

THE ENSHRINEMENT OF THEFT - THE DRUMBEAT TO WAR

“Thou shall not steal”

From time immemorial theft has had an unvarying definition: *taking what does not belong to you*. By this very simple definition, the state of Israel has committed theft and its citizens are either thieves themselves or accomplices in theft. For, Israel’s creation was based on The Partition Plan for Palestine—a resolution adopted by the UN in 1947—by which it was allocated a small territory that did not even include Jerusalem. Today, the State of Israel is occupying a territory double its original size, with Israelis taking Palestinian properties on a daily basis. By any standard, Israel is an outlaw state. But then why is it that it gets away with theft—and murder?

The propaganda scheme

It’s because Israel has a propaganda machine that puts Goebbels’ into shame. And much like the Nazis who demonized the Jews, Israel has demonized Iran and Iranians, as a smokescreen behind which it can continue its scheme of grand larceny. Ironically, those who were the victims of Nazi atrocities are now perpetrating the same against Palestinians: they are harassed, humiliated, and beaten to death; their villages are razed for the crime of one; their lands are confiscated; they are shot at indiscriminately; they are confined into pogroms fenced by walls and barbed wire; or like the people of Gaza, must live in conditions referred to by the British PM Cameron as “a prison camp” (Haaretz of 8/27/2010). In reality though, Gaza has become like a modern day Auschwitz, where people die by white phosphor and slow starvation, rather than in gas chambers.

And yet, it is the President of Iran that has been branded as a Hitler aiming to massacre the Jews. For sure, Mr. Ahmadinejad is no friend of Israel. What needs to be emphasized though is the propaganda campaign built on a distorted statement attributed to him, the infamous "Israel must be wiped off the map." But as fully expounded in Wikipedia, the original statement in Persian (“*een rejim-e eshghalgar-e Quds bayad az safheh-ye ruzgar mahv shavad*”) was not his, but a quote from Ayatollah Khomeini, and should be translated as: “the occupying regime of Jerusalem (*Quds*) must vanish from the page of time.” It does not advocate the destruction of Israel but wants an end to the *illegal* occupation of Jerusalem. And *illegal it is*, for the 1947 UN resolution did not give Jerusalem to Israel, nor was it part of Israel when its independence was declared in 1948; West Jerusalem, was occupied a year later, and the rest in 1967.

Rather than a threat, the quote emphasized the illegality of Jerusalem’s occupation. It was obviously aimed at the heart of Israel’s expansionist policy and had to be countered. And so, a statement in conformity with international law was turned on its head to raise the specter of a new Holocaust against the Jews. Is it a translation mistake or deliberate distortion? In the case of France at least, it’s the latter, because an ex-ambassador of France to Iran affirmed to me that the Foreign Ministry knew what the statement meant, but France’s official policy was to stick to the distorted propaganda! If others still perpetuate the same message, they must have a devious agenda as well.

This distorted quote is the corner stone of a propaganda campaign preparing public opinion for a possible attack on Iran, much like Hitler’s false propaganda on the Sudetenland before attacking Czechoslovakia. It’s not the only one. Consider the case of Hezbollah, labeled as a terrorist organization supported by Iran:

Israel briefly occupied Lebanon in 1978, but came back in full force in 1982. To dissimulate its expansionist policies, it took a page from Hitler’s recipes and set up a Quisling government in southern Lebanon. It may be that growing up in the Germany of the Soviet Quisling, Erich Honecker, Chancellor Merkel never learned what Quisling meant. But President Sarkozy should know better. France has much glorified the members of the Resistance who fought against Vichy and the Nazis, and continued to fight



after the liberation of France while their comrades were still imprisoned in Germany. So did Hezbollah (which came into being as a *resistance* movement against Israel's occupation). It managed to drive the Israelis out of Lebanon (except for the Shib`a Farms), and is still fighting to liberate its comrades *held in Israel prisons* by the hundreds, many like Sheikh Obayd kidnapped from their homes. If fighting for one's homeland is a crime, then it's time for Mr. Sarkozy to brand the French Resistance as terrorist, and instead of claiming the mantle of Gen. De Gaulle, he should now claim that of Petain and Laval.

The success of Hezbollah in pushing out Israelis created a major obstacle for Israel's expansionist policies. Arrogant Israel took it as an affront to be avenged at all cost. Hezbollah had to be demonized, in tandem with Iran. And the media shamelessly obliged, failing to mention, even once, that Israel was the aggressor, still occupies Lebanese land, and holds numerous prisoners.

