

OPINION and ANALYSIS

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local and international writings on the Middle East

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Israel may be on the eve of revolution

Merav Michaeli, Haaretz, 17 January 2011

<http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/opinion/israel-may-be-on-the-eve-of-revolution-1.337445>

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday characterized the popular revolution in Tunisia as an example of "instability in our region." While Western leaders (and the Arab League!) praise the great achievement of the freedom struggle and the ousting of a tyrannical despot, Netanyahu does not see achievement in civil protest. He only wants "stability to return," with or without freedom.

Perhaps he actually does see, and that is why he didn't say anything. Dr. Daniel Zisenwine is a research fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, of Tel Aviv University, specializing in North Africa. He explained in an interview that it was not the political opposition that brought down President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali: "They are only fragments of parties, in a very weak position ... and mainly busy fighting among themselves." Sound familiar? The strong elements in Tunisia, Zisenwine said, are the trade unions and nongovernmental organizations, which "suddenly woke up and could awaken public life in the country a little more." Maybe that's why Netanyahu is backing up Lieberman's remarks and actions with regard to human rights organizations. He is "afraid," as Netanyahu once famously said about the left.

Israeli civil society organizations have amassed considerable power over the years; not only the so-called leftist organizations, but ones dealing with issues like poverty, workers' rights and violence against women and children. All of them were created in order to fill the gaps left by the state, which for its part was all too happy to continue walking away from problems that someone else was there to take on. The neglect is so great that Israel's third sector - NGOs, charities and volunteer organizations - is among the biggest in the world. As such, it has quite a bit of power.

Now comes the backlash. The Knesset and the cabinet have suddenly discovered the power these groups have, and they want it back. For now the war is against "political" groups, but we can anticipate efforts to take control of charities, because they too are political. They too are involved in human rights, even if their human beings are women, teens, Ethiopians or the poor.

But in this war the cabinet and the Knesset have chosen to ignore the reasons these groups became powerful. They can make false claims about foreign funding, but that is not the source of their power. The source of their power is the vacuum, the criminal policies of Israel's governments over the last 40 years. The source of their power is a government that is evading its duties to care for all of its citizens and to end the occupation, and a Knesset that supports the government instead of putting it in its place. That is the reason this war will not help the government and the Knesset. The work of these groups stems from deep commitment and the tangible, existential needs they meet. And because the Israeli government is increasingly abandoning its citizens, these organizations are not about to disappear.

Unfortunately, these organizations also serve as a pressure valve. As Prof. Yagil Levy explained ("Making the occupation more convenient," Haaretz, January 11, 2011) the byproduct of the activities of "leftist groups" is the preservation of the occupation. In the same way, organizations such as Latet, Elem and Bizchut allow the state to continue shirking its responsibility to its citizens. According to Zisenwine, behind the revolution in Tunisia is "a well-educated, pro-Western population, combined with a blend of economic distress, openly recognized corruption, that in any case was known, the president's iron fist and more. Had Ben Ali consulted me in advance I would have told him to ease up a little, to give a little more freedom to the media and the Internet," Zisenwine said.

If only Netanyahu's and Lieberman's bad intentions of restricting personal freedom and civil rights in Israel would lead to the opposite result. Perhaps, if they don't permit the pressure to escape, the much-needed revolution will finally happen here.

The True Narrative

Jeremy Ruden, Jerusalem Post, 16 January 2011

<http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Op-EdContributors/Article.aspx?id=203880&R=R7>

In my last column, I wrote about the different methods used by our enemies to perpetuate anti-Semitism, using examples from stories published in the international news media throughout December. Some of the people who wrote and spoke to me about the column disagreed with my claim that these are really attacks against Jews, saying that these lies are really targeting Israel and its politics.

So is there a real difference between anti-Semitism and "anti-Israelism"? Of course and, in almost all cases, there should be no doubt on how to tell the two apart. Anti-Semitism is ingrained in the subconscious of our enemies and it has nothing to do with what Israel does or does not do.

Let's take some examples from Muslim countries in Africa which have been in the news recently.

In Tunisia, former president Zine el- Abidine Ben Ali is now an exile following the civilian uprising which began a few weeks ago. Citizens took to the streets and rioted following the government's decision to double prices on basic foodstuffs as if the corruption and sky-high unemployment weren't enough. The result of the riots were predictable – hundreds dead and injured. Bloodshed is what the world must expect when dictatorships take action against their own people.

