Testimony of One More Brave Arab Woman

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Brigitte Gabriel, a Lebanese Arab woman, spoke at Duke University a short time ago and her speech is more than worth the time to read. It's not long, but it's powerful in its content. May the Holy One of Israel bless her for her courage and protect her from those who despise her message.

"I'm proud and honored to stand here today as a Lebanese speaking for Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East. As someone who was raised in an Arabic country I want to give you a glimpse into the heart of the Arabic world. I was raised in Lebanon where I was taught that the Jews were evil, Israel was the devil, and the only time we will have peace in the Middle East is when we kill all the Jews and drive them into the sea.

When the Moslems and Palestinians declared Jihad on the Christians in 1975, they started massacring the Christians city after city. I ended up living in a bomb shelter underground from age 10 to 17 without electricity eating grass to live and crawling under sniper bullets to a spring to get water.

It was Israel who came to help the Christians in Lebanon. My mother was wounded by a Moslem shell and was taken into an Israeli hospital for treatment. When we entered the emergency room I was shocked at what I saw. There were hundreds of people wounded, Moslems, Palestinians, Christian Lebanese and Israeli soldiers lying on the floor. The doctors treated everyone according to their injury. They treated my mother before they treated the Israeli soldier lying next to her. They didn't see religion they didn't see political affiliation, they saw people in need and they helped. For the first time in my life I experienced a human quality that I know my culture would not have shown to their enemy. I experienced the values of the Israelis who were able to love their enemy in their most trying moments.

I spent 22 days at that hospital, those days changed my life and the way I believe information, the way I listen to the radio or to television. I realized I was sold a fabricated lie by my government about the Jews and Israel that was so far from reality. I knew for fact that if I was a Jew standing in an Arab hospital I would be lynched and thrown over to the grounds as shouts of joy of 'Allahu Akbar', (god is great) would echo through the hospital and the surrounding streets. I became friends with the families of the Israeli wounded soldiers, one in particular Rina, her only child was wounded in his eyes. One day I was visiting with her and the Israeli army band came to play national songs to lift the spirits of the wounded soldiers. As they surrounded his bed playing a song about Jerusalem, Rina and I started crying. I felt out of place and started walking out of the room, and this mother holds my hand and pulls me back in without even looking at me. She holds me crying and says: "it is not your fault". We just stood there crying holding each other's hands.

What a contrast between her, a mother looking at her deformed 19 year old only child, and still able to love me, the enemy, and between a Moslem mother who sends her son to blow himself up to smithereens just to kill a few Jews or

Christians. The difference between the Arabic world and Israel is a difference in values and character. It's barbarism verses civilization. It's democracy verses dictatorship. It's goodness verses evil.

Once upon a time there was a special place in the lowest depths of hell for anyone who would intentionally murder a child. Now, the intentional murder of Israeli children is legitimized as Palestinian "armed struggle". However, once such behavior is legitimized against Israel, it is legitimized everywhere in the world, constrained by nothing more than the subjective belief of people who would wrap themselves in dynamite and nails for the purpose of killing children in the name of god.

Because the Palestinians have been encouraged to believe that murdering innocent Israeli civilians is a legitimate tactic for advancing their cause, the whole world now suffers from a plague of terrorism; from Nairobi to New York, from Moscow to Madrid, from Bali to Beslan. They blame suicide bombing on "desperation of occupation". Let me tell you the truth. The first major terror bombing committed by Arabs against the Jewish state occurred ten weeks before Israel even became independent. On Sunday morning, February 22, 1948, in anticipation of Israel's independence, a triple truck bomb was detonated by Arab terrorists on Ben Yehuda Street in what was then the Jewish section of Jerusalem. Fifty-four people were killed and hundreds were wounded. Thus, it is obvious that Arab terrorism is caused not by the "desperation" of "occupation", but by the VERY THOUGHT of a Jewish state.

So many times in history in the last 100 years, citizens have stood by and done nothing allowing evil to prevail. As America stood up against and defeated communism, now it is time to stand up against the terror of religious bigotry and intolerance. It's time to all stand up and support and defend the state of Israel, which is the front line of the war against terrorism."