



## Commentary...

**Those Bleeding-Heart Journalists** By Isi Leibler

*In these troubled times, it is regrettable that many of our journalists emphasize the negative.*

In recent weeks, our media has indulged its penchant for masochism, depicting every incident in the most self-deprecating manner. This is exemplified in a column by Bradley Burston on the current homepage of the English edition of Haaretz. Titled "I envy the people who hate Israel," he relates to real and imaginary blunders committed by our political leaders, and concludes with the breathtaking comment that "my father did not flee the Soviet Union just so that his son could one day have the chance to live in a place just like it."

I would submit that the publication of such wacky remarks in a purportedly serious Israeli paper highlights the need for soul searching by our bleeding-heart editors.

Burston's principal example of malfeasance was "our apparent violation of the basic conventions of all civilized states in the Dubai murder." It is unlikely that the true facts concerning the assassination of the vicious Hamas killer Mahmoud al-Mabhouh will ever be revealed. The information disclosed by the Dubai police smacks of disinformation. It sounds somewhat bizarre for the Mossad to risk 27 agents and then send some of them on to Iran.

Initially, Israeli media reports of the assassination were exuberant. However, when it transpired that foreign passports belonging to Israeli dual nationals had been used, the euphoria evaporated and commentators who had portrayed Mossad chief Meir Dagan as "superman" began calling for his head.

Ideally, intelligence agencies should be invisible. The use of forged passports from friendly countries is unacceptable, but has been common practice by all Western intelligence agencies. Indeed, one is entitled to ask why the Dubai authorities failed to notice false passports employed by Mabhouh. We might also ask whether there would have been such a brouhaha over passports had it been one of Osama bin Laden's lieutenants who was killed.

Our media critics discounted the fact that our intelligence agencies may have succeeded in eliminating a murderer whose sole occupation was to bring death and destruction upon us. Furthermore, the goal was achieved with no civilian casualties and all participants returned safely. So let's stop beating ourselves up and be thankful that we are rid of a cruel and evil fiend.

ANOTHER ISSUE covered in a distorted manner was the alleged mishandling of J Street and visiting US congressmen. After the incident with the Turkish ambassador, many of us viewed Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon as somewhat of a fallen star. But in this matter, he behaved impeccably, and it was those in the media who permitted themselves to be manipulated by J Street who should be condemned.

Five democratic congressmen visited Israel as part of a delegation organized by Churches for Middle East Peace – a group notorious for its anti-Israel agenda. J Street coordinated the visit, and the Foreign Ministry undertook to arrange meetings. However, it declined to invite representatives of J Street, an organization renowned for lobbying the Obama administration against the government. There was no boycott of the

# ISRAEL NEWS

*A collection of the week's news from Israel  
From the Bet El Twinning / Israel Action Committee of  
Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation*

US congressmen, merely a decision by the Foreign Ministry to exclude J Street and Churches for Middle East Peace from those meetings.

I recollect numerous occasions when I accompanied high-level Australian and international legislators to Israel. Even though, unlike J Street, I felt obliged as a Diaspora leader to support the policies of the government, I was never offended when I was not invited to partake in direct meetings between the government and visiting lawmakers.

Yet, true to form, J Street saw this as an opportunity to bash the government, and held a press conference attended by the congressmen, falsely condemning the Foreign Ministry "for refusing to allow meetings with congressmen." It is noteworthy that of the five congressmen depicted by J Street as "staunch friends of Israel," Mary Joy Gilroy was the only one who voted in favor of a House resolution (overwhelmingly passed) condemning the Goldstone Report and reaffirming Israel's right to self-defense. That says something about J Street's definition of "pro-Israel."

Despite media accusations that Ayalon indulged in McCarthyism and damaged the reputation of Israel, the Foreign Ministry behaved entirely appropriately, and was justified in condemning J Street for "putting self-aggrandizement ahead of the interests of the State of Israel."