Watching the coverage of these events, Muslim media outlets went and did "man on the street" interviews to get reactions from protesters. "It's so bad," one woman said, "even the Jews wouldn't treat us like this."

Not only was this woman ignorant enough to make this statement, the TV station also felt it served its purpose by showing just how desperate the situation has become.

Keep in mind that Tunisia is considered a "moderate" Arab state. It's just a corrupt dictatorship instead of a corrupt, religious dictatorship. You don't have to be a political science major to figure out what they think of the Jews in a radical Arab state.

Another reason people took to the streets in Tunisia was one of the recently released WikiLeaks cables which describes the country as a despotic police state. No surprises there – but wait – remember anti-Semitic conspiracy theorists are claiming the WikiLeaks fiasco is a Mossad plot.

Therefore the riots in Tunisia are Israel's fault. Surely you see the logic. I wonder, now that Ben Ali is gone, if those same anti-Semites will credit or blame the Jews for the results of the revolt? NOT TO be outdone was the president of Sudan, Omar al-Bashir, a man whose government hosted Osama bin Laden in the 1990s and is still wanted for war crimes by the International Criminal Court on charges of genocide in Darfur.

The people of South Sudan went on to vote on independence from the north. The referendum was the key element of the peace accord that ended the Sudanese civil war in 2005.

Now that it looks like the southern Sudanese want separation, Bashir realizes that the referendum might have been a mistake, especially since the south controls about 80 percent of the country's oil production.

Arab media ran pictures of "radical" Muslims burning pro-independence voters to death. Once again bloodshed is the way to keep the people in line in dictatorships.

As for Bashir, he was interviewed saying that the move for southern independence was very dangerous for the entire country and – you guessed it – an international Zionist plot. Nothing like blaming the Jews to get your people all riled up.

To folks in their right mind, these kinds of accusations sound preposterous, but they have to be taken very seriously.

In countries where the literacy rate is between 20%-60% (depending on who you want to believe), and there is no way for people to access or process alternate versions of the "truth," lies become fact. Today, there are no bigger lies in the Arab world than those being told about the Jews.

Not only do they make no effort in trying to hide it, they flaunt it.

These examples – and there are hundreds more – have absolutely nothing to do with Israel's actions or politics.

How can any Westerner excuse accusations against a nation which has not actually committed the actions for which it has been blamed? Israel makes mistakes and legitimate criticism is something we should all expect and even encourage. As with every country, we are constantly changing our policies, strategic assessments and so on. When that same criticism becomes automatic, that's anti-Israel. If a party condemns Israel's actions spontaneously, how could it be otherwise? Everything else, be it conspiracy theories, blood libels, demonizing or outlandish statements are all anti-Semitism, pure and simple. They are all following methods which date back thousands of years, designed to blame Jews for all of the problems.

No one should accept these practices.

They represent an ancient injustice which has merely morphed in the 21st century.

It is up to every Jew to be outraged when s/he hears even a shade of anti-Semitism and to challenge it at every corner. It's just as important that the State of Israel make it a national priority to do everything in its power to combat anti-Semitism just as strongly as it fights our enemies on the battlefield.

A sudden tear in the fabric of the Arab world

Doug Saunders, The Globe and Mail, Toronto, 15 January 2011

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/doug-saunders/a-sudden-tear-in-the-fabric-of-the-arab-world/article1871070/>

The violent events that reached a climax in Tunis on Friday aren't just the first full-fledged popular revolution the world has seen in some time – they're a sudden tear in the fabric of the Arab world, an irreparable rupture in the slick logic that has held two dozen countries in half-development limbo for generations.

To most outside observers, the Tunisian uprising seemed to appear from nowhere: Seemingly minor “food-price protests,” which began four weeks ago in the city of Sidi Bouzid with the self-immolation of a young man and spent December and early January in bottom-of-the-page news briefs, suddenly exploded into a mob takeover of the streets of the capital on Friday, leading long-time President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali – within a period of hours – to sack the government, call an election and then flee the country on his private jet, leaving the Prime Minister in control of a caretaker regime.

The people – and these were clearly ordinary citizens, not bearded Islamists or foreign-funded elites – won the day, and their country. It’s fair to say the Arab world will never be quite the same.

Tunisia’s popular uprising is all the more surprising because it wasn’t part of a narrative that had been given a name and assigned a colour months in advance. To most people outside Tunisia, distracted by events in the United States and elsewhere, this came out of nowhere, in a country too often described as a “benign dictatorship,” one of those places we happily visit on package vacations because the torture chambers are kept well out of sight.

