

OUTPOST

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A War Footing

Herbert Zweibon

In *War Footing*, The Center for Security Policy's Frank Gaffney and a group of expert contributors offer, as the subtitle says, "Ten Steps America Must Take to Prevail in the War for the Free World." The book makes clear that despite the overwhelming power of the United States, two militarily exemplary wars in the last five years and the avowed determination of the President to prevail in what he calls "the War on Terror," we are falling short in key areas.

To take only a few, we have failed to take basic measures to reduce our dependence on oil. Then there is funding for terror organizations. While the President boasts that the new Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence has deprived terror groups of \$144 million, the funds going to terror groups have nonetheless grown substantially, because these outfits have access to money from state sponsors of terror who continue to profit from business dealings with publicly traded companies. Yet another key area is homeland security: we not only fail to secure our borders and engage in adequate emergency planning but are woefully unprepared for what Gaffney calls such plausible threats as a catastrophic electromagnetic pulse attack (EMP) that could cripple our economy.

If the world's most powerful country is failing to address the dangers facing it, what of Israel, a tiny land facing the most naked existential threat? Its competing leaders, far from confronting the challenges facing the state, are falling over one another in their haste to surrender. As Martin Sherman details in this issue, the reality is "just about word-for-word what disengagement opponents predicted with regard to the dangers and proves wrong just about every promise made by supporters of that plan just six months ago." The reaction of Israel's leaders? The Kadima government has already brutally uprooted the Jews of Amona. Its chief election plank is its promise to uproot many more Jewish communities, i.e. to make the heart of the Land of Israel a terror base against Israel's population centers. The supposedly "hawkish" Likud is equally prepared to surrender: it distinguishes itself

from Kadima merely in asserting it wants "a partner" with which to "negotiate" its retreat.

Even the Hamas victory has had no real impact. The first response of the Kadima government was to turn over 250 million shekels to the Palestinian Authority. Olmert offered the Orwellian declaration: "We will not play into the hands of extremists who want to create an unending war here." Hamas is dedicated to unending war with Israel. How can funding it do anything but play into the hands of extremists? In typical stop-and-go fashion, the cabinet has now voted (temporarily) to hold tax monies after Hamas has been sworn in but refuses to implement the most important recommendations of the defense establishment, including banning entry of workers from Gaza. It asks foreign governments to prevent funds from going to Hamas "military organizations" but wants "humanitarian aid" (obviously fungible) to continue. In short, the sanctions Israel promised are toothless.

Yet another worrying development: it has been little noted that at Egypt's insistence (and with EU support) the language by which the International Atomic Energy Commission referred the issue of Iran's nuclear preparations to the UN joined the issue of Israel's nuclear deterrent with the Iran issue. As David Twersky has noted in *The New York Sun* "Iran will now have a new fig leaf...Tehran can argue that it will not discuss its nuclear progress until and unless the world first deals with Israel, which already has one." Her nuclear arsenal is the major card Israel retains: once the "world community" brings its pressures to bear, will Israel's feeble leaders leave the country totally bare to its destroyers?

A war footing? Israel has lost all footing. As the ground slips beneath it, the state drifts towards unconditional surrender.

In This Issue

The False Promises of Disengagement	
by Martin Sherman3
Handing Jews To Hamas by Naomi Ragen4
On Jewish Hebron by Erich Isaac	...5
Misunderestimating Al-Sadr by Lee Harris	...8
Spielberg's Munich by Melanie Phillips	..10

From the Editor

Anglicans vs Israel

George Carey, the former archbishop of Canterbury, told *The Jerusalem Post* he was "ashamed to be an Anglican." He referred to the overwhelming vote on Feb. 6 by the General Synod of the Church of England (backed by the current Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams) to divest from companies whose products are used by the Israeli government in Judea and Samaria.

A counter motion by Anglicans for Israel was not even permitted to be presented to the Synod. After the vote this group issued a statement: "The continuing demonisation of Israel will increase anti-Semitism. It is almost beyond belief that the Anglican Church, at the behest of some clergymen who seem to be motivated by a combination of liberation theology and a strange, Islamicized version of New Testament theology, should seek to collaborate with the forces of Radical Islam -- which destroyed the Middle East's only once-Christian state, Lebanon, while the Church largely looked the other way -- to deliver the last corner of Western values, religious liberty and democracy in the region to Wahhabist Islam."

Jon Benjamin, chief executive of the British Jewish Board of Deputies, summed it up: "Nothing Israel ever will do will be right, while nothing the Palestinian will do will ever be wrong." An even more bleak assessment came from Dr. Irene Lancaster of the Center for Jewish Studies at Manchester University: "The writing is on the wall for the Jews of Great Britain, 350 years after they settled here."

Meanwhile at Oxford...

Not to be outdone, Oxford University offered its premises to what journalist Melanie Phillips calls a week of Jew-hatred "dedicated to declaring Israel an apartheid state, with speakers, films and more" all designed to vilify Israel. Phillips notes that Oxford's chancellor is Chris Patten, who achieved notoriety as a European commissioner when he blocked an inquiry into the diversion of EU funds for terror activities by the Palestinian Authority. According to Phillips he subsequently evinced a desire to mend fences with the Jewish community. This seems an odd way to begin.

Johannes Rau, z.l.

A former President of Germany, a great friend of Jews and Israel, Johannes Rau died on January 27 at the age of 75. In 2000, as President, Rau became the first person to speak German in the Israeli Parliament. He made a moving plea for forgiveness: "With the people of Israel watching, I bow in humility before those murdered, before those who don't have graves where I could ask them for forgiveness...I am asking for forgiveness for what Germans have done, for myself and my generation, for the sake of our children

and grandchildren, whose future I would like to see alongside of the children of Israel."

May his memory be a blessing.

Memo to Useful Idiots

On behalf of the U.S. government, James Wolfensohn headed off to the Persian Gulf on a familiar mission -- raising money for the Palestinian Authority. He was last heard from when he raised \$14 million from American Jewish donors to purchase greenhouses from the expelled Jewish farmers for Palestinian Arabs. While there was extensive looting immediately after the deportations, the greenhouses were restored to operation. The PA hired terrorist militias to guard them who reverted to type, robbing them instead. Using bulldozers to break the iron supports of the frames and removing every bit of piping and irrigation computers, this time the thugs did irreparable damage. The greenhouses are history.

