

The price of ignoring Palestinians' needs

By Natan Sharansky International Herald Tribune February 1, 2006

Hamas's victory in the Palestinian elections is the logical outcome of a "peace process" more than a decade long that completely ignored what was happening within Palestinian society.

Rather than seriously link the peace process to the building of a free society among the Palestinians, the democratic world, including Israel, turned a blind eye as Palestinian civil society was hollowed out, its streets taken over by armed thugs and its youth indoctrinated to glorify suicide bombers and despise Israel and America, Jews and Christians.

The international community repeated its shallow formula for peace like a broken record. International legitimacy, Israeli concessions and billions of dollars in aid were used to strengthen Yasser Arafat and Mahmoud Abbas's Palestinian Authority - the "moderates" who had ostensibly renounced violence and accepted Israel's existence - and marginalize extremist groups like Hamas.

The Palestinian election result is the fruit of this failed approach to peacemaking, which amounted to nothing more than supporting a corrupt dictatorship. The world believed that seriously pressing Palestinian leaders to enact real reform would only weaken the Palestinian Authority internally and strengthen Hamas. The truth is precisely the opposite. By failing to insist that the Palestinian Authority dedicate itself to improving the lives of Palestinians, the United States, Israel, the EU and other players in the peace process made themselves contemptible in the eyes of Palestinians who saw their lives only getting worse.

When Arafat died, I had hopes that perhaps a new path to peace would be taken. But it was not too late. Abbas was not told unequivocally that without serious reforms, he would receive no support from the free world. On the contrary, he was given a pass when he blatantly refused to confront terror groups.

For its part, Israel's government, encouraged by the effusive praise of the international community, embarked on a foolish policy of one-sided concessions, which, as I feared when I resigned from the government last May, only strengthened the forces of terror within Palestinian society.

To the outside world, the Palestinians have now chosen the party of terror over the party of peace. But in the eyes of most Palestinians, the differences between Hamas and the "moderate" Fatah were not primarily in their views toward Israel. In fact,

satellites of Fatah, such as Tanzim and the Al Aksa brigades, were no less responsible for the terrorism against Israel than were Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Indeed, the leading figure on Fatah's list was Marwan Barghouti, a man serving five life sentences in an Israeli prison for his role in terror attacks.

No, the real difference for the Palestinians was that a Fatah-run Palestinian Authority was rightly seen as a corrupt and feckless organization that had done and would continue to do nothing to improve Palestinian lives, whereas Hamas was untainted by corruption and appreciated for providing real social services. With the vote being a choice between corrupt terrorists dedicated only to themselves and honest terrorists who are also dedicated to others, is it any surprise that Hamas won by a landslide?

I believe that many Palestinians who voted for Hamas voted to end corruption, to restore law and order and to implement real reform; the slogan that Hamas chose in its election campaign was not "Throw the Jews into the Sea," but rather "Change and Reform." The paradox is that the only party that Palestinians see as credible on this internal reform agenda was a terror organization dedicated to Israel's destruction and which has declared President George W. Bush "the enemy of God" and "the enemy of Islam."

Now that the Palestinian Authority's corrupt dictatorship has collapsed and a terror organization riding a wave of resentment with the status quo is assuming power, the free world has an opportunity to restore moral clarity to the peace process.

The world must base their support for this new regime on two ironclad conditions. First, Hamas must explicitly abandon the goal of destroying Israel and renounce terrorism. Second, it must dedicate itself toward building a free society for the Palestinians.

For 12 years, Israel and the world have imposed the first condition and ignored evidence when it was violated. As for the second condition, not only were democratic reforms seen as irrelevant to peace, supporting a corrupt dictatorship was seen as essential.

If the new Palestinian regime does not abide by these conditions, the free world, including Israel, must actively confront it and withhold legitimacy, money and concessions. But we must also seek ways to support any Palestinian individuals and organizations that do abide by these conditions.

My fear is that the results of the Palestinian elections will discredit the whole concept of democratic reform in the Middle East. But that would be to discredit an idea without it having been tried. For all the talk of the need for Palestinian reform and democracy, the only thing that the world insisted upon was holding elections. Elections do not make a free society. Elections in a "fear society" in which there is no law and order and in which democratic institutions are nonexistent, can bring the worst elements to power.

I hope that the policy of promoting democracy in the Middle East has not been dealt a fatal blow.

We are all Danes now By Jeff Jacoby **The Boston Globe February 5, 2006**

Hindus consider it sacrilegious to eat meat from cows, so when a Danish supermarket ran a sale on beef and veal last fall, Hindus everywhere reacted with outrage. India recalled its ambassador to Copenhagen, and Danish flags were burned in Calcutta, Bombay, and Delhi. A Hindu mob in Sri Lanka severely beat two employees of a Danish-owned firm, and demonstrators in Nepal chanted: "War on Denmark! Death to Denmark!" In many places, shops selling Dansk china or Lego toys were attacked by rioters, and two Danish embassies were firebombed.

It didn't happen, of course. Hindus may consider it odious to use cows as food, but they do not resort to boycotts, threats, and violence when non-Hindus eat hamburger or steak. They do not demand that everyone abide by the strictures of Hinduism and avoid words and deeds that Hindus might find upsetting. The same is true of Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Mormons: They don't lash out in violence when their religious sensibilities are offended. They certainly don't expect their beliefs to be immune from criticism, mockery, or dissent.

