

 Jerusalem 5:32; Toronto 6:23

Events...

Monday October 14, 8pm

Toronto Chug Aliyah meeting at the home of Larry & Sue Zeifman, 30 Tangreen Circle, Thornhill. New participants welcome.

Tuesday October 15, 8pm

Rabbi Berel Wein delivers the first annual Rebbetzin Judy Taub Lecture at BAYT.

One Israel/ BAYT Brotherhood Mission November 3-10

Visits throughout Yeshu, Shabbat in Jerusalem, For info: 905-896-4451.



This is the tombstone of Yoseph HaTzaddik in Shechem (Nablus), the way it was found on Wednesday night of the Succoth Holiday. (shechem.org.il)

Quote of the Week...

"...The PLO no longer recognizes Israel and adheres to its national charter, which includes clauses that call for Israel's destruction." - Palestinian Foreign Minister Faruq Qaddumi (albayan.co.ae (Dubai) / mideastweb.org / IMRA)

Commentary...

The Axis of Envy By Josef Joffe

Why Israel and the United States both strike the same European nerve

Anti-Israelism and anti-Americanism travel together. In the Arab Middle East, the link is standard fare, but a more interesting case in point is Europe. Take José Bové, who first gained notoriety around the world in 1999 by leading the charge of a "deconstructivist" mob against a McDonald's restaurant in France. In March 2002, he showed up in Ramallah, denouncing Israel and pledging enthusiastic support to Yasir Arafat while the latter's headquarters was being surrounded by Israeli tanks. Arafat's cause was Bové's cause, this mise-en-scène suggested never mind that the Israeli army had not simply dropped in for a little oppression but in defense against mounting terrorist attacks.

ISRAEL NEWS

*A collection of the week's news from Israel
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Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation*

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Pick a peace-minded demonstration in Europe these days or a publication of the extreme left or right, and you'll find anti-Israeli and anti-American resentments side by side in the tradition first invented by the Khomeinists of Iran, whose demonology abounds with references to the "small" and "great Satan."

What explains this linkage? First, Israel and the United States are the most successful states in their

respective neighborhoods: Israel in the regional arena, the United States on the global beat. They boast the most fearsome armies, they command impressive technological infrastructures, and the Israeli economy vastly outperforms those of each of its neighbors while the United States has the world's number one economy. Moreover, both are stable, vibrant democracies. One need not invoke Dr. Sigmund Freud to infer that success breeds envy and resentment. The resentment is compounded by the rampant modernity both countries epitomize. Relentless change, as inflicted from outside, does not sit well with European societies, which obey a very different social contract—one that favors social and economic protection against the effects of the market and rapid technological transformation. The unconscious syllogism goes like this: Globalization is Americanization, and both have found their most faithful disciple in Israel.

Second, there is an element of bad old anti-Semitism. A hallowed place in its mythos is the Jewish quest for world domination. Now "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion" come with a new twist. The Jews, so the lore goes, finally achieved global domination by having conquered the United States: Jews control the media, the U.S. Congress, and the economy. Assisted by American Jewry, Israel has built up the most powerful lobby in Washington—one that delivers almost \$3 billion worth of aid per year. And thus, with the help of the "hyperpower," a term coined by the former French Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine, Jews actually do rule the world.

Third, the United States and Israel may not be unique, but they stand out because of their strong senses of national identity. For all their multiculturalism—indeed, both the United States and Israel are microcosms of the world—these two countries share a keen sense of self. They know who they are and what they want to be. They define themselves not through ethnicity but through ideologies that transcend class and tribe. Or to use a less charged term, they define themselves in terms of documents, be it the Torah or the U.S. Constitution. Their senses of nationality are rooted in the law, as received at Sinai or promulgated in Philadelphia.