Subduing Congress

Israel has concentrated its propaganda efforts on the US, knowing that if it can subdue its politicians, Europe will follow sheepishly. And through the American Israel Public Affairs Committee it has achieved wonders. Today, no US politician dare stand in the way of AIPAC lest their credentials be tarnished within days, and their chances for reelection permanently doomed. Congressmen are but mere puppets in the hands of AIPAC: Israel killed 34 marines of the SS Liberty in cold blood, and Congress didn't have the courage to launch an investigation; Israel targets innocent civilians with phosphorous bombs, and cluster bombs supplied by the US for defensive purposes, and instead of reprimand, it is compensated with more armament; Israel continues to steal land, and it is rewarded with more aid money from US taxpayers; Israel refuses to sign the Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty, has nuclear warheads, and the US, instead of engaging "negotiations in good faith" for "nuclear disarmament" as stipulated by article VI of the NPT, unabashedly protects Israel from any and all attempt to denuclearize it; and to cap it all, the Senate has allowed, and even encouraged Israel, to use any mean (presumably tactical nuclear warheads) to subdue Iran, a signatory of the NPT. I wonder if anybody will stand today before the Senate, as did Joseph Nye Welsh before Mc Carthy, and ask: "*Have you no sense of decency, sir[s], at long last? Have you left no sense of decency?*"

When Israel, in conjunction with France and England, attacked Egypt in 1956, President Eisenhower did not accept the nationalization of the Suez Canal as an excuse for invasion. He obliged all parties to retreat. No such courage is to be seen in today's politicians. AIPAC has effectively turned the United States of America into the United States of Israel, with Israel *über alles* among all states. Am I exaggerating? Here's a test:

In 1995, the young Israeli-American Alisa Flatow was killed in Gaza by a suicide bomber. Claiming that the operation had been financed by Iran, AIPAC put pressure on Congress to alter the Foreign Sovereign Immunity Act to allow the father of the victim to sue Iran. The Flatow Amendment was thus enacted, and a judgment of \$275 million was awarded to the plaintiff based on *assumptions* presented to the court by Israel's MOSSAD. Since laws are supposed to espouse universal values, American victims of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda must be equally able to sue Saudi Arabia, well-known for its financing of both organizations. As Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Gen. Shinseki, who took an oath to defend their rights, must therefore ask Congress to extend the privileges of the Flatow Amendment to the victims of Saudi-financed operations. Will he succeed? No. Because there is an unholy alliance between Israel and Saudi Arabia, supporting one another since both perceive Iran as their main foe. In addition, as long as terrorism can be imputed to Islamic groups, attention is deflected from Israel's own terrorist activities, whether killing on high seas, in Dubai or Amman.

Gen. Shinseki would be opposed, Saudi Arabia would remain shielded, and veterans would never be extended Flatow privileges.

A threat to security

The shielding of the Saudis is nowhere more evident than in the al-Khobar incident, in which a housing unit for US military men was blown up in Saudi Arabia in 1996. In a concerted effort, the Israeli and US intelligence community laid the blame on Hezbollah and Iran; as if Osama Bin Laden and his fellow Saudi warriors, who had fought the Soviets for years in Afghanistan, had returned home as good boys, only to play Nintendo. The Saudi government joined the chorus reluctantly, knowing very well who the

real culprits were. Years later, the 9/11 Commission noted that Osama Bin Laden was “congratulated on the day of the Khobar attack,” and the US indicted some 13 Saudis.

Two years after al-Khobar, al-Qaeda blew up the US embassy in Nairobi. Within months the US indicted 20 more, most of them Saudis. And yet, each time these incidents happened it was the Iranians who were thoroughly searched at US airports, while Saudis were given red carpet treatment. As a recipient of these targeted searches, I filed a lawsuit against the FAA in January 2001. I argued that they were discriminatory, and were not implemented out of concern for the safety of passengers because, with so many Saudis indicted, it is they who should have been primarily targeted, *and they were not*. Federal Judge K. Hoyt issued a preliminary ruling in my favor. Unfortunately, 9/11 threw the lawsuit off track; it was summarily dismissed a week later.