But not only Westerners were taken by surprise. Indeed, to most Arabs outside of Tunisia, it seemed the last likely place to experience an anti-authoritarian uprising.

Mr. Ben Ali, who has ruled the country since 1987, has been not so much a paternal figure as an avuncular one, showering gifts of economic modernization, foreign investment, education and technology, so the repression of politics, media and urban communities appeared to be secondary.

Indeed, few Arabs, who heard a lot about the protests in their news media, believed they had much to do with food-price inflation or joblessness. After all, Tunisia’s unemployment rate, at 13 per cent, is half that of some Arab countries to the east and south; its citizens have greater purchasing power than those of Bahrain or Libya; and they have the highest education rates in the Arab world, with more access to cellphones and the Internet than residents of Lebanon, Jordan or Syria.

“If the citizens of Tunis are dissatisfied,” the director of Dubai-based Al Arabiya television, Abdul Rahman Al-Rashed, marvelled in late December, “what can we say about the citizens of other Arab nations that are suffering from an even worse situation and reality?”

Indeed, what can we say? In the past, we’ve said one of two things: First, that this form of leadership is part of Arabic culture and tradition and is, therefore, broadly accepted by Arabs in ways it wouldn’t be by anyone else. Second, that the democratic option would inevitably lead to rule by radical Islamists, and that the besuited fellows whose pictures adorn the wall of every room are the alternative.

These two myths have led the West to provide backing, legitimacy and investment to Arab dictators for decades, and to avoid supporting democratic opposition groups the way it did in places such as Eastern Europe. While U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton made an impressive speech in Doha on Thursday calling for region-wide reform, France, among other countries, continued to support Tunisia’s Ben Ali regime as late as Friday night.

What are the results of these twin myths? We have supported some of the worst regimes on Earth. The Arab states, despite a wealth of resources, have seen an economic growth rate of 0.5 per cent a year between 1980 and 2004 (and no better since then), according to the United Nations Development Program, placing them at the bottom of the world’s growth list; millions of their citizens live in extreme poverty, making less than \$2 a day; and there are vast, intergenerational levels of unemployment.

Is it any wonder, then, that Arab citizens stopped believing the myths? Whatever the outcome, it will no longer be possible to say of those oppressed citizens, whether you're an Arab ruler or a foreign observer, that "this is simply their nature."

An Egyptian's scientist's journey from wariness to warmth

Avigayil Kadesh, MFA Newsletter, 16 January 2011

http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/IsraelExperience/Egyptian_scientist_journey-Jan_2011.htm

When Dr. Ahmed Moustafa announced his intention to conduct medical research in Israel during the summer of 2008, his family feared for his life and his friends feared for his sanity.

But the Cairo University graduate, who has a Ph.D. in cognitive neuroscience from the University of Louisiana, was eager to accept an invitation from Jerusalem's Hadassah-Hebrew University School of Medicine and Al-Qds University to enhance his study of Parkinson's disease.

"Some of my friends in Egypt advised me not to embark on such an 'unethical' trip," Moustafa recently wrote on the Scholars for Peace in the Middle East website. "For many in Egypt, setting foot in Israel is unthinkable. But the Palestinian professors whom I consulted did not voice such criticism; they encouraged me to visit Israel. My friends in the United States did not make such criticisms either, and I realized that many Americans and Europeans who visit Israel hold different views on Israeli politics, yet they discuss their opinions openly with Israelis."

Now 33, Moustafa is doing post-doctoral work at Rutgers University in New Jersey - his home base since 2007 - developing computational models that demonstrate how Parkinson's disease affects a patient's ability to learn, memorize and pay attention. His research also has applications for a greater understanding of schizophrenia.

At the end of November, he was enjoying a visit from Dr. Boris Rosin, with whom he worked at the medical school during the summer of 2008 in the physiology lab of Prof Hagai Bergman. Neuroscientists at the Hebrew University play a key international role in understanding Parkinson's, he says.

Moustafa explains that widespread wariness regarding Israel is not due to educational indoctrination in Egypt, but rather the result of unflattering newspaper reports and cartoons as well as a lack of exposure to anything Israeli.

"I've read recently that they tried to show an Israeli movie in Egypt, but it was not allowed," he relates. "If people could see the 'other side' of Israel, its books and movies and science, I think that might make a difference. Now I talk to everyone about my time in Israel," including those friends back home who had discouraged him from going.

