

Israel's Deadly Stupor By Jeff Jacoby The Boston Globe May 9, 2007

If Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert had been as adroit and resolute in defending his nation from its enemies as he is in defending his grip on power, Hezbollah today would be a disgraced relic of its former self, while Olmert would be esteemed from Dan to Beersheba. Instead, the terrorist organization is hailed throughout the Arab world for its attack on Israel last summer, while Olmert -- despite surviving no-confidence motions in the Knesset on Monday -- is so reviled by his countrymen that according to the latest poll, 0 percent of Israelis -- that is not a misprint -- would vote for him today.

The poll follows the release of the interim report of the Winograd Commission, a blue-ribbon panel appointed last September to investigate Israel's failings in its second Lebanon War. The report is scathing. It documents in damning detail the bungling, the willful blindness, and the almost criminal ill-preparedness that pervaded the highest levels of Israel's government during the war and the years leading up to it.

The commission blasts Olmert for making rash and uninformed decisions, and pronounces him guilty of "a serious failure in exercising judgment, responsibility, and prudence." It is equally critical of the inept defense minister, Amir Peretz, whose incompetence crippled Israel's ability to defend itself from Hezbollah's attacks, and of former military chief of staff Dan Halutz, who never warned his clueless superiors that the armed forces were unprepared for a ground offensive in southern Lebanon.

For anyone used to associating Israel with military brilliance and nerve, the Winograd report makes excruciating reading.

The immediate trigger for the war was Hezbollah's July 12 incursion across the Lebanon-Israel border, in which three soldiers were killed and two others kidnapped. But Hezbollah had been openly preparing for war for six years, ever since Israel's unilateral retreat from southern Lebanon in May 2000. Making no attempt to disguise its intentions, Hezbollah swept into the territory Israel had abandoned, creating a network of fortified bunkers and launch sites and deploying thousands of missiles and rockets along the border. All the while Israel looked on, doing nothing about the mounting threat.

"Every alarm bell should have been ringing," Jerusalem Post editor David Horowitz writes. "But many of the warning systems had, literally or

figuratively, long since been disconnected. And those who did try to stress the unmistakable imminent dangers were often ignored."

How could Israel have been so complacent? What accounts for such lethargy in the face of a deadly menace that was growing more dangerous by the day?

The answer, says the Winograd Commission, is that too many of "the political and military elites in Israel have reached the conclusion that Israel is beyond the era of wars." Unlike their forebears, who understood that the Jewish state would never have peace until its enemies decided to lay down their arms, today's Israeli leadership imagines that it can achieve peace by means of restraint and retreat.

"Since Israel did not intend to initiate a war," the report concludes, senior officials decided that Israel "did not need to be prepared for 'real' war." And that being the case, "there was also no urgent need to update in a systematic and sophisticated way Israel's overall security strategy and to consider how to mobilize . . . all its resources -- political, economic, social, military, spiritual, cultural, and scientific -- to address the totality of the challenges it faces."

Fed up with fighting, aching to live normally, Israelis lulled themselves into a stupor. They shook hands with Yasser Arafat and ran away from Lebanon and expelled the Jews from Gaza. They blamed themselves for their enemies' hatred and turned the other cheek to suicide bombings and Kassam rocket attacks. They tried to be Athens, one Israeli commentator wrote last year. But to survive in the Middle East, even Athens must sometimes act like Sparta.

"We are tired of fighting," Olmert moaned in a 2005 speech. "We are tired of defeating our enemies." Unfortunately, those who grow tired of defeating their enemies generally end up being defeated by them.

As America's beleaguered ally searches for new leadership, one voice worth heeding is that of Hebrew University game theorist Robert Aumann, a Nobel laureate in economics.

"We are like a mountain climber who gets caught in a snowstorm," Aumann said at this year's Herzliya Conference in January. "He is cold and tired, and he wants to sleep. If he falls asleep, he will freeze to death. We are in terminal danger because we are tired. I will allow myself to say a few unpopular, unfashionable words: Our panicked lunging for peace is working against us. It brings us

farther away from peace, and endangers our very existence.

"Roadmaps, capitulation, gestures, disengagements, convergences, deportations, and so

forth do not bring peace. On the contrary, they bring war, just as we saw last summer."

With enemies like Hezbollah, weariness is a luxury Israel cannot afford. And lest we forget, Hezbollah is our enemy too.

An open letter to the parents of Rachel Corrie

By Prof. Stephen Plaut IsraelNationalNews.com (Arutz Sheva) May 11, 2007

You are continuing with your campaign of demonization and delegitimization against Israel, a campaign that now manifests itself in a shallow anti-Israel propaganda play being staged in Seattle. All this, of course, came after your earlier open letter to the world, "A Call to Action; Rachel's Words Live," which was reprinted in many different media outfits, including the viciously anti-Semitic Counterpunch magazine, and the Guardian of the UK.

In that letter, you begin by recalling that your daughter was "killed by an Israeli bulldozer," but you neglect to mention the circumstances under which she was so killed (and the fact that she died from her injuries while under Palestinian medical care). You then add, "She had been working in Rafah with a nonviolent resistance organization, the International Solidarity Movement, trying to stop the demolition of Palestinian homes and wells."

