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Commentary...

Take That, Thomas Friedman

By Jonathan Rosenblum

The joys of being a columnist.

Friends often commiserate with me over my miserable job. It must be terrible having to read all the attacks on Torah Jews and Judaism, they tell me. Well, yes. But there is another side of the coin to being a columnist and running a media resource organization on behalf of the Torah world.

In a world gone mad, I'm not forced to seethe alone, with no way to let out the steam. I can always write a column. In the best possible scenario that column may even be read and have an impact by those not immediately inclined to share our viewpoint. And in the worse case, I can at least give expression to the views of many others who do not have access to the media.

If Thomas Friedman writes some nonsense in The New York Times, the most the average reader can do is write a letter to The New York Times not in excess of 150 words and hope that his or her letter will be one of the 15 selected out of the more than a thousand that The New York Times receives every day. A columnist only needs to worry about meeting his deadline and not exceeding the allotted word count.

I was reminded of the plus side of being a columnist by some particularly arrant nonsense written by the aforementioned Friedman last week. Friedman, the winner of three Pulitzer Prizes, is unquestionably the most overrated columnist in the world. It is not that he is never right, but even when he is right, others have always made the point better and with considerably more depth.

His major gift, aside from an extensive Rolodex and an apparently unlimited expense account from the Times, is for the clever apercu. The problem with his clever vertelach, however, is that they are almost always wrong.

Last week's column was a case in point. Here is how Friedman began: "Question: What do the Shiite extremist leader Muktada al-Sadr and his Mahdi Army have in common with the extremist Jewish settlers in Israel. Answer: More than you'd think. Both movements combine religious messianism, and a willingness to sacrifice their followers and others for absolutist visions, along with a certain disdain for man-made laws, as opposed to those from G-d."

Friedman is particularly fond of this particular analogy between religious Jews and radical Islamists. Two days after 9/11, he informed his readers that the battle is not between the West and Islam, but between fundamentalists of all religions – Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, Islam, and Jewish – and those whose religious beliefs are 'progressive' and up-to-date." An empirical examination of that particular insight would provide a good measure of the overall quality of Friedman's thought. As I pointed out at the time ("What is a Fundamentalist?" HaModia, October 26 2001), Friedman would be hard pressed to point out any other religion besides Islam that has produced thousands eager to blow themselves to smithereens or millions more who celebrate their actions.

His more recent analogy holds up no better to scrutiny. Beyond the pejorative label "extremists" what exactly is Friedman's criticism of the Gaza's Jewish residents. What could be more natural and normal than not wanting to be uprooted from one's home? Over more than three decades, and in some cases three generations, the Gaza settlers have turned barren sand dunes into highly productive agricultural enterprises, while building up communities in which they live surrounded by those who share their strong faith and commitment.

When did they show their disdain for man-made laws? Prime Minister Sharon, who after all holds office only by virtue of having headed the Likud parliamentary slate, sought Likud Party approval by referendum of his plan for Gaza withdrawal. No one forced him to take that decision. He could have

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simply sought cabinet approval for his initiative and then presented it to the Knesset for approval. He wisely chose not to do so because he recognized that he would face a wide-scale revolt by Likud MKs and likely Knesset defeat. He hoped to win the referendum and thereby bind Likud MKs.

True, many settlers, who had previously registered with the Likud, participated in the referendum, but

they by no means constituted the majority of Likud voters. Polls taken immediately after the Sharon-Bush press conference showed the Prime Minister winning the referendum handily. That he ultimately failed to do so had little to do with the settlers having foisted any Greater Israel ideology upon the Likud, and a great deal to do with the cold-blooded murder at close-range of a pregnant woman and her four young daughters and with the prime minister's failure to answer basic security concerns connected to the withdrawal. Among those concerns are fears that the Gaza withdrawal would be read by the Palestinians as proof that terrorism succeeds and that Gaza would become a launching pad for missile attacks on Israel.

Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz's assurances that Israelis will be made safer by the Gaza withdrawal failed to convince Likud voters, as they convinced Friedman. Perhaps because the former know that Mofaz, who is not an MK and who holds his post only at Sharon's sufferance is not exactly an impartial expert.

Friedman quotes the usually level-headed Ari Shavit, who writes that the 13 Israeli soldiers who fell in the last two weeks in Operation Rainbow, "are no longer the victims of extremist Islam. They are no longer the victims of Arafat's insanity. They are the victims of the settlement enterprise. The attempt of the organized settlement movement to force on the citizens of Israel as war that is not their war. . . ."

