



Jerusalem 4:01 Toronto 4:37

## Events...

### Shabbat, November 12-13

**Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, Cief Rabbi of Efrat, will be Shaarei Shomayim's guest. He will speak at an Oneg Shabbat Friday evening at 8:30pm, and Shabbat Morning at 11:30am. The community is invited.**

### Saturday, November 13, 8:00pm

**Stewart Bell speaks on "Our National Security and Terrorists who live amongst us" at the Jewish Book Fair, Leah Posluns Theatre, Bathurst JCC. Sponsored by Bnai Brith Canada. \$10.**

### Saturday, November 13, 8:30pm

**Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, Chief Rabbi of Efrat, will speak on Sharon's disengagement plan at BAYT.**

### February 20 to March 1, 2004

**Bnai Brith, Rabbi Stern and Rabbi Zweig's Mission to Israel Visit Gush Katif, Hevron, Beersheva, Ashkelon, Masada, Jerusalem; Info evening Thursday Nov. 11 7:30 pm at Shaarei Tefilla. For information call 416-787-1631 or email [reingar@pathcom.com](mailto:reingar@pathcom.com)**

## Commentary...

### A Gangster With Politics By Bret Stephens

In 1993, the British National Criminal Intelligence Service commissioned a report on the sources of funding of the Palestine Liberation Organization. For years, it had been Chairman Yasser Arafat's claim that he'd made a fortune in construction as a young engineer in Kuwait in the 1950s, and that it was this seed money, along with a 5% levy on the Palestinian workers in Arab League countries, which kept the PLO solvent. But British investigators took a different view: The PLO, they concluded, maintained sidelines in "extortion, payoffs, illegal arms-dealing, drug trafficking, money laundering and fraud," bringing its estimated fortune to \$14 billion.

In retrospect, it would seem amazing that 1993 was also the year in which the head of this criminal enterprise would be feted on the White House lawn for agreeing peace with Israel. But then, so much about the 1990s was amazing, which is perhaps why Arafat, of all people, thrived in that time. The ra'is, as he is commonly spoken of among Palestinians, may basically have been a gangster with politics, but he was also one of the 20th century's great political illusionists. He conjured a persona, a cause, and indeed a people virtually ex nihilo, then rallied much of the world to his side. Now that he is dead, or nearly so -- news reports vary as of this writing -- it will be interesting to see what becomes of his legacy.

Who was Yasser Arafat? For starters, he was not a native Palestinian, although his parents were and he variously claimed to have been born in Gaza or Jerusalem. In fact, he was born and schooled in Cairo, spoke Arabic with an Egyptian accent, and took no part in the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, the Nakba (catastrophe) which Palestinians regard as their formative national experience. Nor did Arafat take part in the Suez War, again despite later claims to the contrary.

But this was the period of Third World ferment -- of the "anti-colonialist" Bandung politics of Indonesia's Sukarno, Algeria's Ben Bela, Cuba's Fidel and Egypt's Nasser -- and at the University of Cairo Arafat became a student activist and head of the Palestine Student Union. He also began developing the Arafat persona -- kaffiyah, uniform, half-beard and later the holstered pistol -- to compensate for his short stature and pudginess. The result, as his astute biographers Judith and Barry Rubin write, "was his embodiment of a combination of roles: fighter, traditional patriarch, and typical Palestinian."

Around 1960, Arafat co-founded Fatah, or "conquest," the political movement that would later come to be the dominant faction of the PLO. Aside from its aim to obliterate Israel, the group had no particular political vision: Islamists, nationalists, Communists and pan-Arabists were equally welcome. Instead, the emphasis was on violence: "People aren't attracted to speeches but to bullets," Arafat liked to say. In 1964, Fatah began training guerrillas in Syria and Algeria; in 1965, they launched their first attack within Israel, on a pumping

# ISRAEL NEWS

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station. But the bomb didn't detonate, and most of the other Fatah raids were also duds. From this experience, Arafat took the lesson to focus on softer targets, like civilians.

So began the era of modern terrorism: the 1972 Munich massacre, the 1973 murder of American diplomats in Khartoum, the 1974 massacre of schoolchildren at Ma'alot, and so on. Yet as the atrocities multiplied, Arafat's political star rose.

Partly this had to do with European cravenness in the face of the implied threat; partly with the Left's secret love affair with the authentic man of violence. Whatever the case, by 1980 Europe had recognized the PLO, with Arafat as its leader, as the "sole legitimate representative" of the Palestinian people. The U.S. held out for another decade, but eventually it too caved in to international pressure under the first Bush administration.