But radical Muslims do. The current uproar over cartoons of the Muslim prophet Mohammed published in a Danish newspaper illustrates yet again the fascist intolerance that is at the heart of radical Islam. Jyllands-Posten, Denmark's largest daily, commissioned the cartoons to make a point about freedom of speech. It was protesting the climate of intimidation that had made it impossible for a Danish author to find an illustrator for his children's book about Mohammed. No artist would agree to illustrate the book for fear of being harmed by Muslim extremists. Appalled by this self-censorship, Jyllands-Posten invited Danish artists to submit drawings of Mohammed, and published the 12 it received.

Most of the pictures are tame to the point of dullness, especially compared to the biting editorial cartoons that routinely appear in US and European newspapers. A few of them link Mohammed to Islamist terrorism -- one depicts him with a bomb in his turban, while a second shows him in Heaven, pleading with newly arrived suicide terrorists: "Stop, stop! We have run out of virgins!" Others focus on

Like so many tens of millions of Arabs in the region, there are countless Palestinians who want a better future, and we must seek every way to work with them. If we do not, we will end up not only betraying them once again, but also endangering ourselves.

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the threat to free speech: In one, a sweating artist sits at his drawing board, nervously sketching Mohammed, while glancing over his shoulder to make sure he's not being watched.

That anything so mild could trigger a reaction so crazed -- riots, death threats, kidnappings, flag-burnings -- speaks volumes about the chasm that separates the values of the civilized world from those in too much of the Islamic world. Freedom of the press, the marketplace of ideas, the right to skewer sacred cows: Militant Islam knows none of this. And if the jihadis get their way, it will be swept aside everywhere by the censorship and intolerance of sharia. Here and there, some brave Muslim voices have cried out against the book-burners. The Jordanian newspaper Shihan published three of the cartoons. "Muslims of the world, be reasonable," implored Shihan's editor, Jihad al-Momani, in an editorial. "What brings more prejudice against Islam -- these caricatures or pictures of a hostage-taker slashing the throat of his victim in front of the cameras?" But within hours Momani was out of a job, fired by the paper's owners after the Jordanian government threatened legal action.

He wasn't the only editor sacked last week. In Paris, Jacques LeFranc of the daily France Soir was also fired after running the Mohammed cartoons. The paper's owner, an Egyptian Copt named Raymond Lakah, issued a craven and Orwellian statement offering LeFranc's head as a gesture of "respect for the intimate beliefs and convictions of every individual." But the France Soir staff defended their decision to publish the drawings in a stalwart editorial. "The best way to fight against censorship is to prevent censorship from happening," they wrote. "A fundamental principle guaranteeing democracy and secular society is under threat. To say nothing is to retreat."

Across the continent, nearly two dozen other newspapers have joined in defending that principle. While Islamist clerics proclaim an "international day of anger" or declare that "the war has begun," leading publications in Norway, France, Italy, Spain, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Hungary, and the

Czech Republic have reprinted the Danish cartoons. But there has been no comparable show of backbone in America, where (as of Friday) only the New York Sun has had the fortitude to the run some of the drawings.

Make no mistake: This story is not going away, and neither is the Islamofascist threat. The freedom

of speech we take for granted is under attack, and it will vanish if it is not bravely defended. Today the censors may be coming for some unfunny Mohammed cartoons, but tomorrow it is your words and ideas they will silence. Like it or not, we are all Danes now.

NATO for Israel The Wall Street Journal editorial February 6, 2006

As diplomatic triumphs go, the weekend referral of Iran to the U.N. Security Council by the International Atomic Energy Agency is very small beer. It came without a call to action, and even any U.N. debate was postponed to give Iran more time to embrace Russia's offer to let the mullahs enrich uranium under Moscow's auspices.

Even at that minor rebuke, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad ordered a resumption of homegrown uranium enrichment and barred snap IAEA inspections. But if the Iranians are as smart as they are devious, they'll accept the Russian offer, let the Europeans pretend the crisis is over, and continue to build a nuclear weapon in secret. Yesterday Iran said it will again consider Moscow's offer, and all signs point to the fact that on present course Iran is going to get the bomb one way or another.

Which is all the more reason for the U.S. to promote a more serious diplomatic response suggested to us last week over lunch at the Journal by former Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar: Begin NATO accession talks with Israel.

Israel's NATO membership has been mooted before, but the suggestion is especially compelling as a response to the Iranian nuclear threat. Iran's apocalyptic President Ahmadinejad has called for Israel to be "wiped off the map," and influential former President Hashemi Rafsanjani has said an Islamic bomb "would not leave anything in Israel but the same thing would just produce damages in the Muslim world."

Those are unprecedented threats, which are all the more likely to be carried out if the mullahs think that the only retaliation would come from Israel itself. It may be that the mad mullahs aren't deterrable, since they claim to welcome mass martyrdom. But if Israel were part of NATO, the saner elements in Tehran would at least have to worry about the collective response of the West.

Only last week President Bush promised that the U.S. would come to Israel's defense against Iran, but the NATO proposal has the additional virtue of forcing Europe to take a firmer stand against an Iranian bomb.

Many Europeans will object that NATO is a geographic defense pact, but it has already expanded its field of operation beyond Europe into Afghanistan. If NATO is going to continue to be relevant, it has to adapt to confront new threats to global stability, and a nuclear Iran certainly qualifies. It's fanciful for Europe to think it could stay aloof from an Iranian strike against Israel or the U.S., since the latter would surely retaliate and wider regional war would ensue. Iran is also developing ballistic missiles that will eventually have the capitals of Europe within range.