The U.S. rationale in sending Wolfensohn on his current mission is reportedly that if we do not find money for the PA, Iran will fund it. But if President Bush says he will cut off U.S. funds to Hamas, what is the point of raising money for it in the Persian Gulf?

AFSI Apologizes

Due to a failure of oversight by the AFSI office, a website with AFSI's name -- now closed down -- featured the paranoid fantasies of Barry Chamish. We apologize especially to Steven Plaut and Daniel Pipes, special targets of Chamish's obsessions. AFSI totally repudiates Chamish. Indeed *Outpost* was one of the first to expose his ludicrous conspiracy theories (see From the Editor, January 2002 and March 2002). In the spirit of Chamish we offered (March 2002) our own conspiracy theory. One of Chamish's absurd notions was that Shimon Peres was implicated in the death of Tourism Minister Rehavam Zeevi (who was murdered by Arab terrorists). We argued that Chamish was planted by Shimon Peres to destroy the credibility of the right.

Chamish is to be pitied -- and ignored. The real culprits are those on the right who defend him and purvey his imbecilities.

(continued on page 12)

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The False Promises of Disengagement

Martin Sherman

Rarely have all the premises of a political undertaking so critical, with such decisive long-range strategic consequences, managed in so short a period of time to appear so outrageous and unconsidered.

Despite everything, the prevailing reality today is just about word-for-word what disengagement opponents predicted with regard to the dangers, and proves wrong just about every promise made by supporters of that plan just six months ago.

Half-a-year after Gaza, there is no avoiding the decisive conclusion that disengagement was, from the get-go, a tragic, pre-ordained failure.

Not one of the positive things that were supposed to come about due to disengagement has come to pass. Similarly, not one security issue that the pullout was supposed to solve has been solved.

Before our very eyes, all the prophecies of doom are coming true, and all the rose-colored predictions have been forgotten.

This is true with respect to every possible issue: security, politics, economics, and perhaps most importantly, ethics and morals.

Regarding security, the facts speak for themselves. In stark contrast to hopes that the pullout, the destruction of the settlement enterprise and the end of friction between the IDF and the local population would lead to an end of (at least a reduction in) Qassam rocket attacks from evacuated areas, the rain of rockets on Israeli cities and population centers has grown stronger, reaching the outskirts of Ashkelon, with its wide range of essential strategic installations.

Even without the latest threats from terrorist groups that they have improved the range and power of their warheads, we would have known that an expanded radius of destruction was unavoidable. Yet no official source has offered any explanation about how we will deal with this problem, apart from "reinforcing roofs."

Even the Palestinians' updating of their arsenal was entirely predictable. Only a complete sucker would have believed that the Egyptian troops who replaced IDF soldiers along the southern Gaza border would move to stop the steady flow of weaponry smuggled into the evacuated Strip, smuggling that stands to alter the critical strategic balance.

As a result of abandoning the Philadelphi Route and in light of the bizarre assumption that Arab soldiers would fight the Palestinians to protect the Zionist entity, Israel's western border, from Gaza to Eilat — a long border that is relatively hard to secure — is now exposed to terrorist infiltrations from Sinai.

Politically, the picture is no less chilling. Many warned that leaving Gaza would strengthen extreme elements amongst the Palestinians. Disengagement architects said the move would strengthen Mahmoud Abbas and the moderates. Then came the Palestinian elections, and — voila! — "More than 80 percent of Palestinians view the pullout as a victory for the armed struggle," said Palestinian pollster Khalil Shikaki.

This is bad news for anyone who believed we could reach an agreement with the Palestinians via negotiations. And for those who never believed — Is-

rael will now have an even tougher time convincing the Palestinians to abandon the violence and terrorism most of them believe is the only thing that's ever proven itself to "work."

Nothing proves the complete failure of disengagement more than the statements of Acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert himself and the stunning U-turn he was forced to do overnight. Until just a few weeks ago, he sang the

praises of the "process and diplomatic opportunity" created by disengagement. But immediately after Hamas won the elections — the real result of the pullout — Olmert suddenly changed his tune. No process, no diplomatic opportunity. No partner, no one to talk with. And all on the heels of his optimistic speech to the Herzliya Conference.

Economically, too, all the predictions have come false. Pullout supporters promised a windfall of resources, supposedly freed up by the end of the occupation, that would be available to upgrade infrastructure, fight poverty and develop poor areas. But as time goes on, the massive costs associated with implementing disengagement and dealing with the repercussions become clearer and clearer. As Qassam attacks on Gaza-area settlements grow, demands for reinforced homes grow from residents of those towns. And the more the rockets' range increases, the numbers requiring reinforced roofs will also grow.

The water commissioner's office warns that disengagement created serious threats to the nation's water, threats such as raw sewage from Gaza that could shut down the Ashkelon desalination plant. Officials also fear that unsupervised pumping in the northern West Bank will lead to increased salinity of the water and drying up of the entire region (including northern valleys on the other side of the green line). This will strike a blow to the quality of life for residents, will destroy both agriculture and tourism and will do away with special development plans.

According to the water commissioner, dealing with these threats will require an investment of billions

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of dollars. It should be noted that these costs are on top of the cost of the pullout itself; of the costs required to build replacement housing and for creating replacement incomes; and of the cost of turning a creative, productive community that contributed much to the country into a beaten society requiring welfare support.

Then there is the cost of securing the western Negev, and the rise in defense costs due to new threats created by disengagement, as, for instance, the "rising wave of terror" and the "motivation to carry out terror attacks" the defense minister warned about recently.

Morally, the toughest and longest-lasting blow struck by disengagement is to our national, Zionist ethos. Something happened to the destiny of the security forces of the Jewish state. Instead of recognizing the duty to defend Jews wherever they are, simply because they are Jews, soldiers and police officers were ordered to evict Jews from their homes, in order

to appease their would-be killers.

In doing so, the country trampled any moral claim it might have had that the world not abandon Israel to its enemies. For if Israel was willing to withdraw its support for the residents of Gush Katif and to abandon them to appease the enemy, what possible moral basis could there be for the world, especially the Western world, not to withdraw its support for Israel and to abandon this country in order to appease the Arab and Muslim world?

Furthermore, if the country abandoned the Philadelphi Strip – "a vital security interest" that so many young men gave their lives to defend – why should they believe it when, in future, they are asked to risk their lives to defend what they are told is some other vital strategic interest?