For the Palestinians themselves, however, this was not such a good development. If Arafat's violence against Jews and Israelis was shocking, his violence against fellow Palestinians was still worse. In the manner of other would-be national liberators, he did not look kindly on dissenters within his ranks. In 1987, for instance, Palestinian cartoonist Ali Naji Adhami was murdered on a London street; his crime was to have insinuated in a drawing that the ra'is was having an affair with a married woman.

Once in power in Ramallah, the abuses became much worse. Critics of his government were routinely imprisoned and often tortured. In 1999, Muawiya Al-Masri, a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, gave an interview to a Jordanian newspaper denouncing Arafat's corruption. He was later attacked by a gang of masked men and shot three times. (He survived.)

Yet for all this, Arafat continued to ride the wave of international goodwill. The Europeans gave him the Nobel Peace Prize. The Clinton administration saw him as the one man who could "deliver" the Palestinians to make peace with Israel. The peace camp in Israel, championed by the late Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, more or less agreed: to them, Arafat was the thug who'd keep the Palestinian street quiet. Arafat strung them along, more or less, until his bluff was called by the Israeli peace offer at Camp David in July 2000.

After that, there was just no point in keeping up appearances, and so came the intifada. It was a premeditated act. As Arafat had already told an Arab audience in Stockholm in 1996, "We plan to eliminate the State of Israel and establish a purely Palestinian state. We will make life unbearable for Jews by psychological warfare and population explosion . . . . We Palestinians will take over everything, including all of Jerusalem."

It goes without saying that Arafat failed in that endeavor. The Israelis belatedly realized that the maximum they could concede was less than the minimum Arafat would accept, and refused to deal with him. For its part, the Bush administration cut off the international life support. In this sense, Arafat's illness -- so far undisclosed by his doctors -- can easily be diagnosed: He died of political starvation.

What remains? Very little, I suspect. None of his deputies can possibly fill his shoes, which are those of a personality cult, not a political or national leader. There is nothing to unite Palestinians anymore, either: their loyalties to the cause will surely dissipate in his absence. Arafat was remarkable in that he sustained the illusion he created till the very end. But once the magician walks off the stage, the chimera vanishes.

*The writer, former editor in chief of the Jerusalem Post, is a member of the Wall Street Journal's editorial board. (Wall Street Journal Nov 5)*

### Giving Terror a Boost By Daniel Mandel

Do the media give aid and comfort to terrorists by giving their violence maximum exposure and impact at times while sanitizing the perpetrators and tainting their victims at others?

It is standard procedure for many media outlets to describe the perpetrators of terrorist acts - the premeditated slaughter of civilians - with a range of euphemisms, "militants" being the most common.

Thus, The New York Times can headline a report on the killing of a hostage as "Iraq Militants Said to Behead a Truck Driver From Bulgaria." Similarly, terrorists killed in a military strike can be described in another as "Israeli Airstrike Kills 2 Hamas Militants, Wounds 6 Bystanders." Sometimes words are substituted, with government statements about "wanted terrorists" being transformed into "wanted militants."

Conversely, highly judgmental language is used when describing counterterrorism: "murder" and "assassination" have been popular when describing Israeli targeting of terrorist chieftains, bombers and dispatchers,

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even when no civilians are harmed.

How to justify these choices? Media organizations allege professional objectivity. The Reuters news agency has argued that "terrorist" is an "emotive term" unbecoming to "impartial journalists." The Canadian Broadcasting Corp. takes a similar view: "Terrorist" is a subjective term, while "militant" is an objective one. The former, so the argument runs, is reportage; the second is editorializing.

These rationalizations are based on the assumption, willful or otherwise, that violence committed on behalf of an approved cause cannot be terrorist. The platitude is well known to everyone: "One man's terrorist is another's freedom fighter."

In fact, being a freedom fighter, however defined, does not foreclose on the possibility that one is a terrorist. The Israeli terrorism scholar Boaz Ganor has put it well: "When you deliberately choose to attack civilians, you cannot say any more, 'I am not a terrorist because I am a freedom fighter.' Maybe you are a freedom fighter, but you are also definitely a terrorist."

Why, therefore, do the media persist in sanitizing terrorism and tainting counterterrorism? Out of bias and fear. Contrary to what is normally claimed, a bias is at work in which the nature of the attacks matters less than the identity of the parties carrying them out. This illegitimate practice started with the media disfavoring Israel and favoring Palestinians. It has not stopped there.

The same media outlets that indulge this practice also defend it vigorously. Thus, when CanWest Global Communications Corp., Canada's largest newspaper chain, altered news agency copy to restore the word "terrorist" to reports describing terrorist acts, Reuters, a leading purveyor of euphemistic reportage on terror, complained.

