

# Radical Solution to Radical Extremism

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By Robbie Friedmann

The corrupt criminal murderer who still passes for a world leader - elevated to a Nobel Peace Prize winner - realizes full well the world still does not get it. He wants to destroy Israel, and the world (and Israel) is letting him get away with it ("[Arafat: 'No One in This World Has the Right to Concede the Refugees' Right to Return to Their Homeland; The Palestinian Heroes Will Fight for This Right](#)," MEMRI, Special Dispatch No. 717, 19 May 2004). So much for the Geneva Accord, which his Israeli counterparts hailed as a major achievement since the Palestinians have "given up their 'right of return.'"

He continues to guide hate sermons from mosques ("PA Politicians Direct Mosque Hate Sermons," Itamar Marcus, Palestinian Media Watch Bulletin, 16 May 2004) and summons the Palestinian masses to battle. After all, what is a million more or less of his people for him ("PA called Women, Children and Elderly to Wednesday's Battle," Itamar Marcus and Barbara Crook, Palestinian Media Watch Bulletin, 20 May 2004)? And the price he pays for this? After almost four years of terror (not counting the 36 years of terror he initiated beforehand), thousands of Israeli casualties and many American ones as well, he and the Palestinians have "lost the sympathy" of some in the Israeli Left ("The Death of Sympathy," Larry Derfner, *Jerusalem Post*, 16 May 2004). Now he must be really scared. As if sympathy is what he has been after. And from the Israeli Left.

Last month a Muslim cleric in Gaza- paid by Arafat's PA - took pride in "playing with heads of Israeli soldiers like soccer balls" and threatened to do more of the same by inciting his flock to terrorize Israelis. This is what an Israeli commander referred to as the deep cultural divide between murderers who glorify death and those defending against it ("Givati Commander: The Palestinians have different values than we do: Colonel Eyal Eisenberg tells soldiers experiences under fire and Palestinian hatred," Amir Buhbut, *Ma'ariv*, 18 May 2004): "I do not expect understanding from them. Let's put things on the table. I have no expectations from the Palestinians. Their scale of values and mine are different."

The President of the United States provided the single leadership voice that supported Israel in its operation in Gaza ("[Bush Backs Israel's Defense](#)," Dana Milbank and Glenn Kessler, *Washington Post*, 19 May 2004). But after mounting international criticism the U.S. abstained and thus allowed a quick U.N. condemnation of Israel. U.S. President George W. Bush rebuked Israel - if uncomfortably - for the operation on the same day the U.S. military had to defend the killing of civilians in Iraq ("Bush's Support for Israel Falters," Barry Schweid, Associated Press, *Las Vegas SUN*, 20 May 2004).

The U.N. was indeed too quick to denounce the Israeli reconstruction operation (namely the demolition of smuggling tunnels and terrorist-infested buildings) in Gaza. The U.N. - which has yet to condemn anything (like murder) the Palestinians do - eagerly awaits any pretense to condemn Israel ("The U.N. is a Failed Organization," Rachel Neuwirth, 15 May 2004). Given the "hope" that many put in the U.N. to resolve world problems, "It is time to stop the pretense that

the U.N. is anything but a hopelessly corrupt, ever mischievous, ever-conniving, ever anti-democratic, failed organization. It is time . . . to establish an alternative mechanism for dealing with the world's ills, and this time, let it be 'by invitation only!' The U.N. must be radically overhauled in a way that requires member states to be at least on the road to democracy and all voting rights to be restricted to established, representative democracies. If not, it is time to put the old slogan into effect: get the U.S. out of the U.N., and the U.N. out of the U.S."

Claiming that Israel's operation in Gaza violates international law is utter nonsense ("What are Israel's Legal Justifications for House Demolitions: Justus Reid Weiner responds to a just-released Amnesty report, critical of Israel's house demolition policies," AME exclusive, 17 May 2004). On the contrary, the operation constitutes a legitimate defensive action against a continuous onslaught of terror that has not been stopped by other means ("[Israel Fights Back](#)," Joseph Farah, WorldNetDaily.com, 19 May 2004).

Surprisingly, the BBC demonstrated that it can provide a valuable must-see account when it wants to, as it did in the case of the Israeli operation in Gaza ("[In Pictures: Searching for Gaza's Tunnels](#)") but even that single piece was an exception to the otherwise deriding and accusatory tone of BBC reporting. Similarly, National Public Radio continued its shameful biased coverage against Israel by turning to a *Guardian* correspondent who gave over his biased opinions using Palestinian opinions as facts. He failed to counterbalance it with Israeli views or facts and context from the field ("[NPR Turns to Guardian Reporter for Lessons in Israel Bashing](#)," Ricki Hollander, CAMERA, 19 May 2004).