Even apart from the Iranian threat, a strong case can be made for Israeli membership. Israel is a liberal democracy, which is why nobody seriously worries about Israel's bomb. The Jewish state has also taken unprecedented steps for peace with its Palestinian neighbors over the past decade, relinquishing territory even as it became clear that there was little good faith on the other side. Ariel Sharon's Gaza withdrawal and the subsequent victory of Hamas in Palestinian legislative elections are more than enough reason for the rest of the world to now reciprocate with a gesture of solidarity regarding Israel's defense.

Unless the civilized world unites to make it clear that Iran's current combination of rhetoric and nuclear armament is intolerable, Mr. Ahmadinejad and the mullahs will likely continue to believe they can have their nuclear apocalypse at a "reasonable" price. Inviting Israel to join NATO will send a far tougher message to Iran than mere referral to that tower of delay and rationalization known as the United Nations.

From Hitler to Hamas

By Suzanne Fields The Washington Times February 6, 2006

For years "Mein Kampf" stood as proof of the blindness and complacency of the world. For in its pages Hitler announced -- long before he came to power -- a program of blood and terror in a self-revelation of such overwhelming frankness that few among its readers had the courage to believe it. -- Konrad Heiden's introduction to Mein Kampf.

It's impossible to read these chilling words without drawing analogies to Hamas. The organization says loud and clear that it wants to rub Israel from the map, yet voices across the political spectrum tell us to relax, take it easy, we shouldn't necessarily believe they really intend to do what they say they will. Besides, even if they meant it, now that

an election has put them in power they will finally behave themselves.

Like Hitler and those who followed him, Hamas thrives on humiliation and blames others for its failures. Hamas understands that Muslims in the rest of the world have done almost nothing to alleviate their situation, but they blame the Jews (and occasionally Christians), anyway. They keep it simple.

Hitler and his followers knew well the vulnerabilities of the Weimar Republic, and exploited its weakness. Hamas understands the weakness of Fatah. With all of the big talk about taking care of domestic issues -- better schools, better health care, better public services -- Hamas wouldn't give up the guns before the election and Fatah couldn't, or wouldn't, take them. The rest of the world cheerfully agreed that everyone could wait until after the election.

Outsiders have advantages. Of the major non-Marxist parties in Germany in the 1930s, only the Nazis had never held power, so they couldn't be blamed for the inflation, the shortages, the unemployment, the misery in Germany. The Nazis were free to promise everything because, being out of power, they didn't have to deliver anything. Hatred was enough -- hatred of the Jews, the communists, above all the Weimar Republic.

Hitler's good friend Dietrich Eckart, who der fuhrer called "the spiritual founder of the Nationalist Socialist Party," had already written the book about the Bolsheviks. Hitler had to top that. He wanted to call his book "A Four and One-Half Year Struggle against Lies, Stupidity, and Cowardice: Settling Accounts with the Destroyers of the National Socialist Movement." He decided to settle for "Mein Kampf." By focusing on the Jews, he could sharpen grievances with appeals to anti-Semitism. Civilized people couldn't believe that Hitler and his Nazis actually meant to do anything about the mean things they were saying about the Jews.

A lot of the civilized people comfort themselves now with the thought that Hamas won its landslide

with promises of better social services. Such civilized people among the Palestinian voters are willing executioners in Hamas violence, many duping themselves into believing that democratic values will inevitably triumph over evil. You don't have to believe in "the clash of civilizations" to understand that a militant Hamas is a force greater than its numbers. Democracies that show weakness when confronted by contempt for their freedoms inevitably pay dearly.

The fires of fanaticism feed on unexpected fuel. The controversy over the publication in several European newspapers of cartoons of Mohammed was unexpected fuel. The portrayal of the prophet from benign old man to a man with a bomb in his turban set off demonstrations from the Middle East to Indonesia. Since the first newspaper to publish the cartoons was in Copenhagen the boycott of Danish butter and cream across Arabia naturally followed. That was not the worst of it; soon Muslim gunmen were going through villages in Gaza looking in hotels and apartments for European guests to capture and hold hostage until suitable apologies were rendered.

A French newspaper sacked its managing editor when it published the caricatures. The editor in chief of the offending paper in Denmark capitulated, offering an apology couched in the mushy language of such apologies offered more in fear than sorrow: The cartoons were not intended to be offensive to Muslims everywhere and the newspaper "takes exception to symbolic acts suited to demonize specific nationalists, religions and ethnic groups."

Free speech, even offensive free speech, is prized in the West. Tyrants understand that until free speech is successfully suppressed they cannot get on with suppressing everything else. The Islamic fanatics understand this as tyrants in the recent past understood it. Johannes Gross, a German television commentator, observed that resistance to Hitler and his kind would ebb, the further the Third Reich receded into the past.

Palestine without Illusions

By Charles Krauthammer The Washington Post February 3, 2006

Amid much gnashing of teeth, the Hamas victory in the Palestinian elections is being called a disaster. On the contrary. It is deeply clarifying and ultimately cleansing. If the world responds correctly, it will mark a turning point for the better.

The Palestinian people have spoken. According to their apologists, sure, Hamas wants to destroy Israel, wage permanent war and send suicide bombers into discotheques to drive nails into the

skulls of young Israelis, but what the Palestinians were really voting for was efficient garbage collection.

It is time to stop infantilizing the Palestinians. As Hamas leader Khaled Meshal said at a news conference four days after the election, "The Palestinian people have chosen Hamas with its known stances." By a landslide, the Palestinian people have chosen these known stances:

rejectionism, Islamism, terrorism, rank anti-Semitism and the destruction of Israel in a romance of blood, death and revolution. Garbage collection on Wednesdays.