Revealingly, the global managing editor for Reuters, David Schlesinger, observed that naming terrorists as such could "endanger its reporters in volatile areas." As journalist Jonathan Tobin wryly observed, "Reuters is worried that the people it won't call terrorists will terrorize them." The resultant bias dictates a spurious moral neutralism that actually favors terrorists.

Without TV or the Internet, the hideous broadcasting of appeals from innocent hostages of Iraqi terrorists, followed by their televised merciless beheadings, could not succeed as a tactic to wage psychological warfare against the West. This, of course, redoubles pressure on governments to concede to blackmail and almost ensures the murder of hostages when they don't.

Far from reviewing gravely the journalistic ethics involved, media outlets, particularly in Europe, compete for the distinction of being the first to break the gruesome images of exhibition killings. This only ensures the taking of more hostages and thus the taking of more innocent lives.

Clearly, the media fail in their mission when they allege superior detachment while in reality they become obliging accomplices of terrorists. Terrorists might well continue killing, whatever the nature of the reportage. But they should receive no help from journalists. And if they do, the media cannot expect immunity from criticism. (Baltimore Sun Nov 5)

*The writer is associate director of the Middle East Forum and the author of H. V. Evatt and the Establishment of Israel: The Undercover Zionist.*

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#### **After Arafat** By Caroline B. Glick

In his press conference last Thursday, President Bush said people who don't believe in the applicability of democracy to the Arab world cannot really believe in a two-state solution to the Palestinian conflict with Israel. That is, as long as the Palestinians remain governed by terrorists, there is no way they will be willing to live at peace with Israel.

With Palestine Liberation Organization chieftain Yasser Arafat, the godfather of Islamic terrorism, now dead or dying in France, is there at last a real chance the Palestinians will achieve a democratic transformation that will enable peace to emerge?

In answering this question, we should take an example from one of Mr. Arafat's guiding lights: Adolf Hitler. Hitler's suicide in his bunker in Berlin in May 1945 was not what enabled Konrad Adenauer to lead a democratic West Germany. Adenauer could not have led, and certainly would never have been a democrat, if all he did was replace Hitler in May 1945. Before Adenauer was brought in to lead West Germany, aside from Hitler passing from the scene, the Nazi regime he created was militarily defeated and Nazi leaders -- both political and military -- were brought before war crimes tribunals.

Adenauer presided over a German democracy whose truncated borders were determined by the Allies; where Nazi propaganda was expunged from the schoolbooks; where Nazis were barred from positions of power and influence; and where Germans educators were made to teach their pupils the evil Germany had wrought in the war. Adenauer's ascension was only possible after the total destruction of the Nazi power apparatus.

The analogy of Hitler's death is pertinent in the case of Mr. Arafat not merely because of his ideological affinity with Hitler, but because Mr. Arafat, like Hitler, has built the Palestinian power apparatus in his own murderous image. All of Mr. Arafat's presumed heirs -- from Mahmud Abbas to Ahmed Qureia to Muhammed Dahlan and their colleagues in the Palestinian Authority are terrorists.

Mr. Abbas and Mr. Qureia owe their prominence to their having co-founded the Fatah terror group with Mr. Arafat. Mr. Abbas, who has been upheld by the United States and Israel alike as a "reformer," wrote his Ph.D. dissertation and later a best-selling book "explaining" the Holocaust is a hoax. Mr. Abbas has overseen terrorist attacks for the past several decades and has outspokenly conditioned peace on the destruction of Israel as a Jewish state through the so-called "right of return" of millions of foreign born Arabs to Israel.

Mr. Qureia, who also has a rich history of terror involvement, has been the

PLO's chief money man for the past three decades. From Tunis to Lebanon to the Gulf States to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Mr. Qureia has overseen a confidence operation that puts the Sicilian Mafia to shame. Mr. Qureia overtly supports terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians and in recent months has openly called for terrorists to murder Israeli civilians.

Muhammed Dahlan, who with his charismatic smile won the hearts of Israeli and American policymakers alike, is one of the architects of the current terror war. In 1994, Mr. Arafat put him in charge of coordinating with Hamas. Mr. Dahlan's militia in Gaza has actively carried out attacks against Israelis, including an Israeli school-bus bombing in November 2000, in which three persons were murdered and a half-dozen children lost legs and arms. Since then, Mr. Dahlan's forces have retained their leadership role in terror attacks, as well as in the weapons smuggling and development in Gaza.