Such bias is not limited to NPR. Observe the recent watchdog group comparison on the differential treatment Israel and the U.S. received while undertaking very similar activities (Iraq and Gaza). The picture is not heartwarming. The *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, BBC, Reuters and AFP all opened with headlines and first sentences that were balanced vis-a-vis the U.S. bombing of the "wedding party" (which turns out not to have been a wedding at all) in Iraq. On the other hand, they rushed to judge Israel's action in Gaza, when even under fire the Israeli soldiers secured humanitarian aid to the residents ("Balanced in Iraq, Tilted in Gaza," Communique, HonestReporting, 20 May 2004). More emphasis was given to "homeless refugees" than to a pregnant mother and her four children who were murdered by terrorists. Or for that matter the prison fiasco in Iraq.

An editorial comment provides a poor excuse as to why the Iraqi prison abuse story and the beheading of Nick Berg are "not equal stories." By suggesting the prison story is "unfolding" and is an "on-going investigation," the paper justifies its own (and the general media's) misplaced focus ("Berg Murder, Prison Abuses Not Equal Stories," Mike King, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 21 May 2004). Apparently the editorial office thought ample material could not be provided about the blood-thirst of the perpetrators, the routinization of the culture of violence and global aims at attacking anything not Muslim (and even the Muslims they do not like). This approach is indicative of the shallow understanding of what the real issues are and how the media should cope with them. The fact remains, it is easier to vilify our own negative behavior than that of an enemy, perhaps partly because we believe we can make a difference with the former but not with the latter.

What is erroneously called torture rather than abuse or humiliation, is getting out of proportion

(" [Atrocities Happen in War, but Self-Flagellation Only Satiates a Deranged Individual](#)," Jackie Mason & Raoul Felder, *Jewish World Review*, 20 May 2004): "Americans should understand that self-flagellation only satiates a deranged individual. They should also take note of Lincoln's observation that dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate for the stormy present." Yes, the abusers have offended our sensibilities, but has anyone done an analysis of the value of humiliation in interrogation? Would not humiliation be even preferable to torture? Our over-reaction to the prison fiasco may backfire at our intelligence collection capabilities and thus to the likelihood of us winning this war with minimal cost ("Geneva for Demagogues: The facts about the rules of war and U.S. interrogation in Iraq," Editorial, *The Wall Street Journal*, 17 May 2004). After all, "This is a war for the future of civilization. If we allow the immoral parts of the Muslim world, Europe and Scandinavia to make up their own rules and criticize the good guys (U.S.), then we endanger everything." ("The Congressional Abuse Excuse," Irwin Graulich, *MichNews.com*, 18 May 2004).

While the West is still reeling from the horrifying video of Berg's beheading (when the media allows such moments in between excessive reporting on the prison fiasco) it is important to note the beheading was more than an act of cruelty. It was a deed that gives vicious animals and barbarians a good name. It constitutes a call for similar acts of slaughter against infidels ("[Berg Video Called How-to-Kill Demo: Translator-expert sees jihadist message to Muslims worldwide](#)," Joseph Farah's G2 Bulletin, *WorldNetDaily.com*, 17 May 2004).

This should be of little surprise when contrasted against centuries of such a tradition ("Chopping Heads," Amir Taheri, *New York Post*, 14 May 2004): "Cutting heads is frequently practiced against clerics from non-Islamic faiths or even rival Islamic sects. At least four Christian priests and nine Sunni Muslim muftis have been murdered in that way in Iran since 2001." Some do understand the message rather well ("A Bit of Perspective Please: A culture that glories in the death of innocents makes clear whom we are fighting -and why," Mortimer B. Zuckerman, *U.S. News and World Report*, 24 May 2004): "President Bush's critics seek to use Donald Rumsfeld as a pinata and this scandal as a chance to discredit the entire Iraqi venture. But we must not lose faith. The murder of Nick Berg underscores the stakes. Our enemies will never understand America and its values, but they would surely recognize weakness, if we ever allowed them to see it."

With the fervor of antisemitism flourishing worldwide one would think Jews are beheading Western hostages rather than being its victims (Pearl, Berg). From the birthplace of Hitler to the U.S. Senate, antisemitism raises its ugly head again with impunity. An Austrian paper has published a cartoon so vile that it prompted the Israel Holocaust Memorial to issue a rare criticism against showing Palestinians as victims of the Holocaust and Israeli soldiers as Nazis ("Yad VaShem Protests Austrian Newspaper Caricature," Etgar Lefkovits, *The Jerusalem Post*, 20 May 2004). And a Democratic U.S. Senator stated that President Bush went to war with Iraq to "protect Israel and appease American Jews" ("Hollings Defends Statements on Israel," *The Associated Press*, 19 May 2004). This statement was more offensive to the American President than to Jews. Even more so to the values the Democrats (should) stand for and for which they are seeking and counting on Jewish votes.