He recalls being on his guard when he first arrived, a bit taken aback by the sight of Israeli soldiers on the streets. But after a short while he realized there was nothing to fear and much to be learned about Israel and its Jewish and Arab citizens.

"The Arabic street signs everywhere surprised me," he relates. "I thought Arabic would be something they'd stay away from, but every sign has Hebrew, Arabic and English. And I met many Jewish people of Arab origin there. I did not know about that before."

Moustafa describes his three months in Israel as "scientifically enriching and socially rewarding." He attended an Israeli-Palestinian Conference on Alzheimer's disease, toured the land with fellow

Arab students from the Hebrew University, and was often invited to professors' homes for Shabbat dinner and social gatherings. Arabs and Jews alike were open to discussing political issues, and he discovered that neither group's views were uniform.

At Al-Quds University in East Jerusalem, Moustafa met Dr Mukhles Sowwan, a Palestinian with a doctorate from the Hebrew University, earned under the supervision of an Israeli professor. This background enabled Sowwan to establish a nanotechnology laboratory at Al-Quds.

"One cannot help but hope that other scientists in the Arab world follow Dr. Sowwan's example," wrote Moustafa. "Why shouldn't Arabs learn at Israeli universities? Like Dr. Sowwan, why shouldn't Arabs get mentored by Israeli professors and go on to become independent investigators making their own contributions to the global scientific enterprise?"

Believing strongly that Arab countries need more scientific interaction with the outside world, including Israel, Moustafa has been trying to encourage Arab colleagues to join the ranks of world-class scientists and graduate students from Italy, the United States, Germany, Canada, Japan and many other countries who learn, visit and lecture at Israeli universities and attend scientific conferences in Israel.

"It is sad that neighbouring countries do not participate in these activities," he says. "There is no doubt that Israeli science institutions and Israeli researchers would welcome having Arab researchers visit and collaborate with them. It is an overall win-win game for both sides, if not more beneficial for Arab researchers."

So far, his efforts have borne only modest fruit. "I'm not there yet, but I'm trying," says Moustafa. "I was able to collaborate with some researchers in Egypt who I've persuaded to come to a major neuroscience conference in Israel that I am hoping to attend this summer. If I am there, it will be easier for them."

After publicizing his impressions of Israel and his opinion that more Arab scientists should visit the Jewish state, Israel's Foreign Ministry asked Moustafa for permission to have one of his articles translated into Arabic for its website. The Indian government translated the same article into Urdu. "I'm very happy about that," he says. "I got emails from several Israeli professors thanking me for what I wrote."

Moustafa had hoped to bring his mother to visit Israel, but she died last year. He says he plans to remain in the Western hemisphere permanently, going back to Egypt only for occasional scientific collaborations and guest lectures. He is currently co-supervising a graduate student at Alexandria University.

If there is one overall message he'd like to get out to his fellow Arab scientists, it is this: "Separate politics from science and give Israel a try. See for yourself."

I will apologize no more

By Ari Bussel, Canada Free Press, 14 January 2011

<http://www.canadafreepress.com/index.php/article/32131>

Israel is good for the Palestinians. It supplies them electricity. It fulfills any order of the Palestinian Authority as a conduit into Gaza. It allows tens of thousands of them to go for medical treatment in Israel. It provides drinking water, assists with the water infrastructure and treats their sewage.

Israel provides vaccinations and helps fight the spread of diseases like bird flu. It supplies many commodities and products that are of far superior quality and at the same or lower prices than those brought from Egypt.

Israelis are good for other reasons. They actually care about Gazans. Despite being bombed and kidnapped, ambushed and murdered, Israelis will not target civilians of any age. They protect women and children and the elderly and will do everything, risking their own lives repeatedly, to save a human being be he or she a terrorist fighting against them or an innocent bystander.

For Israelis, lives are sacred, and the Palestinians know it all too well.

Christian Arabs in Israel love Israel

Christian Arabs in Israel love Israel. Not because Israel is the home of Jesus Christ, where he was born, studied, taught, lived, was crucified and later resurrected, but because here they enjoy freedom of religion that today can only be found in one other place: the United States of America.

Christians also know what it means to live under Muslim rule, be it in an Arab country like Lebanon, that once was the Paris of the Middle East with a majority of Christians and today a small minority; in Bethlehem, the birthplace of Christ that today has less than two percent Christians; or in any one of numerous African countries where they are slaughtered, their churches set on fire and their occupants burned alive.