No, she was not. She was trying to prevent the demolition of tunnels used to smuggle weapons for Palestinian terrorists seeking to murder Jewish civilians. The International Solidarity Movement, or ISM, to which she belonged openly endorses Palestinian "armed struggle" against Jewish children and civilians and openly collaborates with terrorists. It has hidden wanted terrorists and their weapons in its offices. It is an accomplice in murder. Two Arabs who entered Israel under ISM auspices blew up a Tel Aviv pub and murdered Jews. Lying is not the best way to drum up sympathy for your dead daughter.

Your daughter was in Rafiah in the Gaza Strip to serve as a human shield to defend and promote Palestinian terrorism. When you yourselves were nearly kidnapped in Gaza last year, you were there for the same reason. You pretend that your daughter died trying to protect an "innocent house." You are lying again. That "innocent house" she was protecting was camouflage for a not-so-innocent terrorist smuggling tunnel, and the residents of that "innocent house" knew all about the tunnel. Explosives and arms were being smuggled by terrorists through that tunnel to commit mass murder.

Your daughter was in a war zone as a belligerent, as one who had - perhaps wittingly and perhaps not - recruited herself on behalf of a genocidal movement of Arab fascists seeking to destroy Israel and murder as many Jews as possible. Your daughter died while interfering with an anti-terror operation carried out by an army in a land in which she had no business being at all. You demand

that we in Israel feel your pain at the loss of your daughter, yet your daughter conscripted herself as an aid for those seeking to murder my children.

The *raison d'être* of the ISM is to assist Palestinian terrorists murder Jewish children, and to prevent all Israeli efforts to fight that campaign of murder. Your daughter foolishly put herself in harm's way by challenging a large bulldozer and placing herself in a position where the operator could not see her. You know quite well that the bulldozer operator was not seeking to harm your daughter. And you know very well that no harm would have fallen her had she not decided to "play chicken" with the machine - about as responsible a form of behavior as running across unlit segments of LA freeways at midnight.

In that earlier open letter of yours you write, "We had not understood the devastating nature of the Palestinians' situation." Of course, you have never expressed any interest in the devastating nature of the Jews' situation. The Jews have been battling Arab fascism and terrorism for a hundred years, before, during, and after the Nazi Holocaust of six million Jews. Your daughter was allied with those seeking to continue the perpetration of Nazi-like atrocities against randomly selected Jews. You smugly praise the propaganda play about your daughter in London, which ignored all the *other Rachels*, the Jewish women victims of terror in Israel, who were murdered by the genocidal terrorists with whom your daughter's ISM friends collaborate.

Your daughter, and apparently you as well, never had any understanding of the Middle East conflict. The Middle East conflict is not about the right of self-determination of Palestinian Arabs, but rather, it is about the right to self-determination of Israeli Jews. For a century, the Arabs have attempted to block any expression of Jewish self-determination, using violence, armed aggression and terrorism. The Arabs today control 22 countries and territory nearly twice the size of the United States. They refuse to share even a fraction of one percent of the Middle East with Jews, even in a territory smaller than New Jersey.

The Arab countries invented the imaginary Palestinian "people" and their imaginary "plight" after 1967 as a propaganda ploy, in imitation of the German campaign on behalf of Sudeten self-determination in the 1930s. Just as the struggle for "Sudeten liberation" was nothing more than a fig leaf for the German aggression aimed at annihilating Czechoslovakia, so the struggle for "Palestinian

liberation" is nothing more than a jihad to destroy Israel and its population. And it is in support of that goal that the ISM operates, even taking its operational orders from terror leaders.

You write, "Clearly, our daughter has become a positive symbol for people." I am afraid you are mistaken. Your daughter has become a symbol for dangerous foolhardiness. She committed suicide as an empty gesture meant to assist murderers and terrorists.

You want the world to mourn for your daughter, who died as part of her efforts to assist those trying to murder my children. You demand, on the pages of anti-Semitic propaganda web magazines, that the world mourn your daughter, but you do not have a single word of sympathy for the families of the thousands of innocent victims of the terrorists with whom your daughter chose to ally herself.

Strategic Lesson of the Winograd Commission Report May 7, 2007 **By Maj. Gen. (res.) Yaakov Amidor Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs**

In general terms, the Winograd Commission Report dealt mostly with the flaws in the decision-making process in Israel. However, the report contains important insights into the strategic thinking that was predominant in the Israeli political-military leadership from the time of Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon until the outbreak of hostilities in July 2006, with the advent of the Second Lebanon War:

Israel completed its unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon on May 24, 2000. It was hoped that the withdrawal would erode the legitimacy of any continuing military activity by Hizbullah, especially in Lebanon's internal politics. At that time the Israeli government declared that any violation of Israeli sovereignty would bring about a harsh and immediate Israeli response.

These declarations stipulated that in the event of any assault on Israeli soldiers or civilians, all of Lebanon, Syria, and Hizbullah would be affected. The purpose of these statements was to build up Israeli deterrence in the aftermath of the withdrawal. Effective deterrence of this sort was critical for Israel, the Winograd Commission Report explains, for a number of reasons: after the Israeli pullout from Lebanon there was a lack of "elementary depth," there were many points of friction with Hizbullah, and finally there were multiple Israeli targets - both civilian and military - adjacent to the new Israeli-Lebanese boarder. At the same time, within the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) the view developed that if need be, Israel could use "levers of influence" to restrain Hizbullah, such as attacks on Lebanese infrastructure and Syrian targets, as well.