Martin Sherman is a political scientist at Tel Aviv University. This article appeared on YNetNews.com of Feb 18, 2006

Handing Jerusalem to Hamas

Naomi Ragen

I have an Arab village a five minute walk across a wadi from my home, which is a ten minute drive from the heart of Jerusalem. This village is called Beit Iksa. During the Six Day War, the villagers fled. Moshe Dayan begged them to come back, and they did. Beit Iksa is now situated between two Jewish neighborhoods, Ramot and Mevasseret, each with 50,000 or more Jews. It is also near one of Jerusalem's major highways. While it was well known that villagers were involved in hundreds of break-ins and thefts in both Ramot and Mevasseret, our police did nothing. During the *Intifada*, villagers regularly walked across the wadi and up the steps past my home to work in construction jobs in Ramot and elsewhere. This, even after terrorists were found with suicide belts in Ramot, and admitted they were planning to blow up a synagogue and a bus.

The police never checked these workers, despite repeated phone calls and warnings. During the Oslo days, when we were marking villages as area A (completely under the control of the Palestinian Authority and its thugs) and area B (under the security control of the Israeli army), Beit Iksa became a "B". Now *Haaretz* reports that the security fence around Jerusalem is slated to be between Ramot and Beit Iksa. What this means is that instead of fencing off Beit Iksa from terrorist infiltrations, they have made Ramot (and probably Mevasseret) the new border with the Hamas, now slated to move into Beit Iksa. In a tour of the area, Benjamin Netanyahu said it was outrageous. When he entered Beit Iksa, there were already armed Palestinian guards waiting for him. Ehud Olmert said clearly yesterday: "We are not changing the fence." And so, area B now becomes Area A,

without discussion or protest, and two peaceful communities of thousands of Jews are sitting with Hamas on their doorstep. And for those of you who have hopes that our good relations with Beit Iksa will prevent this, I have some other news: In the elections, Beit Iksa voted one-hundred percent for Hamas.

Please understand what I am telling you. If Mr. Olmert is elected, we Jews of Jerusalem are going to have to move. And so the perfidy begins, with no one to even understand how it is happening. It creeps along slowly, and gently, without much fanfare. Remember what I am telling you — in the future don't say you didn't know about it. I am going to make an effort to organize my community against this. But I'm just one person, and frankly I'm tired. I'm tired of fighting the people who are running this country into the ground. I'm tired of one wrong decision following another at a disastrous pace and no one ever paying the price for it. Now that everything that opponents of the disengagement said has come true, where are those responsible? I'll tell you. They are making the decisions for the next disaster in-the-making. What I'm wondering though, is how many bad decisions can we make and still survive.

For those of you outside the country, if you'd like to discuss this with the Israeli government, such as it is, I have no doubt you can Google some addresses. I wish I had the heart to do it for you, but you know what, I just don't feel up to it today.

And so, this is how we turn Jerusalem into a Hamas stronghold.

Naomi Ragen is a novelist living in Jerusalem.

Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar.—Ezekiel 13:10

On Jewish Hebron

Erich Isaac

Today 500 Jews live in Hebron in the midst of 120,000 Arabs, famed for their fanatic hatred of Jews — given the extent to which Palestinian Arabs generally are steeped in hatred, a high bar to surpass. Many may wonder why Jews came there, why they persist in living there, despite the difficult living conditions, the daily dangers, the hostility of their own government, the indifference (or worse) of most of the Israeli public. They are there quite simply because, second only to Jerusalem, Hebron has the densest religious and historical associations for Jews.

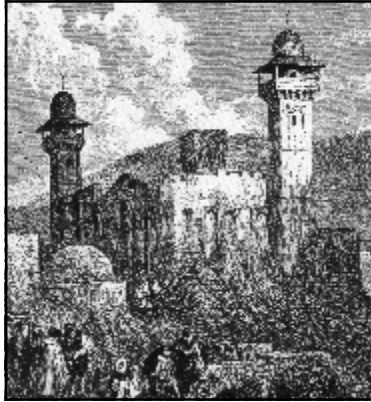
After the Six Day War of 1967, years went by before there was any serious effort to create Jewish settlements in the hills of Judea and Samaria, despite the fact that this was the core area of the historic Land of Israel (much of modern Israel sits on the Philistine coastal plain). Not so in

the case of Hebron. In 1968, less than a year after Israel's stunning victory, a group of religious Jews under Rabbi Moshe Levinger rented Hebron's Park Hotel for Passover — and then refused to leave. In a compromise move, the government shifted them to a military compound outside the city which became the nucleus for Kiryat Arba (the earlier Canaanite name for Hebron), which has grown to be a community of 6,000 Jews.

Jews were now close to Hebron, but not within it. In April 1979 Jews from Kiryat Arba, including the Levinger family, intent on reestablishing a Jewish presence within Hebron itself, moved into the abandoned building of Beit Hadassah in the old Jewish quarter of Hebron. A year later, after Jews returning from prayer services at the Tomb of the Patriarchs were attacked, Menachem Begin's Likud government agreed to refurbish the crumbling Beit Hadassah and allow Jews to move into adjacent buildings in the old Jewish quarter. There the community has remained, since Oslo a thorn in the side of successive Israeli governments first bent on exchanging "territory for peace," more recently on "separation" from Arabs.

Perched high on the north-south mountain axis of Judea, boasting a favorable climate and soils, Hebron is only 23 miles south of Jerusalem. From ancient times it was a trade center for it links the mountainous interior westward with the coastal plain's *via maris* (the biblical route known as *derech erez plishtim*) and eastward with the rift valley and beyond it with the towns of the King's Highway on the desert frontiers of ancient Edom and Moab. Because of these characteristics, Hebron played a role in the earliest days of the patriarchal migrations.

But it was Abraham's purchase of the Machpela cave from its Hittite owners and its dedication thereafter as patriarchal tomb that first gave Hebron its religious sanctity. Even earlier, Abraham had built an altar to God in the terebinth grove of Mamre (Gen.13:18). Clearly Abraham also valued Hebron's strategic location for he mustered his men and, allied with his confederate Mamre, achieved his striking victory in the War of the Kings (Gen 14:24). The account of this war, followed closely by the narrative of the purchase of Machpela, suggests that for Abraham seizure by force of a holy place was out of question; it could only be obtained by a meticulously negotiated, even ritualized purchase. This makes Hebron an early precursor for the Torah's prohibition of using the metal of swords (Ex 20:22), for construction of an altar. It will be remembered that God denied David's wish to build the Jerusalem temple -- his role as warrior king overrode even his virtue as loyal servant of God (I Chr. 22:6-8).



