

AMERICA THE TARGET

By Mike Evans

(September 30) - On a September evening in 1980 in Tel Aviv, I sat with former Mossad chief Isser Harel for a conversation about Arab terrorism. As he handed me a cup of hot tea and a plate of cookies, I asked him, "Do you think terrorism will come to America, and if so, where and why?"

Harel looked at his American visitor and replied, "I fear it will come to you in America. America has the power, but not the will, to fight terrorism. The terrorists have the will, but not the power, to fight America - but all that could change with time. Arab oil money buys more than tents."

As to the where, Harel continued, "New York City is the symbol of freedom and capitalism. It's likely they will strike the Empire State Building, your tallest building [he mistakenly thought] and a symbol of your power."

With my Western mind-set I replied that America was dedicated to fighting terrorism. Harel smiled and said, "You kill a fly and you celebrate. We live with flies daily. One dies and 100 flies come to the funeral."

"If 'land for peace' happens," Harel continued, "I think it will mean America gets peace for a season, as the West pressures Israel into giving Arafat our land. But once you let the genie of appeasement out of the bottle, he will grow and eventually turn on you. In time America itself will be in the crosshairs."

"Hitler first killed Jews, then he killed Christians. Our culture and our democracies are the root of [the terrorists'] rage. If we're right, then they are wrong."

Twenty-one years later, the first part of Harel's prediction came true; except, of course, that the twin towers of the World Trade Center were much taller than the Empire State Building. However, it was the second part of his doomsday prediction that came true much earlier.

It was 1982 and Israel had declared its own war on terrorism by invading Lebanon to root out Arafat's terrorist infrastructure. I was summoned to New York by then prime minister Menachem Begin's aide, Reuven Hecht, for a meeting with Begin prior to his meeting with then president Ronald Reagan. Hecht had just met in Washington with then secretary of state Alexander Haig, who had told him that America had changed its mind: it would no longer support Israel's war against terrorism in Lebanon.

Begin was in shock. The West - whose planes had been blown out of the sky, its diplomats, soldiers, and civilians murdered by terrorists - was now fighting to save the primary organization responsible for these vile acts. In the end, American pressure prevailed and Arafat's 10,000 PLO terrorists, rifles in hand, were escorted out of Beirut to safe bases in Tunisia and other Arab lands.

The cries of Israeli mothers whose sons had died in Lebanon and who stood outside his apartment screaming "Murderer!" were more than Begin could bear. He resigned a depressed and broken man.

Since then hundreds of Israeli civilians have been killed and thousands wounded by terrorists recruited, trained, and equipped in territory controlled by Arafat's Palestinian Authority. Osama bin Laden's cells operate in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as does Hizbullah - all with Arafat's blessing.

Now that America has declared its own war against terrorism, Arafat has summoned the press to photograph him giving blood ostensibly for the victims of the attacks on America. Meanwhile, his Palestinian Police threatened journalists who filmed Palestinians dancing in the streets to celebrate the same attacks. All this supposedly in aid of encouraging Islamic states to join the anti-terrorism coalition.

Even Arafat's Hamas protégé has announced it is willing to suspend suicide attacks inside Israel "unless it is provoked." Can one imagine bin Laden saying "I will suspend suicide attacks against America unless I am provoked - now let me join the anti-terrorism coalition"?

Israel and America share the same democratic values that terrorists despise and seek to destroy. For Americans to think that Arafat, the godfather of Islamic terrorism, does not continue to support it is a prescription for more terror in America. A war on terrorism that categorizes some terror as good and some as bad is a guarantee of failure; a cruel spectacle in the theater of the absurd.

Michael Evans has, for two decades, been an ambassador to Jerusalem. He is the founder of the National Prayer Breakfast to Honor Israel, the "Night to Honor Israel" rallies, the Jerusalem Prayer Summits, www.jerusalemprayerteam.org, and Churches United with Israel. He is the Chairman of the Board of Corrie ten Boomhuis in Haarlem, Holland. He is the author of 7 books, and 11 award-winning specials on the Middle East. During the Middle East Peace Conference in Madrid, Mr. Evans fervently challenged former Secretary of State James Baker in public debate not to touch Jerusalem. His "Proclamation of Blessing" at the first National Prayer Breakfast to Honor Israel became an official document of the Congressional Record, 97th Congress, Second Session.

Mr. Evans has appeared on "Good Morning America," "Nightline," and CNN's "Crossfire." His articles have been featured in The "Wall Street Journal" and "Newsweek." Mr. Evans has covered the vast majority of events that have transpired throughout the world relating to Middle East, including the Middle East Peace Conference, the White House Peace Accords, the state funeral of the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, and the 43rd specially-convened General Assembly of the United Nations in Geneva where he publicly challenged Yasser Arafat to denounce terrorism. Mr. Evans has been a confidante of both Jerusalem Mayors, Teddy Kolleck and Ehud Olmert, and the majority of Israel's Prime Ministers. He has spoken at more than 4000 churches worldwide.

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