Despite these strong declarations, Israel only responded locally to the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers in October 2000. The Winograd Commission Report presents the assessment of Deputy Defense Minister Efraim Sneh that the Israeli government at the time did not respond more forcefully because it did not want to show that its Lebanon withdrawal had actually produced an escalatory effect. Moreover, the Second Intifada had erupted and the Israeli government was concerned about having to wage a two-front war. This policy of

restraint continued through March 2002, when Hizbullah attacked inside Israel near the town of Shlomi.

As a result, another view became deeply rooted in the Israeli national security establishment that Hizbullah's military buildup after Israel's Lebanon pullout was not so terrible as long as relative quiet along the border was preserved. Israel knew that Hizbullah was gaining strength and acquiring weaponry, but it preferred to turn a blind eye. As a result, Israel did not prepare for war with an enemy that was far more powerful than what it was familiar with in the past.

Implications for the Gaza Strip In the Gaza Strip, a similar process is underway. Hamas is getting stronger as it organizes itself, digs fortifications underground, and builds up its military capabilities. Israel will have to ask itself whether it is preferable to delay the confrontation with Hamas, because meanwhile there is quiet or a temporary truce or some other illusory understanding. We are likely to find ourselves in exactly the same position in Gaza that we created with respect to Lebanon.

The Winograd Commission Report, which does not deal with the Gaza problem, describes Israeli policy toward Lebanon during 2000-2006 as a policy of "containment." Strictly speaking there is a problem with this terminology for what Israel pursued in Lebanon during this period, was not a pure policy of containment, which by definition implies preventing an adversary from reinforcing its capabilities.

What Israel is doing today in the Gaza Strip is not containment either, but rather a case of ignoring reality completely. It is an extremely costly policy. Few have any idea what price Israel will have to pay if it moves into Gaza in two or three years, when Hamas feels strengthened and has the capability to launch 122mm Katyusha rockets -which Hizbullah possessed in the thousands - as far as Ashdod and Kiryat Gat. Israeli decision-makers will have to take into account that inaction has a price, as well.

Anyone who has dealt with military affairs knows that it is impossible to thwart the firing of Katyusha or Qassam rockets by means of artillery

fire, or by means of any land-based or air-based firepower. The Winograd Commission Report details, nonetheless, how many of Israel's operational plans for Lebanon during 2002-2004 did not require the use of maneuver units on the ground.

It is now clear that the only way to thwart rocket attacks is by controlling the situation on the ground. Qassam rockets are today landing in Sderot and Ashkelon - and not in Kfar Saba - because Israel does not control the situation on the ground in Gaza, whereas it has control of the ground around Qalqilya.

For political reasons, the IDF was not permitted by the political echelon to cross the Israeli-Lebanese border from 2000 to 2006. This allowed Hizbullah to conduct exercises day and night and to attack at will, while Israel was unable to stop any of its preparations. The only way to deal with such a situation in the long term is to allow the IDF to cross the border and halt such offensive

preparations. As long as no responsible government is preventing attacks against Israeli territory, the IDF will have to adopt such an approach both with respect to its northern border with Lebanon and its southern border with the Gaza Strip.

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Israel's self-examination healthy

By Frida Ghitis The Miami Herald May 6, 2007

Does Israel make itself more vulnerable by publicly airing the scathing results of its self-examination after last summer's war? Hardly. While Israelis painfully and openly struggle with how to address the problems identified by the Winograd Commission, the country's enemies -- beginning with Hezbollah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah -- take the opportunity to gloat. How they miss the point!

What they are watching with glee is not Israel's weakness. Instead, it is the country's greatest strength, and one from which just about every country -- from the Arab world to the United States -- could learn an important truth: Israel's most powerful weapon is its capacity for fearless self-examination.

Logistical breakdowns A few weeks after the end of the war between Israel and the Islamic militia Hezbollah in Lebanon, I spoke with a young mother whose husband had been called up to the front. He had just returned from the war with tales of logistical breakdowns, bad tactical performance and a host of stories that revealed some of the reasons why Israel did not achieve a clear victory against Hezbollah. With an anguished look in her face, she told me, "We had better learn from our mistakes -- and quickly." The instinct was not to seek scapegoat or find blame. Like others in Israel, she said the country -- under threat from Iran and others -- cannot afford to move on without identifying and correcting its shortcomings.

Now the first thorough examination of what went wrong has arrived, and Israel's enemies are enjoying a good look at a country in turmoil,

watching closely as Israelis discuss all they did wrong in what they call the Second Lebanon War.

Hezbollah's Nasrallah, who triggered the war when he sent his militias across the border to infiltrate and kidnap Israeli soldiers on July 12, declared that the commission confirmed his claim that Hezbollah won and Israel lost the war. That, as it happens, is hardly what the commission said.

Poorly prepared While it is hard to argue that Israel won conclusively, it is even more difficult to say that Lebanon won. Hezbollah's ability to trigger a war on Lebanese soil, without the consent of the country's elected government, is exactly the type of development that deserves close scrutiny.

The report, incidentally, puts the lie to the conspiracy theorists, who claim Israel had planned this operation all along and had only looked for an excuse to attack. Instead, it shows the decision to go to war came shortly after the Hezbollah operation, was not thoroughly thought through by the government and caught the military poorly prepared.

The recent Lebanon war was the first war between Israel and an Arab neighbor that did not end with an outright victory for Israel. The Winograd Commission laid most of the blame at the feet of three men: Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Defense Minister Amir Peretz and former Chief of Staff Dan Halutz. Beyond the political future of the three, Israelis are looking at other issues raised by the commission, including the influence and preparation of the military, the decision-making process and the level of experience of government leaders.