That claim, however, is patently false. Those soldiers did not die defending Gaza settlements; they died defending Ashkelon and Ashdod from missile attack. Operation Rainbow's goal is to prevent advanced missiles and other sophisticated weaponry from reaching Gaza via tunnels from Egypt. Prime Minister Sharon promised that Israel would maintain control of the Rafiah sector even after withdrawal from Gaza to prevent the free

flow of high-powered weapons into Gaza.

The only thing about which Friedman is right is that polls show that a majority of Israelis support withdrawal from Gaza. But is he advocating plebiscitary democracy for Israel, in which every important public issue is placed before the voters in a referendum. The relevant issue is whether the prime minister can gather a majority of Knesset members for withdrawal without losing his job.

Those working against him are perfectly legitimate participants in Israel's representative democracy. They have nothing in common with Muktada al-Sadr, who is opposed by the overwhelming majority of Shiites in Iraq, whom he is attempting to hold captive at gunpoint.

In his final paragraph, Friedman writes, "I am a firm believer that what a culture or a society deems to be shameful and illegitimate is the most important restraint on how its people behave." But the only thing shameful mentioned in his article is not the behavior of Gaza's Jewish residents, but his baseless comparison to Islamic fanatics.

If Friedman wants to find the real messianic minority that has led the people of Israel to the point of destruction, he could point instead to the supporters of the Oslo process, who convinced themselves against all evidence and over more than a decade that the Palestinians truly want to live in peace with the Jews of Israel. (Hamodia May 26)

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This is the Enemy By Nissan Ratzlav-Katz

[WARNING: The following contains graphic descriptions of violence.]

Nick Berg, an American from Philadelphia, was kidnapped and tortuously beheaded by Arabs in Iraq sometime in May. The murderers filmed the deed and proudly displayed the victim's severed head.

After killing six Israeli soldiers in an attack on an armored vehicle in Gaza on May 11, the Arabs near the scene of the carnage gleefully held aloft human body parts in front of rolling cameras. One of the Arab terrorists was later interviewed on film with what appeared to be a human head in front of him.

The week before, after shooting at Tali Hatuel's car, causing it to skid and stop, Arab terrorists walked over to the vehicle to finish the occupants off. They looked at the heavily pregnant mother and her four no-doubt frightened girls; the youngest was two years old. And then shot them all. At point-blank range. With sadistic satisfaction, they systematically murdered Tali Hatuel and her unborn son, as well as all of Tali's daughters - Hila, age 11, Hadar, 9, Roni, 7, and two-year-old Meirav.

In Fallujah in March, crowds of townspeople dragged four American civilians out of their vehicles, shot or beat them to death, mutilated their bodies, dragged them through the streets, suspended them from a bridge and burned them.

And they danced and cheered.

With their children.

In Ramallah in 2000, two Israeli soldiers were kidnapped, beaten, stabbed countless times, had their eyes gouged out, and were literally disemboweled and dismembered by an Arab lynch mob.

The people - and I use the term loosely - who carried out the initial beatings threw one of the victims down to the waiting mob, where his face was further crushed with stones, feet, fists and even a heavy metal window frame. One Jew was set on fire and dragged along the street as Arab onlookers danced and cheered. Some of the butchers celebrated their crimes with the victims' internal organs. One of the killers, famously captured on film, proudly displayed his blood-soaked hands to the cheering Ramallah crowd.

And it gets worse. In 2003, nearly two years later, Arab parents in Gaza cheered again when their little children dressed up as members of the Ramallah lynch mob, complete with hands painted blood red, for a kindergarten graduation ceremony.

According to a report by Dr. Michael Widlanski, an Israeli Arabic expert, the Voice of Palestine called the attack on the Hatuel girls "an act of heroic martyrdom". The targeted children and their mother, the PA radioreported only as "five settlers".

Among the participants at the funerals of the Hatuel family members was President of Israel Moshe Katzav. He said, "This day of blood will be engraved in our history. An earthquake has happened. No one in the world can stand apathetically by in the face of these acts by such evil people. Where are those who speak in the name of Allah?"

National Review contributing editor David Frum posed the same question in his May 12 "Diary" on NRO: "Where are the imams?" he asked.