YET ANOTHER example of media self deprecation was its attack on the decision by the government to include the Cave of the Patriarchs, Rachel's Tomb and the walls of Jerusalem's Old City in a list of national heritage sites marked for restoration and preservation. The first condemnation, not surprisingly from the UN, was on the grounds that the sites are over the Green Line and have "historical and religious significance not only to Judaism but also to Islam and to Christianity." This is absurd. It is only since these sites have been under Israeli jurisdiction that they have been accessible to all faiths. The interests of Christians and Muslims are surely not served if these locations are permitted to deteriorate.

Of course, the UN was merely preempting the predictable response of the Palestinians who, true to form, expressed outrage that Israel could even view the walls of Jerusalem as a national heritage site. Hamas called for a third intifada. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas threatened a religious war.

Unfortunately, the US administration, which should appreciate the symbolic connection of the Jewish people to these sites and was aware that the decision does not affect the political status quo of the areas in which the sites are located, chose to issue statements echoing the sentiments expressed by the UN.

This US response must be viewed against the backdrop of the negative Israeli media coverage of this issue, which has had a major influence in molding the perception of the international community.

However, rather than condemning the Palestinian threats and focusing on the irrevocable connection of the Jewish people to these sites, much of the media criticized the government. Such self-defeating attitudes, deliberately downplaying our moral and legal rights to avoid offending the Palestinians, merely embolden extremists. It is surely time to cease apologizing for our national heritage. If we are to be precluded from identifying Jerusalem, the Cave of the Patriarchs or Rachel's Tomb (three of the most important symbols of Judaism) as sites of national heritage, we undermine the entire concept of Jewish nationhood.

While we condemn Europe for caving in to Islamic fundamentalists, we cannot afford to make the same mistake in Israel, where the stakes are so much higher.

It is regrettable that during these troubled times many of our journalists emphasize the negative, using every possible opportunity to

We express our deep appreciation to our member for Thornhill, our good friend **Peter Shurman, MPP** a regular at BAYT, for proposing a resolution in the Ontario Legislature condemning Israeli "Apartheid" Week. The resolution was passed unanimously. Way to go Peter!

demean and deride the positive aspects of our nation. It is surely time to urge them to at least begin displaying a modicum of respect for our achievements. (Jerusalem Post Mar 3)

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### **Holy Hysteria** By Michael Freund

*You don't have to be a biblical scholar to recognize the incontestable Jewish nature of Rachel's Tomb and the Cave of the Patriarchs.*

A new malady is sweeping through the Middle East and beyond, spreading as rapidly as any contagion in recent memory. Like any epidemic, this nefarious virus has left havoc in its wake, claiming an increasing number of victims as it crosses borders and continents with all the speed that broadband can offer.

It is "holy hysteria," and it has even struck some of the leading members of the international community.

The most common sign of this ailment, as any political physician will tell you, is an irrational overreaction to the Jewish people's basic and fundamental right to revere its own sacred spaces. In especially severe cases, the symptoms of this illness have also been known to include denying the Jewish historical connection to various holy sites and willfully ignoring the mounds of evidence to buttress such claims.

The latest person to be hit by this dreadful disorder is Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, who this week joined the growing ranks of world leaders who have denounced Israel's recently-published list of national heritage sites.

In a telephone conversation on Tuesday with Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, Mubarak reportedly warned against what he termed "the dangerous implications of the invasion of the Temple Mount and of including the Cave of the Patriarchs and Rachel's Tomb in the list of Jewish heritage sites." Cairo even submitted an official protest to the government over the matter.

Mubarak's blunt reaction actually seemed downright composed when compared with some of the frenzied responses emanating from the Palestinian leadership, who tried to outdo one another in their condemnation of the Jewish state.

TAKE, FOR example, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, who on a visit to Brussels last week asserted that the decision could spark hostilities, labeling it "a serious provocation which may lead to a religious war." Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh in Gaza likewise called on Palestinians to launch a new intifada and defiantly declared that "Jerusalem is ours, the land is ours. We will not accept these decisions."

And at its weekly meeting in Ramallah, the PA cabinet went still further, denying the Jewish link to the burial places of the biblical patriarchs and referring to them in a statement as "Palestinian archeological and heritage sites."

