



ISRAEL NEWS

*A collection of the week's news from Israel
 A service of the Bet El Twinning Committee of
 Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation*

Commentary...

Disengagement's Military Lesson for the West Bank

By Nadav Morag,

Now that the dust has settled and the outcome of the recent Israeli elections is clear, it has become apparent that Ehud Olmert will be able to form a government consisting of parties who favor, or at least do not seriously oppose, his proposed policy of unilateral withdrawal from most of the West Bank.

The disengagement policy adopted by Ariel Sharon with respect to the Gaza Strip has now become the policy of Hitkansut - a term which does not easily translate into English, but has connotations of "circling the wagons" and "pulling in" or "ingathering." The best way to think of this is to use an analogy. When a turtle is frightened, it pulls its head and limbs into its shell - that is Hitkansut in a nutshell.

This "Turtle Strategy" is based on the same premise a turtle uses when in danger, pull back and hide inside a protected zone - in this case, behind the security barrier. While this may work, in most cases, for turtles - given the kinds of threats that they face, it seems hopelessly naive and ineffectual as the basis for Israeli policy.

The first rule of policymaking is that it needs to be firmly grounded in reality, even if that reality is unpleasant. Consider the following:

A Hamas-led Palestinian government refuses to recognize Israel and its interior minister has publicly stated that he does not believe that the Palestinian Authority should try to apprehend people who want to launch attacks against Israel (under the previous Palestinian government, they at least paid lip service to fighting terrorism). Hamas has already claimed victory for the "liberation" of Gaza from Israeli rule and will almost certainly take credit for an Israeli withdrawal from most of the West Bank - thus boosting the popularity of this government and further weakening President Mahmoud Abbas.

As Hamas rule strengthens and solidifies, the Europeans and even the United States (both of whom are currently taking a tough stance on Hamas) are likely to change their positions recognizing the "pointlessness" of "punishing the Palestinian people."

By withdrawing, Olmert would be, in effect, making himself a key ally in Hamas's quest to strengthen its control and political legitimacy.

The Palestinian terrorist organizations - particularly Hamas and Fatah - have been taking advantage of the current Israeli policy of limiting counterterrorism operations against them, in order to rebuild their infrastructure and rearm. The recent firing of a Russian-built (and apparently Iranian-supplied) Katyusha rocket from Gaza towards a critical infrastructure target in Israel, represents a qualitative increase in the Palestinian capacity to inflict harm on Israel.

Israel's effective abandonment of the border between the Gaza Strip and Egypt has made it possible for the Palestinians to stockpile larger quantities of weapons as well as more powerful ones. In addition, al-Qaida terrorists are said to have infiltrated the Strip and are setting up their own infrastructure there.

Despite Israel's withdrawal from the Strip and the "liberation" of Gaza, the Palestinian Authority has not been able to step in and fill Israel's shoes and the political/security situation in the Strip has become increasingly anarchic. As anarchy grows, so do the opportunities for Palestinian terrorists to strike at Israel.

IT IS important to recall that the entire Oslo peace process was predicated on the idea that the Palestinians would fill the political/security vacuum left by Israeli withdrawals - something that, of course, never really happened.

The unilateral withdrawal policy, on the other hand, was based on the idea that Israel could live with a political/security vacuum on the Palestinian side.

It is not likely that Israel will be able to do so much longer, with respect to

Gaza, now that the Palestinians have devised even more effective ways to strike at Israel from the Strip. Olmert's proposed policy takes the same principle applied to Gaza and shifts it to the West Bank thus putting Israel's central population centers within rocket and missile range.

The barrier that Israel is building is not a panacea that will enable Israel to withdraw behind it and forget the Palestinians. Israeli voters may want

this to be the case, but wishful thinking does not substitute for realism. The barrier may be effective to a large degree in preventing infiltration, but it cannot prevent the firing of rockets and missiles over it. Moreover, if Palestinian terrorist organizations are afforded free reign in the West Bank, as they now enjoy in Gaza, they will find ways to dig under or fly over the barrier or otherwise compromise it. In order for the barrier to be truly effective, it must be defended from both sides, yet Olmert's plan, if implemented, would ignore this important truth.