Some of "those who speak in the name of Allah," Mr. President, were busy sawing Nick Berg's head from his body in Iraq. "Allah is great!" they shouted in triumphal glee as they killed their bound and helpless victim. The imams are in the mosques, Mr. Frum, waving swords and exhorting their followers to behead a Jew: "Allah willing, we will cut off his head! Oh Jews! Allah is great! Allah is great!" They are also in Saudi Arabian palaces, telling their subjects that they are 95% certain Zionists are behind Islamist terrorism. They are also writing for the Arab media, explaining that Jews are behind all the evil in the world. And they are even organizing soccer matches, Mr. President, honoring mass murderers.

This is the enemy. Don't look away.

Perhaps when another rally is held in support of Iraqi "resistance" or "Palestinian liberation" somewhere in the world, counter-protesters can remind the ever-so-sensitive and progressive demonstrators of Nick Berg's scream of pain, or of two-year-old Meirav Hatuel cowering in her car seat, or of the Ramallah or Fallujah savages dancing with human entrails.

During the lynch of the two IDF soldiers who had taken a wrong turn into Ramallah in 2000, one of the Arab murderers paused in his savage beating to answer a cell phone belonging to one of the dying soldiers.

He told the worried voice on the other end of the line, "We are killing your husband."

There is a Talmudic dictum that states, "One who is merciful to the cruel, will ultimately cause cruelty to the merciful."

It seems to me that we, Israelis and Americans, have proven the Talmudic sages absolutely correct. Please, no more mercy. (IsraelNationalNews.com May 30)

Selling the Eiffel Tower By Sarah Honig

Con artists and political tricksters are both in sales, whether they promote property or policy. Their stratagems are often indistinguishable. They're both adept at marketing what is markedly different from what they claim, and they're not averse to trying to hawk the same bogus merchandise over and over to ever-gullible buyers.

Bohemian-born Victor Lustig, glib and charming, was one of the most talented scammers ever who ever lived. In 1925 he noticed how run-down the Eiffel Tower was. Its maintenance encumbered Paris's municipality, which couldn't even afford to paint it. It was then about 30 years old (like Gush Katif) and had never been planned as a permanent feature. Lustig developed a remarkable scheme based on the premise that the tower was a liability. Posing as a senior government official, he offered to sell it for scrap - without publicity, to prevent public outcry. A number of eager dealers entered competing bids, and the unlucky winner even bribed the bogus official for the privilege of buying the tower.

The victim never lodged a complaint. The truth was too embarrassing - as embarrassing as the awareness that Israelis had already bought the Gaza withdrawal package once; that they've already been had.

Those who claim amnesia would do well to recall Yishai Levy's top-of-the-local-pops hit of May 1994. It dominated our airwaves, avidly promoted by de rigueur progressive broadcasters. It went like this: "Goodbye to you, Gaza/We're getting out/I'll sit on the beachfront plaza/And my uniform put out of sight."

That was the glorious promise of peace exactly one decade ago - ostensibly not too long for the recollective capacities of folks with average intelligence.

Those were Oslo's heady days when it appeared that the superior intelligences among us (those with a proven expertise at discarding the past laden with all of history's burdensome lessons and changing their minds in determined defiance of reality) were cleverly ending all the foolishness of their less daring predecessors. Instead of vanquishing the enemy, they imported leadership and reinforcements for it and armed the lot to boot.

Concomitantly, they retreated to offer said enemy a strategic base of operations. That was when we got out of Gaza, 10 years to the day before the explosion that killed six soldiers in the Zeitoun Quarter, which they were exiting after searching for and destroying plants for the manufacture of rockets and mortars to terrorize civilians in Sderot, Ashkelon, and above-reproach kibbutzim.

Israeli soldiers never returned permanently to Gaza. It's no longer under Israeli control, which is perhaps why all hell broke loose there. Had reality conformed to the wise-ones' wishful thinking, there'd be no need even for intermittent incursions because there would be no terrorism to root out.

The road to Gaza's current hell was paved with broad-minded intentions. On May 11, 1994, Shimon Peres informed the Knesset that "the nation heaves a great sigh of relief to see our soldiers evacuate Gaza." Unhesitatingly he portrayed the pullback as "prudent, responsible, historic, and moral."

Then, as now, Peres derived his confidence and authority from opinion polls: "84% of Israelis support withdrawal. Its opponents are a negligible minority."