Everyone is lamenting the fall of Fatah and the marginalization of its leader, Mahmoud Abbas. This is ridiculous. The election exposed what everyone knew and would not admit: Abbas has no constituency. Would it have been better to keep funneling billions of dollars from the European Union and a gullible United States to the thoroughly corrupt administration of a hapless figurehead? Billions that either end up in Swiss bank accounts or subsidize countless gangs of young men carrying guns? The current nostalgia for Fatah moderation is absurd. What moderation? Yasser Arafat's 1993 paper recognition of Israel's right to exist was as fraudulent as his famous Oslo side letter renouncing terrorism. He spent the next seven years clandestinely sponsoring it, then openly launched a four-year terrorist war, the most vicious in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

With this election, we can no longer hide from the truth: After 60 years, the Palestinian people continue to reject the right of a Jewish state to exist side by side with them. Fatah -- secular, worldly and wise -- learned to lie to the West and pretend otherwise. Hamas -- less sophisticated, more literal and more bound by religious obligation to expel the Jews -- is simply more honest.

This election was truth in advertising. Now we know. What to do? The world must impress upon the Palestinians that there are consequences for their choices. And so long as they choose rejectionism -- the source of a 60-year conflict the Israelis have long been ready to resolve -- the world will not continue to support and subsidize them.

And that means cutting off Hamas completely: no recognition, no negotiation, no aid, nothing. And not just assistance to a Hamas government but all assistance. The Bush administration suggests continuing financial support for "humanitarian" services. This is a serious mistake.

A manifesto for murder

By Daniel Jonah Goldhagen The Los Angeles Times February 5, 2006

Much has been said about the Hamas charter's call for the destruction of Israel and the need for Hamas to renounce this goal as the condition for being granted international legitimacy, economic aid and diplomatic recognition.

But an examination of the charter (available at <http://www.palestinecenter.org/cpap/documents/c harter.html>) reveals that Hamas, also known as the Islamic Resistance Movement, is not just dedicated (however wrongly or murderously) to the destruction of Israel. It shows Hamas to be governed by a Nazi-like genocidal orientation to Jews in general.

First, because money is fungible. Every dollar we spend for Palestinian social services is a dollar freed up for a Hamas government to purchase rockets, guns and suicide belts for the "Palestinian army" that Meshal has already declared he intends to build. Second, because it sends the Palestinians precisely the wrong message. If they were under a dictatorship that imposed rejectionism on them, there would be a case for helping a disenfranchised Palestinian people. But they just held the most open and honest exercise of democracy in Palestinian history. The Palestinian people chose. However much they love victimhood, they are not victims here. They are actors. And historical actors have to take responsibility.

They want blood and death and romance? They will get nothing. They choose peace and coexistence? Then, as President Bush pledged in June 2002, they will get everything: world recognition, financial assistance, their own state with independence and dignity.

In August 2001, Hamas sent a suicide bomber into a Sbarro pizzeria in Jerusalem. He killed 15 innocent Israelis, mutilating many dozens more. A month later, Hamas student activists at al-Najah University in Nablus celebrated the attack with an exhibit, a mockup of the smashed Sbarro shop strewn with blood and fake body parts -- a severed leg, still dressed in jeans; a human hand dangling from the ceiling. The inscription (with a reference to the Qassam military wing of Hamas) read: "Qassami Pizza is more delicious."

The correct term for such a mentality is not militancy, not extremism, but moral depravity. The world must advise the Palestinian people that if their national will is to embrace Hamas -- its methods and its madness -- then their national will is simply too murderous and, yes, too depraved for the world to countenance, let alone subsidize.

The essential first lesson of any newborn democracy is that national choices have national consequences. A Hamas-led Palestine, cut off entirely, will be forced to entertain second thoughts.

It would be no surprise if a self-styled Palestinian liberation movement depicted Israel in unflattering or even (if we indulge the movement some license to exaggerate) venomous terms. Yet Hamas' 9,000-word charter of 1988 -- repeatedly reconfirmed by its leaders -- pits Jews, Israelis and Zionists (used pretty much interchangeably in the charter) in Manichaean conflict, not just with Palestinians, but with Islam, which to Hamas is synonymous with all goodness.

"Israel, by virtue of its being Jewish and of having a Jewish population, defies Islam and the Muslims," Article 28 of the charter says. This otherwise stunning statement is not surprising, given

that Hamas describes Jews and Israel as a cosmic evil. Almost mimicking Nazi textbooks, Hamas contends that Zionism does "not hesitate to take any road, or to pursue all despicable and repulsive means to fulfill its desires." And what are those desires? "To demolish societies, to destroy values, to wreck answerableness, to totter virtues and to wipe out Islam. It stands behind the diffusion of drugs and toxics of all kinds in order to facilitate its control and expansion." (Article 28)

Hamas sees Jews as extremely malevolent and also extremely powerful, capable of achieving their desires. In a hallucinatory anti-Semitic passage recalling the most extreme Nazi ideologues, the charter asserts that the Jews amassed wealth that permitted them to "take over control of the world media such as news agencies, the press, publication houses, broadcasting and the like. [They also used this] wealth to stir revolutions in various parts of the globe in order to fulfill their interests and pick the fruits. They stood behind the French and the Communist Revolutions and behind most of the revolutions we hear about here and there." (Article 22) Pursuing this hallucinatory reverie (among the clandestine organizations the Jews allegedly use to take over the world, "Rotary Clubs" are highlighted), Hamas' charter then describes Jewish power and malevolence as still more sinister: The Jews "used the money to take over control of the Imperialist states and made them colonize many countries in order to exploit the wealth of those countries and spread their corruption therein.... They stood behind World War I, so as to wipe out the Islamic Caliphate They obtained the Balfour Declaration and established the League of Nations in order to rule the world by means of that organization. They also stood behind World War II, where they collected immense benefits from trading with war materials and prepared for the establishment of their state."