As these two examples indicate, the West is accusing Jews of "dual loyalty" (implying loyalty to Israel first) and uses anonymous sources to spread lies and fabrications from those who have

more than an axe to grind by serving as foreign agents ("You Must be Likud! Anti-Jewish rhetoric infects the West," Michael Rubin, *National Review*, 19 May 2004). In addition, there is little doubt antisemitism has gone global or that Israel and the Jewish people are its targets without an end in sight, short of antisemites achieving their objectives or being defeated ("Think Again: al-Qaeda," Jason Burke, *Foreign Policy*, May/June 2004): "A two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which would still leave the 'Zionist entity' intact, would offer little succor to the wounded pride of any committed militant or to the pride of those in the wider community who support and legitimize extremism and violence."

Hollywood escapism is acceptable as long as it is not a substitute for in-depth understanding of the threat that international terrorism poses. We must heed the threat not only against Israel but against the U.S. that Hamas leader Khalid Al-Mish'al recently issued and which ought to be taken very seriously ("The New Leadership of Hamas: A Profile of Khalid Al-Mish'al," Yehudit Barsky, Director, Division on Middle East and International Terrorism, American Jewish Committee, May 18, 2004): "If the [Islamic] nation would fight the same way [that Palestinians and Iraqis] are fighting in Rafah, Jenin and Falluja, then, by God, we will defeat both the United States and Israel...The Qassam Brigades swear that their retaliation will be 100 martyrdom attacks in the heart of your homes. We will burn the earth under your feet."

These are not only words of a single leader of a single terrorist group. Rather, it is part of a wider and cancerous effort that has already spread in the home base of Western society in Europe, Australia ("Man Tried for Attempt to Blow up Israeli Embassy in Canberra," The Associated Press, 17 May 2004), England and the U.S. ("The Radical Islamic Terrorist Presence in the United States and the Ongoing Campaign against Global Terror," Yehudit Barsky, American Jewish Committee, Global Jewish Radio, 19 May 2004). Against this backdrop it is not surprising to learn the recent FBI warning about possible suicide bombing attacks on U.S. soil ("[FBI Issues Homeland Suicide Bomber Warning U.S. Law Enforcement Warned to Look for Tell-Tale Signs](#)," Elaine Shannon, *Time*, 20 May 2004).

Terror is also taking place on Saudi soil, but increasingly it turns out that not only does its government support terrorism (as long as it is not directed against it), but that guards who are supposed to be loyal to the Royal House have become part of the terror network ("Saudi Royal Guards 'aided al-Qaeda' in Riyadh Bombings that Left 35 Dead," Mark Hollingsworth, *Independent*, 16 May 2004).

In this context the call for a radical solution to a radical problem is starting to emerge, but with a caveat. Given the role modern media plays, it is increasingly a hindrance whether it is embedded on site (as in Iraq, Viet-Nam) or absent from it (as in Jenin or the Gulf War). There is a shorter frame for operations than ever before. Military forces no longer have the "luxury" of operating without being under a microscope by those who understand little about context and perspective, as the latest Israeli incursion into Gaza has proven ("Kill Faster!" Ralph Peters, *New York Post*, 20 May 2004): "...when a situation demands a military response, our forces must bring to bear such focused, hyper-fast power that our enemies are overwhelmed and destroyed before hostile cameras can defeat us."

Indeed, conducting wars these days against self-declared enemies is far more difficult than logic would suggest, mostly because of self-imposed difficulties. Imagine a theater critic who reviews a new play and starts shouting at the actors during the first act. He refuses to wait for the play to end and submit his critique for the following morning's paper. The unwillingness and lack of preparedness to unite against such an enemy is nothing but astounding. Perhaps it takes a chess champion to point out that the West is playing moral games that amount to shooting itself in the foot by not recognizing the moral distinctions between perpetrator and victim ("Stop the Moral Equivalence: Suicide-bombing and hostage-taking vs. democracy," Garry Kasparov, *The Wall Street Journal*, 19 May 2004): "In this fight the enemy does not play by our rules, or by any rules at all. WMD will be in terrorist hands eventually; conventional wisdom recognizes this reality. Concessions and negotiations at best only delay catastrophe. Europe and its people are in this war whether they acknowledge it or not. Those who would appease terrorists must realize that by pretending this battle does not exist, they will soon have blood on their hands--both real and metaphorical."