And so on, down the line. Today there is no Palestinian political party that is not a terrorist organization. Of the 12 militias Mr. Arafat formed in the West Bank and Gaza since 1994, every one is deeply involved in terror activities. Documents seized by the Israeli army during major combat operations in the West Bank have shown Mr. Arafat's generals ordering suicide bombings and authorizing payments to terrorists.

Under Mr. Arafat's leadership, Palestinian society has been indoctrinated to jihad in a manner unmatched throughout the Arab world, perhaps with the exception of al Qaeda training camps. Children have been brainwashed to believe their life goal should be to die carrying out acts of genocidal mass murder of Jews. Women have been inculcated with the inhuman belief their wombs are bomb factories, rather than the sources of life.

Through the Palestinian media, school system, religious institutions, sports teams and iconographers, Palestinians over the past decade have been brought to believe their sole purpose as a people is to liquidate the Jewish people. Suicide bombings in Israel are greeted with carnival-like celebrations in the West Bank and Gaza. There is no remorse, no regret, no shame and no guilt of the wanton brutality and barbarity of suicide bombings.

And so, in light of the current derangement of Palestinian society, does Mr. Arafat's passing have any significance for policymakers?

On a basic level, the death of an evil man is always a cause for hope. Yet Mr. Arafat's death will provide an opportunity for building a better future if the Bush administration uses his disappearance as a catalyst for a true overhaul of Palestinian society. This requires more than just pressuring Israel to meet with and make concessions to a new PLO warlord, raised on Mr. Arafat's knee.

There is no doubt there are Palestinians alive today who have the potential to be Palestinian Adenauers. But for these leaders to come forward, the apparatus of genocide and terror that Mr. Arafat has wrought over the past four decades must first be dismantled. Mr. Arafat's heirs have no more chance of bringing peace and democracy to the Palestinians than Hitler's heirs could have done so in Germany. For peace to arise, Palestinians cleanly break not only with Mr. Arafat but with his legacy.

*The writer was one of Israel's negotiators with the PLO, 1994-1996. She is the Jerusalem Post's deputy managing editor and is senior Middle East fellow of the Center for Security.* (Washington Times Nov 9)

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#### **Arafat's Last Threat?** By Daniel Pipes

"I think it's very important for our friends, the Israelis, to have a peaceful Palestinian state living on their border. And it's very important for the Palestinian people to have a peaceful, hopeful future."

So spoke George W. Bush just two days after his reelection, exactly as news reports were leaking of Yasser Arafat's demise.

The combination of Bush's stunning new mandate and Arafat's near-death condition will lead, I predict, to (1) a quick revival of Palestinian-Israeli diplomacy after months of relative doldrums and (2) massive dangers to Israel.

The doldrums will cease because the Bush administration views Arafat as the main impediment to achieving its vision -- articulated above by the president -- of achieving a "Palestine" living in harmony side by side with Israel.

As Arafat exits the political stage, taking with him his stench of terrorism, corruption, extremism, and tyranny, Washington will jump to make its vision a reality, perhaps as soon as this Thursday when Tony ("I have long argued that the need to revitalise the Middle East peace process is the single most pressing political challenge in our world today") Blair comes to town.

This observer expects that the president's efforts will not just fail but -- like so much prior Arab-Israeli diplomacy -- have a counterproductive effect. I say this for two reasons. One has to do with his own understanding of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the other with the situation on the ground in the Palestinian territories.

Bush's understanding: The president's major statement of June 2002 remains the guideline for his goals vis- -vis this conflict. In it, he outlined his vision for a "provisional" Palestinian state and called on Israel to end what he called its "settlement activity in the occupied territories."

As these two steps make up the heart of the Palestinian program, the president was effectively inviting the Palestinians to behave themselves for an interval, long enough to collect these rewards, and then go back on the warpath.

Instead, the president should have told the Palestinians that they need unequivocally and permanently to accept that Israel is now and will always remain a Jewish state, plus they need to renounce violence against it. Furthermore, this change of heart must be visible in the schools, media, mosques, and political rhetoric before any discussion of benefits can begin.

But Bush did not make these demands; so, as Eli Lake has reported in the New York Sun, his approach translates into likely pressure on Israel.

Situation on the ground: There will be no successor to Yasser Arafat – he made sure of that through his endless manipulations, tricks, and schemes. Instead, this is the moment of the gunmen. Whether they fight for criminal gangs, warlords, security services, or ideological groups (like Hamas), militiamen grasping for land and treasure will dominate the Palestinian scene for months or years ahead.

The sort of persons we are familiar with from past diplomacy or from television commentaries (Mahmoud Abbas, Ahmed Qurei, et al.) lack gunmen and so will have limited relevance going forward.

