

Commentary...

Why the Likud Voted No to Sharon's Disengagement Plan By Ron Dermer

The main reason that Ariel Sharon's disengagement plan was overwhelmingly defeated in the Likud is that party members were not convinced that the plan would improve Israel's security situation. In fact, the majority of voters thought the plan was a reward for terrorism.

Voters did not consider the referendum a vote of confidence in Ariel Sharon. Sharon remains extremely popular within the Likud. Voters did not think they were "slapping President Bush in the face" by voting against the disengagement plan, nor did the vast majority believe that a vote against the plan would harm Israel's relations with the United States.

Voters did not believe that a vote against the plan would weaken the Likud. On the contrary, it is far more likely that Likud voters feared that a vote in favor of the plan would split the party and alienate it from its base. In sharp contrast to what happened in Madrid last year, the terror attacks that occurred the day of the vote had little impact on the outcome. If anything the attacks only strengthened the resolve of those determined to vote against the plan.

On May 2, 2004, members of the Likud party (193,000 people in total) voted overwhelmingly - 60% to 40% - against Ariel Sharon's disengagement plan. Turnout for the vote was over 50%, a higher participation rate than in the last Likud primary, in November 2002.

Many outside of Israel may be wondering how a plan initiated by a hugely popular prime minister, backed by President Bush and supported by all senior Likud ministers, including former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, could have been defeated at all, let alone by such a wide margin.

An analysis of a comprehensive poll of Likud likely voters conducted by Midgam Research on April 22-23, 2004, shows that the main reason Likud voters did not back the plan was that they did not believe it would improve security. This was clear in the answers given to the following question: Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: "The disengagement plan will improve Israel's security situation." Strongly Agree 23%; Somewhat Agree 21%; Somewhat Disagree 13%; Strongly Disagree 40%; Don't Know/Refused 3%.

Despite assurances by Prime Minister Sharon and Defense Minister Mofaz that the disengagement plan would improve Israeli security, a majority (53%) of Likud voters disagreed with that assessment. There is also a clear difference in intensity between those who "strongly disagreed" (40%) and those who "strongly agreed" (23%) that the plan would improve Israel's security, suggesting that this argument was even more lopsided in the direction of the opponents of the plan. In fact, rather than seeing the plan as strengthening Israeli security, the majority of Likud voters saw it as a reward for terrorism.

Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: "The disengagement plan is a reward for terrorism." Strongly Agree 42%; Somewhat Agree 12%; Somewhat Disagree 16%; Strongly Disagree 28%; Don't Know/Refused 3%.

Fully 54% of Likud voters saw the disengagement plan as a reward for terrorism, including 42% who "strongly agreed" with that statement. A closer inspection of the data reveals that the decision by Likud voters to support or oppose the Gaza disengagement plan highly correlated with their answers to these two security-related questions. Over 93% of those who opposed the plan disagreed that it would improve security, and 89% agreed that it was a reward for terrorism. In contrast, 89% of those who supported the plan agreed it would improve security and 83% disagreed that it was a reward for terrorism. No other parameter tested served as a better predictor of voter behavior.

In the waning days of the campaign, those in favor of the disengagement plan attempted to turn the referendum into a vote of no confidence against Prime Minister Sharon. The logic for doing so was clear. Despite his spearheading the disengagement plan, Sharon remains hugely popular within the party, with 84% of Likud members viewing him favorably, including 44% who view him "very favorably." These numbers are remarkably consistent with opinions of Sharon within the Likud since he became prime minister three years ago.

Sharon's advisors were attempting to cash in on the prime minister's popularity by turning the referendum into a vote of confidence in Sharon. In the waning days of the campaign, Sharon repeatedly stated that "a vote against the

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plan was a vote against me." But as seen below, the majority of Likud voters (53%), including many who supported his plan, did not see the referendum as a vote of confidence in Sharon. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: "A vote against the disengagement plan is a vote of no confidence in Sharon." Strongly Agree 32%; Somewhat Agree 12%; Somewhat Disagree 16%; Strongly

Disagree 37%; Don't Know/Refused 3%

Wary of the popularity of the prime minister, those leading the opposition to his plan wisely decided against mounting a personal campaign against him. On the contrary, the most visible slogan during the campaign was: "We love you Sharon, but we are voting 'No.'"