The Machpela building (1841)

Centuries after the patriarchs, Hebron becomes significant in the conflict over the conquest of Canaan. The twelve scouts Moses sent to spy out the land returned to their desert staging area with an ambivalent report. They stressed the land's extraordinary fertility, bringing with them a giant cluster of grapes from Hebron's vineyards. (To this day vineyards dominate Hebron's agriculture. In the Crusader period, it was reported that Hebron vines were the foundation stock for the vineyards of the Rhine and Mosel valleys.) In an aside, the text mentions that Hebron is older than Zoan of Egypt (Nu 13:22), the comparison probably suggesting itself because Zoan (Tanis), was the dominant grape growing area of Egypt.

Nonetheless the majority of scouts were against the conquest of Canaan, arguing that its cities and peoples were too strong (Num. 13). Only two argued for immediate conquest: Caleb, son of Jephunne and Hoshea [later Joshua] son of Nun, insisted that for all their apparent power Canaanites were a weak, decadent people.(Num:6-9). Their reward came decades later, after the conquest under Joshua, when Hebron became part of the portion of the clan of Caleb (Josh.15:15). In fact, the old Kiryat Arba may have been renamed Hebron after a descendant of Caleb (I Chron 2:42).

Hebron's importance for all of Israel was underlined when it was designated a Priestly and Levitical City (Josh 21:13; 10:11). In addition it became the southernmost City of Refuge, responsible for sheltering from pursuing blood avengers those that had killed

unintentionally (Deut 4:42; Josh 20:7). In both these capacities Hebron was associated with David's rise to kingship. As a City of Refuge, Hebron was an attractive destination to David's followers, a band of desperate, detribalized and impoverished men, including some from King Saul's own family (I Chr.12). As a city of priests, Hebron became a shelter for the survivors of Saul's massacre of the priests of Nob (I Sam 22:19). One such refugee had already joined David's camp at Ziklag bringing with him the sacred Ephod, and had accompanied David and his followers to Hebron (I Sam 22:20; 23:6).

It was in Hebron that David became king over Judah (II Sam 2:4) which he ruled from Hebron for seven and a half years. As the first royal seat of David's line, which later would acquire near mystical messianic status, Hebron acquired additional sanctity. It was at a sanctuary in Hebron that David concluded the covenant that made him king over all of Israel (II Sam 5:13). It was only after the final fall of the house of Saul that David decided to rule the entire country from Jerusalem.

Thereafter, while the significance of Hebron as a political center declined, because of its holiness, it did not vanish. It was to Hebron's holy sanctuary that David's son Absalom resorted in his abortive attempt to legitimize the dethronement of his father (II Sam 15:7-9-10).

The attachment to Hebron continued despite national calamities. It was one of the first places to which exiled Judeans, priests prominent among them, returned from the Babylonian exile, settling in its ancient quarter *Kiriath-arba* (Neh. 11:25). Nonetheless as a result of their sparse numbers, and their uncertain relations with the Persian empire, Jews were unable to prevent Hebron from falling under Edomite rule. The town was recovered for Judea by the Maccabean John Hyrcanos (128 B.C.). Later King Herod, himself of Edomite descent, catered to the popular veneration of the Machpela by building a magnificent structure around it. (Today's building, modified by Crusader and Muslim additions, rests upon the Herodian foundations).

The fall of the Judean commonwealth in the war against Rome ushered in one of Hebron's darkest periods. Overcoming the city's zealous defenders under Shimon bar Giora, the Romans burned Hebron down. Perhaps to dramatize the complete erasure of Jewish independence in Judea, the Romans located the major slave market at the grove of the terebinth and the nearby fort of Botna. St. Jerome in his Bible commentary written four centuries later describes the vast numbers of Jewish captives sold there in 70 A.D. and following Bar Kochba's defeat in 135 A.D. He writes that as a result the annual Hebron fair was bit-

terly hated by Jews. Indeed, a Jewish edict (by R. Yochanan) banned attendance at Hebron's annual market.

Nonetheless the pull of the Machpela remained so strong that in 570, a century after Jerome, the Christian pilgrim Antoninus Placentinus writes: "(Jews) come in untold numbers to prostrate themselves on the patriarchs' tombs." This attachment to Hebron is all the more remarkable because its tiny Jewish population suffered severely under Byzantine rule. The Jewish farmers had been reduced to exploited *coloni* under imperial *conductores* (called by Jews *mazikim* -- persecutors) who administered the area for the empire. After the Arab conquest, the Jewish community of Hebron (renamed by the Arabs *Khalil a'Rachman* in honor of Abraham "beloved of the merciful God") began to grow somewhat. But by the eighth century, confiscatory taxation and land expropriations took their toll. The small struggling community nevertheless managed to support a pious

group, the "Fellowship of Patriarchal Graves" which functioned as the Machpela's caretakers. In the early Crusader period Jews were prohibited from residing in Hebron. But even so, Jews held on to Hebron as a sacred place for burials. Shlomo ben ha'Yatom (early 11th cent.), tells of the many who transport their dead, sealed in caskets, for burial in Hebron. The traveler Benjamin of Tudela (circa 1170) writes that on coming to Hebron, he found stacks of caskets filled with 'bones of Israel', waiting for burial. Jewish pilgrims continued to come, despite the dangers of land and sea travel. One of the most famous was Maimonides who came in 1165 with his father and brother to pray in Hebron.

The Mamluk reconquest of Palestine made a rebirth of the Hebron Jewish community possible. But once again, initial tolerance gave way to harsh restrictions. After Hebron became the Mamluk capital of Palestine in 1260, Jews were prohibited from entering the Machpela. Henceforth Jews (and Christians) were only allowed to step up to a small wall opening outside the Machpela. The Muslim claim of exclusive rights to the patriarchs' tomb was described by the 14th cent Christian traveler Sir John Maundeville: "...they suffer no Christians to enter the place, except by special grace of the Sultan; for they hold Christians and Jews as dogs, and say that they should not enter into so holy a place." Moslems enforced this prohibition to our days.