The Palestinian territories have already descended into a hellish anarchy, and their circumstances will probably worsen as the strongmen struggle for power. Eventually, two of them will emerge with the ability to negotiate with the Israelis and Americans.

Note, two of them. The geographic division of the West Bank and Gaza, of only minor import until now, looms large upon Arafat's passing. As Jonathan Schanzer has suggested, whoever rules in the one unit is unlikely to gain traction in the other, making the notion of a "Palestine" that much more difficult to promote.

Two Palestines, anyone?

In conclusion, Israel has been spared unremitting US pressure during the past three years only because Arafat continued to deploy the terrorism weapon, thereby alienating the American president and aborting his diplomacy. Thanks to growing anarchy in the Palestinian territories, Israel will probably remain "lucky" for some time to come.

But this grace period will come to an end once clever and powerful Palestinian leaders realize that by holding off the violence for a decent interval they can rely on Israel's only major ally to pressure the Jewish state into making unprecedented concessions.

I doubt this will happen on George W. Bush's watch; but if it does, I foresee potentially the most severe crisis ever in US-Israel relations. (Jerusalem Post Nov 10)

*The writer is director of the Middle East Forum and author of Miniatures.*

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### **Belligerence as a Matter of Choice** By Evelyn Gordon

Shortly after Afghanistan successfully completed its first democratic election, New York Times columnist William Safire wrote ebulliently that if Afghanistan can do it, so can Iraqis and Palestinians.

But in his list of the reasons for Afghanistan's success (including George Bush's determination, international support, and Hamid Karzai's political talents), Safire omitted a crucial one: the Afghani people.

And that is precisely why a similar Iraqi or Palestinian success seems unlikely – because while Afghanistan chose to work together to build their country, Iraqis and Palestinians have chosen to turn theirs into living hells.

Afghanistan is the only one of the three where every major population sector agreed to decide the country's future by elections rather than force of arms.

That choice was far from obvious: With the Pashtuns comprising an absolute majority of Afghanistan, ethnic minorities knew they had no chance of winning the presidential election.

Nevertheless, Afghans of every stripe registered to vote, and even fielded candidates. Not a single ethnic group boycotted the elections.

Furthermore, the losers quickly reversed an initial refusal to accept the results due to voting irregularities. Had they persisted in their refusal they could have plunged the country into chaos or even civil war.

Their concession was a credit to them as individuals, but even more it was a credit to their electorates. In Afghanistan, playing the spoiler does not win hearts and minds.

No less important was the flip side of the equation: eschewing violence.

Though every ethnic group has its own private army, they turned these armies neither on each other nor on Western forces helping to stabilize the country. Instead, they joined the Western forces in hunting down Taliban and al-Qaida remnants that did want to act as spoilers.

While Afghans dislike being "occupied" no less than do Iraqis or Palestinians, they opted to end their occupation peacefully – by forming a stable, democratic government that could simply ask the Westerners to leave whenever their presence became unnecessary or undesirable.

As a result, Afghanistan has suffered far less violence than either Iraq or the Palestinian Authority.

In Iraq, the minority Sunnis adopted the opposite approach.

Ever since Saddam Hussein fell, they have waged vicious war not only against America but against their fellow Iraqis. Indeed, many attacks are specifically aimed at Iraqis: at policemen – who are in the forefront of efforts to build a stable, democratic Iraq – and even at ordinary civilians.

Iraqi terrorists have bombed crowded marketplaces and even an elementary school; they have kidnapped aid workers, including Iraqi ones, whose sole goal is to assist the civilian population; they have attacked oil pipelines, sewage and power plants, and other facilities aimed at improving Iraqis' quality of life.

Moreover, a leading association of Sunni clerics threatened to have its followers boycott January's elections if any attempt is made to end the violence

by attacking the terrorist stronghold of Fallujah.

In short, the Sunnis will tolerate voting only if it does not interfere with their shooting.

Worst of all, however, this attitude appears to enjoy substantial popular support. Without a large civilian population giving them shelter and concealing them from the authorities, combined with a reluctance on the part of many Iraqi policemen to take action against them, the terrorists would have been caught long ago.

The Palestinians adopted the Sunni approach as far back as 1994, when Hamas and Islamic Jihad boycotted the first (and only) Palestinian election because it was held under the Oslo Accords, which recognized Israel's existence – something they were unwilling to do.

Instead, they launched a six-year campaign of suicide bombings against Israeli civilians, undeterred by the economic consequences to their countrymen of Israel's response: repeated closures of its borders to Palestinian laborers.

Moreover, this choice was supported by the PA's official government. Far from using its armed forces against these groups, PA-controlled areas became safe havens for Islamic terrorists.