Though some may try to interpret the election results as a slap in the face to President Bush and the United States, analysis of the poll results does not bear this out. By over 3 to 1, Likud voters did not believe that voting against the plan would harm relations with the United States. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: "A vote against the disengagement plan will harm Israel's relations with the United States." Strongly Agree 12%; Somewhat Agree 11%; Somewhat Disagree 30%; Strongly Disagree 40%; Don't Know/Refused 6%

Fully 70% of Likud voters did not think that voting against the plan would harm relations with America. Among those who intended to vote against the plan, 78% did not think their vote would harm U.S.-Israel relations. Moreover, the data suggests that the effort to paint a vote against the plan as a rejection of everything the prime minister received from President Bush failed because voters were not convinced that President Bush had actually given something important to Israel in the first place. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: "President Bush gave Israel something important in return for the disengagement plan." Strongly Agree 16%; Somewhat Agree 18%; Somewhat Disagree 15%; Strongly Disagree 32%; Don't Know/Refused 18%

Nearly one-half (47%) of Likud voters disagreed that President Bush gave Israel something important in return for implementing the disengagement plan, including almost one-third (32%) who "strongly disagreed." In contrast, only one-third (34%) thought the president had given Israel something important in return. While these results may shock those in the White House who felt the brunt of Arab and European ire over President Bush's historic statements that in effect opposed the return of Palestinian refugees to the Jewish State and the return of Israel to the 1967 borders, they will not come as a shock to Israelis.

Despite the repeated attempts by Prime Minister Sharon to present the president's statements in the best possible light, the Israeli press immediately downplayed their significance, suggesting that they left room for interpretation. This view was reinforced by statements from the American State Department that seemed to contradict the line coming out of the White House, as well as by the persistent rumors that the ostensibly unequivocal commitments made by the president would be "watered down" soon after the Likud vote in a letter to Jordanian King Abdullah.

In addition to attempting to turn this into a referendum on the prime minister and Israel's relations with the United States, supporters of the plan tried to suggest that a vote against the disengagement plan would weaken the party. As can be seen below, Likud voters did not buy this argument either. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: "A vote against the disengagement plan will weaken the Likud." Strongly Agree 15%; Somewhat Agree 14%; Somewhat Disagree 14%; Strongly Disagree 50%; Don't Know/Refused 6%

The overwhelming majority (64%) of Likud voters did not believe that a vote against the disengagement plan would weaken the Likud, including 50% who "strongly disagreed" with this statement. In all likelihood, most Likud voters believed that voting in favor of the plan would endanger the party by permanently alienating its ideological base. The fact that it was widely assumed that should the plan pass, a secular national unity government with Labor and Shinui would follow, only reinforced the sense among Likud voters that approval of the Gaza disengagement plan would threaten the party's base. Only 24% of Likud voters favored a secular national unity government. Nearly 70% preferred the current coalition or a coalition with the right-wing and haredi religious parties, the Likud's

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traditional political partners.

While it became clear in the days preceding the vote that the plan would be defeated, the margin of defeat surprised most pundits. A particularly savage attack on the day of the vote, in which a pregnant mother and her four children were gunned down at point blank range near the entrance to Gaza, led many to conclude that the outcome of the vote was affected by terrorism. This view seems to be reinforced by the large gap between what the polls predicted on the day of the vote and the final results. On the day of the election, Israel's two major newspapers, Yediot Ahronot and Maariv, published polls. Yediot, the country's largest daily, had the "no" vote leading by 3.5% (47.5%-44%), a gap which suggested that support for the plan was gaining ground in the closing days. Maariv, on the other hand, had the "no" vote leading by 8% (49%-41%), which according to their polls meant that the gap was actually widening. The final gap (20%) was well beyond the statistical margin of error of either poll. Many attributed this discrepancy to the terror attack in Gaza that occurred the day of the vote, but this is only partly true. At the time of the last vote within the Likud, terror attacks that occurred on that day had no effect on the outcome. On the day of the previous Likud primary in November 2002 between Sharon and Netanyahu, there were also terrorist attacks. In Mombasa, Kenya, a suicide bomber drove a car into a hotel lobby, and almost simultaneously, a missile was fired at an Israeli civilian airliner. Later that day in Bet Shean, Likud members were gunned down at a polling station. Yet those attacks had no effect on the outcome of the vote, and Sharon defeated Netanyahu by 15% (55%-40%), which is what polls conducted just before the election predicted. Furthermore, the polls published in the newspapers on the Gaza disengagement plan failed to separate likely voters from all Likud members. In a poll conducted among likely voters eight days before the balloting, the "no" side was leading by 8%. Yet polls conducted at the same time by the leading newspapers of all Likud members showed the "yes" side leading by 8%. This suggests that at the time there was a significant gap between the opinion of all Likud members and those who were actually going to vote. Thus, the 3.5% to 8% gap among all Likud members predicted by the newspapers on the day of the vote was probably significantly higher among likely voters. If there was any impact from the terror attack in Gaza on the vote, it was to reinforce the opinion of those opposed to the plan that it was a reward for terrorism. For those Likudniks who did see the vote as a referendum on Israel's resolve in the war against Palestinian terrorism, it seems clear that the message they sent was very different from the one sent by Spanish voters in March. If matters are left up to Likud voters, terrorism against Israel will never pay. (Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs May 3)