A small, fluctuating number of Jewish families managed to maintain themselves in Hebron from the 14th to the late 17th century mainly thanks to outside Jewish contributions. Hebron's Jews sent emissaries abroad asking for donations to help them sustain themselves and most urgently, to pay off rapacious pashas and local sheiks. For example, one pasha



Bar Kochba Coin "Year 1 of Israel's Freedom"

threatened to burn half the Jewish community and sell the rest into slavery if he was not paid a huge sum. The Jews of Italy, especially Verona and Venice, came to the rescue with funds, which the community treated as a miracle, making a special "Purim for Hebron" on the 14th of Tevet. This was celebrated for many years. Still, under these conditions, the number of Jews declined. By 1481 Meshulam of Volterra found only 20 Jewish families in Hebron.

In the Ottoman period, especially in the 17th century, there was an upswing in numbers. A substantial augmentation of the community followed the expulsion of Jews from Spain and a movement of some of the sages of Safed to Hebron (notably the Kabbalists Elijha de Vida and Isaac Archa). Pilgrims from Yemen also came, including one of Yemen's greatest Hebrew poets, Yahia al'Dahari, who came in 1567 and decided to stay. Among the pilgrims were many Karaites, some coming all the way from the Karaite centers of the Crimea. Considering the mutual aversion of Rabbinic and Karaite Judaism, it is to Hebron's credit that it helped abate it, at least locally. One Crimean Karaite (Moshe ben Eliahu Halevi, 1654-55) praised the kindness of Hebron's Jews, a sentiment shared by a Crimean Karaite traveler more than a century later (Binyamin ben Eliahu, 1785-1786).

Even when the size of the Jewish community in Palestine grew substantially in the 19th century, settlement in Hebron lagged, partly as a result of the widely feared fanaticism of Hebron's Muslims, considered the most extreme in Palestine at that time. Warring Arab clans, tribal vendettas, and even full fledged battles in the region reinforced the reluctance to join its oppressed community. In 1917, near the end of World War I, the survival of the remaining Jews was seriously endangered. The Turkish Pasha addressed the notables of Hebron with a fiery anti-Jewish rant reminiscent of more recent Moslem outbursts: "All the Jews are spies and traitors, and they alone are the cause of Turkish defeats," etc. Fortunately, the Arab leaders of that period, recognizing that such incitement was likely to unleash mob upheavals that would endanger their own life and property, kept the town reasonably quiet between the flight of the Turks and arrival of the British.

For the Jews of Hebron, as well as of the rest of Palestine, the British Mandate seemed finally to offer a safe and legally assured peace (although the religious community of Hebron had little truck with Zionism in the absence of the coming of the Messiah). Some Hebronites who had emigrated returned. In 1925 the community had a substantial increase when a Lithuanian Yeshiva of more than 100 students

transferred with its teachers and their families to Hebron.

Alas, a few years later the hopes of a renewed community were drowned in blood. In August 1929, at the call of their imams, the Arabs of Hebron slaughtered the Jews. Thus an uprising ostensibly against "the Zionist menace" massacred a pious apolitical community. As a result of the failure -- and unwillingness -- of the British to protect them, dozens were slaughtered, and the survivors left Hebron. Amazingly, only a year later some survivors came back. But the attempt to revive the community failed. The so-called Arab uprising of 1936 was the final nail in the coffin of Hebron's Jewish community, and the Jews left, as was widely believed, this time never to return. Yet even then, the determination to one day make Hebron part of a Jewish state remained strong within important segments of the Zionist movement. A year later, when the Peel Commission partition proposal was being debated, Rabbi Meir Berlin (later Bar Illan, for whom the university is named), head of the Mizrachi Party, rejected the plan on the grounds that Jews "could not accept a Jewish state that would not include Jerusalem and Hebron."



19th Century entrance to Jewish Quarter of Hebron

For decades this goal seemed impossible of fulfillment. In 1948, in Israel's War of Independence, even the kibbutzim founded in the Hebron region (the Kfar Ezion group) were lost to the invading, British-officered Arab Legion of the Transjordanian Kingdom of Jordan. Henceforth, Hebron, town of the patriarchs and first seat of Judea's greatest king, now part of an area renamed Jordan's "West Bank," like Jerusalem's Old City, was absolutely cut off even from Jewish pilgrims.

Almost twenty years later, in the Six Day War, Hebron fell to the Israel Defense Forces virtually without a shot. The initial policy of Israel's National Unity government (which included Menachem Begin's Herut Party) was to offer to give up almost all the territory conquered in the war (including Hebron) for "peace." When this offer was met a mere two months after the war with the three "nos" of Khartoum (to recognition, to negotiations, to peace) the government's policy became essentially to sit on its hands -- waiting for the Arabs to change their minds and take an offer the Israeli government hoped it could not in the end refuse. When the Arabs showed no sign of budging, the way was open for a dedicated minority to seize the initiative and reassert Israel's claim to Hebron.

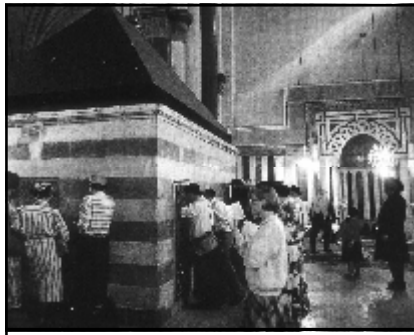
Ironically it would be a supposedly "right-wing" government, sensitive to Israel's historic claims, that, under Benjamin Netanyahu, relinquished most of Hebron to Israel's Arab enemies. In 1997 the Israel De-

fense Forces turned over 80% of the city to the Palestinian Authority, retaining control of 20% of the city, including the section occupied by the Jewish community.

Yet even now Hebron retains its power to draw Jews. On February 14 of this year, in honor of Tu B'Shvat (the New Year for Trees), fifty new immigrants went there to plant trees adjacent to the Cave of the Patriarchs in the first ceremony of its kind to take place

since the Tomb was reopened to Jewish pilgrims after the Six Day War. One of the visitors remarked how her children now "shared the same wonder and sense of connection to our history."