Correcting weaknesses Most Israelis want Olmert to resign, and that is where the media focus remains. But that is not all that Israelis want now, and it is not the only area of debate. The government is already at work looking for ways to correct the weaknesses identified by the Winograd Commission. In a few months, the commission will release an even more thorough report on all that Israel did wrong, not only in the first days of the war, but for years leading up to that outbreak of fighting.

Finkelstein's Bigotry

By Alan M. Dershowitz **The Wall Street Journal May 4, 2007**

In her 1951 best seller, "The Groves of Academe," Mary McCarthy fictionalized a failed academic who, realizing he wouldn't get tenure, became a communist so that he could claim that he was being denied tenure because he was a Red rather than a lousy scholar.

A version of that ploy is being used today. Norman Finkelstein brags that "never has one of [his] articles been published in a scientific magazine." By his own account he has been fired by "every school in New York," including Brooklyn College, Hunter and NYU. His chairman at one of these colleges said that Mr. Finkelstein was fired for "incompetence," "mental instability" and "abuse" of students with politics different from his own. His prospects seemed bleak, so when radical Islamist Aminah McCloud -- a follower of Louis Farrakhan -- helped him land a job at DePaul, a school that Mr. Finkelstein describes as "a third-rate Catholic university," he accepted "exile."

His prospects did not improve when he wrote a screed against Holocaust survivors called "The Holocaust Industry." The scholar whose work on the Holocaust was the "stimulus" for this volume, University of Chicago professor Peter Novick, warned that: "No facts alleged by Finkelstein should be assumed to be really facts, no quotation in his book should be assumed to be accurate, without taking the time to carefully compare his claims with the sources he cites. . . . [S]uch an examination reveals that many of those assertions are pure invention." Nor was he helped when New York Times reviewer Prof. Omer Bartov, an authority on genocide, characterized his book as "a novel variation on the anti-Semitic forgery, 'The Protocols of the Elders of Zion' . . . brimming with indifference to historical facts, inner contradictions, strident politics ... [I]ndecent ... juvenile, self-righteous, arrogant and stupid."

On the other hand, Mr. Finkelstein is supported by hard-leftists like Noam Chomsky and Alexander Cockburn. They regard him as a scholar in a class with Ward Churchill (the Colorado professor who

When commentators throughout the Middle East get their fill of rejoicing at Israel's self-identified shortcomings, they might consider taking a page from the Israeli playbook and having a look at the mistakes their own leaders have made. In the end, all of us would be much better off if self-examination, Israeli style, became a regular practice not only in the Arab Middle East but all over the world.

Frida Ghitis writes on world affairs.

called the 9/11 victims "little Eichmanns") -- a characterization with which I would not quarrel.

Facing tenure denial, Mr. Finkelstein opted for a tactic that fit the times. He expressed views so ad hominem, unscholarly and extreme that he could claim the decision was being made not on the basis of his scholarship, but rather on his politics.

Mr. Finkelstein does not do "scholarship" in any meaningful sense. Although his writings center on Israel (which he compares to Nazi Germany) and the Holocaust, he has never visited Israel and cannot read or speak German -- precluding the possibility of original scholarship.

Prof. Bartov characterized his work as an irrational Jewish "conspiracy theory." The conspirators include Steven Spielberg, NBC and Leon Uris. The film "Schindler's List," Mr. Finkelstein argues, was designed to divert attention from our Mideast policy. "Give me a better reason! . . . Who profits? Basically, there are two beneficiaries from the dogmas [of Schindler's List]: American Jews and American administration." NBC, he says, broadcast "Holocaust" to strengthen Israel's position: "In 1978, NBC produced the series Holocaust. Do you believe, it was a coincidence, 1978? Just at this time, when peace negotiations between Israel and Egypt took place in Camp David?" He argues that Leon Uris, the author of "Exodus," named his character "Ari" in order to promote Israel's "Nazi" ideology: "[B]ecause Ari is the diminutive for Aryan. It is the whole admiration for this blond haired, blue eyed type." (Ari is a traditional name dating back to the Bible.) He has blamed Sept. 11 on the U.S., claiming that we "deserve the problem on our hands because some things Bin Laden says are true.") He says that most alleged Holocaust survivors -- including Elie Wiesel -- have fabricated their past.

Like other anti-Semites, Mr. Finkelstein generalizes about "the Jews"; for example: "Just as Israelis . . . courageously put unruly Palestinians in their place, so American Jews courageously put unruly Blacks in their place." He says "the main fomenters of anti-Semitism are 'American Jewish

elites' who need to be stopped." Normally, no one would take such claims seriously, but he boasts that he "can get away with things which nobody else can" because his parents were Holocaust survivors.

And then, of course, there is me. In a recent article, "Should Alan Dershowitz Target Himself for Assassination?" Mr. Finkelstein commissioned a cartoon by a man who placed second in the Iranian Holocaust-denial cartoon contest. The Hustler-type cartoon portrayed me as masturbating in joy while viewing images of dead Lebanese on a TV set labeled "Israel peep show," with a Star of David prominently featured.

Mr. Finkelstein has accused me of not having written "The Case For Israel" but when I sent his publisher my handwritten draft, they made him remove that claim. He has accused virtually every pro-Israel writer, including me, of "plagiarism." I asked Harvard to conduct an investigation of this absurd charge. Harvard rejected it, yet he persists.

