



Blessed Are the Righteous, Mr. President

A Letter to President Barack H. Obama

[New York, 05 February 2009]

Israel's future represents humanity's future; Israel's conflict is the nadir of our human experiment. History has never wanted Israel to exist, has never considered the Jewish population to be worthy of any form of consideration save that of revulsion and enslavement. No population in human history has fought and struggled for their right to self determination for as long, or has been dismissed, debased and destroyed as consistently across the ages as the Jewish people. The West's treatment and consideration of blacks for the last 500 years is but a drop of water in the well that is the oppression of populations. Today's Jewish state—which recently celebrated its 50th anniversary—exists only because Adolph Hitler failed in his perverted scheme to eliminate Jews from the future pages of history. His policy of *lebensraum* (German for “living space”) was realized as the victors of WWII reinterpreted it—as a permanent home for the Jewish people—not as Hitler had envisioned: the extermination of all peoples not Aryan.

But that reinterpretation of living space was not achieved until after over 15,000 Nazi concentration, work and death camps across 15 European countries and 6 million murdered (35% of the worldwide Jewish population in 1939, which is roughly the size of the worldwide Jewish population currently living in Israel). It is no surprise, then, to witness the United Nations continue the sentiment of Hitler in its denunciation of Israel's incursion into Gaza. They are merely continuing the same bigoted and hateful rejection of the self determination of a population they would sooner see extinct. Their sentiment should be anathema to that of American's, for the right of self determination is what our Founders bequeathed to us; and strength through victory in pursuit of that right being recognized by our shared community is the enduring lesson they taught us. Our Founding Fathers would steadfastly defend the action of today's Israel.

And so must we.

However, to believe that the international community abhors Israel's Gaza incursion strictly because of its fundamental anti-Semitism would be short-sighted. There has been a pervading culture of fear across Europe since before WWII concluded, has only intensified in the aftermath of the world's last global conflict, and until recently had avoided residence on our own American shores. I liken it to the same culture of fear that pervades the weaker less-popular primary school child on the playground courtyard. Terrified that the school's bully is going to harm them without reprieve, they futilely attempt to do good by them in the misguided hope of gaining the bully's favor and avoiding what their own lacking strength cannot accomplish—avoidance of a beating. But placating one's enemies is not a path to victory, only a path to delayed defeat. Pleading with your enemies to “make nice” only emboldens them to continue pilfering your inept defenses and complacent acceptance of peace under someone else's terms. This is the policy of the United Nations. It is not the policy of Israel.



And until last week was not the policy of the Executive Branch of the United States government.

Israel does not seek the world's favor. And since most of human history is comprised of various populations attempting to either enslave or exterminate the Jewish people, it is hard to blame them for striking their current course. Israel realizes that an enemy intent on their destruction, on ending their way of life, must be dealt with on a level wholly different than purse snatchers, bank thieves, and money launderers. They understand that the rules for dealing with criminals must be different from the rules dealing with terrorists. They understand that it is not *crimes* being committed by Hamas against Israel, but rather *terrorism*. When cultural extinction is the ultimate objective of your enemy, civility or adherence to basic investigative procedures are unaffordable luxuries whose pursuit only serves to expedite your enemy's plans. The Israeli's understand this. And they are wise to ignore the international community's condemnation of their acts considering no nation has ever come to their aid over the last several millennia when their existence has been threatened. Israel's first priority is ensuring the existence, the protection and assured future of its people. Whether the global community appreciates their methods for attaining that priority could not be of lesser value to them.

Not so with the newly elected president of the United States. Less than one week in office and President Obama enabled the terrorists to do catastrophic harm to not only the 46% of the American voting populace who did not cast their ballot for him, but as well to the 53% of Americans who elected him to office. America's enemy is no different from that of Israel's in its desire for our way of life to cease immediately and with the most severe and calamitous pain inflicted. The celebrations in the streets of the Middle East on September 11, 2001, the internet broadcasts of decapitated journalists, the ignored distinction between civilians and children from uniformed soldiers, are all testament to the brutality of our enemy; and to the chilling differences between our current enemy and the enemy as defined by the nations involved in WWII.

But America's newly elected president, in the opening days of his administration, has chosen to adopt the European adherence to the Geneva Convention (written in 1948 when the Allied and Axis powers alike conceived of *enemy combatants* as uniformed soldiers fighting for recognized nations.) In one fell swoop, President Obama ordered the following:

- The closure of Guantanamo Bay prison
- The staying of all military commissions (with the implied intention to have these prisoners tried in civilian courts where intelligence sources and methods will be requested shared in open court by defense attorneys)
- Adherence to the Geneva Conventions' definitions of "prisoner of war" for those the Bush Administration labeled enemy combatants
- Requiring of the CIA to conduct interrogations as per the Army Field Manual: no coercive techniques, no threats, no promises, no good cop-bad cop techniques
- Al Qaeda leaders to be protected from "outrages on personal dignity" and "humiliating and degrading treatment"



Let us be perfectly blunt: it was George W. Bush who put the world on notice after 9/11 that the US would treat terrorists and harbingers of terrorists alike, the result being not a single American killed on US soil by terrorism since. And it was Bill Clinton who decided not to take out Osama Bin Laden when he was quite literally in the crosshairs of a US predator drone. It was George W. Bush who toppled Saddam Hussein and enabled a democratically elected government the inalienable right to life and liberty less than three years into his presidency, while Bill Clinton spent all eight of his administration playing cat and mouse with Saddam while the Iraqi dictator pursued chemical, biological and nuclear technology. For all of George W. Bush's shortcomings and just reasons for criticism, the US was a safer nation under his watch after eight years of Bill Clinton leading us to the horrible effects of 9/11 through the very same approach to national defense now being adopted by President Obama.