REMAINING IN the West Bank is important for Israeli security. This is not about the settlers, Olmert can remove them if he deems their presence in the West Bank as one that ties down the IDF (though sometimes their physical presence helps increase the Israeli control in some sectors thus ensuring that they will not be abandoned to Palestinian terrorists).

However, even if the settlements are evacuated, they should be transformed into military bases.

It is crucial to bear in mind that Israel's success in thwarting the majority of terrorist attacks is due, in large part, to its ability to conduct operations in Palestinian cities and villages. Withdrawing from the West Bank will, as it has done in Gaza, provide the Palestinians with safe havens from which to conduct terrorism against Israel. Olmert may be right in concluding that Israelis very much want to disentangle themselves from the Palestinians, but will the Palestinians let them?

The strategy that works for the turtle will not be as effective for Israel. If Israel comes under increasing attacks in the wake of further withdrawals, and yet continues to insist that this policy will create greater security, we will know that the next Israeli government no longer holds to the turtle strategy - it will have then adopted an "ostrich strategy." (Jerusalem Post Apr 5)
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How Israel Can Win By Daniel Pipes

Since I argued in a column last week that Israel can and must defeat the Palestinian Arabs, a barrage of responses have contested this thesis. Some were trivial (Ha'aretz published an article challenging my right to opine on such matters because I do not live in Israel) but most raised serious issues that deserve an answer.

The ancient Chinese strategist Sun Tzu observed that in war, "Let your great object be victory," and he was echoed by the 17[th]-century Austrian war thinker, Raimondo Montecuccoli. His Prussian successor Clausewitz added that "War is an act of violence to compel the enemy to fulfill our will." These insights remain valid today: Victory consists of imposing one's will on the enemy, which typically means compelling him to give up his war goals. Conflicts usually end with one side's will being crushed.

In theory, that need not be the case. Belligerents can compromise, they can mutually exhaust each other, or they can resolve their differences under the shadow of a greater enemy (as when Britain and France, long seen as "natural and necessary enemies," in 1904 signed the Entente Cordiale, because of their shared worries about Germany.)

Such "no victor, no loser" resolutions are the exception in modern times, however. For example, although Iraq and Iran ended their 1980-88 war in a state of mutual exhaustion, this tie did not resolve their differences. Generally speaking, so long as neither side experiences the agony of defeat - having its hopes dashed, its treasury wasted, and lives extinguished - the possibility of war persists.

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One might expect this agony to follow on a crushing battlefield loss, but since 1945 that has usually not been the case. Planes shot down, tanks destroyed, munitions exhausted, soldiers deserting, and land lost are rarely decisive. Consider the multiple Arab losses to Israel during 1948-82, North Korea's loss in 1953, Saddam Hussein's in 1991, and that of Iraqi Sunnis in 2003. In all these cases, battlefield defeat did not translate into despair.

In the ideological environment of recent decades, morale and will matter more. The French gave up in Algeria in 1962, despite out-manning and out-gunning their foes. The same applies to the Americans in Vietnam in 1975 and the Soviets in Afghanistan in 1989. The Cold War ended without a fatality.

Applying these insights to Israel's war with the Palestinian Arabs points to several conclusions:

* Israel hardly enjoys freedom of action to pursue victory; in particular, it is hemmed in by the wishes of its primary ally, the American government. That is why I, an American analyst, address this issue with the intention of influencing policy in the United States and other Western countries.

* Israel should be urged to convince the Palestinian Arabs that they have lost, to influence their psychology.

* An aggressive step like "transferring" Palestinian Arabs out of the West Bank would be counterproductive for Israel, prompting greater outrage, increasing the number of enemies, and perpetuating the conflict.