The final part of Mr. Finkelstein's quest for tenure is to blame his tenure problems on "outsiders." He claims that I intruded myself into the DePaul review process, neglecting to mention that I was specifically asked by the former chairman of DePaul's political science department to "point [him] to the clearest and most egregious instances of dishonesty on Finkelstein's part." I responded by providing hard evidence of made-up quotes and

facts -- a pattern that should alone disqualify him from tenure.

Nevertheless, Mr. Finkelstein's radical colleagues voted for tenure, having cooked the books by seeking outside evaluations from two of his ideological soulmates. The dean, however, recommended against tenure. Mr. Finkelstein then used my letter to stimulate a "Solidarity with Finkelstein" campaign.

Like the character in the "Groves of Academe," Mr. Finkelstein generated protests by students and outsiders. He has encouraged radical goons to email threatening messages; "Look forward to a visit from me," reads one. "Nazis like [you] need to be confronted directly." He has threatened to sue if he loses -- while complaining about outside interference. No university should be afraid of truth -- regardless of its source -- especially when truth consists of Mr. Finkelstein's own words.

Whether or not he receives tenure, Mr. Finkelstein will persist in his unscholarly, ad hominem attacks against supporters of Israel, Holocaust survivors and the U.S. But for the time being, the question remains: Will his bigotry receive the imprimatur of the largest Catholic university in the America?

Mr. Dershowitz, professor of law at Harvard, is the author, most recently, of "Preemption: A Knife that Cuts Both Ways" (Norton, 2006).

Israeli inquiry aftershocks

By Ariel Cohen The Washington Times May 4, 2007

The Winograd Commission, named after its chairman, retired Tel Aviv District Court judge Eliyahu Winograd, released a political bombshell this past Sunday -- its report on Israel's conduct of the war with Hezbollah in Lebanon last summer.

This massive "explosive device" is likely to blow up the Israeli political establishment and send Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, his Kadima (Forward) Party, and Amir Perets, the incompetent Labor Party leader and defense minister, packing.

In a nutshell, the commission declared Mr. Olmert failed as prime minister to lead the wartime decisionmaking process. It also diagnosed -- correctly -- the main disease of the Israeli politico-military elite: lack of a strategic doctrine "in the fullest sense of the term." Israel has suffered from this malady since facing the deathly strategic surprise of the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

The commission also pointed a finger at former Labor Prime Minister Ehud Barak, who presided over the hasty pull-out from Lebanon in 2000, leading to Hezbollah's unchecked presence on Israel's northern border. Mr. Barak now plans to

replace the tainted Mr. Peretz and stage a comeback as a Labor leader and defense minister.

Mr. Olmert, the interim report said, bears overall responsibility for his Cabinet's and the military's performance. He made "mistaken and hasty judgments and did not manage the events, but was dragged along by the army. Mr. Olmert did not ask the army for alternative plans to those presented and did not ask the right questions," the draft report stated.

The commission was also scathing in its criticism of former military chief of staff, Air Force Gen. Dan Halutz, who dismissed the threat of Katyusha rockets fired by Hezbollah, and of Mr. Peretz, the former trade union leader, who lacked a military background and failed "to learn about the military," once he became defense minister. In fact, the commission noted, Mr. Peretz should have never accepted the appointment as defense minister -- something every child in Israel already knows.

These are only the Olmert-appointed commission's preliminary findings. The real punch will come this summer, when the final report is due. Then, the commission is likely to place personal

responsibility directly at the feet of the failed leadership. Mr. Olmert is unlikely to survive that, despite his tendency to cling to power.

Today, Israel is like a rudderless ship, with Mr. Olmert not only under fire from the Winograd Commission, but under multiple police investigations and subject to severe criticism from State Comptroller Micha Lindenstraus. Accusations against him range from abuse of power and corruption to illegal real estate transactions.

The decades of failed Israeli political leadership is endangering the nation's precarious security. The country's secular leftist elites live amidst dreams of a "peace process" shared by the cocktail circuit with their diplomatic counterparts from the European Union and the United Nations. Tony Tel-Aviv lefties, well-meaning and idealistic -- generals, journalists, politicians and academics -- ignore the rising tide of political Islam, Sunni and Shia, sweeping the region. This is the same elite that failed to design a workable strategy through which Israel's once-capable military and security services can face off against heavily armed and well-motivated terror armies, such as Hamas or Hezbollah. Israel has also failed to design an antidote to the Arabs' effective propaganda machines.

The postwar shell-shock fosters finger-pointing, which has prevented the Israeli military from using the lessons learned from the Hezbollah war.

This is the first war many Arabs say the Jewish State lost. Hezbollah in Beirut has welcomed the report, claiming it proves Hezbollah "won." Beyond that, both the Hezbollah war and U.S. difficulties in

Iraq and Afghanistan demonstrate how hard it is for Western nation-states to defeat radical Muslim substate actors.

Israelis are led by a prime minister who sorely lacks public trust and can barely function. His approval is in the single digits, while Mr. Peretz as defense minister is the national butt of jokes. Any anti-terrorist action Mr. Olmert may need to take in the future could be seen as a "wag the dog" diversion from the devastating criticism of the Winograd report.

Israel is also "missing" its finance minister, who resigned due to corruption proceedings, and lacks a president, who is under police investigation for sexual harassment and influence peddling. This is the worst government crisis in the 59-year history of the reborn state.