At the time, he was as convincing as Lustig. The transaction Peres boosted seemed to have been executed without a hitch. Yet there he was at the recent left-wing rally, again claiming to speak with the moral authority of the nation's undisputed overwhelming majority, and again advocating that we forthwith evacuate Gaza.

Oops, had we missed something? Hadn't we already subscribed to and paid in full for the peace that was to accrue from departing Gaza? It's a dead cert that Peres didn't forget what he so brilliantly pulled off in his Nobel-earning heyday.

There's no way he'd admit that his subtext pitch now is exclusively to cede Gush Katif. Since most Israelis are vague about its actual location, don't know how unconnected it is to the latest Gaza combat, and don't realize that it's geographically farther removed from Gaza than Sderot or Ashkelon, he can try to sell them another Gaza pullout all over again. "Goodbye to Gaza" is an eminently catchy mantra, well worth repeating.

Any reminders of his crowing speech of a decade ago could be disastrous for his present business venture. He can only hope the muddled masses don't dredge it up. He's about as likely to blab about it as Lustig was when he tried to sell the Eiffel Tower again. One successful con whets the appetite for more.

But there's a crucial difference between Lustig and Peres. Lustig escaped by the skin of his teeth when his hoax bombed the second time round. Our consummate elder statesman, however, may be on his way back to the coalition, perhaps for another stint as our ever-glib and charming globe-trotting foreign minister. (Jerusalem Post May 31)

Engineering Civilian Casualties By Itamar Marcus & Barbara Crook

It could have been an invitation to a social event, calling for "all citizens – women, children and the elderly" to participate. But the venue was anything but hospitable. The event was dangerous and the consequences deadly.

Two days before four Palestinian civilians were killed and others injured during the recent fighting in Rafah, the Palestinian Authority called on women, children and the elderly to stand in front of the IDF bulldozers that were searching for weapons tunnels between Gaza and Egypt. The area was infested with terrorists, and was the location of heavy fighting between the IDF and armed Palestinians. Instead of urging civilians to stay out of harm's way, the PA intentionally sent them to the front lines of an active war zone.

In the words of the official Palestinian Authority daily, the call was to create "an impassable barrier for the occupation bulldozers" and to "prevent their progress to the Rafah neighborhoods." The principal of a school in Rafah "called for all the citizens, women, children and elderly to participate" according to the May 17, Al Ayyam newspaper.

The call was answered. Thousands of civilians marched into the heart of the battle zone. Tragically, this is not the first time the PA has urged civilians into combat zones. It is part of a consistent and disturbing pattern. Since the outbreak of violence in October 2000, the PA has been pushing civilians, especially children, to leave the safety of their homes and join the fighting.

Children have been enticed into battle through manipulative music videos, broadcast for hours every day on official PA television, depicting youngsters in combat as heroes.

One such video, broadcast repeatedly by the PA, shows young boys and girls in army uniform taking part in a frenzied war dance, along with other scenes of children participating in the violence at the battlefield. The song accompanying the visuals is a musical call to arms for the children:

"Oh, young ones: Shake the earth, raise the stones.

"You will not be saved, O Zionist, From the volcano of my county's stones.

"You are the target of my eyes, I will even willingly fall as a shahid [martyr for Allah]." Allahu akbar! Oh, young ones!"

Children are directed by Palestinian television to go to the front and "willingly fall" as martyrs. In this glorification of war for children, even a toddler who can barely sit up is filmed breaking stones for the older children.

ANOTHER VIDEO, aired repeatedly from 2000 through 2002, instructs very young children to attack soldiers with stones and tells them about their supposed strength and invincibility.

"Don't be afraid," a 10-year-old sings to a five-year-old. "The stone in their hand turns into a rifle."

Every adult knows that stones can't be a match for rifles. But the Palestinian leadership mesmerizes its children through music and dance, while inculcating the fanciful notion that "the stone in their hand turns into a rifle," and that they should therefore be out fighting IDF rifles with their stones.

As they have done repeatedly in the past, the United Nations and world media have rushed to condemn Israel for the deaths of civilians during Operation Rainbow. But very few observers have looked beyond these lamentable deaths to ask the crucial questions: Why are PA leaders sending civilians, especially children, to the front lines and encouraging them to seek death?

What kind of political leaders send their five-year-olds, their "women, children and elderly," to the front lines of a war zone?

Yasser Arafat supplied the answer on Palestinian television several years back. Asked what message he would like to send to Palestinian children, Arafat answered: "This child, who is grasping the stone, facing the tank, is it not the greatest message to the world when that hero becomes a shahid? We are proud of them" (PATV January 15, 2002).