* Contrarily, perceptions of Israel's weakness lessen the possibility of Palestinian Arab defeat; thus did Israeli missteps during the Oslo years (1993-2000) and the Gaza withdrawal inspire Palestinian Arab exhilaration and more war.

* Israel needs only to defeat the Palestinian Arabs, not the whole Arab or Muslim populations, who eventually will follow the Palestinian Arab lead.

I refrain from suggesting specific steps Israel should take in part because I am not Israeli, and in part because discussing tactics to win in premature before victory is the policy. Suffice to say that the Palestinian Arabs derive immense succor and strength from a worldwide network of support from NGOs, editorialists, academics, and politicians; that the manufactured Palestinian Arab "refugee" problem stands at the dank heart of the conflict, and that the lack of international recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital festers. These three issues are clearly priorities.

Ironically, Israeli success in crushing the Palestinian Arab war morale would be the best thing that ever happened to the Palestinian Arabs. It would mean their finally giving up their foul dream of eliminating their neighbor and would offer a chance instead to focus on their own polity, economy, society, and culture. To become a normal people, one whose parents do not encourage their children to become suicide terrorists, Palestinian Arabs need to undergo the crucible of defeat. (New York Sun Apr 4)

'Let's Ignore Hamas' By Caroline Glick

Last Thursday the first jihadist government since the Taliban ascended to power. The induction of the Hamas government in the Palestinian Authority has created a new dynamic in the Middle East.

Today a force openly supportive of global jihadist organizations like al-Qaida and Hizbullah, allied with Iran, dedicated to the complete Islamization of Palestinian society and committed to the eradication of Israel now reigns in the Palestinian Authority.

To date, Western governments have limited their response to Hamas's rise to power to endless debates and statements regarding their desire to create mechanisms that will allow them to continue to give the Palestinians billions of dollars a year and to maintain their official ties with the Hamas-led PA through the office of PA President Mahmoud Abbas. Exemplifying this trend last week were Acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and US President George W. Bush. On election night, Olmert entreated Abbas to open negotiations with Israel.

In an address last Wednesday, Bush said, "I weep about the suffering of the Palestinians," while maintaining that the "US government has got aid that goes directly to people. And I know that we'll continue to call upon governments in the region to support the Palestinian people."

At base, the Western world's desperate search for a way to give the Palestinians its money shows two things about the West. First it shows that Western governments from Washington to Paris to Jerusalem understand that Hamas is not the same as Fatah.

They know that there is something that fundamentally differentiates today's situation in the PA from that which existed before the January 25 elections. Yet on the other hand, the fact that the West searches for ways to continue aiding the Palestinians in spite of the fact that they just elected Hamas to lead them indicates that the West is unclear why the Palestinians' choice should change the way its governments do business.

IN the interest of clarifying the situation, it is necessary to examine what Hamas actually is. In the first instance, Hamas is a jihadist organization

rooted, like al-Qaida, in the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood movement. Hamas was founded in 1988. Its covenant defines the goal of Hamas's jihad as the eradication of Israel.

Towards this end, the notion of negotiating a peace treaty with Israel is completely ruled out. As the covenant states, "There is no solution to the Palestinian problem except by jihad."

The Hamas covenant places great emphasis on the need to indoctrinate the Palestinian people in the cause of jihad. Raising the banner of jihad, "requires the propagation of Islamic consciousness among the masses, locally [in Palestine], in the Arab world and in the Islamic world. It is necessary to instill the spirit of jihad in the nation, engage the enemies and join the ranks of the jihad fighters."

Hamas's covenant is important because its tenets are upheld and given concrete meaning in Hamas's electoral platform published in January. That document places its greatest emphasis on Hamas's intention to use its political power to Islamize the PA government apparatuses and to bring about the total mobilization of Palestinian society for jihad. The platform stipulates that Hamas will revise the PA's criminal code and constitutional laws to ensure that "Islamic Sharia law will be the principle source of legislation in Palestine."