Not surprisingly, the international community was also quick to side with the Palestinians. The European Union called it a "provocative act," as did the US State Department, and the UN special coordinator for the Middle East peace process issued a statement saying he was "concerned" by the decision.

This tempest over tombs is both absurd and offensive, and Israel should not in any way buckle under to the pressure.

Sites such as Rachel's Tomb and the Cave of the Patriarchs are part of the national and religious patrimony of the Jewish people, and we do not need anyone's permission to renovate and maintain them. Our reverence for these sites and attachment to them predates Muhammad and precedes Jesus, and no one has the right to lecture us about where and how we choose to serve God.

In fact, this entire episode provides a revealing glimpse of just how transparently hypocritical our critics have become. After all, it was nearly 15 years ago, in the September 1995 Oslo II Accords, that the Palestinians themselves recognized Israel's attachment to Rachel's Tomb. In Article V, Annex I to the agreement, the Palestinians agreed that "the present situation and existing practices in the tomb shall be preserved," meaning that they clearly consented to Israeli control and use of the site, which has never been anything other than a place of Jewish worship.

So for chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat to say last week that Israel's move amounts to a "unilateral decision to make Palestinian sites in Hebron and Bethlehem part of Israel" is not only absurd, it is patently false.

And since the accords were signed on the White House lawn in front of the world, and were formally witnessed by representatives of both the US

administration and the European Union, one would expect them to see right through the Palestinians' shenanigans.

Worse yet, by playing along with the feigned outrage of the Palestinian leadership, the international community is merely giving credence to their boorish denial of the Jewish essence of these sites.

YOU DON'T have to be a Biblical scholar or a learned archeologist to recognize the long-standing and incontestably Jewish nature of Rachel's Tomb and the Cave of the Patriarchs. Arguing otherwise is akin to asserting that the earth is flat, Elvis is still alive and the moon is made of cheese, and that is how the Palestinian claims should be viewed.

Indeed, the late Prof. Ze'ev Vilnai, in his monumental study *Holy Tombstones in the Land of Israel*, noted that "the Cave of Machpela and the tombs of the patriarchs were known throughout all of the eras, and Jews looked upon them with great esteem" (Vol.1, p. 102). Similarly, regarding Rachel's Tomb, Vilnai, considered the leading expert on the subject, wrote that it "was known throughout all of the generations, from the earliest ones onward" (Vol.1, p. 149).

But the sad fact is that history and reality just do not seem to matter all that much when it comes to how the world views Israel. Consumed by "holy hysteria," they prefer to insult and even denigrate our most ancient traditions even as they give the Palestinians a free pass for their refusal to return to the negotiating table.

But let them grumble all they wish. Those who cherish and visit Jewish holy sites will continue to do so, whether or not others approve. And I am pleased that the government will at last begin to invest the funds needed to refurbish and restore them.

We have nothing to apologize for in paying our respects to the founding fathers and mothers of the Jewish people, and it is a blessing that our generation has been given access to their resting places. Treasuring our past, it should be clear, is no sin. But allowing others to trample on it most assuredly would be. (Jerusalem Post Mar 3)

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### **Don't Attack Jews** By Moshe Dann

On December 18, 2009, Aluf Benn and Amos Harel, writing in *Haaretz*, offered one of the most important insights into Israeli policy regarding the Iranian nuclear threat.

"When Netanyahu was finance minister in Ariel Sharon's cabinet, he urged Sharon to focus on the struggle against Iran. When Netanyahu resigned over the disengagement plan, and Sharon left Likud and established Kadima, Netanyahu told Sharon that if he acted against Iran before the election, Netanyahu would support him. Sharon did not act.

"It is possible that years ago, the problem of Iran's nuclear project could have been solved by one tough blow and with relatively minimal risk... If it had been bombed, Iran would have lost large quantities of raw material for uranium enrichment, and its nuclear program would have been set back years. But nothing happened."

Why not? Benn and Harel do not answer this crucial question, nor did the media pick up their observation. Was the Air Force incapable? Did Israel lack essential information? Was America, bogged down in Iraq, reluctant to agree?