The PA chairman's explanation that dead children are the greatest message to the world finally puts PA policy into perspective. Palestinian leaders know that civilian corpses make powerful images and increase global anti-Israel sentiments. Dead Palestinian children make the Palestinians look like victims and create a smoke screen for the PA's terrorism war against Israeli civilians.

Photos of dead Palestinian children are manipulated to balance photos of dead Israeli civilians killed in pizza shops and on buses, murdered by Palestinian terrorists.

Simply put, dead Palestinian children create the illusion of moral symmetry. The saddest part of this twisted value system is how well it is succeeding. Palestinian civilians continue to flock to the front lines. And, tragically, the media have fallen for the Arafat trap, enabling the PA to continue its terror war while the world laments the "cycle of violence."

Arafat's propaganda campaign, built on the corpses of these civilian pawns, continues to fool even the best-intentioned observers who focus only on who inadvertently hit the wrong target, not on who deliberately put the target there in the first place.

Marcus is founder and director of Palestinian Media Watch. Crook is PMW's North American representative. (Jerusalem Post Jun 2)

Nausea as Strategy By Evelyn Gordon

A year ago, I wrote in these pages that Yosef Lapid had proven himself the wrong man for the justice minister's job. After last week, however, I am beginning to doubt his fitness for any cabinet position.

What bothered me was not the remark about his grandmother that incensed so many Israelis. I believe Lapid when he says that he never intended a Holocaust comparison by likening an elderly Palestinian woman in Rafah to his grandmother; he wanted to evoke the image of someone known and loved, not of someone slaughtered by the Nazis.

True, the comparison caused great public relations damage to Israel, because, regardless of Lapid's intent, it was widely construed as implying that Israeli soldiers were behaving like Nazis. But since irresponsible speech is unfortunately the norm among Israeli cabinet ministers, Lapid cannot justly be singled out for censure on this count. Where he did cross a line, however, was in demanding that the army operation in Rafah be stopped because the house demolitions "are making me sick."

An elderly woman who has suddenly lost her home is indeed distressing. But so is a bus full of schoolchildren being blown up in the heart of Jerusalem. Or four young girls, ages two to 11, being murdered at point-blank range by a Gazan terrorist.

In fact, these scenarios ought to be even more distressing – because death, unlike losing a home, precludes any possibility of starting anew. And the Rafah operation, like all of the army's operations over the past three years, was launched precisely to prevent such murders.

The unfortunate truth is that war is ugly: There is no way to wage it prettily. You can argue that a given operation is not worth the costs, and public relations damage should certainly be included in these costs.

But if you rule out action just because it "makes you sick," you have essentially ruled out any military action at all – because when terrorists operate from among a civilian population it is impossible to fight them without ever harming an innocent.

Even the Geneva Convention – which Israel is so frequently, and wrongly, accused of violating – recognizes this truth. Indeed, it states explicitly that "the presence of a protected person," i.e. a civilian, "may not be used to render certain points or areas immune [to] military operations."

And though the covenant prohibits the destruction of civilian property when avoidable, it explicitly permits such destruction if this is "rendered absolutely necessary by military operations."

Are the army's activities in Rafah legitimate military operations, and are house demolitions "absolutely necessary" to their success?

The answer to the first question is unarguably yes. Rafah is the center of the Palestinian arms smuggling industry, with weapons of all sorts being brought into Gaza from Egypt via tunnels that run from Rafah to the Egyptian Sinai. Disrupting the flow of arms to one's enemy is universally recognized as a legitimate military operation.

But since houses in Rafah lie mere meters from the border, it is impossible to combat the smuggling while leaving them untouched. First, almost every tunnel begins inside a house, since this enables the digging to take place unobserved while adding little to the tunnel's length. These houses, which are essentially arms depots, are clearly legitimate military targets for demolition.

Beyond this, however, many houses near the border serve as bases for gunmen, who use them to fire on soldiers searching for the tunnels. This may well happen without the owners' consent: Few people would argue with an armed man who announces his intention of taking over their second story. But it does not change the fact that gunmen are shooting at Israeli soldiers from these houses – which also makes them legitimate military targets.

One could argue that while the demolitions are legitimate, the public relations damage they cause is so great that disrupting the flow of arms is not worth the price. Yet even this claim seems dubious, given the lives that have unquestionably been saved by the army's successes.