Directed from the top to pursue Iranians, and neglect Saudis, the US intelligence community dared not do otherwise. Israel and AIPAC had set a course of action, and nobody could deviate from it. How else can one explain the failure of the US intelligence in detecting 19 free-roaming Saudis enrolled in aviation classes, at a time when public enemy #1 was Osama bin Laden, with ample evidence that al-Qaeda had contemplated using planes as weapons? Saudi terrorists had, in effect, been shielded by the Israeli lobby’s obsessive, and false, propaganda on Iran.

Wielding the Holocaust weapon

There were once noble Jewish men such as Baron Edmond de Rothschild, who helped the settlement of Jews in Palestine, but who believed that “*the struggle to put an end to the Wandering Jew, could not have as its result, the creation of the Wandering Arab*” (1934 letter to the League of Nations). Today, Israel is dominated by the Irgun mentality of those whom Ben Gurion himself called the Jewish Nazis (NYTimes 8/13/2003). They evict Arabs from their lands, more often as a dead Arab rather than a Wandering one; and they believe that Nuremberg gave them a blank check to wield the Holocaust weapon as they please. In Europe, the Holocaust is a reminder of the Europeans collective guilt, and pushes them to rally around Israeli positions. In the US, it is used more often as a weapon for extortion. Here’s an example:

In 2001 when I was a member of the Board of the Freer Gallery, a Holocaust claim hit the museum. It came from the French heirs to the German dealer Oppenheimer, who once owned a Chinese bronze belonging to the museum. Sensing the Nazi danger, he fled Germany but asked his nephew to liquidate his stock. In 1935, the bronze in question was sold to a German collector, through public auction. It fetched an amount equivalent to \$250’000 in today’s money, a more than fair price since, in 2001, a similar piece was on the market for the same amount. The collector died in 1937, and the piece was sold to Charles L. Freer in 1938.

The heirs were asking \$1.5 million in compensation. I objected because the case had no merit. Every transaction had been bona fide in nature. But Larry Small, the head of the Smithsonian (the parent organization of the Freer), acquiesced; \$1.2 million was paid, slightly less than asked. As a typical Washington politician he did not want to be seen resisting a Holocaust claim. What was most infuriating though, was the fact that these heirs *had already been compensated* once before, in 1951 by the Adenauer government, for all losses incurred as Jews in pre-war Germany!

In pursuit of sanctions

The UN sanctions imposed on Iran are based on the “suspicion” that it is aiming for a knowhow that allows it to produce nuclear armament, if and when necessary. Therefore it *must* stop enrichment, even though allowed by the rules of NPT. It’s like the police arresting a person, who has legally acquired a pistol for target practice, on the suspicion that he *might* use it for murder. He *must* remain in jail until he proves he has no intention to do so. The question is: how can you prove a negative? Rules and regulations are precisely meant to avoid such situations.

The history of the sanctions clearly shows that they were meant to devastate Iran, by hook or crook. The first sanction, implemented in 1996 by the Iran-Libya Act, was enacted through the intense lobbying of AIPAC. Back then, the allegation against Iran was not nuclear but its support for “international terrorism”, i.e. Hezbollah (who had committed the sin of liberating its homeland). It did not gain much traction internationally. Israel then concocted the nuclear scheme. As documented by Scott Ritter of the International Atomic Energy Agency (“*Target Iran*”), the existence of the Natanz nuclear facility in Iran

had long been known to the agency, courtesy in fact of Israel itself. The agency had deemed the facility to be of no alarming importance. But when the news broke out that North Korea was about to have a bomb, Israel saw the opportunity to pull a propaganda coup and put Iran on the same scale as North Korea. It passed on the long known information to the MEK, who then “revealed” it to the world. What’s interesting in this devious scheme is that the Islamist-Marxist MEK was listed as a terrorist group by the State Department. Its claim to fame was the killing of two Americans in the 1970s. It was an ally of Ayatollah Khomeini, but then shifted its allegiance to Saddam and moved to Iraq. It was paid by Saddam to do his dirty work: after gassing the Kurds in Halabja, the MEK was sent to finish off the half dead, a task that even Saddam’s loyal troops refused to do. The cooperation between the MEK and Israel was thus a marriage arranged in Heaven for two like-minded fanatics. The US and France subsequently joined this happy family: one through protecting its military camp in Iraq, and the other by providing a safe haven for its leaders.