The worst thing the Bush administration can do is cling to Mr. Olmert and his flagging coalition. These are political corpses floating in the stormy waters of Israeli politics. They may not know it, but they are politically dead and should be left alone.

The U.S. needs an Israel that can defend itself and effectively work with Washington in the increasingly unstable Middle East. To achieve this, Israel needs to go through a period of political cleansing and rebirth. The Israeli society is vital and robust enough to do it -- with no external interventions.

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Mad TV By Joel Mowbray The Wall Street Journal May 1, 2007

Testifying under oath recently, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice misled Congress in her strong defense of Al-Hurra, the taxpayer financed Arab TV network. It was unwitting, though. She herself was misled.

During the March 21 House Foreign Operations Appropriations subcommittee hearing, Rep. Mark Kirk (R., Ill.) pressed Ms. Rice on the wisdom of providing a platform to Islamic terrorists, citing Hezbollah leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah's Dec. 7 speech, which Al-Hurra aired live. The broadcast speech "went on for 30 minutes," she responded, "followed by commentary, much of which was critical of Nasrallah."

In fact, Mr. Nasrallah's speech was carried in its entirety, roughly an hour and eight minutes. The commentary that followed -- a 13-minute phone interview with Wael Abou Faour, a member of Lebanon's governing coalition -- was indeed critical of Mr. Nasrallah. He accused the Hezbollah leader of not being anti-U.S. and anti-Israel enough. While Mr. Nasrallah had claimed Lebanon's governing coalition was aligned with the U.S. and had backed Israel during the war last summer, Mr. Abou Faour said that Hezbollah was actually closer to the U.S. and added that any Lebanese faction that assisted

"the Israeli enemy" should not be allowed to engage in political discussion because "the only place they should be [is] in prison."

The secretary of state's testimony was without doubt delivered in good faith. But the same cannot be said of the information about the broadcast Al-Hurra provided to the State Department.

Unfortunately, there is no practicable way that Foggy Bottom, or anyone else for that matter, can effectively monitor Al-Hurra, which has come under fire since the publication of my story about it on this page on March 12. The Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), the congressionally created independent panel charged with oversight, lacks the ability to conduct even basic auditing, as English transcripts are only provided on request -- which rarely happens. Worse, there is no good channel for whistleblowers to communicate with the board without fear of retribution.

With an annual budget now over \$70 million, Al-Hurra has for three years served as the centerpiece of America's aggressive post-9/11 courtship of the Arab world. Insiders maintain that the network was fulfilling its mission until it hired former CNN producer Larry Register last November. Mr. Register has not, to his credit,

changed Al-Hurra's dedication to showcasing the full range of U.S. politics. The other side of the network, however, has been "guttled," in the words of one staffer. Even though Mr. Register has made some improvements since the March 12 column, Al-Hurra still produces far fewer stories about Arab government corruption and human-rights abuses. (Mr. Register did not respond to repeated requests for an interview.)

Al-Hurra was intended to cut through the anti-West and anti-U.S. propaganda that permeates even mainstream Arab media. Stories in that vein no longer see significant airtime, and nowhere is this more apparent than Al-Hurra's new approach to the Holocaust -- the treatment of which in Arab society embodies so much that is wrong in that critical region of the Muslim world.

It is precisely because of Arab society's persistent refusal to accept the existence of such a defining -- and indisputable -- event in modern history that Al-Hurra dared to do things Al-Jazeera would never fathom, such as interviewing Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel and airing the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. But that was under Mr. Register's predecessor, a Lebanese-born Muslim named Mouafac Harb.

Under Mr. Register, Al-Hurra covered the Holocaust denial conference in Tehran last December. But in a stark break from Mr. Harb's era, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and the attendees at his conference were treated with unmistakable deference.

Al-Hurra's Dec. 12 report on the gathering included David Duke's praise for Mr. Ahmadinejad, and it took at face value the organizers' demand for Israel "to provide proof and evidence that certifies the occurrence" of the Holocaust. An official running the event was afforded the opportunity to show the open-mindedness of Holocaust deniers: "If we actually conclude with our experts through this meeting that the Holocaust is a real incident we will at that time admit its presence." (Transcript provided by a fluent Arabic-speaking U.S. government employee.)

Also broadcast unchallenged were the remarks of the infamous French Holocaust denier Robert Faurisson, who informed Arab viewers: "Gas chambers and mass killings of the Jews, in the way that it is pretended (by the Jews), is completely untrue, and an historical lie."

The Al-Hurra reporter stationed in Tehran referred to those who believe Hitler killed six million Jews as "Holocaust supporters." He took a swipe at the handful of conference attendees who didn't deny the Holocaust, by noting that they "didn't enforce their statements with scientific evidence." In closing the piece, he referred to Israel as "the Jewish state on Palestinian lands."

Almost six weeks later, on Jan. 20, Al-Hurra aired a follow-up story on the Neturei Karta, the

fringe group of ultra-orthodox, anti-Zionist Jews who met with Mr. Ahmadinejad. There was obviously world-wide media fascination with the Jews who ventured to a Holocaust denial forum hosted by the man who wants to wipe Israel off the map. Responsible journalists, though, were careful to provide the necessary context, the most important of which is that the Neturei Karta is a marginal group with world-wide membership, according to its Web site, of "several thousand."

Responsible Al-Hurra was not.