Since its electoral victory, Hamas has targeted nightclubs, bars, Westernized women and homosexuals in Gaza. Its platform backs these moves and future suppression of Western norms when it states, "We will foster respect for all views that do not deviate from the people's beliefs and their cultural heritage." Women are targeted specifically with the promise that they will be instructed in the ways of Islam to "familiarize" them with their "independent identity which is based on chastity and commitment."

In promoting and proselytizing jihad, Hamas will "support mosques and mosque facilities" and "ensure that places of worship serve both a missionary and educational role in society." And the educational role of the mosques, like the role of schools and the media, will be to preach jihad. Hamas explains that its goal is to "improve our citizenry" with the goal of helping them "resist cultural normalization." The media under Hamas will receive "guidance... so that they serve to elevate the Palestinian people and foster their perseverance and resistance."

The fact that Hamas publicly places its greatest emphasis on indoctrination is borne out by its decision to appoint Dr. Nasser Al-Din Shaar deputy prime minister and minister of education. Shaar is the dean of the Sharia Law department at A-Najah University in Nablus. He is the senior government minister in Judea and Samaria, with the PA's prime minister, foreign minister and interior minister all located in Gaza.

In an interview with Ma'ariv last month, Shaar, whose university has seen several of its students become suicide bombers, not only refused to acknowledge the virulently anti-Semitic content of the PA's school and university curricula, he accused Israel of corrupting Palestinian society. In his words, "We know that the government of Israel and its intelligence services are trying to oppress the Palestinians, for instance by distributing narcotics and pornography."

WHILE MAHMOUD Abbas is seen as the great white hope of the West, for Hamas it appears that his main purpose is to buy time during which they will complete the Islamization and militarization of Palestinian society. Acting as a fig leaf to a West addicted to the Palestinians, Abbas will enable Hamas to mobilize the Palestinians for the next round of jihad as it builds up its arsenal - which is already formidable.

Last Tuesday a Katyusha rocket was launched for the first time on Ashkelon. Since Israel's abandonment of the international border between Gaza and Egypt last September, al-Qaida operatives from Iraq and Hizbullah operatives from Lebanon have established bases of operation in Gaza.

Iranian Revolutionary Guards officers have begun assisting Hamas commanders in establishing, arming and training a new jihadist army. That army, which will be called the Murbitun, will be modeled after the Iranian Revolutionary Guard.

Hamas is also taking steps to co-opt Fatah terrorists and bring them into its government with the aim of Islamizing Fatah. Its Interior Minister Said Siam appointed Khaled Abu Hilal, one of the commanders of Fatah's Aksha Martyrs Brigades terror group, as his ministry's spokesman. Siam also cancelled the Fatah-instituted ban on beards in the PA security services.

The West is operating under the assumption that the Palestinians will stop supporting Hamas if they stop giving their money to the PA. But Hamas seems to invite the aid cutoff. Its electoral platform pledged that it would "Reject all donations that come with conditions or ask us to concede any of our inviolable principles."

HAMAS'S RISE to power renders it all but impossible to deny the connection between the insurgency in Iraq and the global jihad in general and the Palestinian war with Israel. Indeed, in his first statement as foreign minister, Mahmoud Zahar attacked the US claiming, "America is committing big crimes against the Arab and Islamic countries."

Yet as Hamas prepares for war on all levels, Israel is about to form a government led either by Kadima or Labor whose politicians insist on pretending that there is no problem here. Kadima's plan to remove Israeli communities and IDF forces from Judea and Samaria is based on an abject refusal to admit that the areas abandoned will be taken over by Hamas. Furthermore, as Olmert has repeatedly stated, Kadima refuses to acknowledge that Hamas is even a threat to Israel.

For its part, Labor believes that it is still possible to negotiate an agreement with the Palestinians in spite of the fact that they elected Hamas to lead them. Labor believes that Abbas, who has never lifted a finger to fight terrorism and has been incapable of making any constructive steps toward peaceful coexistence with Israel, is a viable partner for negotiations. As well, its leaders have expressed a willingness to negotiate with Hamas.