Given the current direction of Israeli politics, it would seem the handwriting is on the wall for Hebron's Jewish community. But small though it is, the Jewish community of Hebron is not likely to go gently into the good night of oblivion. Hebron means too much in



Modern Day Prayer at Machpela

Jewish religion and history and Jews have sacrificed too much to maintain their links with Hebron over millennia. If a Jewish government by its own hand makes Hebron once again off limits to Jews (in service of the fantasy that Israel can "disengage" from the Arab world by retreating behind a concrete barrier) this must have a profoundly alienating impact on much of Israel's religious community, precisely the community most dedicated to the state.

As Israel's one-time defense minister Moshe Arens has warned, in the name of securing a democratic Jewish state, Israel's government may yet establish an unbridgeable chasm within the nation. Nothing would contribute more to this than expelling Hebron's Jews.

Erich Isaac is a retired professor of Geography at the City University of NY and a founder of AFSI.

Misunderestimating al-Sadr

Lee Harris

By a single vote, the Iraqi parliament has retained Ibrahim al-Jaafari as their prime minister. Though widely, and correctly, regarded as an ineffectual and weak leader, al-Jaafari was able to hang on to the semblance of power through the decision of a single man, namely, the virulently anti-American cleric Moktada al-Sadr, a friend of both Syria and Iran -- or, more generally speaking, a friend to anyone who is the enemy of the United States.

Both al-Jaafari's re-election and Sadr's role in bringing it about came as something of a shock, both inside Iraq and outside. Most Iraqis felt that it was "time for a change," as we Americans say whenever we vote out of office a man who has proven incompetent to govern, as al-Jaafari has proven himself over the last year. But the assumption was that the change would be in the direction of a man more decisive and unifying than al-Jaafari, for example, the economist Adel Abdul Mahdi.

In fact, underneath the surface, there has been a profound and radical change. Though al-Jaafari continues to hold on to the title of Prime Minister, he is aware that his one-vote victory was entirely dependent on the political cunning of Moktada al-Sadr. As Robert F. Worth reported in his article in *The New York Times*: "Mr. Sadr's followers now control the largest bloc of seats -- 32 out of 130 -- within the Shiite alliance. They decided to vote for Mr. Jaafari after he promised to help implement their political program," according to a spokesman for the Sadr movement who is also a sitting member of parliament.

Expressed like this, the bargain between al-Jaafari and Sadr's followers would appear to be simply a case of political horse-trading. "We'll support your guy, if your guy supports our programs." Yet I fear that there is far more going on here than normal parliamentary politicking, and let me explain why.

Adolf Hitler, in his table talk, once remarked that history does not repeat itself. But what would he say if he had been watching the rise of al-Sadr over the course of the last several years, ever since the overthrow of the regime of Saddam Hussein?

Sadr not only controls the largest bloc within the Shiite alliance; he is also the head of a paramilitary organization, the Mahdi army. In this respect, his position is identical to that of Hitler, before he came to power. Hitler, on the one hand, had the Nazi party, a tight-knit organization that was happy to use the parliamentary system in order to bring about the destruction of the Weimar Republic, and thus to end the parliamentary system itself. On the other hand, Hitler also commanded his own paramilitary organization, the famous "brown-shirts" of the SA, whose membership, at its height, may have included between three to four million young German toughs, whose usefulness to the success of the Nazi Party Hitler himself repeatedly stressed. They were invaluable in their ability to intimidate and threaten anyone who seriously opposed the Nazi party.

Hitler's original impulse was to reject out of hand what he saw as an alien form of government that had been imposed on his nation. In the failed Munich putsch of November 1923, Hitler tried to overthrow the hated Weimar Republic directly, in the false confi-

dence that the German people would rise up and endorse a fascist regime like the one that had only recently been established in Italy by Mussolini.

Like Hitler, al-Sadr's original impulse was to reject unconditionally what he saw as the American imposed parliamentary system, and in 2004 he led two violent uprisings against the interim government, both of which, like Hitler's putsch, failed to achieve their goal. Yet, miraculously, again like Hitler, Sadr was able to survive the humiliation of a bloody fiasco that he had masterminded, and was even able to learn from his mistakes, just as Hitler did. The only difference, of course, was that the Bavarian government at least insisted that Hitler should serve some token time in jail for his uprising.

In contrast, Sadr did not spend a single hour in jail and, after leading two violent rebellions, was permitted to continue amassing the kind of "black market" power that is associated with his Mahdi militia -- a power that is all the more disturbing because no one can be sure when it is being exercised. For example, no one knows how far Sadr's followers have been able to infiltrate Iraq's police and military establishments, nor can anyone say to what extent Sadr's followers are behind various bombings and assassinations.

In addition, Sadr is seeking to find a unifying theme that can transcend the divisions within Iraq, both tribal and sectarian; and this unifying theme is anti-Americanism -- a creed that may be shared by both Sunnis and Shiites, and that is also capable of forging strong bonds with nations like Iran and Syria, as well as millions of Muslims across the globe. Here again, like Hitler, Sadr appreciates the fact that there is no better way to unite a divided people than to give them a common enemy -- and that common enemy is us. Indeed, all populist demagogues have always been aware of this fact, and they all have exploited the marvelous unifying power that hatred of a common enemy is capable of providing their people.

Finally, we come back to where we started -- Sadr's brilliant stroke in letting the weak and discredited al-Jaafari continue to retain his position as Prime Minister of Iraq. Sadr could have told his bloc simply to obstruct any movement toward the formation of a new government, a ploy that would have been ideologically consistent with Sadr's previous rejection of the American-imposed Iraqi government. Shouldn't his earlier convictions have led him to boycott the general election and to refuse to acknowledge the legitimacy of the American-tainted Iraqi government?

Yes, rejection of the new government should have been Sadr's response, given his previously stated positions. But so too Hitler, given his hatred of all forms of the parliamentary system, should have directed the Nazi party not to play any political role in



the Weimar Republic that the Nazis so much despised. Yet, like Hitler, Sadr has shown himself willing to swallow his political conviction and to play the parliamentary game -- or, more precisely, to use the parliamentary system in order to promote the interests of his own party. And, like Hitler, Sadr has shown himself a consummate political player. Aware that he cannot be the Prime Minister himself, in a government that he repudiates, he will work to subvert this government to his purposes, but from behind the scenes.