Nor was this due to inability. With 50,000 "policemen" armed with assault rifles – twice the size of the Western forces in Afghanistan, for a population one-seventh as large – the PA could easily have crushed the terrorists, had it so desired.

This continued until 2000, when the Palestinians announced their choice even more unambiguously. After rejecting Israel's offer of a state on more than 90 percent of the territories, including parts of east Jerusalem, they launched a

full-scale terrorist war that has thus far lasted four years. They did not cease this war even when Israel, under US pressure, upped the offer to 97% of the territories, including the Temple Mount.

The Palestinians preferred killing Israelis to having a state.

Nor was this merely the choice of a few terrorists. The official PA security services not only refused to fight the terrorists, but joined them in attacks against Israel. And large majorities of the Palestinian public not only consistently approved suicide bombings in opinion polls, but suited action to word by giving the terrorists material aid and comfort.

Palestinians like to call this a war against "the occupation." Yet it was launched in response to Israel's offer to remove its troops and civilian settlements from almost all the territories.

Furthermore, in 2000 there were no Israeli troops in major Palestinian population centers (except Hebron); Israel occupied these cities only in April 2002 because of the vicious wave of terror.

Thus not only did the Palestinians choose continued "armed struggle" over ending "the occupation," they were even willing to accept a far more suffocating occupation – complete with economic collapse and thousands of dead and wounded – for the sake of continuing the terror.

Until ordinary Iraqis and Palestinians make the same choice Afghanistan did – of life over death, construction over destruction – there is no chance that they will repeat Afghanistan's success. Unfortunately, that seems unlikely to happen anytime soon. (Jerusalem Post Nov 9)

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### **Arafat's Bedroom Farce** By Daniel Pipes

It is hard to find words adequate to describe the malevolent 40-year long career of the world's longest reigning terrorist (it began in January 1965), a man who fouled his nest in Jordan, Lebanon, and then in the West Bank and Gaza, a moral monster who fooled the world into thinking he had reformed (remember that Nobel Peace Prize?). Yet his farcical death-scene provides perhaps the appropriate coda to an unworthy life.

The mise-en-scène is as preposterous as what came before, only much funnier. First, there is the wife, Suha, a Greek Orthodox convert to Islam who nonetheless continued to observe Christian holidays and now bellows out "Allahu Akbar" as she spends a reputed \$100,000 a month living the good life in Paris. Then there are the long-suffering minions, hoping to get their day in the sun, free at last of their irascible, unpredictable, domineering leader. Finally, there are the hapless French politicians, stung by their own stupidity in sending a military plane to Jordan to retrieve Arafat to Paris, then treating him like royalty (including a courtesy visit by President Jacques Chirac), only to find themselves parties to his death-bed antics.

Here are some of the specifics; as they say, you couldn't make this stuff up.

On Nov. 7, French foreign minister Michel Barnier told the LCI television channel that Arafat was alive, but "I would say he is in a state that is very complicated, very serious and stable at the time we are speaking." Asked if Arafat was already dead, Barnier memorably answered: "I wouldn't say that." The foreign minister of a major country, supposedly a serious man, has satisfyingly been made to look like an idiot.

What Arafat might be dying of has been conspicuously not mentioned, leading to many speculations. Of course, some Palestinians have hatched a conspiracy theory about Israel poisoning Arafat. The PLO's news service, Wafa, with a straight face demands an inquiry into the exact manner of his poisoning. "We have the right to know the type, the source of the poison as well as the antidote and how to get it," writes Wafa's political editor. More interesting, though, is the plausible thesis that the "president" is dying of AIDS, especially given his reputed pre-nuptial activities. David Frum elaborates on this hypothesis in National Review Online:

We know he has a blood disease that is depressing his immune system.

We know that he has suddenly dropped considerable weight – possibly as much as 1/3 of all his body weight. We know that he is suffering intermittent mental dysfunction. What does this sound like?

Former Romanian intelligence chief Ion Pacepa tells in his very interesting memoirs that the Ceaucescu regime taped Arafat's orgies with his body guards. If true, Arafat would a great deal to conceal from his people and his murderously anti-homosexual supporters in the Islamic world.

Before airlifting Arafat to Paris, French Foreign Minister Michel Barnier promised to "stand by" him. Was that why Arafat chose to be treated in France rather than in any of the fraternal Arab countries that supposedly support his movement – because he could trust the French to protect his intimate secrets?

Meanwhile, the Israelis, when not lying low, give out that Arafat is "clinically dead."