Compare this mind-set to that of the mature states of Europe. It might well be said that the countries extending from Italy via Germany and the Low Countries into Scandinavia are already in a post-national stage. The European Union is fitfully undoing national sovereignty while failing to provide its citizens with common European identity. Europe is a matter of practicality, not of pride—at least, not yet. As a work in progress, it lacks the underpinning of emotion and "irrational" attachment. Europeans might become all wound up when their national soccer teams win or lose, but the classical nationalism that drove millions into the trenches in the 20th century has vanished.

Finally, because Israel and the United States are still national societies, they do not hesitate to back up their interests with force. Indeed, no Western nation has ever used force as frequently as have those two in the last 50 years. Conversely, post-national Europe cherishes its "civilian power," its attachment to international regimes and institutions. European armies are no longer repositories of nationhood (and career advancement) but organizations that have as much social status as the post office or the labor exchange. Europeans, in fact, pride themselves in having overcome the atavism of war in favor of compromise, cooperation, and international institutions. This view imbues them with a sense of moral superiority vis-à-vis those retrogrades that are the United States and Israel.

Perhaps many Europeans resent unconsciously what they no longer have—the exact qualities that once made them fierce and fearsome players in the international arena. They resent those two nations in the Western family for doing what they no longer can—or dare—do. Considering that Europe was the fountainhead of the two greatest evils of the 20th century (fascism and communism) that is not the worst of outcomes. But this divergence won't increase harmony and understanding between Europe and its two outriggers, the United States and Israel. Anti-Israelism and anti-Americanism will continue to march together until that day when Israel and the United States

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turn post-national, too.

Those chances, though, are slim. Strong traces of post-nationalism are evident in Tel Aviv's Sheinkin Street, as well as among the denizens of California's Silicon Valley. But Israel will remain a threatened polity, and the United States the world's number one, for the rest of this century. So regardless of what insight comes from examining national psyches, in the end, there are the stark and incontrovertible facts of power and position in the international arena. The anatomy of the international system, to borrow once more from Freud, is destiny. Tout court, where you sit is where you stand--post-nationalism, postmodernism, and all. (Foreign Policy Sept/Oct 2002)

The writer is editor of Die Zeit in Hamburg and associate of the Olin Institute for Strategic Studies at Harvard University.

What Are They Fighting For? By Evelyn Gordon

What are the Palestinians really fighting for? Anyone who wants an honest answer to this question should study the list of the intifada's "achievements" offered by various Palestinian public figures in honor of its second anniversary last week.

Dr. Ali Sha'ath, the son of Palestinian Authority cabinet minister Nabil Sha'ath, for instance, told a conference in Abu Dhabi two weeks ago that the intifada has three principal achievements to its credit: It has undermined Israel's security, weakened Israel's economy and caused Jews to leave the country.

An unnamed Palestinian public figure interviewed by Ha'aretz columnist Ze'ev Schiff last week offered a similar list of achievements. First, he said, the Palestinians have gotten better at killing Israelis: Whereas in the early days of the intifada, dead Palestinians outnumbered dead Israelis 11 to 1, the ratio is now down to 3 to 1.

And second, Israel's status in the court of international public opinion has plummeted. What is noteworthy about these lists is that all of the cited "achievements" are Israeli losses rather than Palestinian gains. The speakers did not, for instance, claim that the intifada has brought the Palestinians any closer to their declared goal of an independent state--largely because, in honesty, they could not. Two years ago, Israel and the United States jointly offered a Palestinian state on all of Gaza and 97 percent of the West Bank, including east Jerusalem and the Temple Mount. Today, Israel is refusing to negotiate with the Palestinian Authority at all, and the world's only superpower is backing this refusal.

Nor is it possible to claim that the intifada has increased the Palestinians' personal well-being.

Over the last two years, gross domestic product has fallen more than 50 percent, unemployment is approaching the 50% mark, and the Israel Defense Forces' reentry into the cities and towns it left seven years ago has imposed a daily burden of roadblocks and curfews unparalleled during the 28 years of Israeli rule that preceded the PA's establishment.

Yet despite this, a survey published last week by the Jerusalem Media and Communications Center found that 71% of Palestinians think the intifada's achievements are sufficiently significant to justify continuing the violence.