As if this wild, anti-Semitic litany, which includes Jews establishing the United Nations as part of their plan for world domination, is insufficient, Hamas declares that "there was no war that broke out anywhere without their fingerprints on it." (Article 22)

With how much power will the Jews be satisfied? According to Hamas, "Zionist scheming has no end, and after Palestine they will covet expansion from the Nile to the Euphrates. Only when they have completed digesting the area on which they will have laid their hand, they will look forward to more expansion, etc. Their scheme has been laid out in the Protocols of the Elders of Zion." (Article 32)

Faced with this demonic enemy, Hamas is determined to rouse the Islamic world to act in the only manner adequate to the danger. Negotiation, compromise, any permanent *modus vivendi* with Israel and Jews (Jews' very existence in Israel is

deemed an affront against Islam), is not thinkable. Jihad and destruction is. Proclaiming every inch of Palestine, including all of Israel, to be Palestinian and Islamic, and in accord with its demonic view of Jews, the charter declares, "[Peace] initiatives, the so-called peaceful solutions, and the international conferences to resolve the Palestinian problem, are all contrary to the beliefs of the Islamic Resistance Movement."

Why? Because "renouncing any part of Palestine means renouncing part of the religion; the nationalism of the Islamic Resistance Movement is part of its faith, the movement educates its members to adhere to its principles and to raise the banner of Allah over their homeland as they fight their Jihad." (Article 13) So what is left for Hamas and all Muslims to do? Despite Hamas' pro-forma statement that "humane" Hamas will tolerate Jews and Christians only under the impossible condition that they live under Islamic fundamentalist domination (Article 31), the genocidal logic of Hamas' foundational document is explicit: "Hamas has been looking forward to [implementing] Allah's promise whatever time it might take. The prophet, prayer and peace be upon him, said: The time will not come until Muslims will fight the Jews (and kill them); until the Jews hide behind rocks and trees, which will cry: O Muslim! there is a Jew hiding behind me, come on and kill him! This will not apply to the Gharqad, which is a Jewish tree." (Article 7)

This is no selective reading of Hamas' charter, as the extensive quotations indicate. The charter's almost classically Nazi accounts of Jews and its annihilative reveries form the core of Hamas' uncompromising and divinely ordained canonical version of the Declaration of Independence.

As a lifelong student of Nazism and its radical murderousness, I have always been extremely reluctant to use the epithet "Nazi" for other reprehensible, anti-Semitic or genocidal movements. Whatever the other differences, the anti-Semitism and the murderous logic that form the principal content and rhetorical structure and substructure of this charter and this political party are unmistakably Nazi-like with regard to Jews.

Imagine if a territory or country next to the United States, Germany, France or Britain were governed by a political party that had repeatedly terrorized and murdered citizens of its neighbor, and had issued a governing charter about Americans, Germans, French or Britons that described the people of that country as Hamas describes Jews — calling not only for that country's destruction but also for the mass murder of its people.

Would people in that country accept the threatening political party as a fit partner in peace? Would people say that a political party harboring such profoundly irrational beliefs, fomenting such uncompromising hatred and speaking the language of mass murder should receive international aid that

could only further its hold on power and facilitate its murderous intentions?

Hamas' charter should not be dismissed as just words, and all that it contains would not be nullified even if Hamas, under pressure, renounced its goal to destroy Israel. (So far, Hamas has adamantly defended its genocidal charter.)

Seldom in the modern world has a political party enshrined such hallucinatory hatred and overt murderousness against another people in its

constitution, and more seldom still has such a party taken power. The Nazi Party Program of 1920 also contained much anti-Semitism, but compared to Hamas' charter, its demonology and prescriptions were tame. Given the extreme political costs of such speech, governments, political parties and political leaders rarely speak the language of annihilation openly. So when they do, we should take them at their word. The last 100 years have shown that those expressing murderous dreams, like Hitler, mean it.

What the cartoons have revealed – Drawing Conclusions

By Martin Peretz *The New Republic* February 7, 2006

Maybe you remember, back in 1989, the controversy over *Piss Christ*, a piece of art by the now fashionable artist Andres Serrano. He himself had been living on a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, and his brave break-out work (a crucifix immersed in urine) was hung in various public museums and was debated and mostly defended by the high culture elites until it became part of the canon. So much part of the canon that I suspect almost no one any longer blanches or even blinks when he sees the image anywhere. Then you may remember that other and later cruddy art work, by Chris Ofili, the Afro-Brit winner of the Turner Prize, *Holy Virgin Mary*, in which the medium is ever so daintily catalogued: "paper collage, glitter, polyester resin, map pins, elephant dung on linen." Coming after *Piss Christ*, it did not cause so much of a stir. Still, these experiments in testing public tolerance for the visual representation of the mixing of human and animal excretions with the divine constituted, at least in my view, the ugliest battle in the culture wars. It was started on the left, and it was the left that won it. And I'm not sure it shouldn't have. Yes, the First Amendment ... and all that. You may dislike what it protects ... but protect it, it must.