Then there is this unique paragraph of Steven Erlanger in the New York Times:

Mr. Arafat's condition was described as unchanged by a spokesman for the French military hospital in Paris where Mr. Arafat is variously said to be in an irreversible coma, a reversible coma or no coma at all. The rumor of Saturday [Nov. 6] was that Mr. Arafat had sat up and waved at his doctors; the latest rumor on Sunday is that he has suffered liver failure - denied by Mr. [Nabil] Shaath - and is being kept alive on machines while his aides and his wife fight over his burial place and his bank accounts.

The allusion to a "fight over his burial place and his bank accounts"? There is widespread suspicion that Suha and her allies are pretending Arafat is still alive so that they have time to tussle with the Israeli authorities over getting him buried in Jerusalem and also plunder Arafat's bank accounts, reputed to be as much as billions of dollars. A "senior Palestinian banker" is quoted noting that Arafat alone knows the numbers of his secret accounts and these could well accompany him to the grave. "If the numbers die with him, then the Swiss bankers and other bankers worldwide will be rubbing their hands in glee."

Perhaps Suha has already dipped her delicate hand in the honey pot. An account in the Washington Times finds that shortly before Arafat was flown to France, Suha "received \$60 million in her Paris bank account." And that's on top of an alleged \$11.4 million deposited in her accounts between July 2002 and September 2003 (which French authorities are looking into). The same Washington Times article states that "At least 60 percent of the Palestinian Authority's budget comes from international aid contributions, of which the European Union is the largest donor." Translation: most of us Westerners share the privilege of footing the bill for Suha's legendary shopping expeditions.

It's no wonder they are angling to dispose of the corpse in Jerusalem, considering the state of Arafat's family burial plot in Khan Yunis, Gaza. Agence France-Presse vividly describes this decrepit site (the French original is even more colorful):

Unkempt, ankle deep in rubbish and the air thick with flies from the stinking market next door, the Arafat family plot could not be a more inauspicious burial place for the icon of Palestinian nationhood. ...

Less than 100 square metres with two dozen tombs already in pride of place, a minimum of mourners would be able to crowd the site, stumbling over the roughshod ground to pay their last respects. Hidden behind a cement wall and accessible through a solitary white, metal door encrusted with mud, nothing could be less imposing or more humiliating for a man who is now unlikely to achieve his dream of a Palestinian state with its capital in Jerusalem.

Bin liners, a child's T-shirt and a traditional red keffiyeh (headdress of the type favoured by Arafat) are ground into the dust. Empty crisp bags, milk cartons, plastic bottles and broken glass are strewn across the burnt grass. Overgrown scarlet and white bougainvillea do nothing to sweeten the nauseating stench of rotting fruit and meat, laced with dung from half-dead donkeys tied up in the adjacent market.

Laundry hanging from a run-down high-rise flat flaps over the grave of Arafat's sister, Yusra al-Qidwa, who was laid to rest in August last year, alongside their father.

To the prospect of Arafat forever gracing the Holy City, Israel's justice minister Tommy Lapid said on Nov. 5, in perhaps the best one-liner of the whole sordid affair, that Arafat "will not be buried in Jerusalem because Jerusalem is the city where Jewish kings are buried and not Arab terrorists."

When four of Arafat's flunkies, including Ahmed Qurei, his pretend "prime minister," no longer could bear Suha's capricious ways, they announced a trip to Paris to hear directly from the doctors on the state of the great man's health. Suha responded viciously, calling up Al Jazeera television early on Nov. 8 and accusing the quartet of engaging in a "conspiracy" against Arafat. "Let it be known to the honest people of Palestine that a gang of would-be inheritors are coming to Paris," she screamed in a segment Al-Jazeera aired repeatedly. Using Arafat's nom de guerre, she warned: "You have to understand the scope of this conspiracy. I tell you, they are trying to bury alive Abu Ammar." She also added for good measure, "He is all right and he is going home."

To this, the flunkies replied by calling Suha "evil" and a "madwoman," and went anyway. Suha's stock response is "Every beautiful flower ends up surrounded by weeds."

To make matters yet more interesting, rumors have swirled around Arafat's military hospital that he twice refused to speak to Mahmoud Abbas, the PLO's number-two, by telephone and instead has on the quiet made Farouq Kaddumi his successor. Who, you might ask, is Farouq Kaddumi? Erlanger explains that he is a founder of the Palestine Liberation Organization who rejected the Oslo accords and refused to return with Mr. Arafat to the West Bank and Gaza. He still lives in Tunis, where he retains the title of P.L.O. foreign minister, despite the fact that Mr. Shaath holds the Palestinian Authority's title of minister for external affairs

Got that? The farce is complete, and Arafat dies as wretchedly as he lived. (FrontPageMagazine.com Nov 10)

## Where Dreams Flew By Barbara Sofer

Exploring the grand new Terminal 3 at Ben-Gurion Airport last week, I was dogged by an unanticipated feeling of moroseness, which wasn't quite offset by the thrill of sweeping expanses of glass and concrete, the alluring shopping, or the promise of flying without hauling hand luggage up and down precipitous staircases.