The only conclusion to be drawn from this concatenation of facts is chilling: To the Palestinians, the goal of creating their own state takes second place to the goal of undermining the Jewish one. Only this can explain why the list of "achievements" cited by Palestinian public figures has nothing to do with improved Palestinian prospects but everything to do with deteriorating Israeli ones: the worsened personal security, the economic crisis, the international contumely. And only this can explain why an overwhelming majority of Palestinians favor continuing a policy that has made their personal lives a misery and distanced the achievement of statehood.

Israelis, Americans and Europeans have frequently found the ongoing Palestinian support for the violent conflict inexplicable. Over and over during the last two years, statesmen, journalists and ordinary people have asked the same question:

How is it that the Palestinians have failed to realize that violence undermines their cause? But if the "cause" is to hurt Israel rather than to promote the Palestinian welfare, the deep commitment to the intifada makes perfect sense.

The "achievements" cited by the Palestinians are very real: Israelis' sense of personal security has deteriorated, Israel's economy has suffered and its international status has plummeted. If those are the goals, the intifada is a superb tactic for attaining them.

The assumption that the Palestinians simply do not understand what the violence has cost them is extraordinarily patronizing. It implies that an entire society is too stupid to grasp such obvious facts as that they are personally less well off today than they were two years ago, that they have lost much of the sympathy they once received from the world's only superpower, or that Israelis are much less willing than before to allow a Palestinian state within shooting distance of their major population centers. That this assumption has nevertheless gained such widespread credence is largely due to the fact that the alternative -- that the Palestinians understand full well what they are doing -- is simply too disturbing for most people to contemplate.

But it is time for Israel and the world to face up to what the Palestinians are really saying: that for an overwhelming majority of them, the "achievements" of

undermining Israel's economy, security and international support are worth the steep personal and national price they have paid.

And as long as this is so, the idea that a Palestinian state would end the conflict is a pipe dream -- because the Palestinian goal is not a thriving Palestine alongside a thriving Israel, but a dying Israel, even at the price of a dying Palestine alongside it. (Jerusalem Post Oct 8)

Anti-Semitism in the Guise of Intellectualism By Avi Becker

The decline in the number of anti-Semitic incidents in Europe and elsewhere in recent months is deceiving. In light of international criticism, particularly by the U.S., some European governments undertook aggressive enforcement measures that for the meantime are preventing violent outbreaks against Jews. But the statistics are misleading and hide anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic trends that have taken up a central position among intellectuals and academics worldwide. Instead of burning synagogues and violent harassment of Jewish children or rabbis, a campaign of incitement is underway under cover of intellectualism.

Intellectuals and civil rights activists try to explain that the attacks on Jews and terror against Israel are, in fact, Israel's fault. Their analysis combines delegitimization of the state of Israel with traditional anti-Semitic motifs and stereotypes. According to any objective criteria, this is a new wave of anti-Semitism, unprecedented since the end of World War II, and so far it is difficult to find any sense of responsibility for it among statesmen and intellectuals.

The aggregate effect of violence against Jews, expressions of hatred - including cries of "Death to the Jews" on the streets and campuses of Europe and elsewhere in the world - alongside thundering silence or convoluted explanations that blame Israel for the events, characterize what is now being called "the new anti-Semitism."

Harvard University President Lawrence Summers recently raised a cry about the moral decline of intellectuals. A former Secretary of the Treasury in the Clinton administration, Summers defined himself in the graduation speech at the university as an inactive Jew who had never encountered anti-Semitism in his life. In the past, he explained, he rejected attempts to label criticism of Israel as anti-Semitic. But now, he said, anti-Semitism is no longer the monopoly of the lowest ranks of right-wing extremists, but is taking root among enlightened intellectuals whose anti-Israeli attitudes are characterized by anti-Semitic activity. Summers said he found such anti-Semitism in the growing movement for an economic and academic boycott of Israel, in the deliberate indifference to the fund-raising for anti-Israeli terrorist groups on campuses, and in the left-wing demonstrations that condemn Israel and compare Ariel Sharon to Hitler.