There was never an intention to accommodate Iran. President Khatami’s comprehensive 2003 proposal was flatly rejected. So was the deal concluded by two honest brokers, namely Turkey and Brazil, on terms previously formulated by the US. No matter what Iran accepts, an excuse would be found to debase it. The objective is not to bring Iran to the negotiation table but to provide an alibi for aggression.

US Constitution vs. Greed

The sanctions on Iran though, present a constitutional problem for the US, because of the still valid 1955 Treaty of Amity between the two countries. As it happens, the US Constitution qualifies this treaty as the Supreme Law of the Land. Its linchpin is the freedom of trade. It’s a right conferred to the citizens of the two countries, one that may not be abolished by a simple decree. The way out of this constitutional dilemma is to terminate the treaty. The question is: does President Obama know it, and will he do it? The answer is: yes he knows, yes he can, but he won’t. Why? Because, based on this treaty, some American entities are still able to extract money from Iran. Thus, for a fistful of dollars, the Constitution is sullied, and the Supreme Law of the Land is rendered worthless.

The plight of Palestinians notwithstanding, the most notable consequence of the unconditional support for Israeli lawlessness is a severe loss of ethics, and morality, in the US itself. When theft is enshrined, greed settles in. Not only among businessmen such as Madoff, but also in government.

I remember when I first came to the US, David Packard of Hewlett-Packard fame, put his fortune in a blind trust and joined the government as undersecretary of Defense for the nominal salary of one dollar. He had procurement skills and wanted to put it at the disposal of his country out of sheer patriotism. Today things are different. Ethical conduct has been sacrificed at the altar of lies and innuendos. Whoever joins the government comes with an eye for becoming an influence peddler afterwards. It is so lucrative that nobody can resist. And none wishes to attract the wrath of AIPAC for fear of losing such golden opportunities.

The effect of sanctions

I have often criticized sanctions and fought against it. But I now believe that they may be beneficial to the people of Iran, for the following reasons: 1- In 1960, the Russians, who had provided the backbone of China’s industry, suddenly pulled out, sabotaging what they could and taking all blueprints with them. China learned a lesson never to forget, and since then has always insisted to be master of its own destiny rather than be dependent. Hopefully Iran will learn the same lesson. 2- Its vast amount of hydrocarbon reserves will not be excessively exploited, as during the Shah, and will allow future generations to benefit from it. 3- In the meantime, East Asia can provide many of its needs, at much better prices.

Sanctions will certainly create hardship, but won’t be “crippling.” Israel knows it, and the West knows it. And that is why they are all preparing for war.

The drumbeat to war

Where the government of Iran has been most vulnerable, it’s the fact that its clerical oligarchy stole the riches of the country and brought misery to its own people. Oddly, this has never been a point of contention; instead all focus is on the nuclear non-issue. The sanction proponents have each their own agenda, which all converge toward one essential point: they do not wish to see an independent Iran sit on top of the oil-rich Persian Gulf.

Ms. Merkel once claimed that she knows history well (i.e. of the Nazi era) and she won't let it happen again. Well, it's happening again. In the words of France's ex-premier, Michel Rocard, the xenophobic rhetoric of Mr. Sarkozy alone is worthy of "Vichy and the Nazis." Goebbelsian propaganda now reigns supreme, and xenophobia is rampant, not against the Jews, but against Moslems, and of course against Iranians branded as members of the Axis of Evil.

And so, the drumbeat for war is on. Israel has been unleashed but as usual it will try to pull in US troops. Better to have American soldiers killed than Israelis. There shall be much destruction in an already devastated area; there shall be death, vengeance, frenzy, and perhaps global instability. The same Germans and French, who once sold the Tabun and Mustard Gas to Saddam, would do it again. And adding insult to injury, officers would be decorated, despite killing innocent civilians, as was the US Navy commander who shot down an Iranian commercial airplane, killing more than 200 of its passengers. But when the dust is settled, History shall look back and shall compare this era with the Nazi one: in both, the writing was on the wall, even though blurred by intense propaganda. People either did not see it, or chose not to. In both cases it resulted in a tremendous loss of morality and humanity.

What about Iran? What will happen to it? In the course of its history, Iran has survived the onslaught of Macedonians, Arabs, and Mongols, and has risen from the ashes time and again. It shall do so once again. And therein, the Judean Jews who chose it as their homeland 25 centuries ago, will always consider themselves as Iranians, and at home.

Abolala Soudavar
aas@soudavar.com