Then I realized I was experiencing a sense of loss for that old, homely but familiar Terminal 1. A renovated adaptation of an old British edifice, Terminal 1 didn't boast a single esthetic element – nothing like the enchanted fountain and six-pointed shopping star of Terminal 3. It was purely utilitarian.

Nonetheless, who among us doesn't feel nostalgia for the scene of so many romantic moments, both in our personal lives and our national existence? There's a Terminal 1 moment in most of us.

Ben-Gurion Airport, a.k.a. Lod, became the major gateway into our new state, and its lack of pulchritude was irrelevant. The scarred memories of being forcibly kept out by the British always prevented us from taking our comings and goings for granted.

Then our government imposed stiff exit taxes. Travel was such a luxury that the words for going abroad, "hutz l'aretz" were uttered with reverence. At last the barriers came down, and we became passionate, ubiquitous (if obstreperous) tourists traveling because we could, traveling to take a breather from the confinement and weightiness of life in an intense nation the size of New Jersey.

Entire countries seemed to be overtaken by colonies of Israeli families and youngsters as we discovered bazaars on the Bosphorus, bargain balneology in Bratislava, backpacking in Bhagsu. You'd meet these fellow Israelis in the tight quarters of Terminal 1 and later Terminal 2, the no-frills charter flight launch pad, dispelling any notion that flying was for a privileged few. We were newly mobile and urbane.

If the departures were liberating – "head cleaners" we called them – the arrivals were always more gripping. First there were images of Golda Meir and David Ben-Gurion returning from trips abroad.

The legendary Magic Carpet brought Yemenite Jews in striped cassocks and curled sidelocks. Sophia Loren landed in dark sunglasses. Frank Sinatra was all smiles. Anwar Sadat stepped out of an airplane and changed history. Some 800,000 former Soviet immigrants walked down those airplane stairs in winter jackets, many toting violins. Ethiopian Jews donned their Shabbat white clothing for the ultimate pilgrimage to Jerusalem. We cheered the planes of Jews rescued from Entebbe. Returnees from Mombasa, guarded against further terror and missile attack by Israeli fighter jets, deplaned at the old terminal.

The hot asphalt retained its enchantment, eliciting spontaneous kisses from immigrants and tourists alike, moved by their first footstep in the land of their forefathers, the return dreamed of for thousands of years.

At the festive opening night of the new terminal, President Moshe Katsav was among the speakers who recalled the thrill of his own arrival as an immigrant.

That old terminal was also the setting of terror. There were the two attacks in May 1972. The first was aboard a Belgian Sabena airline carrying two future prime ministers among the commandos who defeated Black September. Then, as odd as it seems three decades later, only three weeks after Sabena, Kozo Okamoto and the Japanese Red Army attacked pilgrims from Puerto Rico in the terminal.

Those were times when a passenger could board a plane with a semi-automatic rifle inside an attach case. How far we have come to times when even tweezers are confiscated.

Since then, we've taught ourselves and the world about security.

But despite the grilling from our homegrown agents, we lugged soup nuts in one direction and came back with English muffins, never sure if we should admit to carrying anything for anyone. After all, not so long ago you could still buy duty-free Swiss army knives on board our planes.

In Israel, legions of greeters always waited in the airport, breaking through security. Visitors weren't just coming to Israel; they were coming home. Deplaning involved siblings separated for decades, grandmas reaching out for the first touch of a generation they weren't sure would be ever born, college kids claiming their birthright, Christian tourists who believed in the Holy Land, too.

We'll soon bond with the new terminal and make it ours. I don't care that it's late and that it wasn't, as anticipated, a crowning achievement in a time of booming tourism and industry. Like the entire enterprise we call the State of Israel, it's a vote of confidence in the future.

The first flights left Terminal 3 on November 2, exactly 87 years after Arthur James Balfour expressed His Majesty's Government's declaration of sympathy with the "Jewish Zionists" and "their aspiration of statehood."

The greeting hall is gigantic – the expression of our oversized anticipation for the millions of friends and family still to join us in the greatest experiment of our times.

On Yom Kippur we prayed, "Open up a gateway." Now 500 mezuzot hang in the portals.

Voila! Terminal 3 is open. (Jerusalem Post Nov 8)