In Paris, a few months ago, Jewish intellectual Alain Finkielkraut claimed that overt French anti-Semitism is now found in the extreme left and not in the extreme right wing represented by le Pen and his supporters on the right. Recent election campaigns in France, Germany and Denmark included anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic rhetoric to appeal to the dark racism of the masses.

An analysis of the anti-Semitic events shows there is a symbiosis between the acts of violent hooligans and the atmosphere in intellectual circles and the media. The United Nation's anti-Semitic fiesta against racism in Durban, South Africa last year was the writing on the wall, from which nobody drew a lesson. Respectable media like the Guardian, the BBC and Le Monde quote intellectuals who challenge the right of Israel to exist. The European press, like civil rights groups and the UN's refugee agency, UNWRA, have yet to apologize or re-examine the blood libel they disseminated about the IDF's operation in Jenin, which resulted in an outbreak of anti-Semitic incidents.

This is the atmosphere now nurturing the public debate in Europe. Under the guidance of Syria, a state that supports terror and currently serves as president of the UN Security Council, Europe is now ready to ignore the definition of responsibility for the murderous terror and to condemn only Israel. And at the UN's Human Rights Commission in Geneva, with member states including "enlightened" countries like Syria, Libya and Sudan, decisions that provide the rationale for killing Jewish Israelis, are being made.

The new anti-Semitism eclipses reason and morality, obfuscating concepts. The unholy alliance between European leftists whose ranks include academics and intellectuals, and fundamentalists and Islamic terror, endangers Israel and the Jews, and threatens the moral strength of Western culture. (Ha'aretz Oct 7)

The writer is the secretary general of the World Jewish Congress.

Pariahs By Berel Wein

There are two countries in the world that are international pariahs. Yet they are as different as they can be. One is Saddam Hussein's Iraq. This lawless regime has been a menace to its neighbors and to the world generally for decades. It has engaged in wars of aggression and conquest against its neighboring Muslim states, it has gassed thousands of its own citizens, it is governed by a megalomaniac dictator and torturer and it has cunningly and

successfully defied the Western world that defeated it in war a decade ago.

Apparently, US President George W. Bush has had enough of Saddam and the danger he represents to the democratic world and is about to take action to depose him, no matter what the consequences. Britain's Tony Blair is also convinced that Saddam must go and is willing to back up his rhetoric with British arms and blood. There is general agreement in the world community about Iraq, even though Russia, France and other countries trading with Saddam are sulking and are willing to somehow still give him the benefit of the doubt in the short term while they are making money on his dealings with them. Even in the Arab world, where Saddam shamelessly plays the Zionist card, as do most of his fellow Arab autocrats, his standing is very low. No one will be sorry to see Iraq crushed and disarmed and Saddam himself removed from power, and the sooner the better.

The other pariah country is naturally the State of Israel. No other country has been the subject of so many UN resolutions. Israel is constantly criticized, scrutinized and analyzed. In peace or war, it rarely finds a sympathetic hearing. It is probably the only country in the world faced with extinction – God forbid – if its sworn enemies were to prevail. It is the subject of many boycotts on all levels – economic, social, travel, sports, and academia. It is accused of racism while Islamic countries such as Saudi Arabia and Iran are allowed to practice vicious bigotry and religious intolerance openly, and the Western world winks at these excesses and outrages. It has never been allowed to reap the benefits of its victories in wars brought about by the continuing Arab attempt to eliminate it completely.

In my travels, whenever I present my Israeli passport in a foreign country, invariably the passport officer looks at me askance, as though I was from a different planet. I am probably somewhat paranoid about this subject, but I am reminded of the famous remark that Richard Nixon made: "You too would be paranoid if the whole world was against you!" The stigma of being a pariah that the Jew in the Exile bore for so many centuries was supposed to have been removed with the creation of the State of Israel. Instead we are now witness to an entire state and all of its inhabitants being made a pariah. From the French ambassador to Britain to the oped columnists of England's *The Times* and *Guardian*, through the self-hating Jews of American academia and the nihilist do-gooders of Mary Robinson's persuasion, there is a publicly stated opinion questioning Israel's right to exist.