I was reminded of these episodes by the riots now spreading here, there, everywhere over the twelve cartoons about the Prophet Mohammed published in a privately owned Danish newspaper, *Jyllands-Posten*, last September. Some of the illustrations are a bit goofy, some much more provocative. One depicts Mohammed's head with an ignited bomb protruding from his turban. In any case, for the rampaging mobs of Muslims this may be more a theological contention than a political one. Muslims are just plain forbidden from depicting the prophet. So, let them not depict him. But Christians and Jews, Hindus and Buddhists are not prohibited, and I assume that the Danish cartoonists were not Muslims but Lutherans (an overwhelming majority of whom assert that they do not believe in God) or from that cool breed of Scandinavian rationalists. Another cartoon shows the prophet greeting some martyrs at the entrance to heaven, and he shouts to them, "Stop, stop, we have run out of virgins." When you compare the most offensive of these caricatures to the vile and inciting images of Jews routinely shown on government-owned

television all over the Muslim world (forget about the ugly role of caricature in the long history of Christian anti-Semitism) you wonder what all the fuss is about. OK, Bill Clinton doesn't wonder. He's referred to them as "these totally outrageous cartoons against Islam," although I myself doubt whether he's ever bothered to look at them. Is he for free expression or for that sloppy multiculturalism that forbids you from raising anyone's hackles? This is the liberal's dilemma. By the way, a European-Arab website--in retaliation, I suppose--has just put out a cartoon showing Anne Frank and Hitler in bed.

As far as I can tell, no American newspaper except *The Philadelphia Inquirer* has reprinted the cartoons. This has left those who still depend on the daily gazette in the lurch. They don't know exactly what the papers are writing about and why precisely Muslim mobs are so agitated. Of course, television hasn't shown them either. And *TNR* won't publish them. Should we? We certainly are not obliged to run them: Just imagine the geshrei if a pro-Zionist journal did run them. We wouldn't in any case: It would only bring more people into the circle of peril. If you're really interested you can find them on the web on your own. (*The San Francisco Chronicle's* online edition has a link to them and the right-wing *FrontPageMagazine.com* has a very informative and intelligent article on its site, fully illustrated.) I just don't recall whether any of the newspapers or news weeklies reproduced *Piss Christ* at the time of that controversy. (And I'd appreciate it if any readers can tell me.) The present American media black-out is consistent with the Bush administration's huffing and puffing: "We find them offensive, and we certainly understand why Muslims would find these images offensive." Maybe the media execs were thinking about whether our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan would be in more peril if American press outlets reproduced the cartoons. It seems that the Islamicists believe that they cannot simply disagree vehemently with those who offend them. They seem incapable of simply opposing. Killing--or threatening to kill--seems to be a reflex with enough of them to make militant Islam a danger. As Saturday's *Guardian* pointed out, a demonstration "led by the extremist group al-Ghuraba ... marched to the Danish embassy in Knightsbridge carrying

banners calling on Muslims to 'massacre' those who insult Islam and chanting: 'Britain, you will pay, 7/7 on its way.'" Why exactly threaten England with another bombing? As far as I know, no British periodical has run the cartoons even as an act of solidarity. So why, in fact, are people who so openly menace the English populace allowed to walk free on the streets? This is not free speech. This is rank intimidation--and, given 7/7, there is, in the words of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., a clear and present danger.

But a few newspapers in other countries were neither docile nor frightened nor conscientious. There is, after all, some fraternity among journalists. The Times reported that the cartoons had been reprinted in Germany, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, and Hungary, in addition to France and Jordan, where the editors responsible for the decision were summarily fired by their papers' owners. That Jordanian is one hell of a brave person. In Damascus, where the Syrian police-state can prevent virtually anything from happening, mobs burnt the Danish and Norwegian embassies with impunity. In Beirut, thousands of seething Muslims stormed into a Christian quarter where the Danish consulate is situated and brought it down also. Lebanese security arrested 76 Syrians, 36 Palestinians, 25 suspected Syrians without papers, 36 Lebanese, and 12 of unidentified nationality. In proto-Palestine, of course, mobs sacked many European offices, even though most of them have functioned--to Israel's despair--as eager partisans in the Palestinian cause, even (with a wink and a nod) partisans of Palestinian terrorism. According to the AP, Mahmoud Zahar, a leader of Hamas, the landslide winner in the recent Palestinian legislative elections, told *Il Giornale* that anybody responsible for publishing the cartoons should be put to death, and complained that "We should have killed all those who offend the Prophet, and here we are demonstrating peaceably." Peaceably, indeed--if burning offices is considered peaceful. In the Arab town of Nazareth in Israel, hundreds turned out to vent their anger. Rage and bloodlust were on display elsewhere in the Muslim world. Here's the Islamicist equation: Blow up Jews, Israelis, unfavored Iraqis, Hindus in China, Christians in Indonesia, tourists in Egypt, ordinary and uninvolved people riding the trains in London and Madrid--good, very good. Draw some tasteless cartoons--bad, no, terrible, candidate for murder.

The Danish predicament is especially excruciating. Denmark has a deep commitment to freedom of the press, and the population is exceedingly disquieted by Muslim impingement on its distinctive way of life, socially tolerant, if also a bit xenophobic. Yes, the Danes assert, minorities have rights. But majorities do also, and among them is the right to survive with their culture and norms not being under siege. The whole of Western Europe is right now in the midst of discovering this

truism, and other countries' political and cultural norms--those of France, Belgium, Holland, for example--are more imperiled than are Denmark's. Still, the Copenhagen government is center-right. The cartoons expressed something of the sentiment of its supporters. But, being an advanced economy in a globalized world, it has other interests, capitalist interests, and these interests have been pressing the government to try to propitiate the Muslim world and particularly the Arab sector of it over the cartoon incident.