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The Arabist Letter Jerusalem Post Editorial

Back when George Shultz was US secretary of state, he made a practice of asking every newly appointed ambassador to locate his country on a globe. When the unsuspecting emissary put his finger on, say, Thailand, Shultz would correct him: "Your country is here," his finger on the United States.

The story comes to mind on news that some 50 former American diplomats, taking their cue from their British counterparts, have put their names to a letter denouncing President George W. Bush's policies vis-a-vis Israel and the Palestinians.

"By closing the door to negotiations with Palestinians and the possibility of a Palestinian state, you have proved that the United States is not an even-handed peace partner," say the diplomats. "Your unqualified support of Sharon's extra-judicial assassinations, Israel's Berlin Wall-like barrier, its harsh military measures in the occupied territories, and now your endorsement of Sharon's unilateral plan are costing our country its credibility, prestige, and friends."

This sounds like a serious critique, by serious people, of administration policy. The letter was published under the auspices of a Washington-based nonprofit, the American Educational Trust, which publishes a magazine called the Washington Report on Middle East Affairs. WRMEA claims to promote "Middle East solutions which it judges to be consistent with the charter of the United Nations and traditional American support for human rights, self-determination and fair play." The magazine's publisher, former US ambassador to Qatar Andrew Killgore, is the letter's principal signatory.

It's worth taking a look at the magazine's Web site, www.wrmea.com. Its April cover story is titled "Gaza: The IDF's shooting range." (The article, by Gideon Levy, is reprinted from Haaretz.) There is an article on the "USS 'Liberty' cover-up." The site prominently features an electronic ticker on "Your tax dollars sent to Israel," which as of this writing are said to exceed \$90 billion over the years. (That, however, is considerably less than the \$112 billion the US has spent in one year in its war in Iraq, for which WRMEA also has a ticker going.)

Aside from its editorial content, WRMEA is sponsoring an ad campaign which calls for "the Palestinian refugees' right to return." And there is this appeal for individual donations: "Journals of opinion do not bring in the same advertising revenue as mainstream magazines. Big corporations and the Zionist lobby want to control the editorial content around which their ads will be placed."

Killgore has received awards from the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee in 1992 and the Islamic Association for Palestine in 1994. As it happens, 1994 was the year in which the two groups jointly sponsored a fund-raiser in Annandale, Virginia, in which featured speaker Muhammad Siam, a Hamas leader, appealed for funds for jihad against Israel.

This isn't to suggest that Killgore shares their agenda. But it does give some indication of the circles in which he and his fellow signatories travel, and the

views to which they subscribe. It also gives the lie to WRMEA's claim that it offers mainstream views of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is an anti-Israel, pro-Arab organ and ought to be honest enough to present itself as such. Which brings us back to the Shultz story.

Suffusing WRMEA's pages is the conceit that they represent truly "American" views, untarnished by the Zionist lobby and independent of the presumably Zionist-controlled media. Of course this is a crackpot claim, given that in survey after survey Americans overwhelmingly identify with Israel against the Palestinians. On the other hand, Killgore's views are not that far from those of many State Department officials, as attested by the fact that he was awarded the 1997 "Foreign Service Cup," by the Diplomatic and Consular Officers, Retired (DACOR) group, which cited the "courage" of his Mideast advocacy.

Right now, America desperately needs a diplomatic corps to serve as its instrument in reshaping the Middle East. To judge by the Killgore letter, what Americans are getting instead is an Arab lobby within and alongside its State Department, representing views far outside the US mainstream. This week's letter should serve as a wake-up call to Bush that he needs to ensure that his Mideast ambassadors and foreign service officers are with him, not against him. He is, after all, their boss. (Jerusalem Post May 6)

Condoleezza Rice Fundraises for the PA By Michael Freund

Congratulations would appear to be in order for US National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice.