Al-Sadr, by throwing his support, at a critical juncture, to the weakest and most ineffectual candidate for the most important position in the government of Iraq, has thereby achieved a bloodless political coup that has virtually made him the most powerful figure in Iraq. He who makes a Prime Minister can also unmake him -- and this is a lesson that al-Jaafari's one-vote victory has made perfectly clear to him, and to every other player in the political game. The path is now open for al-Sadr's legal seizure of power -- the same path that brought Hitler and the Nazi Party control over the fate of Germany. All Sadr needs is patience and cunning -- and it appears that he lacks neither of these qualities.

Since al-Sadr first appeared on the post-war Iraqi scene, it has been difficult for many foreigner observers to take him seriously. He does not look to us even remotely like a leader. Indeed, to use Bush's famous slip of the tongue, al-Sadr has been fearfully "misunderestimated." But then, so too was Adolf Hitler -- a failed painter, a mere corporal -- how could such an insignificant and inconsequential person come to play a decisive role in history?

Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's minister of propaganda, often said that Hitler's rise to power was like a fairy tale. Al-Sadr's rise to power, on the other hand, seems suspiciously like a fable from *A Thousand and One Nights*. What Hitler did was merely improbable; what al-Sadr has done verges on the seemingly impossible. After having twice led bloody uprisings that killed American troops, Sadr is now the most powerful man in an Iraqi government that the American people have created at great sacrifice to themselves, both in lives and in money. Even more bizarrely, Sadr has made it clear that he will use every bit of power he gets in order to fight against us, and to help spread fanatical anti-Americanism through the Muslim world. We could have stopped him early and effectively; but we didn't. And now it is too late for us to do anything except to wonder what new surprise this twisted tale of Scheherazade will next unfold.

Lee Harris is author of Civilization and Its Enemies. This appeared in www.tcsdaily.com

Spielberg's Munich

Melanie Phillips

Editors Note: Although it may seem that everything that could be said has been said, Phillips zeroes in on the overlooked core issue: the "subject" of Munich is the moral preening of Steven Spielberg, who like so many Jews (it's no accident that fellow preener Abraham Foxman has defended the film), uses Israel to demonstrate his supposed moral superiority.

"It is therefore not surprising that Spielberg, the committed American Jew, should occupy himself with recording the testimonies of Holocaust survivors, or making Shindler's List. And these are indeed good works. But to claim piety by wrapping oneself in the shroud of the dead while denying the living the right to prevent themselves from being similarly exterminated is not good. It is disgusting."

Jewish Chronicle, 10 February 2006

In his characteristically thoughtful piece about 'Munich', Jonathan Freedland sympathised with the plight of director Steven Spielberg who, despite his patent commitment to the Jewish people, had been branded a traitor by those who saw the film as a propaganda gift for its enemies. Freedland concluded that this apparent contradiction showed such accusations meant almost nothing.

I beg to differ. I too have seen 'Munich'. What it tells me is that there is a sickness among some people at the very heart of their Jewish identity. Sure, they're committed all right – but to what? To an image of Jewishness – and of Israel -- which seems to be more about their own highly idealised, egoistic sense of themselves, but which amounts to a sentence of death for others.

The film is a shocker. It's not just the moral equivalence between terrorism and the resistance to terror with which it is suffused. It's not just the Arab propaganda account of the creation of Israel by the Holocaust (untrue); or the Palestinian story of merely wanting a homeland for themselves (untrue); or the depiction of the Palestinian terrorists killed by the Israelis as gentle, benign, generous people with no apparent connection to the murderers of the Israeli athletes (manipulative); or the message that if only everyone saw each other as human beings they would stop killing each other (infantile).

No, the punch to the solar plexus comes at the end when the hero Avner, the Mossad agent whose Jewish soul is tortured by the fact that he has killed such saintly figures, abandons Israel to live in America. This is the real message of the film – that in order to remain true to Jewish ethical codes, a Jew must renounce Israel and go to live in Brooklyn instead.

And so now we can see why the two sets of characters are treated differently. Some believe it is a tribute to the Jews that, unlike the Palestinians, Spielberg gives the Israelis a hyper-active conscience. But this is merely to enable us to see how thoroughly they are damned.

He unquestioningly accepts the Palestinians' own characterisation as people with a cause -- a

homeland – with which we can sympathise, even though we deplore their methods. End of interest. But the Jews – ah, they're a different matter. The Jews are interesting – riveting, even -- because the Jews have a five thousand year-old moral map that as Israelis they are in the process of ripping to pieces.

The Israelis are given a conscience so that through their appalled eyes we can be shown the unspeakable moral corruption that is the State of Israel and the corrosive effect it has upon the Jewish soul. They have been given a conscience so that we can admire the nobility of that Jewish soul in revolting against the evil within itself that Israel represents and renouncing it for ever.

One might expect this of the film's screenwriter Tony Kushner, who believes that the creation of Israel was a mistake and loses no opportunity to demonise it in the usual manner. But Spielberg?

Well, this may be less odd – although no less disturbing – than it seems. For some Jews, their identity is formed around a self-image of unimpeachable virtue which cannot be compromised by the messy ambiguities of real life. Above all, what can never be allowed under any circumstances is for Jews to harm anyone. They must instead remain eternal victims, because it is only as victims that their virtue remains truly unassailable.

And so that means that Jews can never defend themselves if that means killing anyone. But in Israel Jews do indeed kill those who murder their people. So they are no longer the good guys. Indeed, in the Spielberg/Kushner dystopia they are even worse than the bad guys, since at least the Palestinians kill for the universal just cause of a homeland.

But when Israelis kill their killers, their cause cannot be just because what they are wiping out is their own moral heritage. Resisting terror is therefore even worse than terror. What is the value of a Jewish life compared with clean Jewish hands? Jews don't do killing. What Jews are supposed to do is die.

It is therefore not surprising that Spielberg, the committed American Jew, should occupy himself with recording the testimonies of Holocaust survivors, or making Shindler's List. And these are indeed good works. But to claim piety by wrapping oneself in the shroud of the dead while denying the living the right to prevent themselves from being similarly exterminated is not good. It is disgusting.

With such a powerful and committed Jewish friend making the spiritual case for Israel's annihilation, who needs enemies?

Melanie Phillips is a British journalist.