The Taliban's rise to power was greeted by indifference from the international community. Every once in awhile, Mullah Omar and his buddies would be caught stoning women to death or blowing up Buddhist monuments and would receive global reprimands for a few days.

Although it was shunned by all countries except Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, the Taliban's global isolation did not seem to inhibit its commitment to jihad. In the end, the Taliban were only forced to change the way they did business when the US military brought down their regime after they enabled the September 11 attacks.

Is there anyone willing to draw any lesson from the last jihadist government in their dealings with the newest one? (Jerusalem Post Apr 3)

American Anti-Israel Politics By Jonathan S. Tobin

The cliché about academic politics is that it is so bitter because the stakes are so meaningless. That old saw remains true as far as the rivalries that afflict the competition for advancement at any college or university. But the impact of America's tenured radicals on our nation's politics is not quite so trivial.

Hence the focus on two prominent academics this month after a lengthy essay that they co-authored in the London Review of Books brought the debate about Israel to a new low.

Simply titled "The Israel Lobby," the piece by John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt is, more or less, a compendium of every slander and innuendo that's ever been aired about the supposedly pernicious influence of supporters of Israel on US foreign policy.

As such, it is far from unique. One can find similar screeds, filled with the same sort of obvious factual mistakes punctuated by blatant bias, on any number of extremist Web sites hosted by neo-Nazis or Islamists. Indeed, it is a classic example of what the great American liberal historian Richard Hofstadter once labeled "the paranoid style in American politics."

But what differentiates Mearsheimer and Walt from the 19th-century anti-Semitic populists that Hofstadter wrote about - or even a contemporary example such as Louisiana Klansman David Duke - is their credentials.

Mearsheimer is the Wendell Harrison Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago, while Walt is the Robert and Renée Belfer Professor of International Affairs, as well as academic dean at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Both hold sinecures in the heart of the academic establishment.

Their goal isn't just to attack Israel, but to delegitimize Israel's supporters. The main point of "The Lobby" is to portray the pro-Israel community as a vast conspiracy that controls the media, Capitol Hill and the White House, and which ruthlessly squelches any resistance to Israeli policies.

The truth is less exciting. A consensus of Americans across party-lines and religious affiliation identify with Israel not because they do the bidding of the Elders of Zion, but because they see it for what it is: a democratic state in a sea of Arab tyranny with its roots in a common Judeo-Christian civilization.

No one has to bribe or hornswoggle ordinary Americans to back Israel. Whether they base their support on the Bible (as many American Christians do) or on sympathy with a fellow democracy afflicted by terrorists, the American love affair with the Jewish state has withstood the assaults of a biased media (another point Mearsheimer and Walt get completely wrong) and demagogic attacks from the extreme Left or Right.

AND THOUGH the United States is Israel's only real ally, it is far from obsequious in its dealings with Jerusalem. For decades, Washington has placed constant pressure on Israel to make concessions for the sake of an ephemeral peace process.

Though it has lavished Israel with military and economic aid, unlike our European "allies," Israel has not required America to deploy massive armies in its defense. In fact, if only a percentage of the American money spent on NATO deployments during the Cold War were considered foreign aid, then Germany or France - and not Israel - would be considered the chief recipient of American largesse.

The academic stature of these two men shows how far wacko conspiracy

theories about Israel have traveled in the post-9/11 era. This ought to highlight a point that Mearsheimer and Walt hit upon themselves - scrutiny of anti-Israel propaganda in the academy. The two claimed that "The Lobby" has worked to suppress criticism of Israel on the campus, citing a few efforts to respond to intimidation of Jewish students by professors.