First, and most important, the army has succeeded in keeping long-range weapons, such as Katyusha rockets, out of Gaza, despite repeated Palestinian attempts to smuggle them in. Indeed, last week's operation in Gaza was sparked by intelligence indicating that a major arms shipment, including such long-range weapons, was waiting in Sinai for transport to Gaza through the Rafah tunnels, and that the Egyptians were doing nothing to stop it.

Since long-range weapons could devastate Israel's southern cities, keeping them out of Gaza has almost certainly saved hundreds, if not thousands of lives.

Moreover, by hindering the flow of ordinary arms and explosives, the Rafah operations have also reduced the number of "ordinary" terror attacks. Indeed, according to press reports, the arms shortage in Gaza is now so severe that the price of a single bullet has soared to NIS 25-29

(\$5.50-\$6.40).

Israel's government is, first and foremost, responsible for protecting its own citizens. One can legitimately question the wisdom or efficacy of a particular tactic, and had Lapid confined his arguments to these considerations – and aired them to the cabinet instead of the entire world – his statements would have been unexceptionable.

But someone unwilling to countenance legitimate operations that save Israeli lives merely because they "make him sick" has no place in the government of a country at war. (Jerusalem Post Jun 1)

Senator Bigot Jerusalem Post Editorial

General Anthony Zinni says that George W. Bush and Richard Cheney were "captured" by "neocons" who drove them to war. Vanity Fair titled its longest article ever "Neoconned: The Path to War." And now retiring Senator Ernst Hollings has written that the only explanation for the war in Iraq is "Bush's policy to secure Israel." This is not subtle. It is anti-Semitism in one of its most classic and purest forms. Knowingly or not, it tears a page from the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, once again "revealing" that the Jews control the world. Regardless of where one stands regarding American foreign policy, anti-Semitism must be recognized for what it is and condemned like any form of bigotry.

Hollings now claims that charging him with "anti-Jewish stereotyping or scapegoating is ridiculous." If so, one wonders why he did not mention the much larger number of Jewish advisers and cabinet officials who served in the Clinton White House, or the fact that he himself, though a Democrat, voted for the war in Iraq.

As noxious as it is, however, the fact that bigots like Hollings (a former segregationist, who as late as the 1980's was still talking about "darkies" and "wetbacks") are having trouble containing themselves is instructive. It is of a piece with the general rise in anti-Semitism since 9/11. Has anyone stopped to think why this has happened and what it means?

What it should tell us is that anti-Semitism is a sensitive barometer for the state of the war against terrorism and therefore of the fate of the West. Jihad creates a climate conducive to anti-Semitism and vice versa. The more the jihadis seem to be on the rise and democracies on the run, the more anti-Semitism can be expected to increase.

Anti-Semitism and its offshoots are not just symptoms of jihad, they serve its cause directly. What better way to delegitimize and undermine America's war to defend itself than to claim that it is really about defending Israel? The effort to decouple America and Israel is both a principle end and means of jihad.

One key split between "neocons" and their opponents is over whether the road to peace and stability in the region goes through Jerusalem or Baghdad. The "peace process," pre-9/11 thinking, and the Arab party line have been dominated by the former notion, that Israel is the mother of all problems and addressing the Palestinian predicament is the mother of all solutions.

A key plank of the Bush Doctrine is to dispute this. Actually, says this new thinking, 9/11 had nothing to do with the Palestinians (except perhaps that the Palestinians had shown how successful terror could be) and everything to do with the swamp of despotism that had been allowed to fester in an entire backward and radicalized region. Sure, neocons have been at the forefront of making this argument. But whether stability lies in appeasing Arab despotism or in transforming the politics of the region that gave us 9/11 is not a Jewish or Israeli issue but the fundamental strategic question in the world today.

We would go further: Post-9/11, the legitimate debate should not be over whether Arab transformation is necessary, but how to bring it about. Can anyone now seriously suggest that radical, terror-supporting regimes are not a problem and should not be addressed? It is entirely legitimate to argue over how high or low the West should set its sights regarding prospects for Arab democracy and the means for getting there. There is also plenty of room for debate over how best to force remaining radical regimes, such as those in Teheran and Damascus, to choose between their support for terrorism and remaining in power.

