

APPROACHING HORSEMEN

By David Dolan

Week of December 6th, 2004

I was privileged to attend portions of the second annual “Jerusalem Summit” held last week at the elegant King David Hotel, which sits regally perched above the biblical Hinnon Valley across from the walled Old City. The setting was appropriate since the international gathering of prominent conservative shakers and movers was designed to generate “New Ideas from the Old City,” as a banner hanging above the summit podium proclaimed.

Featured speakers at this year’s conclave included American talk radio host Dennis Prager and Colorado Republican Congressman Bob Beauprez, who brought greetings from President Bush. Many renowned experts on radical Islam were seated around the solid oak summit table, including US Institute of Peace director Daniel Pipes and noted British author David Pryce Jones.

Several Muslims—aptly termed brave by summit organizers—delivered lectures at the conservative think-fest. They included Jordanian Professor Mohanna Yousuf Haddad, who called for “increased Islamic tolerance” of the non-Muslim world. San Diego State University Professor Khaleel Mohammad explained that the Quran actually foretold an end-time Jewish return to the Holy Land.

As enlightening as they were, neither speaker adequately dealt with the dreadful contemporary situation in the mainly Muslim Middle East—where popular Islamic loathing and rejection of Israel and its American ally continues to metastasize. That was left to a bold Egyptian-American woman, Nonie Darwish, who spelled out how the 9/11 Al Qaida attacks propelled her out of the kitchen and into the public spotlight.

The intriguing title of her stirring message said it all: “The Daughter of a Shahid Speaks Out For Change.” And speak out she did, resulting in the summit’s only standing ovation.

Nonie Darwish recalled that she had lived as a young girl with her Muslim parents in the pre-1967 Gaza Strip. It was there that her father, serving in the Egyptian Army, was killed during a clash with Israeli soldiers. Despite her tragic personal loss, Darwish testified

that today she is “full of love for the Jewish people and this beautiful holy land.” She went on to castigate the sustained hostility toward Israel from many in her native Egypt, despite the 1979 Camp David peace treaty between the neighboring countries.

Darwish also lashed out at the Islamic world’s general refusal to examine its own sins before throwing stones (or worse) at others, especially at her “beloved adopted homeland,” the USA. She bluntly added that “terrorism is never honorable, and should be abandoned as a so-called political tool” in the bitter Arab/Israeli conflict.

Several relatively optimistic assessments of the current regional situation were proffered at the Jerusalem Summit, all tied to Yasser Arafat’s overdue exit from the blood-stained Mideast stage. But these were more than countered by examinations of the grim situation in post-Saddam Iraq, and of Iran’s determined quest for nuclear weapons. Daniel Pipes was among several experts who doubted that Iraq was ready to hold successful national elections, given the ongoing flood of insurgent violence washing over the land.

The most chilling words at the august gathering came from Yossef Bodansky, the former director of the US Congressional Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare. He warned that Islamic terrorists are currently “tying up the knots” for another massive assault upon America, this time deploying devastating non-conventional weapons.

Bodansky explained that Al Qaida has not carried out a second major attack on US soil until now for “internal psychological and ideological reasons.” However he warned that the President’s lopsided reelection victory prompted a “green light from Islamic elites” for such an atrocity to proceed. American voters are now widely judged as “deserving of death” because a majority of them chose to endorse Bush’s detested war on terror.

With Bodansky’s ominous warning still ticking like a time bomb in my brain, it was interesting to read in Sunday’s New York Times “Weekly Review” section that the world “does not share America’s obsession” with its ongoing struggle against the death-dealing forces of evil. Not that this was actually news to me: I have traveled to many countries since 9/11 and realize that the chattering classes at least tend to see George W’s response as a long march beyond the brutal pale.

I was hardly convinced that a ground invasion of Iraq was the best way to deal with the vile Butcher of Baghdad, given the widespread Arab-Islamic propensity to view American and British “crusaders” as

scheming, oil gobbling infidels. It was therefore predictable that coalition forces would receive a lukewarm reception at best, and a downright hostile greeting from Saddam's Sunni surrogates, supported by a plethora of Islamic regimes and terror groups who regard American-style democracy as far worse than the plague.

But I still found it rather ironic to read that world opinion considers the number one contemporary problem to be struggling national economies, not destructive terrorism. According to the NY Times report, most people reckon the United States as a terror-obsessed Big Bully that lobs its hefty weight around the globe like a drunken marine, flattening anyone who gets in its way.

True, high unemployment, deepening debt and spreading poverty are perennial issues in Africa, South America and much of Asia, as they increasingly are in Europe and North America. Despite this fact, it should be apparent to anyone with a primary education that a terrorist nuclear strike on Manhattan, even one involving a small device, would unleash a swift and devastating financial panic upon the entire planet—if not the four horsemen of the biblical apocalypse.

If anyone thinks the conductors of the world's main economic engine are being overly paranoid in reaction to Bin Laden's videotaped annihilation harangues, they should think again. The United (Against America) Nations will not celebrate for long if Yossef Bodansky's predictive eight ball turns out to have been crystal clear.

DAVID DOLAN is a Jerusalem-based author and journalist who has lived in Israel since 1980.

- [HOLY WAR FOR THE PROMISED LAND](#) (Broadman & Holman), his latest book, is an overview of the history of the Israel and of the bitter Arab-Israeli conflict that rages there, plus some autobiographical details about the author's experiences living in the land since 1980. It especially examines the important role that militant Islam plays in the conflict.
- [ISRAEL IN CRISIS: WHAT LIES AHEAD?](#) (Baker/Revell), which examines the political and biblical prospects for a regional attack upon Israel, settlement in the disputed territories, and related topics, is also available for purchase, along with an updated edition of his popular end-time novel, [THE END OF DAYS](#) (21st Century Press).

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