The Neturei Karta were presented as mainstream Orthodox Jews, and Al-Hurra claimed that they number more than one million. The story's angle is clear from the anchor's introduction: "They always put Israeli officials in a bind, who can't seem to understand how Jews can oppose Zionism, or how a Jew can encourage Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in his opposition to Israel." Various Neturei Karta members uttered outrageous falsehoods about supposed "Zionist" cruelty, including "torture, detention, [and the] burning of their synagogues." None of these libels were challenged, let alone debunked.

"There is no purpose in doing a soft feature of the Neturei Karta, except to pander to or bolster vicious Arab and Muslim propaganda about Jews, Israel, and the Holocaust," notes Mark Broxmeyer, chairman of the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs.

In fairness, there's no reason to suppose Mr. Register understood exactly what was being broadcast: He doesn't speak Arabic. Then again, there's no evidence that he bothered, or cared, to learn about the contents. Either way, Mr. Register clearly doesn't grasp Al-Hurra's mission.

Holocaust denial is rampant in the Arab world, even among the educated; there's a widespread embrace of conspiratorial explanations for world events, such as theories about Jews perpetrating 9/11, and notorious forgeries such as the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, which is widely sold and read throughout the region. Arab media do not challenge this mindset, but usually indulge it.

Combating this nonsense should be ground zero in our quest to inject truth and information into the Arab world. If we can't do this, how will we ever be able counteract the jihadists who preach to the masses that America is waging war on Islam?

The person tasked with counteracting those jihadists, Undersecretary of State Karen Hughes, is a stalwart supporter of Mr. Register. At an April 19 House Foreign Operations Appropriations subcommittee hearing, after two congressmen gave Ms. Hughes a bipartisan earful about Mr. Register, she responded that she has heard nothing but "high praise" and "rave reviews." Just last Friday, Ms. Hughes went to Al-Hurra's D.C.-area headquarters, signaling that she still backs Mr. Register. Meanwhile, five of the six BBG members --

outgoing chairman Ken Tomlinson was the lone dissenter -- are ardent Register partisans, voting 5-1 against investigating Mr. Register's questionable editorial decisions.

Key lawmakers don't share such exuberance. Reps. Dan Burton (R., Ind.) and Robert Wexler (D., Fla.) are circulating to fellow House Foreign Affairs Committee members a letter which asks Ms. Rice for an investigation into Al-Hurra. And Rep. Steve Rothman (D., N.J.), who sits on the panel responsible for funding Al-Hurra, has proposed live Internet streaming of the network, full online digital archives, and English transcripts for all programs.

Lack of active oversight and transparency has obviously contributed to the current mess at Al-Hurra. If someone outside Al-Hurra had been able to view the Nasrallah speech merely by going online,

Hirsi Ali's challenge to humanity

By Caroline Glick The Jerusalem Post

Ayaan Hirsi Ali is arguably the bravest and most remarkable woman of our times.

To understand why this 37-year-old woman is extraordinary, she must be assessed in the context of the forces pitted against her in her twin struggles to force the Western world to take note of Islam's divinely ordained enslavement of women, and to force the Islamic world to account for it.

A series of incidents this week placed the forces she battles in stark relief. Sunday Muslims shot up the Omariyah elementary school in Gaza. One man was killed and six were wounded in the onslaught. The murderers attacked because the UN-run school in Rafah had organized a sports day for the children, in which little boys would be playing with little girls.

The idea that that boys and girls might play sports together was too much for the righteous believers. It was an insult to Islam, they said. And so they decided to kill the little boys and girls.

On May 3, in Gujrat, Pakistan, Muslims detonated a bomb at the gate of a girls' school. Their righteous wrath was raised by the notion that girls would learn to read and write. That too, they felt, is an insult to Islam.

On April 28, US soldiers in Iraq discovered detonation wires across the street from the newly built Huda Girls' school in Tarmiya, north of Baghdad. They followed the wire to its source and discovered the school had been built as a deathtrap. The pious Muslims who constructed the school had filled propane tanks with explosives and buried them beneath the floor. They built artillery shells into the ceiling and the floor. To save the world for Allah, they decided to butcher little girls.

And the brutality is not limited to the Middle East. Last month in Oslo, Norway, Norwegian-Somali women's rights activist Kadra was brutally beaten by a crowd of men piously calling out "Allah Akhbar." She was attacked for exposing the fact that

for example, Ms. Rice almost certainly would not have been fed false information.

But that's not enough. The people who already monitor the network -- its employees -- need to be empowered to report dubious decisions without fear of reprisal. Transparency will allow concerns to be investigated swiftly. Employees simply won't come forward, though, if they believe no one in power cares. For that reason, a clear signal must be sent by firing Mr. Register.

After all, if you can't get fired for using U.S. taxpayer dollars to provide a platform for Islamic terrorists and help further Holocaust denial, then wouldn't Congress and the Bush administration be communicating that pretty much anything goes?

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inside their mosques in Norway, Norwegian imams praise female genital mutilation in the name of Allah.

Late last year Hirsi Ali published her memoir, *Infidel*. In describing her own life, what she actually explains are the two competing human impulses - conformity and individualism. In her own life, the clash of the two has been played out on the stage of Islamic ascendance and Western cultural collapse.

Hirsi Ali was born in Somalia to a politically active father who sought to free his country from Said Barre's Marxist dictatorship. Forced to flee the country with her family, Hirsi Ali's childhood in Arabia and Africa revolved along the axis of Islamic ascendance at the hand of the Saudi-financed Muslim Brotherhood and Khomeini's Iran.