In fact, anti-Israel bias at colleges and universities has become so pervasive as to make the views of "The Lobby" authors seem fairly close to the mainstream in the realm of Middle East studies. While Pat Buchanan of the troglodyte Right once falsely referred to Congress as "Israeli-occupied territory," it is the American university that has become more and more a place where pro-Israel students and teachers often feel unable to speak their minds publicly.

If anything, the Mearsheimer/ Walt essay ought to engender even more support for efforts such as the protest movement against anti-Israel incitement at Columbia University and Campuswatch.org, the Web site founded by scholars Daniel Pipes and Martin Kramer, mentioned in "The Lobby."

Far from suppressing academic freedom, these are merely isolated counter-attacks on the true monolith of the academy: bias against Israel. It is the "Lobby" conspiracy-mongers who wish to repress not only those few academics such as Pipes and Kramer who have the temerity to stand up for the US-Israel alliance, but the free speech rights of American Jews.

What this incident should also do is to once again alert Jewish liberals to the danger to Israel that is growing on the political Left, whose stronghold is the American university.

While many liberals have focused their attention on the perceived threat to Jews from religious conservatives and deplored the welcome given to right-wing supporters of Israel such as former House majority leader Tom Delay (R-Tex.) by some Jews, they have not paid enough attention to the growth of left-wing academic Israel-bashers.

Rather than worrying so much about the popularity of Israel on the Right, liberals need to start worrying about how unpopular it is on the Left.

The point that so perplexes Mearsheimer and Walt - the pro-Israel consensus - ought to remind us that support for Israel is neither the property of the Left or the Right. It would be just as illogical to reject liberals who love Israel, as it is to condemn conservatives who do so.

It would be a mistake to conclude that the authors of "The Lobby" are the only people with glittering credentials and the ability to influence students who feel as they do. Rather than laugh at them, we should be thinking hard about just how deep the roots of hatred for Israel run in our most prestigious schools. And that is a variety of academic politics where the stakes are very high indeed. (Jerusalem Post Apr 3)

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The Islamic Threat Is Greater than German and Soviet Threats Were By Dennis Prager

Only four types of individuals can deny the threat to civilization posed by the violence-supporting segment of Islam: the willfully naive, America-haters, Jew-haters and those afraid to confront evil.

Anyone else sees the contemporary reality -- the genocidal Islamic regime in Sudan; the widespread Muslim theological and emotional support for the killing of a Muslim who converts to another religion; the absence of freedom in Muslim-majority countries; the widespread support for Palestinians who randomly murder Israelis; the primitive state in which women are kept in many Muslim countries; the celebration of death; the "honor killings" of daughters; and so much else that is terrible in significant parts of the Muslim world -- knows that civilized humanity has a new evil to fight.

Just as previous generations had to fight Nazism, communism and fascism, our generation has to confront militant Islam.

And whereas there were unique aspects to those evils, there are two unique aspects to the evil emanating from the Islamic world that render this latest threat to humanity particularly difficult to overcome.

One is the number of people who believe in it. This is a new phenomenon among organized evils. Far fewer people believed in Nazism or in communism than believe in Islam generally or in authoritarian Islam specifically. There are one billion Muslims in the world. If just 10 percent believe in the Islam of Hamas, the Taliban, the Sudanese regime, Saudi Arabia, Wahhabism, bin Ladin, Islamic Jihad, the Finley Park Mosque in London or Hizbollah -- and it is inconceivable that only one of 10 Muslims supports any of these groups' ideologies -- that means a true believing enemy of at least 100 million people. Outside of Germany, how many people believed in Nazism? Outside of Japan, who believed in Japanese imperialism and militarism? And outside of universities, the arts world or Hollywood, how many people believed in Soviet-style totalitarianism?

A far larger number of people believe in Islamic authoritarianism than ever believed in Marxism. Virtually no one living in Marxist countries

believed in Marxism or communism. Likewise, far fewer people believed in Nazism, an ideology confined largely to one country for less than one generation. This is one enormous difference between the radical Islamic threat to our civilization and the two previous ones.