In hindsight, the decision not to bomb the Iranian facility was a gigantic mistake that changed the course of history. There may have been, however, another reason for Sharon's inattention: his preoccupation with unilateral withdrawal from Gaza and northern Samaria. The Gaza disengagement, which took place in August, 2005, took a year to prepare, mobilized massive resources and cost billions of shekels. Focused on expelling Jews from their homes and destroying 25 communities, did Sharon ignore existential threats to Israel's existence?

Similarly, in 2006, PM Ehud Olmert, in the midst of the war in Lebanon, announced his intention to evacuate more settlements. What would have happened had the IDF been prepared for war with Hezbollah instead of attacking the tiny hilltop community of Amona earlier that year, to destroy a few Jewish homes?

Another catastrophic failure of leadership is upon us again. Midnight attacks on innocent Jews by the IDF and police in order to destroy a few Jewish homes might seem justified in order to fulfill obligations PM Netanyahu undertook to "freeze settlement building." But is this necessary? Are these homes more important than hundreds of thousands of illegal Arab buildings? What purpose does it serve? Distraction from the real issues?

PM Netanyahu speaks eloquently about Zionist heritage, but are not the Jews whom his government attacks part of that heritage? Does his definition of Zionist heritage depend on what the UN allows, President Obama dictates, or Peace Now's hysterics?

Sharon's failure to bomb Iran when it was possible is now re-enacted on the backs of Jews who live in Judea and Samaria. Netanyahu's silence about Iran in 2004 – which led to Hamas' catastrophic takeover of Gaza – echoes in 2010 as he and his "inner cabinet" created an intolerable situation, not only to please Obama, but to satisfy the rabidly anti-Jewish and anti-Zionist policies of his Defense Minister, Ehud Barak.

Netanyahu's efforts to appeal to Zionist heritage, improve transportation and laud Israeli technical achievements are safe positions; but that is hardly an agenda that will inspire a nation under attack, or offer a way out of Israel's growing demonization and threats to its legitimacy and very existence.

PM Netanyahu was not elected in order to appeal to American or European policies, or to destroy Jewish homes. Been there; done that. He was elected to strengthen Israel's security, to stamp out corruption, to insure an impartial and fair judicial system, and to enhance our educational system so that it includes basic elements of Jewish and Zionist values and heritage.

As a national leader, Netanyahu failed in 2004; he could have opposed Sharon and exposed Sharon's obsessions. He could have made Iran the issue. He didn't, and now we all must pay for that. But what has he learned from 2004?

I would offer a simple principle: When you attack Jews, you will lose – always.

And one more: Zionist heritage did not begin or end with Tel Hai and the site where the State of Israel was proclaimed. Zionism is an ongoing, evolving process that includes every Jew and those who support the right of the Jewish people to statehood in the Land of Israel. Heritage programs must not only be historical, but guides to the future. They can also provide parameters for meaningful leadership.

Netanyahu's primary obligation is to protect Israel, spiritually and physically – by any means necessary. He fumbled in 2004; let's hope that he won't repeat that mistake. (Ynet Feb 28)

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### **Truly A Holy Alliance** By Malcolm Hedding

*We stand with Israel because we see God's promises at work in its journey.*

Last week, David Newman's opinion column assailed the growing ties between Evangelical Christians and Israel in "An unholy alliance", February 23. In concurring with Rabbi Shlomo Aviner that Israelis should reject Christian support outright, he merely demonstrated that people on both the Left and Right can be equally intolerant.

After centuries of Christian anti-Semitism, a new day has dawned in Jewish-Christian relations and organizations like the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem have been in the forefront of this historic change. Our credentials and track record of engagement and support for Israel are impeccable and thus stand up well to his feeble challenge! For decades now, Jews have asked disturbing questions concerning the Christian anti-Semitic underpinnings of the Nazi Holocaust and why so few Christians were willing to speak out during the darkest days of the Shoah. Sadly, their point is valid. However, now that Christians have sought to rectify this wretched history and have extended a genuine hand of friendship to Israel, we are branded an "unholy" ally. In such a vise, we are left with no way to win.