Boycotts against Danish companies are underway wherever Mohammed is officially revered. There are interdicts against Danish products. In Egypt, what go for supermarkets have announced a ban on Danish commodities. There is an epidemic of ostracism, not only of the Danes but the other Scandinavians who had absolutely nothing to do with this episode. ARLA, one of the largest dairy producers in the world and the makers of Lurpak butter, has been particularly hard hit, and it has already laid off hundreds of workers at home. Lego is on the taboo list. So is Novo, the main producer of insulin. (Only Arab politics and Arab companies would put a hex on an insulin manufacturer. To hell with those who suffer from diabetes.) A.P. Moller, perhaps the world's hugest shipping company, like the other targets of the trade boycott, also has felt tremendous pressure. Of course, it, like its partners in trade pain, has attempted to rechannel that pressure on to the ruling party in Copenhagen to pacify the Muslims, to yield and pray for quarter.

But the European polis is not altogether controlled by the big corporations. The Europeans still have an attachment to their liberties, including their press liberties. And the incident of the cartoons that offended the Muslim minorities of the continent and the Muslim majorities elsewhere has not been, will not be, the only matter to provoke them. Europe and the countries of Europe will not take instructions on how to run a civil politics or how to preserve their culture from those whose habits have not yet caught up with the Magna Carta or the Declaration of the Rights of Man. This episode will inevitably harm Turkey in its bid to enter the European Union. More important, it will deepen the alienation of Muslim and Arab immigrants and their families from those amongst whom they live, still as a minority. They will have no one but themselves to blame. They did not keep the social contract that was both implicit and explicit in their arrival--not that they had larger birth-rates but that they increasingly do not seem to grasp the most elementary of democratic transactions: Give berth even to that which you dislike. The very essence of liberal society is the willingness--OK, the doleful willingness--of its members and constituent groups to be slighted.

Add names to the e-mail list by noting "subscribe" to sheldonb@rsfchart.com.

AIPAC ISRAEL NEWS

American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) is hosting Senator Barbara Mikulski, who will be speaking on the importance of AIPAC from the prospective of a member of Congress on Sunday, February 12 at Bnai Jacob Shaarei Zion. Reception at 2:30. Senator Mikulski will be speaking from 3-4 pm. NO CHARGE for the event, however reservations are required. RSVP to Stephanie Schwartz @ AIPAC office 410-223-4190 or email sschwartz@aipac.org.

AIPAC Policy Conference will be held in Washington DC on March 5-7. Baltimore's Howard (Tzvi) Friedman is to be installed as President of AIPAC. AIPAC's Policy Conference is the largest gathering of Pro-Israel activists in the country. The annual banquet is attended by over half the Senate, and two-thirds of the house. For more information, see AIPAC.org, or call the AIPAC office @ .(410) 223-4190. This is an event that is not to be missed!

Drawing a line under hypocrisy

By Tom Gross The Jerusalem Post February 7, 2006

There is a strong case for saying that the Danish cartoons of Muhammad, which have caused so much uproar, are fair comment. Certainly those who haven't seen them can rest assured that they are relatively tame in comparison with many cartoons on other subjects which regularly appear in the European press. Even so, non-Muslims might have more sympathy with Muslims who find them offensive if it weren't for the astonishing double standards and hypocrisy of the Muslim world when it comes to accepting and applauding truly vicious slanders against Jews and, to a lesser extent, Christians.

The arguments from Muslims - though not the fanatical, violent manner of many of their protests - would no doubt be taken more seriously if they had also objected to the depiction on Syrian television of rabbis as cannibals. Or if, last Saturday, Britain's Muslim Weekly had not published a caricature of a hooked-nosed Ehud Olmert. Or if, last Friday, Valley of the Wolves, the most expensive movie ever made in Turkey, had not opened to great local acclaim. In the film American soldiers in Iraq crash a wedding and pump a little boy full of lead in front of his mother. They kill dozens of innocent people with random machine-gunfire, shoot the groom in the head and drag those left alive to prison, where a Jewish doctor cuts out their organs and sells them to rich people in New York, London and Tel Aviv.

Or if a Belgian and Dutch Muslim group hadn't, last week, posted on its Web site pictures of Anne Frank in bed with Hitler. Or if the mere display of a cross or a Star of David in Saudi Arabia wasn't illegal. And when it comes to newspaper cartoons - the subject of the present unrest - Muslim countries are world leaders in stirring up hate, without a peep of protest elsewhere, let alone the torching of buildings, threats to behead European tourists, and the burning of the Danish flag (which incidentally bears a Christian symbol, the cross).

So much for religious respect. The cartoons published last September in Jyllands Posten, a paper hardly anyone outside Denmark, one of Europe's smallest countries, had ever heard of, are mild when compared to cartoons routinely produced about

Jews in the countries where some of the worst anti-Danish protests are now being staged.

Arabic Jew-baiting is not - as Israel's enemies in the West often try to argue - limited to political attacks on Zionism. They are directed against Jews in general and are as loathsome and dehumanizing as those produced under the Nazis. We might expect such demonic images from a country led by a Holocaust-denier, like Iran, or a rogue regime such as Syria. But these vile images are to be found in the media of supposedly moderate, pro-Western states such as Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain and Egypt.

Al-Watan (Oman) has run Nazi-type caricatures of Jews with hooked noses and hunched backs, not wearing shoes, and sweating profusely. Akhbar Al-Khalij (Bahrain) has shown anti-Semitic caricatures of black-hatted Jews spitting and sweating as they manipulate America to do their bidding. Al Ahrām, one of Egypt's leading dailies, has published cartoons of Jews laughing while they drink blood. (The US Senate has approved a \$1.84 billion aid package for Egypt for 2006, the second highest in the world.)