As the Prime Minister of Singapore articulated, the enemy is more than terror or jihad. It is also the need to recognize that a defeat in Iraq could make terror and jihad successful. It is for that reason the forces which are interested in preserving themselves and defeating terrorism need to unite ("Unite to Fight Terrorism," Goh Chok Tong, Council of Foreign relations Speech, 6 May 2004). The Prime Minister deferred to U.S. leadership in the fight against terrorism but not once did he suggest uniting under the umbrella of the U.N.

The "silent majority" of Muslims and their various advocacy groups have not yet broken their silence about terrorism, jihad and their attitude to the West. The very few individuals who do are too far in between and constitute a rather unpopular and rejected - if not vilified - fringe in the Arab/Muslim world. Yet it is encouraging to find out that such voices exist at all ("Blind Faith: Muslims, like Jews and Christians, must own up to problems in their holy book," Irshad Manji, *The Wall Street Journal*, 20 May 2004).

In fact, the silence of the Muslim majority gives way to the noise the radical element of Islam is emitting without interruption and with fairly loud support from groups not typically associated with Wahabbi causes. These groups gladly jump on the bandwagon of bashing the same America they sought refuge or a better life in and now do their best to destroy ("Muslim Silence... and Muslim Noise," Stephen Schwartz, Tech Central Station, 17 May 2004).

American Arab/Muslim advocacy groups brazenly blame the (American) "culture of hate" as responsible for the Iraqi prison fiasco: "The first thing that has to be said bluntly is that for any Arab group to complain of a 'culture of hate' allegedly existing in the U.S. represents nerve almost beyond description. Arabs, both Muslim and Christian, flourish in America. Arabs live much better in the U.S. than in France, which now issues oceans of crocodile tears over America's so-called 'dirty war' in Iraq. But if there is anyplace in the world known for a 'culture of hate' it is the core of the Arab world, from whence such practices as videotaped beheading of utter innocents originate."

As long as such support exists, then condemnation of religious abuses by any entity that is not Muslim will have a very limited effect ("U.S. Commission Slams Saudi Arabia, Iran, Egypt for Abuses of Religious Freedom," AFP, 12 May 2004). Criticism and change both have to come

from within Islam ("Heresy and History," Angelo M. Codevilla, *The American Spectator*, 14 May 2004).

But that does not mean the West has the time and luxury to wait until a reformation movement will take root in Islam - if ever. It needs to recognize that the enemy is not one organization (al-Qaeda), that this war did not start on 9/11 and that it will not be over until the enemies (*plural*) are disarmed and dead ("[The Enemy is Not Just Al-Qaeda](#)," Robert Spencer, FrontPageMagazine.com, 20 May 2004). In the meantime, what the West needs to do is to recognize who the war is against and who the enemy is ("The War that Dare Not Speak Its Name: The battle is against militant Islam, not 'Terror.'" Andrew C. McCarthy, *National Review*, 13 May 2004): "That militant Islam is our enemy is a fact. That it is the object of our war is a fact. That we need to empower real moderates is a fact. And we need to talk about these facts. We are not helping the authentic moderates if we avoid having the conversation that so needs to be had if the militants hiding in the weeds we've created are going to be exposed and marginalized. If we fail to be critical, if we fail to provoke that discussion, it will continue to be militants who hold positions of influence and who control indoctrination in communities, madrassas, prisons and other settings where the young, the vulnerable and the alienated are searching for direction."

Given that the enemy is no longer restricted to a specific geographical area or associated with a specific country of origin or activity it is also important to recognize that today many terrorist acts are committed by second generation immigrants who are based in Europe or even by converts who are less suspect ("[Europe's Threat to the West](#)," Daniel Pipes, *New York Sun*, 18 May 2004).

The writing is already on the wall (newspapers, radio, TV, Web). We just need to make sure we are skilled enough to read and act upon it. We have been there before recently and missed twice. We misread the intentions of the Iranian revolutionaries (despite them being sprayed all over American campus walls). This allowed one of the vilest regimes posing one of the greatest threats to world peace to ascend to power. And when this regime took [Americans as hostages for 444 days](#) former U.S. President Jimmy Carter used appeasement (and resorted to a failed rescue operation) instead of issuing a stern ultimatum. Did it ever cross Carter's mind that the human rights abuses of a few (million) in Iran under the Shah were substituted by far worse abuses to many (millions and more) all over the world? One can hope we have learned the proper historical lesson from this. If not, we will pay dearly again.