Yes! We are Christians and thus we have a Christian view of how history ends. But we cannot dictate that to others nor would we ever try. Likewise, most Jews foresee a "Jewish" end to history, as should be expected. But this does not mean that the friendship being forged between us is insincere. This begs the question: Is friendship only possible when two groups hold identical views? I think not! Both groups view our respective Scriptures as fully inspired by God. Jews cannot ask me to be their friend on condition that I debunk my Scriptures and deny my faith. This is precisely what Christians did to Jews for centuries and it is called anti-Semitism or at best manipulation. Certainly, I will not ask Jews to deny their beliefs in order to be my friend. I know that no Jew would do this.

ACTUALLY, THE fact that we each are faithful to our belief systems does not make our friendship unholy and fraudulent. Rather, that is what makes it so unique and special. And even more so in view of our tragic history together! Neither does my adherence to my beliefs make me a closet

missionary who fantasizes about the Apocalypse, as Newman suggests. The truth is, we are Israel's friends not because of some radical right-wing view, hidden missionary agenda or some future eschatological scenario. It is because of the past. That is, God gave the land of Canaan to the Jewish people 4000 years ago as an everlasting possession. We believe that the Jewish return to the land in our day is testimony to the faithfulness of God to His covenant with Israel – pure and simple.

Newman is also wrong in his blunt portrayal of the Evangelical community in America as lacking the "values" of a "liberal, open, democratic society." The pro-Israel Christian demographic in the US is a very broad constituency made up of decent, kind-hearted folks and has even included such Democratic presidents as Harry Truman and Bill Clinton. Yes, there are a minority who mirror Newman's bigotry but from the Right. And this includes even some big name leaders who pedal sensational "end-time" speculations regarding Israel. But one should not paint with so broad a brush in making such sweeping condemnations.

As head of the broadest based pro-Israel Christian ministry in the world, I can attest that our global constituency stands alongside Israel not because of some radical right-wing political goal or dark apocalyptic vision, but because we see the promises of God to Abraham at work in Israel's journey back to the land of your forefathers.

We do not seek to make Jews disappear; rather we desire to see you live in peace and security in the land bequeathed to you by God Himself. He will, in good time and in His mysterious ways, fulfill all the good He has planned for Israel. We will leave this to Him! For now, we have far more in common that unites us than divides us – like the struggle against jihadist radical Islam.

It also vital to recall that this so-called "unholy alliance" has served Israel well in its modern history. The path for the rebirth of the Jewish State in 1948 was paved, in large part, because of the support and activities of Evangelicals in Great Britain in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Then known as Restorationists, they were most definitely the driving force behind the Balfour Declaration. Rev. William Hechler, a devout Christian, greatly assisted Theodor Herzl in the Zionist cause, opening doors for him to the nobility of Europe. It was Herzl himself who first coined the term "Christian Zionist" because he so appreciated their work! Their views on Christian mission and biblical prophecy were not so different than mine today.

Yet Herzl – considered a secular man – befriended them, and their contribution to Israel's modern rebirth proved foundational and crucial. This is all on record and requires no defense. But apparently, David Newman has forgotten the honorable origins of this truly holy alliance!

*The writer is the Executive Director of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem. (Jerusalem Post Feb 28)*

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### **The Obama-American Public Disconnect on Israel** By Yoram Ettinger

The findings of the February 19, 2010 Gallup poll put President Obama at odds with the US public, when it comes to attitudes toward the Jewish State, the Arab-Israeli conflict, Arabs, Muslims and Islamic terrorism.

For example, Israel maintains its traditional spot among the five most favored nations by 67% of the US public, despite Obama's moral-equivalence and even-handedness toward the Arab-Israeli conflict, in spite of his attempts to force Israel into sweeping concessions, and in defiance of the US "elite" media and academia. On the other hand, the Palestinian Authority is ranked – along with Iran, North Korea and Afghanistan – at the bottom of the list, favored by only 20% of the US public.