BUT THERE is a decided difference regarding the future of these two "outsiders." Iraq, in spite of its oil wealth and blustering, its weaponry and cold-blooded cruelty, as it is currently governed and constituted is going to disappear. It is not only the determination of the American president that will bring this about. It is the inexorable lesson of history, especially the history of the last century, that such despotic and aggressive regimes that subjugate their own societies for the megalomaniac aspirations of dictatorial leaders are doomed to disappear. Either they implode from within or are exploded from without, but in any event, history eventually and remorselessly grinds them under.

On the other hand, the Jewish people – the ultimate "outsider" – continues to survive and stay its course. The latest statistic that I saw showed that Jews constituted 0.4 percent of the world's population. Yet, our relatively insignificant numbers belie our contributions to the thoughts and value systems of the rest of the world. And our little state has enormous achievements – in very difficult circumstances – on every front to its credit. There is no question that the State of Israel and most Jews would prefer not being an "outsider." We have more than earned our place in the civilized societies of our world. Yet, Balaam, no special friend of ours, saw it right when he said "Lo, it is a people that shall dwell alone" (Numbers 23:9).

I think that he may have meant "a nation that knows how to successfully live apart." Over millennia, we have learned the difficult lesson of "a nation that lives apart" while never forsaking our dreams and aspirations. The current situation regarding the Palestinian war is another chapter in our being forced to "live apart." However, unlike Iraq, we will survive whole and well, in spite of the machinations of our enemies and the clucking sounds of our erstwhile "friends." (Jerusalem Post Oct 4)

Evil Is Evil By Isi Leibler

Although in all likelihood we will still undergo more bloodshed before we see the dawn, all indicators suggest that we are moving in the right direction.

Those who insisted that military responses have no impact on terror have been proven resoundingly wrong. Operation Defensive Shield not only substantially reduced the terror toll; it also brought many Palestinians to the realization that our chaotic exit from Lebanon was not after all a dress rehearsal for our expulsion from the territories and ultimately our disappearance from the map.

Many Palestinians are now questioning the direction in which Yasser Arafat has led them and beginning to realize that terrorism has been a prescription for self-induced misery and brought them to the brink of disaster.

But that should not blind us to the enormously difficult challenges that still face us on the political and diplomatic fronts. As we have seen over the past week, our identity of interest with the United States has its limitations. Indeed, it is not inconceivable that once the Iraqi threat has been overcome, the Bush

administration may feel pressured to rebuild its bridges with the Europeans and others, including the so-called moderate Arab nations, at the expense of our security needs.

Any return to negotiations with the Palestinians, using Taba or even Camp David as a benchmark, would be disastrous. Yet there are still a number of politicians in Israel who would support such a course – despite the fact that the irresponsible ministers who orchestrated these negotiations during the chaotic dying days of the Barak government were acting without the endorsement of their prime minister and the Knesset, not to speak of the people.

There is therefore an urgent need to mount a campaign to convince our friends – and many Diaspora Jews – that we can never return to the Taba formula. We should also explain that it could be suicidal for us if we acceded to pressure from the international community and prematurely endorsed statehood for the Palestinians before that society has undergone truly fundamental changes.

Two years ago we were deeply divided over how to deal with the Palestinians. Not so today. The consensus now shared by the vast majority is that we have no ambition to rule over the Palestinians, but we still oppose territorial concessions until such a time as the Palestinians become reconciled to our right to exist in peace and security as a sovereign Jewish state. To display that, they must first demonstrate that they can elect a government with new leaders who exhibit the will and ability to impose law and order and are prepared to ruthlessly root out terrorism.

