Islam's Interpreter: Bernard Lewis talks about his seventy years spent studying the Middle East - and his thoughts on the region's future," *Atlantic Unbound*, 29 April 2004). Therefore, instead of presenting a clear and united front, such "diplomatic" statements end up serving the Arab interest of weakening the West.

Two setbacks in Iraq in the last couple of weeks are instructive of the difficulties the U.S.-led coalition is encountering there. They have implications for the West's fight against terrorism. The first instance is the decision not to unleash a full-scale assault on the insurgents in Fallujah and to perhaps even have joint patrols with Iraqi officers. While it is understandable that there is a desire to obtain advantage without battle, this has very little leg to stand on. Wars are not sterile and given the performance of the Iraqis thus far with an estimated 50% deserting or acting against the U.S., it does not appear that much hope should be put on them. The Israelis had their experience of joint patrols with Palestinians and it backfired badly. But the more serious implication is the weakness it broadcasts to the insurgents encouraging them to continue under the assumption that Americans do not wish to fight ("The Fallujah Stakes: The insurgents understand guns, not diplomacy," Editorial, *The Wall Street Journal*, 26 April 2004).

The second setback is the fiasco with the Iraqi prisoners. But if the revelation about humiliating the prisoners is a fiasco then the response to it adds yet even more to the setback and not only in Iraq. Claims that we need to "restore our honor" have limited value for internal consumption ("[Restoring Our Honor](#)," Thomas L. Friedman, *The New York Times*, 6 May 2004). The problem with such a position is that they may impress American constituencies and Western followers, but not those we want to impress or placate. Was it horrible and repulsive? Certainly. Should it be handled severely? Very much so. But there are proper channels for doing it, including legal due process. Military courts could - and should - do more than an adequate job at investigating, prosecuting and punishing those who did that and those who are responsible for it. That should have sent the proper message of how our society handles transgressions.

But three days of groveling apologies by the U.S. President and Secretary of State? That is highly unlikely to win over the hearts and minds of terrorists. On the contrary, it sends a message of an America that is not sure of itself, that is willing to humiliate itself not merely because it believes that something wrong was done but because it believes that this way it will win (or not lose) "friends." The test of course will be in the results and those are not likely to yield many dividends in this direction ("Real Thugs Unworthy of Apology," Steven Zak, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 6 May 2004).

Much of the trouble in Iraq is the result of Iranian meddling for the simple reason that Iran wants its sphere of influence to remain untouched by an American victory or an Iraqi regime that would be threatening to Teheran's religious and political domination ("[Iran's Stirrings in Iraq](#)," Dr. Nimrod Raphaeli, MEMRI, Inquiry & Analysis - Iran/Iraq, 5 May 2004, No. 173). That explains Al-Sadr's visit to Iran, the training camps there for his supporters, Iranian intelligence services operating in Iraq, funds to support secular groups, the operation through their proxy the Hizbullah, Iranian pilgrims inundating Iraqi holy sites and Iranian flags being flown there.

Some suggest the use of "soft power" (in addition to "crude power") but the problem is that the equation is overly tilted towards social and cultural services without understanding what makes the population tick and without giving a fuller force its due respect. As long as the radicals and lunatics control the street and the extremist rhetoric dominates the Islamic narrative, then no amount of soft power will ever do the job. When looking into the elements of soft power it turns out we are doing it anyway, and to suggest that world resentment against the U.S. will increase because fewer visas are granted to potential (Muslim) students goes to show how deep is the misunderstanding of what prompts social, political and terrorist action ("[Sell It Softly: Persuasively promoting American values and culture will work better than either carrots or threats to influence the Middle East](#)," Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Los Angeles Times*, 25 April 2004).

The Iraqi prison fiasco could not have come out at a worse time for Israel. The White House has already retracted its commitments to Ariel Sharon in order to placate Arab leaders ("U.S. Retreats from Bush Remarks on Sharon Plan: Effort Is Intended To Placate Arabs," Glenn Kessler, *Washington Post*, 5 May 2004) although today it refused to back up President Bush's statement that a Palestinian state is not likely to be established before the end of 2005. Arafat was his angry self but actually what could have made him happier than the keeping status quo?

We are incensed about our own transgressions even more than about atrocities committed against us. The prison fiasco got more press coverage and already congressional hearings and presidential apologies than what followed the murder and mutilation of four American civilian contractors in Iraq. The world has seen the murder of a pregnant mother and her four children, and by and large it has not stopped breathing in shock or expressed its outrage. If it is any consolation, at times it gives the same disproportional attention to celebrities who messed up such as Michael Jackson or that football player who was charged with killing his wife..... consolation of fools indeed. Perhaps when the lives of those bought-up diplomats would be at risk they will understand the dangers of the culture of death better and then perhaps would be willing to truly support and better serve their own countries.