According to an August 10, 2009 Rasmussen poll, Israel is ranked as the third most favorable ally (70%), preceded only by Canada and Britain. The low regard toward Egypt (39%) and Saudi Arabia (23%) demonstrates that Americans remain skeptical – at least since 9/11 – of Arabs and Muslims, even when they are portrayed by the media and the Administration as supposedly moderate and pro-American. Moreover, only 21% of adult Americans expect that the US relationship with the Muslim world will improve in a year, while 25% expect that it will get worse.

Apparently, US public attitude towards Arabs and Muslims has hardly been impacted by President Obama's highly-publicized outreach to Muslims, as demonstrated by his apologetic speeches at Turkey's National Assembly ("...the Islamic faith has done so much to shape the world,

including my own country..."), at Cairo University ("Islam has always been a part of America's story...") and at the UN ("America has acted unilaterally, without regard for the interests of others...").

Historically, most Americans have been suspicious of Arabs and Islam, while identifying with Judeo-Christian values, Judaism and the Jewish State, as documented by a June 3, 2009 Gallup poll. By an overwhelming 80%:13% ratio, Americans believe that Muslims are hostile toward the USA. They subscribe to Samuel Huntington's "War of Civilizations," much more than Obama's June 4, 2009 statement, made at Cairo University: "America is not – and never will be – at war with Islam." Apparently, Obama's efforts have failed to uproot the legacy of the Islamic threat since the early 19th century war against Muslim pirates, through the 1983 detonation of the US embassy and the truck bombing of the Marine Headquarters in Beirut, the 1998 bombing of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, 9/11, the December 2009 Ft. Hood, Texas massacre and the Muslim terrorist attempt to bomb a Detroit-bound airliner.

Since, at least 9/11, most Americans have held the Palestinian Authority in disfavor, 15% support and 73% opposed, according to a March 3, 2009 Gallup poll. A definite connection has been established between the Palestinian Authority and terrorism, pro-Saddam Hussein and Bin-Laden sentiments and anti-US sentiments. In contrast, support of Israel has remained steady at 63% with only 23% opposing.

Israel's good standing has recently been reflected on Capitol Hill. For instance, 344 House Representatives (79%) signed a November 4, 2009 letter, supporting Israel and condemning the Goldstone Report. On the other hand, only 54 House Representatives (12%) signed a January 27, 2010 letter, criticizing Israel and supporting Hamas.

Unlike dictatorships, which manipulate results of public opinion polls, democracies are shaped, to a large extent, by public opinion. Public opinion is especially critical in the US democracy, which features the constituent as its centerpiece. Therefore, US legislators are more attentive to voters than are other Western legislators. They take seriously the electoral battle cry: "We shall remember in November!" Hence, the sustained support of the Jewish State on Capitol Hill, which reflects the will of the American People, in addition to the role played by shared-values, mutual-threats and joint-interests in shaping the unique covenant between the US, the Jewish People and the Jewish State. (Jerusalem Post Feb 28)

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## **The Real Arab Stuff** By Barry Rubin

*What are the most realistic and moderate Arabic-speaking rulers thinking?*

Hussain Abdul Hussain gets it. He's one of the most interesting Arab journalists who also write in English. In his latest article "Lonely Obama vs. popular Iran", published in the Huffington Post, he points out what the most realistic people and more moderate rulers in the Arabic-speaking world are thinking.

Theme one: Popularity isn't so important in the Middle East. "A common perception is that under President Barack Obama, America's image has improved, and perhaps its friends have increased. But such claims are unfounded, as the opposite proves to be true. International relations, however, are about interests, not sweet talk. As [George W.] Bush went out recruiting allies, and making enemies, Obama lost America's friends while failing to win over enemies."

Theme two: What is important is that allies believe you will support and protect them. Obama isn't doing that. Example A, Iraq. "After losing more than 4,300 troops in battle and spending [a huge amount of money] since 2003, America today cannot find a single politician or group that would express gratitude to Americans for ridding Iraq of its ruthless tyrant Saddam Hussein, and allowing these politicians to speak out freely. On the contrary, shy of making their excellent backdoor ties with Washington known since they fear Obama will depart Iraq and never look back, Iraqi politicians started expressing dissatisfaction with the United States in public."