The Druze love Israel

The Druze love Israel. They are loyal to Israel as the Druze in Lebanon are loyal to Lebanon and the Druze of Syria loyal to Syria. But there is something more here – it is loyalty that goes beyond the call of duty. Almost 96% of Druze youth serve in the IDF, a number three times the average for Israeli 18 year old males (if compared to the general Jewish population).

Druze elders and religious leaders have a centuries-old wisdom one can find nowhere else. Their lives are not very easy, but they understand the region better than anyone, and not only because they speak the language. They know what it means to live under Arab rule, and they are faced with the difficult position of protecting their extended families living in Syria and in Lebanon. Yet, they manage to gain the respect of the Israeli public at large, with Druze Members of the Knesset, in leading positions in each (Jewish) political party and as Ministers and members of almost every Government.

Tourists love Israel, not only because the best breakfasts are served at its hotels. Israel is multi-faceted. From antiquity to modernity, from Biblical sites to the nightlife of Tel Aviv, from the Diamond Exchange to the Stock Exchange, from start-up companies to the leading innovators of the world, all can be found in this tiny country. It is a quick drive from one place to another, from modern era to astonishing remains of millennia past.

One can always see showers of stars in the night's skies, and periodically showers of a different type, a barrage of rockets and missiles. That never stops foreigners from coming to the country to show their admiration, love and support.

It does not take long to traverse the country from its northern-most border to its southern-most point, the resort city Eilat. One can easily cross the border from Israel to Egypt or Jordan at that southern tip for a day trip to experience Petra or for the beaches of what used to be Israel until Egypt received Sinai in a "land for peace" swap.

Along the way from North to South or West to East, one passes via different climatic regimes and geographic zones, yet all seem to bloom. Israel is a country that is flourishing, a man-made heaven. It is a magical place for tourists to find whatever one wants – including those many who

want Israel's demise and come to make films and other propaganda pieces against the Jewish State. Only in Israel!

Culture and arts, architecture and infrastructure are amazing, but there is a new breed of tourists arriving in Israel. They come for the sun and the warmth, escaping the cold like the hundreds of millions of birds in their annual migration south. But more recently they come for medical checkups as part of a vacation in Israel: amazing, and only in Israel.

Israel, it seems, is a country so many love, yet so many others love to hate.

Israeli Arabs, once the largest minority in Israel, enjoy special rights. They are still making up their minds where their loyalties lie - with their country, the Jewish State of Israel, or with a convoluted idea of a revolt, a national aspiration to be disconnected from Israel.

When offered the chance to leave and become citizens of a Palestine-in-formation, they reject the idea. They like their position as equal citizens of the Jewish state. Confused? Need not be. In the Middle East lies the "real truth," the one people will act upon, and the "spoken truth," the one that has to be said because of the need to keep an image or a set of other constraints.

Even Israel's Arab neighbours like the fact she is in the neighbourhood. It is thanks to Israel and her Jewish and non-Jewish citizens that so many good things have been inflicted on her neighbours, from water drip-irrigation technology to agricultural advancements, alternative energies, medicine, treatment of the sick to prevention of the spread of diseases.

Israel's Arab neighbours are happy she is in the neighbourhood, for they know a good thing, yet they cannot be so outwardly welcoming as to dare express this opinion. They also know that Israel is a moderating force, for they have internal problems of their own, threats of extremists trying to take over their own governments.

Moreover, and maybe most importantly, Israelis know how to fight. They can attempt the impossible, most daring missions, and seem to succeed. Thus, when Iraq threatened her Arab neighbours, Israel was seen as a deterrent, and more recently when Iran looks down with contempt and long range plans about the Arab countries, they know that while Israel exists, they are safe.

Members of the royal family from Saudi Arabia, Jordan and other Arab countries come to Israel on "secret" missions for medical treatment. They know they will receive the very best treatment available in the world and be treated with dignity, respect and confidentiality, often in their own language. Many of the doctors, nurses and staff in Israeli hospitals are Arabs. Israel is trusted when things really count – their own lives and that of their loved ones.

Israel is a favourite destination of savvy private and institutionalized investors and funds, and businesspeople seeking new financial outlets. To them, Israel is a safe haven to park their money, with a very stable financial system, innovation the likes of which can be found nowhere else around the world and returns that are often very high.

Israel is also a favourite destination for Hizbollah and Hamas missiles, previously for Saddam Hussein long-range Scud missiles and nowadays for Iran's long-range missiles. Those elements, though, do not love Israel. They are focused on her destruction by all means, including some of the most horrible ones, from unleashing nuclear to chemical or biological agents.