The official cartoonist of the Palestinian Authority has portrayed Jews in the form of snakes, a historic motif of medieval European anti-Semitism. The PA Web site has posted cartoons repeating the ancient blood libel that Jews murder non-Jewish children.

Some of the cartoons don't just resemble those published by the Nazis: They are literally copied from Nazi originals. For instance, a cartoon from Arab News (an English-language Saudi daily regarded as one of the more moderate publications in the Arab world), depicts rats wearing Stars of David and skullcaps scurrying backwards and forwards through holes in the wall of a building called "Palestine House." The imagery used is almost identical to a well-known scene from the Nazi film Jew Sues - a scene in which Jews are depicted as vermin to be eradicated by mass extermination.

At other times the Jews are the Nazis. The Jordanian newspaper Ad-Dustur, for example, ran a cartoon showing the railroad to the death camp at

Auschwitz-Birkenau - but with Israeli flags replacing the Nazi ones, and a sign which read "The Israeli Annihilation Camp." Jordan is supposedly a moderate country at peace with Israel.

To mark the UN designation of January 27 as Holocaust Memorial Day, the cartoonist for Al-Yawm (Saudi Arabia) superimposed the Nazi swastika on the Star of David. Nor is Judaism spared. The Daily Star in Beirut ran a cartoon showing a large Talmud with a bayonet sticking out of it shooting an elderly man in Arab headdress, who then has red blood gushing out of him. Other Arab cartoons have shown Jews with money bags spreading death, terror and disease.

The relatively mild Danish cartoons have been republished in several European papers so readers can discover what all the fuss is about. (It is hard for readers to judge the story without seeing them.) But not in papers in Britain, or in any major publications in the US, countries that are now apparently too intimidated to run the risks that might go with reproducing them.

At the same time, whereas editors from both the Guardian and Independent in London, for example, have appeared on the BBC saying they wouldn't dream of publishing cartoons that Muslims find offensive, these papers have not hesitated to publish

cartoons offensive to Jews (Arab blood being smeared on the Western Wall in The Guardian, the flesh of Palestinian babies being eaten by Ariel Sharon in The Independent, and so on).

The New York Times rushed to praise a frivolous Broadway play showing Jesus having gay sex with Judas, yet hasn't dared to reproduce a Danish cartoon making a serious point about the misuse of the teachings of the prophet Muhammad by Islamist terrorists.

With demonstrators on the streets of London last Friday chanting in unison: "Europe, you will pay, your 9/11 is on its way" and holding signs reading "Behead those who insult Islam" and "Prepare for the REAL Holocaust," it is perhaps not surprising that weak spirits in the West are cowed.

Yet this is an issue that goes far beyond cartoons, and if they want Western freedoms to survive, moderate Muslims and non-Muslims alike have to stop caving into threats. On Sunday, Mark Steyn reminded us of the best-known words of a famous fictional Dane: "To be or not to be, that is the question." Exactly.

The writer is a former Jerusalem correspondent for the Sunday Telegraph

Hamas and 'peace' By The Washington Times editorial January 30, 2006

In the wake of the Hamas victory in the Palestinian legislative elections, Washington is already under pressure to emulate the wrong-headed policies of the late 1980s and early 1990s, when American policy-makers labored to persuade Yasser Arafat and the Palestine Liberation Organization to say they recognized Israel's right to exist.

After the PLO collaborated in Saddam Hussein's brutal subjugation of Kuwait, and Saddam was defeated in the first Gulf war, the drumbeat of demands that the United States persuade Israel to negotiate with Mr. Arafat intensified. Israel eventually elected a government under Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin that was dovish enough to take the risk. The result was the 1993 Oslo Accords and the endless and naive "peace process" that followed: seven years of substantial Israeli political and territorial concessions to Mr. Arafat in the West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem, in exchange for the PLO leader's empty promises to end the conflict with Israel and to prevent Palestinian terrorism.

The process, seriously flawed to begin with, collapsed in the summer and fall of 2000, when Mr. Arafat rejected the generous compromise offered him at Camp David by President Clinton and Prime Minister Ehud Barak. Then he went to war. Now, more than five years later, with Hamas having defeated Mr. Arafat's old Fatah organization, there is a new drumbeat of demands that Washington court Hamas -- in other words, that we repeat what failed.

President Bush's initial response to Hamas' victory was to urge Mr. Arafat's successor as leader of the Fatah movement, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, to stay in office to work with Hamas. That's the wrong way to go. In voting for Hamas candidates, the Palestinians made their decision and they must live with the consequences. There's nothing to be gained by papering over these differences by encouraging an emasculated Mr. Abbas to stay on in a fraudulent "continuity." Similarly, it makes no sense to go chasing after the likes of Hamas boss Mohammed Zohhar, to cajole him into making a meaningless statement laden with caveats about continuing "a ceasefire" with Israel -- even as Hamas and its terrorist allies fire Qassam rockets into Israel and prepare for a new round of terrorist strikes against the Jewish state.

Washington should have contact of some kind with any government elected by the Palestinians -- even a government mismanaged by Hamas. But such contact should be severely limited, and, as was the case under Fatah, aid should go only to nongovernmental organizations that support human rights and democratic reform. Hamas has received substantial aid from Iran and wealthy Saudi sheikhs, enabling its terrorist network and social-service operations to flourish. Washington and the European Union should never, ever, subsidize Mr. Zohhar and his ilk.