Today if we are to effectively promote our cause, we must once and for all put an end to our inclination to understate the virulence of the hatred that suffuses Palestinian society at all levels. Since Oslo, a tendency to sanitize the true objectives of the Palestinians has been a hallmark of Israeli foreign policy. Everything negative was swept under the carpet by government spokesmen more eager to promote the virtues of Arafat as a peace partner than confront unpleasant realities.

We must therefore convince the world that what we face is not a conflict between two people over territory or "occupation." That was clearly demonstrated when Arafat rejected prime minister Ehud Barak's offer to cede 97 percent of the territories over the Green Line.

Nor are we merely a party to "a cycle of violence." What we face is an existential struggle with neighbors who time and again clearly verified that their overriding objective is to destroy us even if this is to be achieved in phases over a long period.

THIS IS NOT paranoia. It is chapter and verse of the Palestinian war against the Jewish state. And since the intent of that war is evil, those who conduct it are evil.

Indeed the Jews have faced no such evil since the Nazis. That should not be construed as a racist statement or a primitive demonization of an entire people. It is calling a spade a spade. US President George W. Bush refers to evil states. Our Palestinian neighbors who seek the destruction of the Jewish people represent the essence of evil and barbarism. And now is the time for us to say so to the world at large, loud and clear. We are not suggesting that the Palestinian people are intrinsically or genetically any more evil than the Germans were under Hitler. We are saying that, like the Nazis, the Palestinian leaders have succeeded in indoctrinating their people and transforming them into a society which is inspired by evil.

It is evil when a society extols as heroes those who target civilians at gatherings such as a Pessah Seder, a bar mitzva, or a discotheque.

It is evil when a society sanctions the revival of the ancient custom of child sacrifice.

It is evil when a people bestows the highest level of merit on suicide bombers whose objective is to kill the maximum number of Jews.

It is evil when mothers display themselves on television conveying pride that their children have become "martyrs" and expressing the hope that their younger offspring will follow in the same tradition and also die killing Israelis.

It is evil when the proud parents of "martyrs" are publicly rewarded for sacrificing their children by being provided with \$25,000 from Saddam Hussein and lauded for their contribution by Arafat himself.

It is evil when children in kindergarten are taught songs and poems which extol the virtues of killing Jews. When four year-olds are taught at summer camps how to shoot Jews and indoctrinated into accepting as role models the "heroic martyrs" who died in order to kill the "wicked" Jews who "usurped" their land.

One video repeatedly shown on Palestinian television incorporates a children's song with the lyric "How pleasant is the smell of a martyr, how pleasant the smell of the land, the land enriched by the blood, the blood pouring out of a fresh body."

It is evil when an entire religious establishment calls on its faithful to hate Jews because they are Jews; to "have no mercy on the Jews wherever they are, in any country. Fight them wherever they are. Whenever you meet them, kill them... because they established Israel here, in the beating heart of the Arab world, in Palestine." That extract from a Gaza mosque sermon broadcast on Arafat's television station, is typical of the daily diet of Islamic

fundamentalist incitement directed against Jews.

And if not evil incarnate, how can one explain or justify the joyous street celebrations that erupt as soon as there is news of Israeli women and children having been blown apart by one of the heroic "shahids"? How else to view such behavior other than as evidence of a truly evil society?

Recent statements by some Palestinian leaders suggesting that in view of international revulsion to these killings, Jews living beyond the Green Line should now become the primary targets – as opposed to those living within it – in no way detracts from this evil.

There are no protests or expressions of dissent to the targeting of innocent civilians. Of course the mafia-like summary executions of men and women accused of collaboration do not encourage those opposed to the regime to raise their voices.

But the truth is that the majority have been sufficiently brainwashed from an early age by the religious and cultural environment to endorse the evil. Palestinian polls show that 80% of the people enthusiastically support suicide bombers.

This is why we must convince our allies and all people of goodwill that while most of us would be delighted to separate ourselves from the Palestinians immediately, no fences or borders would be able to provide us with security from neighbors committed to such evil behavior. To simply walk away and permit a people so suffused with blind hatred to create a state on our doorstep would be a prescription for self-destruction.