Israel has become the focus of international hatred, all blamed on the Zionists-occupiers-of-land-not-theirs. There are numerous blood libels that are improved over time. Once it was Israel releasing cat-size rats that only target Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem but affect no one else. Then it was Israel catching young Palestinian males to harvest their organs. Each year at certain times when supplies are low, the Red Cross would urge its blood donors to come and

donate blood. In Israel there is no need, they kidnap Palestinian kids who are never heard of again. These ridiculous charges escalate each year.

Even more recently, Israel's own history is being re-written. Its most holy of places, Jerusalem and the Temple Mount, are being stripped of any connection to the Jews. "It was never the City of David, if there was a David. The Western Wall was just a Roman fortification. All holy sites in Israel are a new creation of old Muslim sites."

Since there is no connection between the Zionists and the geographic location called by colonialist powers "Israel," then any evidence such as archaeology must be destroyed. Hundreds of truckloads of some of the most important archaeological remains from the Temple Mount were dug and dumped away like trash. Who said the Jews had anything to do with Jerusalem?

Israel deniers go a step further and question the Bible and the God of the Hebrews. Nothing is sacred any more, all permitted by these Muslim extremists. The rewriters are even spreading lies that the Lord of Hosts was actually two Gods. Anything to undermine what was otherwise an unshakeable history of three thousand years, and is now being questioned, ridiculed and disregarded.

Fairy tales are being written about Palestine, claiming there was never a connection to the Bible, calling Jewish history another Zionist-colonialist fabrication, a claim to the land-not-theirs. And if this is bad, then we must also remember the simple solution: JEWS GO BACK TO WHERE YOU CAME FROM: America, Russia, Germany, Poland. Simple, catchy, elegant. NOT YOURS, GO BACK. NOT YOURS. GO BACK!

Many people love Israel. It is not a religious ideology alone, but pragmatism, reality and truth. Many more hate Israel so much they are consumed with the fire of hatred. They have now found an outlet in the form of "Palestine," "Palestinian People" and an acceptable substitute for Israel.

But Israel cannot be replaced, because rational human beings normally choose light over darkness, good over evil and truth over lies. We live at a period of history when darkness is blinding, evil is mesmerizing and lies are told so often we confuse them with truth. Mistake not – those closest to Israel, those who apparently have the alternative, choose Israel.

Israelis choose Israel, although they take their own existence for granted and often are not thankful enough for all they have. Jews choose Israel, for it is their homeland, their shelter, the meaning of their very being, even if often times they do not know to express their love and appreciation and seem to be distancing themselves from their own land. Mistake not, they have no right or ability to exist if Israel were to cease to exist.

I, for one, will apologize no more. I will not accept those who are so blinded by hatred, yet sophisticated enough to fight my very existence using the best tools available – mine. I am fighting back.

My Bible, my God the Almighty, my land and my people are not up for negotiation. Neither is my sanity or wellbeing. Israel exists, and those who truly experience her for what she is will do everything possible to ensure she continues to exist exactly as she is: the only Jewish Homeland of the Jews, the one Jewish country among the member nations on this earth, the one miracle on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean.

Do not mistake past accommodations and patience for weakness. We are strong and our resolve will not be broken. It is harder than granite, stronger than diamonds. It has been shaped under the immense pressure and temperatures of inner earth, over millions of years, and it is included in the DNA of every Jewish person.

Be careful what you wish for, for wishing too much for the annihilation of the Jewish people,

demonizing them, engaging in blood libels and attempting to re-write history and other self-serving methods must eventually backfire.

I, for one, am apologizing no more. If you want to destroy me I will fight back and my armies will destroy you once more.

Bits and Pieces

Clips from various media in the Middle East and elsewhere

Imra.org, 17 January 2011: Dozens of doves were released on the roof of Beit Yonatan in Jerusalem's Shiloach (Silwan) neighborhood last week as an act of solidarity with Jonathan Pollard, who has been imprisoned in the US for 25 years, IDF soldier Gilad Shalit who was kidnapped by Hamas terrorists in June 2006, and the residents of Beit Yonatan themselves, who are fighting against the attempts to seal and demolish the building which was built on land purchased by Jews in the heart of the now Arab-populated neighborhood.

JTA, 17 January 2011: Israel is to lease firefighting planes from Canada as it waits to finalise its purchase of 6 new ones from that country at a cost of \$200 million.

JTA, 17 January 2011: An Israeli Bedouin has been arrested on charges of rape and of impersonating an Israeli pilot.

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