The Latest Rage...Coming Attractions

Ruth King

When Prime Minister Netanyahu opened a tunnel alongside the Temple Mount in Jerusalem in 1996, local Arabs erupted in a "spontaneous" rampage which resulted in shooting and stoning throughout Gaza and Judea and Samaria. The international media howled at the "provocation" and much the same ensued in September 2000 when Prime Minister Sharon visited the Temple Mount, setting off what some call the *intifada* but what was really the dress



Muslims Burn Danish Flags in Beirut

rehearsal for *jihad*. All these so called "provocations" were manufactured to coincide neatly with preplanned riots, stockpiled weapons, and a population goaded by the imams, the Arab media, and encouraged by the Eurabians always eager to appease their burgeoning Moslem populations by trashing Israel. In fact the Scandirabians, including Denmark, redoubled their efforts on behalf of the Arab boycott against Israel.

The media routinely referred to the rioting and violence as having been "sparked" by Sharon's visit and ignored the statements by PLO head of communications Imad Falouji confirming that boulders and stones had been pre-positioned on the elevations of the Mount long before Sharon even applied for permission to visit. This was done at the orders of Nobelist Arafat who then kept proclaiming that the visit was "a grave infringement on Moslem holy sites", and called on Moslems throughout the world to protest. Does this sound familiar?

Of course England and France repeated the mantra that "the root cause of the Arab/Israel war is the 'occupation' and the only cure will be Arab sovereignty in Gaza, Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem."

Well, Gaza has been vacated, Jerusalem's Arabs have been permitted to vote in the Palestinian Authority elections, signaling that even Jerusalem is negotiable, and plans are well under way to dislocate patriotic Jewish citizens from their legitimate homes throughout the Jewish homeland.....and guess what? The Moslems flush with their victory in "Palestine" are now turning on their European hosts with a vengeance that rivals the little *jihad* known as the *intifada*.

As Professor Judith Apter Klinghoffer has stated: "It is Intifada Redux. First, mobs and stones. Then, weapons from torches to knives to bombs. The Islamists man the front lines. The Muslim powers feign innocence, shirk responsibility and demand that the

'spontaneous outrage' of their mobs be appeased. The pattern is clear."

In France, where nightly rampages torched thousands of buildings and cars, the "provocation" apologists were quick to blame it on poverty, alienation, rampant gum disease and foie gras.....not a word about Islam and its goals.

In England, whose flaky Prime Minister clutched a Koran to his chest when he appeared in the aftermath of 9/11, British Moslem citizens are parading with placards calling for extermination and holocaust against those who insult Mohammed. In New York, right at the site of the World Trade Center, Moslems parade with posters denouncing the "insult" to Islam and calling for escalating protest and the supremacy of Islam.

Throughout the European Union local Moslems, goaded by their religious and communal leaders are venting their rage in unprecedented numbers and in escalating rhetoric calling for "chopping Danes into bits," sedition, assassination, terrorism, and beheadings in those very nations that repeated *ad nauseum* that all problems emanate from the "occupation."

And the media, so anxious to blame something.....anything....on Israel is paralyzed and cowering with only a few publications such as *The Philadelphia Enquirer*, *The New York Sun* and *The Weekly Standard* daring to publish the "offensive" cartoons.

President Bush and Condoleeza Rice, who at first offered muted "apology" for the cartoons, now denounce the rioters but blame the international Moslem violence on radical imams in Iran and Syria.....a perfect cop out. No one seems to notice that appeasement only breeds contempt.

And Israel? In Gaza and Hebron local Arabs burn Danish flags and attack Scandinavian observers and missions. They riot and plunder and attack and the acting Prime Minister responds by offering escalating concessions to local *jihadists* at the expense of its own Jewish citizens.

That small beleaguered nation was once in the forefront of the war on terrorism. The Entebbe rescue was the model for the modern war on terrorists. It is where the coming attractions for the present clashes were played out. But Israel is playing the reel backwards and as a result of continuing appeasement, instead of being a role model, Israel is irrelevant, if not worse, in the present war on terror.

Oh yes....I almost forgot. Speaking of the Entebbe rescue....Make sure you revisit the inspiring story before Spielberg/Kushner make a movie about it.

(Continued from page 2)

An Israeli Poll

Israel's Geocartographic Institute conducted a poll of the Israeli public and discovered that 70% believed the implementation of the Gaza disengagement contributed nothing to peace and 50% disapproved of any future unilateral withdrawals.

Yet polls show Kadima and Labor, between them, will obtain the votes of a clear majority. The promise of future unilateral withdrawals is what front-runner Kadima chiefly has to offer. As for Labor, it's hard to imagine any red lines in its thirst for surrender.

If you've dug yourself into a hole — and know it's a hole — dig deeper. That seems to be the motto of the Israeli public.

Dreampolitik

From the ever-wonderful Diana West:

"There comes a point, sometimes, when logic is denied, reason is abandoned, and that vital connection to reality is severed....Take President Bush's analysis of the PA election results. 'The people are demanding honest government, he said. 'The people want services....'

"Honest government? Services? Hamas is 'honest,' all right, when it comes to its blood-lust for Jews, and maybe it can deliver to its constituents 'services' related to Israel's destruction, but I doubt that's what the president had in mind. But neither did he have in mind anything connected to the reality that Palestinians have voted for terror with no 'peace proc-

ess' (Hamas), not a 'peace process' with terror (Fatah). Not much actually separates Hamas from Fatah, but it's enough to send the global-erati over the edge.

"Once, there was *realpolitik*; now we are deeply into *dreampolitik*, where policy is based on an irrational wish of what might be. Miss Rice seems particularly afflicted, lately given to raving that Palestinians have 'long been known for their tolerance.' Tolerance of what -- Hamas?"

Moderate Muslims

Melanie Phillips describes the "good cop, bad cop" routine of cartoon-protesting British Moslems.

"Today's newspapers dumbly fell for the spin and dutifully reported that these [new demonstrations] would be organized by 'moderate' Muslims, as opposed to the mob that demanded murder and bombings last weekend. These 'moderates' are the 'moderate' Muslim Council of Britain, who moderately boycott Holocaust Day, moderately back the Jew-hating, gay-hating, human-bombs-in-Israel-and-Iraq supporting Qaradawi and moderately want to criminalise anyone who even talks about Islamic terrorism; and the Muslim Association of Britain, the British arm of the 'moderate' Muslim Brotherhood whose offshoots are busy terrorising Iraq and Israel and are a principal ideological core of the *jihad* against the west. This show of force on Britain's streets will put muscle behind the 'moderate' demand by 300 'moderate' Islamic religious leaders...[in their] attempt to bludgeon Britain into censoring speech about Islam."

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