In addition to her already weighty responsibilities as President George W. Bush's chief adviser and confidante, Rice has now added a new task to her resume: chief fund-raiser for Yasser Arafat. According to a May 3 article in The Washington Post, the Bush administration has launched a "diplomatic offensive" aimed at allaying Arab concerns regarding the president's recent embrace of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's Gaza withdrawal plan. Among other things, the paper notes, "the administration in recent days has tried to emphasize its concern for the Palestinians."

This has included an effort to drum up financial support for the PA. "As part of the diplomatic offensive," the report says, "national security adviser Condoleezza Rice last week called some Arab countries that were behind in making payments to shore up the Palestinian Authority."

Isn't that thoughtful of her. With American casualties mounting daily in Iraq, Osama Bin-Laden still on the run, and North Korea threatening to develop more nuclear weapons, doesn't Rice have better things to do than making sure Arafat can balance his checkbook?

Indeed, Rice's telethon on behalf of the PA is particularly astonishing in light of some of the Palestinians' recent actions. Just this past weekend the PA transferred funds to Hamas-affiliated organizations in Gaza, claiming that economic conditions in the territories were the reason for the move. But if the PA itself is truly in such need of funds that the US national security adviser must intervene, why is it showering money on Hamas terrorists?

Moreover, it is difficult to comprehend why Rice is seeking to keep the PA afloat despite all the evidence indicating that it is actively engaged in terror against Israel. In the past three years, and particularly during Operation Defensive Shield, Israel has uncovered thousands of official PA documents – including many with Arafat's handwritten approval – proving direct PA financing of terrorist attacks and other acts of violence.

Even the State Department, in its annual report released last month on "Global Patterns of Terrorism," linked the PA with terror.

"The PA's efforts to thwart terrorist operations were minimal in 2003," the report said, and "some personnel in the security services, including several senior officers, have continued to assist terrorist operations."

Doesn't Rice read her own government's reports? If not, then she is probably also unaware that PA incitement against both Israel and the US has continued unabated in recent months.

The Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), an official arm of the US government, monitors electronic and print media worldwide and publishes a daily digest of translations. According to the FBIS, PA television broadcast a Friday prayer sermon from the Zayid bin-Sultan mosque in Gaza on March 26, in which the preacher called upon Allah to "shake the land under the Zionists and the United States and its allies. O Allah, show us a black day for the Jews, the Americans, and their supporters. O Allah, avenge the blood of our martyrs." Just two weeks earlier, the FBIS reported, a sermon broadcast on PA television on March 14 had this to say: "Here are the Jews today taking revenge for their grandfathers and ancestors, the sons of apes and pigs. This is the extremist tendency of Jews. They are extremists and terrorists who deserve death, while we deserve life, since we have a just cause."

More recently, on April 30, a Palestinian preacher again prayed for the downfall of America, telling his audience on PA television, "O Allah, support our kinfolk in Iraq. O Allah, direct the shots of the holy warriors for your sake. O Allah, shake the land under the pillars of the United States and its allies."

This too was documented in a FBIS digest, yet that does not appear to have prevented Rice from seeking to bail the PA out of financial trouble.

IT HAS been nearly seven months now since three Americans were killed by Palestinian terrorists in an attack on a US diplomatic convoy in Gaza on October 15. Under US pressure the Palestinians eventually arrested several suspects, who then "escaped" from a Palestinian prison last

month under extremely suspicious circumstances.

Last month it was reported that the US now has evidence indicating that PA Chairman Arafat personally authorized the attack in order to "convey a message" to Washington (Ma'ariv, April 14). Based on Rice's recent telephone activity, it would seem fair to say that the message has gotten through loud and clear: for instead of shutting down all financial support to the PA, Washington is inexplicably trying to keep Arafat's lines of credit open. In so doing, the Bush administration is not only undermining the moral clarity of its own war on terror, it is also indirectly facilitating the funding of anti-Israel terrorist attacks.

If Rice insists on continuing to serve as a fundraiser, she would do well to consider adopting a better cause to promote. Rather than collecting money for Yasser Arafat and his hired hands of terror, she might wish to lend a hand to their many victims. They are, I would think, far more deserving of her time and assistance. (Jerusalem Post May 5)

Hate in the Garden State By Shmuley Boteach

I was not surprised that Likud members decided to reject Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan to evacuate Gaza. Israelis have grown tired of retreat, and wiser with every evacuation.