THIS IS not to say that peace and accommodation with the Palestinians can never be achieved. On the contrary. It must remain our ultimate objective.

But we must face the truth that as of now, our neighbors are no less suffused with evil than were the people of Germany under Hitler. And just as the Germans were eventually de-Nazified, so must the Palestinians be de-Arafatized and obliged to elect leaders able to enforce law and order. If in the absence of such a change we were to agree to a Palestinian state or grant territorial concessions which would become launching pads for even more intensive efforts to destroy us, we would simply be recycling the mistakes of Oslo and once again gambling with the lives of our children.

Israel was and remains a just and democratic society committed to Jewish and universal humanistic values at the heart of which lies respect for upholding the sanctity of life. In any war innocent bystanders die. But in stark contrast to our enemies who deliberately target women and children, many of our soldiers lie in graves because we sought to minimize civilian casualties and refrained from using the awesome military power at our disposal.

The vast majority of us yearn for peace and have no desire to rule over another people. On the day the Palestinians decide to reject evil, we will be willing to make generous compromises with them. But until then, like any nation facing an existential threat, we are obliged to do whatever is necessary to defend ourselves and protect the life and limbs of our citizens. That is the message we should be promoting to the world. (Jerusalem Post Oct 4)

The writer is senior vice president of the World Jewish Congress.

The Strangest of Times: a Perplexing WorldStage By Victor Davis Hanson

Skeptics cite a number of hypothetical disasters that might befall the United States should we attack Iraq. These are very legitimate worries; but it seems to me more likely that the far more serious ramifications will follow elsewhere, especially should we be successful in ridding the world of Saddam Hussein. We are currently on a roller-coaster ride - and where we are going and what will befall us is as unpredictable as it is wild. Indeed, we are quite literally at one of the most pivotal, dangerous, and bewildering moments of the last half century. Below are a few of strange possibilities on the postbellum horizon.

If we are to fight and risk our youth in Iraq, what will 5,000 Americans do who are now stationed in Saudi Arabia solely to protect the kingdom from Iraq? Will they sit tight out in the desert - on orders of a regime whose citizens murdered 3,000 of our innocents and have subsidized terrorists - as their fellow Americans are killed a few hundred miles distant? It would be hard to imagine our diplomats or generals grounding fighters and bombers as Americans were in harm's way an hour's flight away in order to accede to a government of questionable friendship and morality. Indeed, it might prove very explosive for the Saudis to attempt to prevent Americans from coming to the aid of their countrymen on the battlefield.

If we fight in Iraq, with the British alone of our NATO allies, what will the American public make of our critical European friends - especially the Germans who have deprecated such an effort as a mere "adventure," at odds with a superior "German way," a mentality, according to former and present officials, that is supposedly immune to pressures from an American-style Jewish lobby and the Hitler-like impulses of an American president? The last four crude statements by present and former members of the German government have brought German-American relations to the worst point since 1945. Will the "German way" put restrictions on the American use of German airspace and facilities - the idea being that we are allowed abroad to protect Europe and America from enemies that no longer exist, but not from those that do?

Americans now are learning of German help in establishing Iraq weapons of mass destruction as they wonder to what degree these bizarre pronouncements - voiced across the political spectrum and employing the metaphors of past

belligerency - reflect an out-of-touch elite or are grassroots harbingers of some predictably nasty times ahead. In the aftermath of the war, Americans may gradually turn to unilateral relationships with those eastern and western Europeans - Great Britain especially as well as the Italians and Spanish - who appreciate American efforts to create stability in the world, and who in turn for their support as real allies wish inclusivity beneath the security umbrella of the United States.