Example B, Lebanon. Before Obama took office, more than one-third of the entire population – most of them Sunni Muslims – demonstrated against Hizbullah and Syrian occupation. And the Druse leader Walid Jumblatt said on television that he was proud to be part of America's plan to spread democracy in the Middle East. But "by the time Obama had made it to the White House, support of America's allies in Lebanon waned since Obama was determined to appease their foes in Syria and Iran. [Said] Hariri [leader of the moderate forces] and Jumblatt [his former close ally] were

forced to abandon their fight for Lebanon's democracy and freedom" and seek to make a deal with Syria and Hizbullah instead.

Example C, Iran. The people revolted against the autocratic regime and staged mass demonstrations, "but Obama's Washington was busy sending one letter of appeasement after another to Iran's tyrants, and accordingly failed to side with the Green Revolution for democracy and freedom. When Obama did show support for the Green movement, it was too little and too late."

AMONG THOSE worried about a similar lack of US support are Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the small Gulf states, the three North African states, most of Lebanon and those Turks who don't want to live under an Islamist regime.

Theme three: Iran helps its allies. Hence, Iran has more allies, while the US has fewer. Iran is going up; the US is going down. "Now compare America's friends around the Middle East to Iran's cronies, and you can immediately understand why Washington is in trouble, both diplomatically and on a popular level, while Iran is confident as it marches toward producing a nuclear weapon and expanding its influence across the Middle East."

Iranian ally A, Hizbullah: "Since 1981, Iran has been funding its Lebanese ally Hizbullah, never defaulting on any of its pledged payments. Hizbullah went from an embryonic group into a state within a state, boasting a membership of several thousands and maintaining a private army, schools, hospitals, orphanages, satellite TV and a number of other facilities that have won it the hearts of Lebanon's Shi'ites, and have given Hizbullah an absolute command over them."

Iranian ally B, Syria: "Iran has maintained a flow of cash and political support toward Syria for a similar amount of time. Obama has been begging Syria to switch sides and abandon Iran. Judging by the mishaps that always seem to befall America's friends with time, Syria does not seem likely to change, but is rather playing an Obama administration desperate for whatever it can claim as success in its foreign policy."

As if to prove the point, immediately after a big American delegation visited Damascus to restore full relations and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton told Congress that US policy is seeking to detach Syria from its alliance with Iran, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad visited Syria and the two leaders made strong anti-American statements while pledging eternal partnership.

Here's the headline in the London-based Arabic newspaper Al-Sharq al-Awsat: "Syria and Iran defy Clinton in show of unity."

And in the Syrian government's newspaper Tishrin a column explained that if the US wanted a deal with Iran and Syria to achieve peace in the region that would have to include Israel's elimination.

Iranian ally C, Iraqi insurgents: "In Iraq, Iran does not only fund and train militias and violent groups, but it also funds electoral campaigns of Iraqi politicians, loyal media groups and political parties, thus expanding its influence over Iraq exponentially. Spending billions more than Iran in Iraq, America has seen its money spent to no or little effect."

And here's the bottom line: "The comparison between Iran and Obama's America is simple. While Teheran never let down an ally, offering them consistent financial and political support, Washington's support of its allies around the world has always been intermittent, due to changes with administrations and an ever swinging mood among American voters, pundits and analysts.

"So while Iran has created a mini-Islamic republic in Lebanon, and is on its way to doing the same in Iraq, America has failed in keeping friends or maintaining influence both in Lebanon and in Iraq.

"And while Teheran brutally suppressed a growing peaceful revolution for change inside Iran, Washington's pacifism did not win any favors with the Iranian regime, or with its opponents in the Green Revolution.

"While Iran knows how to make friends, Obama's America has become an expert in losing them."

Yes! That's what it's all about. You know, it's an interesting point. Obama and company says we should listen to Muslim and Arab voices.

Okay, but which ones? Not, as they are doing, to the apologists for radicalism and the purveyors of conventional nonsense (all that matters is the Arab-Israeli conflict, America should just make concessions, you need to understand how Islamism isn't a threat, etc.). If you want to know what a dozen Arab governments think and fear – and Israelis, too – this is the real stuff. (Jerusalem Post Feb 28)