The "who lost Iraq" debate should be replaced with one over how to win, not just in Iraq, but against the entire terrorist network. Those who insist on claiming that ousting Saddam was irrelevant to Western interests should explain how terrorism can be addressed, much less defeated, by continuing the pre-9/11 policy of ignoring states and hunting terrorists as a police action.

Anti-Semites have a certain blindness, shall we say, that allows them to see Jews as the source of whatever it is they don't like in the world. It is not surprising this group has a similarly distorted view of the war the West is in, the stakes involved, and the need, let alone the method of how, to win it. Pay them no heed. (Jerusalem Post Jun 1)

The Ambulances-for-Terrorists Scandal By Michelle Malkin

The United Nations and Red Cross have been providing cover for terrorists - literally. And American taxpayers are footing some of the bill.

Last week, an Israeli television station aired footage of armed Arab terrorists in southern Gaza using an ambulance owned and operated by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). Palestinian gunmen used the UNRWA emergency vehicle as getaway transportation after murdering six Israeli soldiers in Gaza City on May 11. The footage shows two ambulances with flashing lights pull onto a street. Shots and shouts ring out during the nighttime raid. A gang of militants piles into one of the supposedly neutral ambulances, clearly marked "U.N." with the agency's blue flag flying from the roof, which then speeds away from the scene.

AccessMiddleEast.org, a nonprofit global news monitoring service, posted the video (shot by a Reuters TV cameraman) on its Web site last week. To date, Access Middle East managing director Richard Bardenstein in Israel informs me, not a single U.S. television news station has expressed interest in showing the footage to American viewers.

Why should we care? Because since 1950, the U.S. has provided UNRWA with \$2.5 billion in taxpayer subsidies - about one-third of the relief agency's total budget. And because instead of investigating this latest black eye-inducing scandal, the U.N. is blasting American troops for defending themselves against such outrageous tactics - now being emulated by Iraqi guerrilla warriors sniping at our men and women from ambulances in Fallujah.

International relief officials are in stubborn denial about the abuse of their emergency vehicles and hospital credentials by terrorists. They claim the videotaped May 11 ambulance-assisted attack was an isolated incident and that the driver was forced to transport the gunmen. But this ambulances-for-terrorists program has been going on for years. And "humanitarian" workers have been willing collaborators.

According to the Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Center for Special Studies (CSS), senior UNRWA employee Nahed Rashid Ahmed Attalah confessed to using his official U.N. vehicle to bypass security and smuggle arms, explosives, and terrorists to and from attacks. He was in charge of distributing food supplies to Palestinian refugees. Nidal 'Abd al-Fataah 'Abdallah Nizal, a Hamas activist, worked as an UNRWA ambulance driver and admitted he had used an emergency vehicle to transport munitions to terrorists.

U.N. vehicles aren't the only ones being used by terrorists. An intensive care ambulance carrying the acronym of the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) was used to deliver an explosive belt found underneath a stretcher on which a sick child was lying in spring 2002. Female suicide bomber Wafa Idris, who blew herself up in a January 2002 attack in Jerusalem, was a medical secretary for the PRCS. Her recruiter was an ambulance driver for the same organization. PRCS receives financial support from governments and organizations around the world, including the American Red Cross and International Committee of the Red Cross.

The UNRWA has long been suspected of providing aid and comfort to terrorists. Rep. Eric Cantor, R-Va., chairman of the Congressional Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare, recently documented how "buildings and warehouses under UNRWA supervision are allegedly being used as storage areas for Palestinian ammunition and counterfeit currency factories." Cantor's 2002 report also noted that UNRWA hosts summer camps in martyrdom for young terrorists-in-training. Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J., has also lobbied for increased scrutiny of UNRWA funding, which has been used to publish anti-Semitic textbooks and posters in schools that "glorify homicide bombers and the slaughter of innocents."

Moreover, according to Rep. Smith, a UNRWA school hosted a Hamas rally by a key Hamas leader in July 2001 and another UNRWA employee praised homicide bombers, proclaiming: "The road to Palestine passes through the blood of the fallen, and these fallen have written history with parts of their flesh and their bodies."

While jihadis gain shelter in its emergency vehicles, the U.N. continues to lambaste the U.S. for assorted wartime "atrocities." Not one more American dime should go to fund the bloody self-righteousness of the world's most generous terrorist relief organization. (Jewish World Review Jun 2)

The writer is the author of, most recently, "Invasion: How America Still Welcomes Terrorists Criminals & Other Foreign Menaces to Our Shores".