Hirsi Ali's rebellion against Islam was personal, not political. As a young girl and later as a young woman, she found herself abused and stifled by the dictates of Islam just as her youthful spirit wished most to take flight. As a five-year-old in Somalia, she screamed in pain and shock when her grandmother tied her down and had a man with a knife mutilate her genitals.

Living in Saudi Arabia she was struck by the oppressiveness of the "true Islam." Why, she wondered were she and her mother and sister prohibited from leaving their apartment without a male relative escorting them? As an adolescent in Nairobi she wondered why the enjoyment she felt in the company of boys was sinful.

Why did her mother need to suffer the humiliation of polygamy? Why could she not choose her own husband? Why was she told by one and all that her normal human impulses to seek love, respect and compassion and think for herself were sinful and evil?

As she puts it, "I could never comprehend the downright unfairness of the rules, especially for women. How could a just God - a God so just that almost every page of the Koran praises his fairness -

desire that women be treated so unfairly? When the [Islamic teachers] told us that a woman's testimony is worth half of a man's, I would think, Why? If God is merciful, why did He demand that His creatures be hanged in public? If He was compassionate, then why did unbelievers have to go to Hell?"

In her words, "The spark of will inside me grew even as I studied and practiced to submit." Ali credits Harlequin romance novels for her initial mental deliverance from submission. These books, with their passionate loves and steamy sex scenes were her first glimpse at the possibility of freedom. The novels showed her that the emotions and desires she was told to repress were natural and could even be beautiful and right.

Her impulse to rebel was matched by her impulse to conform. As a teenager, Hirsi Ali tried to be a faithful Muslim and even joined the Muslim Brotherhood. Embracing the notion of submission she began wearing a full-body burka.

But try as she might, she could not accept that her own will had no inherent value. She blamed the preachers for the terror she saw as a Muslim girl, believing they must be distorting the Koran. "Surely," she writes, "Allah could not have said that men should beat their wives when they were disobedient? Surely a woman's statement in court should be worth the same as a man's?"

Yet, when she sat down and read the Koran on her own, she found that everything the preachers had said was written in the book.

At 21, HIRSI Ali emancipated herself. Fleeing from an arranged marriage to a Somali immigrant in Canada, she sought and received asylum in Holland. There, she embraced Dutch society and freedoms and quickly flourished in a true rag-to-riches immigrant tale. She learned Dutch fluently and began supporting herself as a translator. In just four years she had bridged the cultural divide between Africa and Europe and began studying political science with the creme de la creme of Dutch society at the University of Leiden.

A mere decade after her arrival, as a naturalized Dutch citizen, she was a public figure, an outspoken social critic of Islam in Europe. In January 2003, she was elected to Parliament as a member of the conservative Liberal Party.

In Holland, Hirsi Ali found herself confronted by a kinder, gentler type of cultural tyranny - the moral relativism of political correctness and multiculturalism dictated by the Left. Just as she rejected Islamic oppression in Africa, so in Holland she refused to submit to the will of the majority not to notice, judge or take action against the misogynist tyranny and anti-Western culture of the Muslim minority.

Hirsi Ali's labors brought her to Theo Van Gogh. In 2004 the two produced the film *Submission, Part One*. The short film shows a young Muslim woman wearing a see-through burka.

Passages of the Koran permitting the abuse of women are written on her body. The woman prays in submission to Allah all the while noting her abject suffering in his name. At the end of the movie, the woman raises her head to Allah and calls into question the reasonableness of her submission.

The film's provocative message placed both Hirsi Ali and Van Gogh's lives in imminent danger. And on November 21, 2004 Van Gogh was butchered by a Dutch Muslim on the streets of Amsterdam. The murderer stabbed a letter into Van Gogh's chest in which he threatened to murder Hirsi Ali "in the name of Allah Most Gracious and Most Merciful."

While Hirsi Ali was forced to flee her home and live under armed guard in army installations, her message proved too much of a challenge for the Dutch establishment which vomited her out last year. Her own party found a formality on which to revoke her citizenship and throw her out of the country and the parliament. Although the public outcry that ensued forced the government to restore her citizenship, the message was clear.

Hirsi Ali moved to Washington, DC. As a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute she continues to warn the West of the dangers of Islam and of Western cultural disintegration under the tyranny of multiculturalism. Just last month, her work brought an imam from Pittsburgh to call for her murder for the crime of apostasy.

In her life and work, Hirsi Ali personifies the central challenges of our times. She holds a mirror up to the Islamic world and demands that it contend with the evil it propagates in the name of divinity.

She holds a mirror up to the Free World and demands that we defend our freedom against the onslaught of moral relativism and cultural decline.

So too, she demands our compassion for the women of Islam. She says we must see the suffering beneath the veil and work to alleviate it. Whether it means that we must mass produce and distribute Arabic and Urdu copies of Harlequin romance novels throughout the Islamic world; challenge veiled women to explain why they ascribe to a faith that gives men the divine right to beat and rape women; or simply hold Muslim communities in the West to the standards of freedom on which our civilization is based, the West must help these women free themselves from oppression.

Finally, in our own societies we must protect and uphold voices like Hirsi Ali's. For the past five years, Hirsi Ali has lived under threat of death for her views.

We must understand that only when she, and people like her can walk on the streets unafraid will we have properly defended our freedom.