But there is yet a second difference that is at least as significant and at least as frightening: Nazis and Communists wanted to live and feared death; Islamic authoritarians love death and loathe life.

That is why MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction) worked with the Soviet Union. Communist leaders love life -- they loved their money, their power, their dachas, their mistresses, their fine wines -- and were hardly prepared to give all that up for Marx. But Iran's current leaders celebrate dying, and MAD may not work, because from our perspective, they are indeed mad. MAD only works with the sane.

There is much less you can do against people who value dying more than living.

The existence of an unprecedentedly large number of people wishing to destroy decent civilization as we know it -- and who celebrate their own deaths -- poses a threat the likes of which no civilization in history has had to confront.

The evils committed by Nazism and Communism were, of course, greater than those committed by radical Islam. There has been no Muslim Gulag and no Muslim Auschwitz.

But the threat is far more serious. (Townhall.com Mar 28)
The writer is a radio talk show host and author.

Hometown Jihad By Patrick Poole

When I left my hometown of Hilliard, Ohio eleven years ago, it was still a small suburban city outside of Columbus. By the time I returned a few months ago to help care for my aging parents, little did I realize that during the time I was gone that my hometown -- about as whitebread, conservative red-state America as you can get -- had become one of the many battlegrounds in the Global War on Terror.

The Hilliard I grew up in was sleepy cowtown. As the son of one the local police officers (and my older brother would later follow him on the force), it was impossible to do anything serious without word quickly making its way back to my home, so I didn't even try. No one else did for that matter. The city was safe and relatively crime-free, except for the obligatory fight at the local bar every Friday night and the annual confiscation of the slot machines at the Moose Lodge. Back then, virtually every area of town was within a half-an-hour walk. While I was in high school, after classes I would walk across the street to the local library at the entrance to the City Park to study and to pass the time.

Today, that former library building is now a full-time Islamic school (K-8), Sunrise Academy, funded and operated by the local-area branch of the Muslim American Society (MAS), the Islamic Society of Greater Columbus (ISGC). MAS has been identified by researchers and many media outlets (such as these recent articles in the Chicago Tribune and The Weekly Standard) as one of the U.S. front groups for the jihadist Muslim Brotherhood and funded by the extremist Saudi Wahhabi lobby. Hasan al-Banna, the Egyptian founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, stated this as the organization's credo: "Allah is our objective. The Prophet is our leader. Qur'an is our law. Jihad is our way. Dying in the way of Allah is our highest hope."

But the local Islamic school's connection to the international Muslim Brotherhood network is far from the only manifestation of the hometown jihad. Among the regular speakers at the school is Hilliard resident, Dr. Salah Sultan, who gives monthly lectures on a number of Islam-related topics. Sultan was the founding president of the Islamic American University in Dearborn, Michigan, and still serves on the European Council for Fatwa and Research. He has self-published a number of Islamic titles available through his own publishing company. On his online resume, Sultan lists as his personal vision: "To live happily. To die as a martyr. To meet the beloved ones in the Paradise of the Lord of Heaven and the earth."

But Sultan's desire for martyrdom isn't just a personal ambition; in a speech he delivered to the annual conference of the Islamic Association for Palestine (the primary U.S.-based front group for the Palestinian terrorist organization, HAMAS) in 1999, he expressed his hope that all Muslim children would dream of martyrdom for the Palestinian cause: "I want every child to sleep on the wound of Palestine and the actions of martyrdom, just like that mother in the country whose son wrote to her that they are to meet in Paradise."