And the only plausible explanation for such misguided actions seems to be fear of our enemies—the idea that if we don't give them a hard time upon capture, our courtesy will both encourage them to share critical intelligence with our law enforcement agencies and perhaps compel them to dissuade their terrorist friends from committing any more acts of violence against our citizens and interests across the world; that our once supportive friends in Europe will come to our defense in times of need having seen our compassion and respect for the personal dignity and civil rights of the killers who wish to take from us what our Founding Fathers called our inalienable right to life, liberty and a pursuit of happiness; that the likelihood of the Republican party conducting a witch-hunt in four years for Democratic lawbreakers will be diminished if our interrogations are “by the book,” in this case, the Army Field Manual. Over 2,700 Americans were murdered in under ninety minutes on September 11, 2001, in part, because the United States government of the 1990s was operating from a position of fear in its (mis)management of terrorist threats against us.

Israel knows this system of conciliatory gestures followed by terrorist responses all too well, i.e. land for peace initiatives. Perhaps President Obama is too young to remember the conciliatory gestures his American predecessors have offered only to be followed by reversals of promises. His own Secretary of State should be able to offer him some stories on North Korea alone, not to mention Iraq and Libya, with respect to US conciliation going unreturned and unappreciated when attempting to persuade nuclear nonproliferation. Europe has its own rich history of appeasement, so much so that if not for the intervention of the United States the official language of France may well have become German. President Obama should remind what appears to be his European constituents of that the next time he is speaking before thousands on the cobbled streets of another foreign city.

And he can start in Tel Aviv, and with a pledge of support for our Israeli friends.

Let us admit that when we gerrymander the globe, the law of unintended consequences will most assuredly play a role. Had the members of the UN Partition Plan in 1947 decided to create a Jewish state in the North Pole, or on a manmade island in the South Pacific, the Israeli conflict would indeed be different. An Israeli state stuck in the middle of the principle Arab region in the world was bound to create biblical unrest. But even separated geographically from the Gentile world, Israel would



undoubtedly still suffer from international isolation and condemnation in defense of its right to self determination.

As the UN sits in what should be humiliating silence on Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran-supported acts of terrorism and professed support of genocide in their call for the destruction of the Jewish state, Israel continues its historic fight for life, liberty and the pursuit of suicide bomb-free commutes to and from work and school. To allow Israel to fail in its defense of its right to exist—for the international community to not throw its full support behind Israeli forces in Gaza—is to concede humanity’s right to self determination and accept the inevitable violence, inequity and brutishness of a Hobbesian world

And to offer Israel anything but our unequivocal support is for America to ignore the premise of its own founding at the free world’s peril.

President Obama rightly claims connection with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as the eventuality of Dr. King’s work. Dr. King correctly asserted that injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. While both black and white Americans should revere the life and work of Dr. King because of his strict adherence and belief in victory through nonviolence, Israel and the United States are each faced with a body of adversity that will not succumb to change through nonviolent means, will not be weakened by nonviolent acts of civil disobedience or passive Christian *turn-the-other-cheek* dogmatism. Our respective aggressors are too ideologically disparate from ourselves for King-like action, all too bent on our respective destruction as the only acceptable vestige of success respected or desired. And the criticism of both Israel’s self defense and of President Bush’s response to terrorism against our country by the usual suspects of the UN is perhaps a greater injustice than either the aggression by Hamas or Islamic fundamentalism. While our own detractors correctly assert that Israel is our only friend in the region, it is worth remembering that there is a reason they are our friend. Terrorist-led states (even if democratically elected) are an injustice threatening justice everywhere. And nations whose very existence is threatened have a like-minded right to defend themselves without the approval of the international community.

For the international community, particularly the United Nations, to continue to give terrorist groups a pass on the world stage while excoriating nations acting in defense of liberty is an act of injustice with widespread consequences across the planet. The message to all free peoples in the world delivered by the international body politic created in the wake of Hitler’s final solution is that justice is not delivered through war but through peace, that freedom is not a birthright but a social condition amendable to the whims of transient governments, and that the right to self determination is neither sovereign nor salient, but subject to popular vote. We cannot afford such a message to be allowed voice any longer. Israel is right to ignore the UN, and the United States and President Obama should be more concerned with protecting Americans than the Geneva Convention-afforded rights of terrorists.

The last half of the 20th century has seen the greatest expansion of wealth in human history, an explosion of technological advancement that propelled mankind into the stratosphere and beyond and beamed the breadth of the world into credit card-sized devices we carry in our pockets. We have more “stuff” than



any generation has ever had before us, and owe more in debt for it than any other previous peacetime generation.

And we are afraid of losing it.

We are so afraid of losing our stuff—home, job, society’s impression of our standing in the community, etc—that we seem to have forgotten that there are in fact non-material things still worth fighting for, that there are indeed principles that require our committed efforts—if not our blood—for sustenance and mere survival. WWII did not rid the world of all that ails it, the Allied powers did not defeat all evil in their victory recorded on paper at Potsdam—endangered principles remained: freedom from tyranny, equality of races and religion, a peaceful nation’s right to self determination. And if the idea of America has come to mean anything, it is an unwavering defense of such principles in both foreign and domestic settings.

Mr. President: maintain the tools that have made the country you now preside over a safer place. Keep the world on notice that its support—both active and passive—of terrorism against the United States will be met with unimaginable force. Save your rhetoric about extending an open hand for the Republicans after you right the economy and bring successful conclusion to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Your clenched fist should remain in the face of those who wish us harm.

Anything less, Mr. President, is treasonous.