One would be hard-pressed to name a single benefit that has accrued to Israel with its continually trading land for war.

They say that the definition of insanity is to repeat the same action but expect a different result. Israel gave up the entire Sinai desert to Egypt, only to receive an ice-cold peace and vitriolic anti-Semitism in return. Israel gave Yasser Arafat control of the major population centers of Gaza and the West Bank, and got a decade of terror in recompense.

And still, with rare exceptions, one Israeli prime minister after another succumbs to the pressure to give away more land – with the notable exception of Yitzhak Shamir, Israel's most underestimated prime minister.

I was a yeshiva student in Jerusalem when Shamir was in office. Israelis complained mightily that he didn't seem to have a plan for solving the Arab-Israeli conflict. But lack of action was his plan. It's called the do-nothing-and-wait-them-out plan. Don't embolden the Arabs by giving in to terror. Don't encourage them by showing weakness.

Don't raise their expectations by talking about unilateral retreat. Get them psychologically used to the idea that Israel is forever. It's a lot better than rushing to make agreements with parties who have no intention of honoring them.

After Yitzhak Rabin signed the catastrophic Oslo accords, I had the pleasure of hosting Shamir for a lecture at Oxford. I asked him whether, had he stayed in office, he would have given away land for peace. "Not one inch," was his response.

History has proven Shamir right and Rabin tragically wrong. If Israel has learned one lesson in its struggle for survival against the Arabs it is that Jewish retreat in the face of provocation only invites further attack.

Across the Arab world it is open season on the Jews. According to the New York Sun, Lakhdar Brahimi, the UN envoy to Iraq, recently bragged that he has never shaken the hand of a Jew.

Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah, head of a regime that is the world's foremost supporter of terror, publicly blamed recent terror attacks within Saudi Arabia on "Zionist hands [that] are behind what is going on now – they deceived some of our sons... they are supporters of the devil."

But American Jews are quickly learning that even in the US anti-Semitism will fester if we don't stand up courageously to fight it. At the Academy Awards this year Leni Riefenstahl, Hitler's beloved propagandist, was paid a public tribute while hundreds of Hollywood Jews sat and listened without protest.

In New Jersey, a state filled with Jewish voters, a whole slew of anti-Semitic incidents has erupted, yet the Jewish community does little to hold our elected representatives accountable for failing to combat it. Topping the list of such spineless politicians is New Jersey Governor James McGreevey, from whom we have barely heard a peep as our state sinks into the infamy of being a haven for anti-Semites.

First, there was the lamentable story of New Jersey Poet Laureate Amiri Baraka, appointed by McGreevey in August 2002 even though Baraka had spent 25 years devoting his art to dozens of anti-Jewish diatribes like this: "Now let us face these realities: A nigger wants to put down the Zionists and the Zionists control the radio, the television, the movies, the education, the intellectual life of the United States, the morality of the United States-Judeo-Christian ethics. The minute you condemn them publicly, you die. They will declare a war on you forever."

It was therefore not surprising that just a few months later Baraka published a famously anti-Semitic poem where he alleged that Israel was involved in the 9/11 attacks.

Then in October 2002 a student group that openly supports suicide bombings and calls for the destruction of Israel announced its intention to stage a conference at Rutgers – New Jersey's state-funded university.

McGreevey allowed the conference to go ahead and issued a statement with the president of Rutgers that said: "The best way to counter deplorable arguments is more discussion, not less, and the appropriate place for this kind of discourse is the university."

McGreevey's cowardly behavior reached its apogee two weeks ago week when the Rutgers student newspaper, The Medium, which receives thousands of dollars in student fees, mocked Holocaust memorial week by running a front-page cartoon showing a carnival contestant trying to throw a terrified Jewish man into a burning oven. The caption read: "Throw a Jew into the oven!"

Three throws for one dollar."

My radio producer and many newspapers called McGreevey's office for a public comment or condemnation, but the good governor has, to date, done nothing to either condemn or withhold funding from The Medium.

It was left to former New York City mayor Ed Koch to write to Rutgers President Richard McCormick, saying, "You have embarrassed, by your inaction, both the university and the State of New Jersey."

One is forced to ask oneself: Who is stupider? Nathaniel Berke, the student managing editor of the Medium who approved the cartoon, or the huge number of Jewish donors who continue to throw money at McGreevey's campaigns.