If Saddam sends a half-dozen germ- or chemically laced Scuds into Israel, what will happen if they are tracked by Israel satellites, targeted by improved second-generation Patriot-like missiles, and blown apart in their descent over Jordan and the West Bank, with their toxic clouds kept eastward by Mediterranean winds? Will the Palestinians again cheer if the Iraqi projectiles this time break up over Ramallah, spreading their patron's frightening poisons over themselves? What will be the official Palestinian response: anger or praise for Saddam? Or perhaps: "Shame on you Jews for not allowing just yourselves to be gassed?"

If the so-called Arab street in Cairo, Amman, or on the West Bank applauds our enemies in the next war, will American taxpayers at last demand that we no longer send millions of dollars to the autocracies of Jordan, Egypt, and the Palestinian Authority who encourage such outbursts to deflect anger from their own failures? In the pre-September 11 days, our diplomatic insiders might have winced at such overt and puerile anti-Americanism, but nevertheless were confident that their own "expertise" and "experience" with such "complex" issues could ensure American hayseeds that what they saw and heard on their screens is not what they really saw and heard on their screens. Will that be possible this time when the shooting breaks out?

What will Arab intellectuals say should the U.S. intervention be quick and successful, Saddam Hussein removed, and a consensual government established that allows freedom of expression without becoming an American colony? Will they deplore American intrusion but visit a new Baghdad to write and speak freely? Will they damn us for bombing an Arab country as they freely investigate for the first time the disappearance of thousands of Iraqis over the last decades? Or will they go on the state dole in Egypt or Saudi Arabia to write op-eds criticizing freedom in Iraq?

If the other members of the axis of evil seem to be moderating their behavior in light of the president's public taxonomy - North Korea, for example, has recently and mysteriously confessed it kidnapped and in some cases murdered Japanese citizens in efforts to further its covert war in the region - what will be their stance, when the first of the despotic triad has ceased to exist?

If the United States is successful, and there is a postwar consensual government in Iraq, what will be the effect of such an emerging latitude of reform - in Turkey, Afghanistan, Kurdistan, Iraq, and Qatar - upon the surrounding autocracies of the region? And do the monarchs and autocrats in the Gulf realize that under the present evolving circumstances the greatest danger to their rule is not the Arab street, the fundamentalist madrassas, a bullying United States, or assorted Libyan and Syrian thugs, but the democratic contagion that might emerge in Iraq?

If U.S. interventions abroad have been recently aimed at eliminating fascistic and autocratic dictators - in Panama, Serbia, Afghanistan, and Iraq - and implementing democratic reform in their place, what will the American Left make of such "imperialism" that costs lives and money not for land and treasure, but for freedom for others? Should we apologize to the EU and U.N. and try to make things as they were before our provocative and preemptory attacks took place - by attempting to bring back Noreiga, restore Milosevic, resurrect the Taliban, and ensure the continuance of Saddam?

Here at home everything is also in flux. Louis Farrakhan feels affinity with Patrick Buchanan; Right-wingers sound like revolutionaries; and Left-wingers appear cautious advocates of the autocratic status-quo abroad. Isolationists are having a problem with the crater in New York and wondering how pulling in our horns is going to make us safe in a post-9/11 world. Sober Cold War realists are becoming aware there is no longer any nuclear, aggressive Soviet Union that demands support for strongmen as the lesser of two evils. Multiculturalists find it perplexing that fundamentalists like al Qaeda and the Taliban are not merely "different" but quite evil and far worse than we. Leftists are hard-pressed to find a recent American intervention that didn't take out Right-wing thugs. Internationalists privately concede that U.N. resolutions are about as moral and binding as those of a faculty senate, and that Libya is more likely to be applauded as a model of human rights than is the United States. Multilateralists are waking up that what German officials say is not very nice and that Europeans shrug about anti-Semitism while they sell strategic materials to fascists in Iraq who plot to use that expertise to send gas against the Jews of Israel.

Meanwhile, an embattled United States goes it alone as its critics, here and abroad, are confused whether they should remain mute, hector, or applaud when the world's hyperpower continues to use its vast power to rid the world of some of its most abhorrent regimes.

And things promise only to become more, not less, perplexing in the weeks ahead. (National Review Oct 4)