In that same speech, Sultan clearly identifies who he thinks is perpetrating the "martyrdom" of Palestinians in a tirade that could be taken straight from the pages of the anti-Semitic book, Protocols of the Elders of Zion:

What does "the Cause" mean to you? And what does it mean to your children?... How much do they know about these tragedies? Did we mention

to them that the Children of Zion over there cut open the wombs of mothers. As Khalid M. Khalid mentioned in 1992 when he visited Shamir and saw on his desk a strange ashtray. He asked him, "What strange ashtray is this?" Shamir told him that this was the skull of an embryo. The skull of an embryo? An Israeli soldier opened the womb of a Palestinian mother, took out the embryo, cut off his head, and gave it to him as a present. He gave it to him as a present! This is the method of the Jews. Killing a Muslim or any other non-Jew does not matter to them. Because their motto is, "The gentiles mean nothing to us." This is what the text of the Talmud says: "If you come across a non-Jew kill him!"

Do you want this guy as your neighbor? We will be glad to see him go, quite frankly.

I'm hoping he doesn't bring any of his friends home for a visit, like his side-kick Yusef Al-Qarawadi, the Qatar-based Muslim Brotherhood and HAMAS cleric whom Sultan hired as a faculty member for the Islamic American University. In 2001, Qaradawi issued a fatwa that authorized HAMAS to conduct suicide bombings, declaring that such acts qualified as martyrdom and did not fall under the Qur'anic prohibition against suicide.

Then again in 2004, Qaradawi issued another fatwa along with 92 other extremist religious leaders authorizing the killing and abduction of American civilians in Iraq, identifying them as "invaders".

My neighbor Sultan and his buddy Qaradawi also serve together on the European Council for Fatwa and Research. This organization has as its goal the establishment of sharia as the operating legal system in Europe and asserts itself as the ruling government of Muslim's living in predominately non-Muslim areas. Among the more famous of its fatwas was issued in 2003 during an annual conference organized by the council in Stockholm, Sweden, which declared that jihadist killings and suicide bombings were not to be identified as "terrorism".

Thus, I have come to discover that the Global War on Terror is no longer a remote issue related to events taking place on the other side of the world. I understood that on September 11th when I heard that a former work colleague was aboard American Airlines Flight 77, which crashed into the Pentagon. And I am reminded of it every day when I think about my cousin that currently commands an Army unit outside of Baghdad, living day-to-day with his troops in harm's way to bring democracy and freedom to the oppressed and victimized people of Iraq.

Though I have to confess that I never would have expected that my hometown of Hilliard, Ohio would have ever become a haven for an international apologist and recruiter for Islamic-sponsored terrorism. But it's true.

It does make me wonder why the American government would grant someone with such readily identifiable terrorist connections, which took me just a few hours to track down on the Internet, U.S. Permanent Residency status? Have we learned nothing from 9/11? Is that day of unimaginable tragedy and horror just a distant memory?

Then I remember that not even two years ago that another local resident, Nuradin Abdi, was charged by the FBI with plotting with another known local al-Qaeda member, Iyman Faris, to blow up an area shopping mall after he had receiving extensive explosives training in Ethiopia. According to trial documents, Faris was taking orders directly from then-al-Qaeda operations chief, Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, who planned the 9/11 attacks and was subsequently captured in Pakistan. It is speculated that the terror plot was uncovered by the domestic surveillance program loudly denounced recently by the mainstream media, Democratic politicians, and leftist special interest groups.

This makes me concerned that next terrorist attack on American soil won't be in Chicago or Los Angeles, but could very well be a bombing at Otie's Tavern on Main Street, a sarin attack at Tuttle Crossing Mall, or shootings at my alma mater, Hilliard Davidson High School. Any of those scenarios is not far-fetched. Will Cemetery Road be the scene of hundreds of burned-out cars reminiscent of the uprisings in Paris just a few months ago?

It is thoughts such as these that give rise to my fears that the eyes of the world will look in shock and horror to my hometown of Hilliard, Ohio, or one of the tens of thousands of cities like it across the country, as jihad strikes into the deepest heart of middle America. When that day of terror comes, it should be one that we should expect. I remember that my neighbor Salah Sultan and scores of his jihad-preaching associates throughout the American heartland are not just teaching Arabic. The seeds they're sowing will inevitably bear fruit in a hometown jihad somewhere.

(FrontPageMagazine.com Apr 3)

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