Anyone spewing Jew-hatred, black-hatred, or any other hatred in the West should certainly not be the beneficiaries of public funding, and should preferably have their jobs terminated as well. Which reminds me. James McGreevey is up for reelection in 18 months. (Jerusalem Post May 5) *The writer is a syndicated radio host in the US and author of 14 books.*

Forceful Reason: Fallaci issues a wake-up call to Europe.

By Lorenzo Vidino

"Oriana Fallaci" is not a household name in the United States, but it cannot be uttered in Europe without generating a heated reaction. Even though her 2002 book, *The Rage and the Pride*, was translated into English (by Fallaci herself) and sold many copies in the U.S., it was on the other side of the ocean that intellectuals, politicians, and ordinary citizens passionately debated the views of the celebrated Italian journalist.

The Rage and the Pride is either loved or hated; the positions Fallaci takes in it leave no middle ground. Outraged by the events of 9/11, Fallaci criticizes both Muslims (bent, according to her, on conquering the West and annihilating its culture) and Europeans (described as spoiled, hypocritical, and blind to the mortal threat represented by Islamic expansionism). Fallaci's views as expressed in *The Rage and the Pride* caused an uproar in politically correct Europe, death threats and lawsuits included. Now, two years later, Fallaci has published a new book, entitled *La Forza della Ragione* (*The Force of Reason*), which continues the discourse she began in *The Rage and the Pride*.

As its title suggests, *The Force of Reason* is not dictated by the (sometimes excessive) fury that inspired *The Rage and the Pride*, but it gives a more accurate explanation of why Europe has decided not to defend its identity and to surrender to what she calls the "Islamic invasion." With the sarcasm and uniquely direct style that characterizes her work, Fallaci carefully examines the historic and political reasons that have led Europeans to vilify their own culture, consistently embrace anti-Americanism, and pander to every request from the increasingly powerful Muslim communities that populate the dying Old Continent. Her analysis does not leave much hope for the future of Europe, although she takes a far more optimistic position on her adoptive country, the United States (Fallaci currently lives in New York).

The long introduction to *The Force of Reason* recounts the intellectual lynching to which Fallaci was subjected following the publication of *The Rage and the Pride*. The PC establishment, which she refers to as the "Modern Inquisition," crucified her, submerging her with lawsuits and accusations of being racist and fomenting a religious war. But all of this publicity just played into Fallaci's hands, as sales of *The Rage and the Pride* soared into the millions. But what has really struck Fallaci in the wake of *The Rage and the Pride* are the letters she has received from readers throughout the world.

One of the most significant was written by an Italian, who thanked her for "helping me to understand the things I thought without realizing I was thinking them." And this is Fallaci's goal: provoking Europeans into realizing what is going on right under their noses and getting rid of their fear to say something that goes against the PC dogma. According to Fallaci, the "Modern Inquisition" has managed to keep individuals in fear of expressing what they believe: "If you are a Westerner and you say that your civilization is superior, the most developed that this planet has ever seen, you go to the stake. But if you are a son of Allah or one of their collaborationists and you say that Islam has always been a superior civilization, a ray of light...nobody touches you. Nobody sues you. Nobody condemns you."

Fallaci has her own interpretation of the massive Islamic immigration that is rapidly changing the face of European cities. She sees it as part of the expansionism that has characterized Islam since its birth. After reminding the reader how Islamic armies have aimed for centuries at the heart of Europe (a part of history that is not taught anymore in Europe, since it would offend the sensitivity of Muslim pupils), reaching France, Poland, and Vienna, she lays out her case, claiming that the current flood of immigrants from the Middle East and North Africa is part of a carefully planned strategy. Fallaci uses the words of Muslim leaders to support this thesis.

In 1974, former Algerian President Houari Boumedienne said in a speech at the U.N.: "One day millions of men will leave the southern hemisphere to go to the northern hemisphere. And they will not go there as friends. Because they will go there to conquer it. And they will conquer it with their sons. The wombs of our women will give us victory." In other words, says Fallaci, what Islamic armies have not been able to do with force in more

than 1,000 years can be achieved in less than a century through high birth rates. She cites as evidence a 1975 meeting of Islamic countries in Lahore, in which they announced their project to transform the flow of Muslim immigrants in Europe in "demographic preponderance."

The "sons of Allah," as Fallaci calls them, do not make a secret of their plans. A Catholic bishop recounted that, during an interfaith meeting in Turkey, a respected Muslim cleric told the crowd: "Thanks to your democratic laws we will invade you. Thanks to our Islamic laws we will conquer you." But what really makes Fallaci's blood boil is the West's inability to even acknowledge this aggression. A large part of her book is dedicated to analyzing how the main European countries pander to the arrogant demands of radical Muslim organizations, how they are unable to defend their Jewish citizens from acts of Islamic militant violence (often blamed on neo-Nazis and almost never on the Muslim perpetrators, even when the evidence clearly proves otherwise), and said countries' unwillingness to be proud of their cultures and identities.

But when and why did Europe become so weak and submissive in the face of its new Islamic masters, a "province of Islam," as Fallaci calls it? She points the finger squarely at the 1973 oil crisis. Europeans were so afraid of losing their supplies of oil that they decided to pander to the requests of OPEC, discarding Israel and beginning an intense dialogue with Arab countries. From that year on, intellectuals, the media, and politicians have been showered with money for their support of Arab and Islamic causes and numerous lobbying organizations have been created in several European countries. A publication with the ominous title of "Eurabia [about which Bat Ye'or has written at length] was created in Paris, and the European parliament established the Parliamentary Association for the Euro-Arabian Cooperation, all part of an Arab-financed effort to influence European politics.

The last chapters of *The Force of Reason* are dedicated to explaining why Europe's three main political and social forces (Left, Right, and the Church) gave in to what she calls "the Islamic invasion." While Fallaci accuses the Left and Right mostly of ignorance and opportunism, her harshest words are left for the Church. Fallaci has been known throughout her long career for her strong anti-clericalism (she is a long-time leftist, daughter of an Italian partisan who fought the Fascists), but describes herself as a "Christian atheist." While stating that she does not believe in God, she claims that the West cannot ignore its Christian origin and identity. Even if we deny God's existence, Fallaci says, Christianity has shaped the Western world. It defines "who we are, where we are coming from, and where we are going."

But the Church, she says, is not able — or worse, not willing — to defend Christianity. Fallaci accuses the Church of helping the expansion of the "Islamic empire," lobbying for more Muslims to come to Europe. She points out that Christianity offers its churches as shelters to Muslim immigrants, who immediately turn them into mosques, as it has happened repeatedly in France and Italy. It continuously apologizes for the Crusades, but never expects an apology for what Muslims are doing now to Christians in Sudan or Indonesia.

Amid Fallaci's bleak vision for Europe, however, a ray of hope comes from America. In a very emotional last chapter, Fallaci describes her admiration in witnessing the 2004 New Year's Eve celebrations in Times Square. In a sharp contrast with the fear-constrained Europeans, thousands of New Yorkers decided to defy the Code Orange terror alert and party hard in the face of the terrorists. Proud to honor itself, young and determined, America is perceived by Fallaci as the only hope for the West. In this unprovoked cultural war that has been waged on the West, America should lead the way, but it cannot do it alone. According to Fallaci, the West has not realized that it is under attack, and that this war "wants to hit our soul rather than our body. Our way of life, our philosophy of life. Our way of thinking, acting and loving. Our freedom. Do not be fooled by their explosives. That is just a strategy. The terrorists, the kamikazes, do not kill us just for the sake of killing us. They kill us to bend us. To intimidate us, tire us, demoralize us, blackmail us."

Movingly passionate, *The Force of Reason* is a desperate wake-up call for the West and for Europe in particular. In Italy, despite a complete silence from the media (who have decided not to make the same mistake they made with *The Rage and the Pride*, when their criticism made the book's sales skyrocket) the book has sold a half million copies in just two weeks. A translation into English is imminent, making *The Force of Reason* readily accessible for those in the U.S. who want to learn more about the dire situation Europe faces. (National Review May 4)

Business as Usual: No love for Israel in Geneva By Anne Bayefsky

Notwithstanding Kofi Annan's anxious disclaimers, U.N. special envoy to Iraq Lakhdar Brahimi's tendentious proclamation that Israel is "the great poison in the region" is no aberration. Assigning blame to Israel for the nonexistence of Arab democracy, the impoverishment of Arab populations, and the human-rights deficit throughout the Muslim world is standard U.N. policy. Indeed, in a subsequent interview, Brahimi affirmed his original incitement, saying "this is a fact — not opinion."

The annual six-week ritual of the U.N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva, which ended on Friday, makes the point all too clearly.

After more than a month of negotiations, the commission on its final day could no longer avoid the ethnic cleansing in Sudan, which has left 30,000 dead and 900,000 in deplorable conditions. The U.S. proposal to condemn "the grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Darfur," and to call on the government of Sudan "to ensure all attacks against civilians are stopped" was defeated. Instead, the resolution announced: "the Commission

expresses its solidarity with the Sudan in overcoming the current situation."

The Sudan result was actually better than the commission outcomes on gross human-rights abuses in China and Zimbabwe. Resolutions on these states were blocked by the success of procedural no-action motions.

Consideration of the human-rights situation in Iran didn't even make it to the floor. This was despite a report from one of the commission's working groups describing a legal system with the following features. "[E]vidence by a man is equivalent to that of two women"; punishments for sins "against

divine law" are "the death penalty, crucifixion, stoning, amputation of the right hand and, for repeat offences, the left foot, flogging..."; and "criminal proceedings in their entirety are...concentrated in the hands of a single person since the judge prosecutes, investigates and decides the case." Iranian impunity from U.N. concern has practical results. Shortly after a meeting in Iran with the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression in November 2003, one person disappeared.

Israel was treated somewhat differently by the U.N.'s primary human-rights body, which is composed of a majority of Asian and African states and whose membership includes countries with such appalling human-rights records as China, Cuba, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Zimbabwe.

Not only were five resolutions adopted condemning Israel, but the commission took three hours out of its schedule to mourn the death of Hamas terrorist leader Sheikh Ahmad Yassin. Yassin personally instigated and authorized suicide bombing and exhorted his followers to "armed struggle" against Israelis and Jews "everywhere." A special sitting for Yassin was convened on March 22, 2004, despite the fact that the commission was already in session, and about to consider the only country-specific agenda item at the commission for the past 34 years — on Israel.

Although Israel's action was denounced by the commission and the secretary-general as an "extrajudicial killing," the conclusion is not only inflammatory, but incorrect. Both Yassin, and Abdel Aziz Rantissi, were combatants in a war. The legal term "extrajudicial," by definition, applies only to individuals entitled to judicial process before being targeted. Combatants — including the unlawful combatants of Hamas who seek to make themselves indistinguishable from the civilian population — are not entitled to such prior judicial process. International Committee of the Red Cross manuals state that civilians who take a direct part in hostilities forfeit their immunity from attack. Furthermore, judicial process was not an option for Israel since it would have placed both Israeli Defense Forces and Palestinian civilians at much greater risk. The legal limit in targeting combatants like Yassin is the rule of proportionality, or "incidental loss of civilian life" which is not "excessive" (in the language of the Geneva Conventions). In these cases, the outcome was proportionate since civilian casualties were kept to a minimum.

What makes the U.N.'s professed interest in the subject even more unconvincing was the commission's total lack of response to a simultaneous report on recent extrajudicial killings in Brazil. The U.N. Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions attempted to raise the alarm on more than 3,000 civilians murdered in Brazil at the hands of military and civil police. Details of "poorly disguised extrajudicial executions...[in which] the lethal shots had been fired from behind and at close range" were provided. Two people brave enough to talk to the rapporteur were shot and killed shortly after the U.N. representative left the country. No mention was made by the Human Rights Commission of Brazil.

The Commission Rapporteur on the Right to Food, while noting almost a billion people undernourished, spent his time issuing a special report on a "food crisis" in the "occupied Palestinian territory." He found blame on the "apartheid wall." No reference was made, however, to the inevitable disruption to the movement of goods and workers through passes subject to frequent terrorist attack, or the millions of dollars recently deposited in Mrs. Arafat's bank account.

The Commission Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief managed to produce an entire global report without mentioning "anti-Semitism." The commission does, however, continue to require the production of an annual report on the "situation of Muslim and Arab peoples in various parts of the world." To his credit, the author of that report suggested to the commission that a report on anti-Semitism would also be appropriate. His suggestion was ignored.

Perhaps the attitude of the U.N. towards Israeli victims of five decades of war and terror aimed at the destruction of the Jewish state is best summed up by the attitude of U.N. Special Rapporteur on Israel John Dugard. He told the commission "[a]fter the necessary disclaimer of sympathy for terrorism, the report will focus on two issues that...most seriously demand the attention of the international community - the unlawful annexation of Palestinian territory and the restrictions on freedom of movement."

The 2004 U.N. Human Rights Commission produced 5,539 pages of documents. Six weeks later there had been 86 separate votes, with the U.S. being in the minority 85 percent of the time.

In a final irony, the 2004 commission's last act was to consider that its performance warranted an additional six meetings next year — to be paid for, no doubt, from the U.N.'s regular budget, 22 percent of which comes from U.S. taxpayers. (National Review April 26)

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