

Published by the Jerusalem Post



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A dangerous silence

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14/04/2010 09:10

Where is the outrage of Israel's supporters as Obama changes the US-Israel relationship into one of no trust.

I weep as I witness outrageous verbal attacks and distortions on Israel. What makes them all the more painful is that they are being orchestrated by President Barack Obama.

For me, the situation today recalls what occurred in 70 CE, when the Roman emperor Vespasian launched a military campaign against the Jewish nation. Masada became the last refuge of the Jewish people, and the Jews of Masada committed suicide rather than let themselves be taken captive.

In Rome itself, I have seen the Arch of Titus with the sculpture showing enslaved Jews and the treasures of the Temple including the menorah – the symbol of the Jewish state – being carted away as booty.

Oh, you may say, that is a far fetched analogy. Please hear me out.

The most recent sacking of the Old City of Jerusalem – its Jewish Quarter – took place under the Jordanians in 1948 in the first war between the Jews and at least five Muslim states – Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. At that time, Jordan conquered east Jerusalem and the West Bank and expelled every Jew living in the Jewish Quarter, destroying every building, including the synagogues, and expelling from every part of Judea and Samaria every Jew living there, so that for the first time in thousands of years, the old walled city and the adjacent West Bank were *judenrein* – a term used by the Nazis to indicate the forced removal or murder of all Jews.

I AM not a religious person. I am comfortable in a synagogue, but generally attend only twice a year. One is a Jew first by birth and then by religion. Those who leave their religion remain Jews forever by virtue of their birth. If they don't think so, let them ask their neighbors.

My support for the Jewish state has been long and steadfast. Never have I thought that I would leave the US to live in Israel. My loyalty and love is first to the US which has given me, the son of Polish Jewish immigrants, so much. But I have also long been cognizant of the fact that every night when I went to sleep in safety, there were Jewish communities around the

world in danger. And there was one country, Israel, that would give them sanctuary and would send its soldiers to deliver them from evil, as it did at Entebbe in 1976.

I weep today because my president, Barack Obama, in a few weeks has changed the relationship between the US and Israel from that of closest of allies to one in which there is an absence of trust. The contrast between how the president and his administration deals with Israel and how it has decided to deal with the Karzai administration in Afghanistan is striking.

The Karzai administration, which operates a corrupt and opium-producing state, refuses to change its corrupt ways – the president’s brother is believed by many to run the drug traffic – and shows utter contempt for the US, yet is being hailed by the Obama administration as an ally and publicly treated with dignity. Karzai recently even threatened to join the Taliban if we don’t stop making demands on him.

Nevertheless, *The New York Times* of April 10 reported “...that Mr. Obama had sent Mr. Karzai a thank-you note expressing gratitude to the Afghan leader for dinner in Kabul. ‘It was a respectful letter,’ General Jones said.”

On the other hand, our closest ally has been demeaned and slandered, held responsible by the administration for our problems in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East. The plan I suspect is to so weaken the resolve of the Jewish state that it will be much easier to impose an American plan to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, leaving Israel’s needs for security in the lurch.

I BELIEVE Obama’s policy is to create a whole new relationship with Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq as a counter to Iran, which we are now prepared to see in possession of a nuclear weapon. If throwing Israel under the bus is needed to accomplish this alliance, so be it.

I am shocked by the lack of outrage on the part of Israel’s supporters. The members of AIPAC, the chief pro-Israel lobbying organization in Washington, gave Secretary of State Hillary Clinton a standing ovation after she had carried out Obama’s instructions and, in a 43-minute phone call, angrily hectored Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu.

Members of both the House and Senate have made pitifully weak statements against Obama’s mistreatment of Israel, if they made any at all. The Democratic members, in particular, are simply afraid to criticize him.

What bothers me most is the shameful silence by community leaders – Jew and Christian. Where are they?

If this were a civil rights matter, the Jews would be in the mall in Washington protesting with and on behalf of our fellow Americans. I asked one prominent Jewish leader why no one is preparing a march on Washington similar to the one in 1963, at which I was present and Martin Luther King’s memorable speech was given? His reply was “50 people might come.”

Remember the 1930s? Few stood up. Remember the most insightful statement of Rabbi Hillel: “If I am not for myself, who is for me? And if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?”

We have indeed stood up for everyone else. When will we stand up for our brothers and

sisters in the Jewish state of Israel?

If Obama is seeking to build a siege ramp around Israel, the Jews of modern Israel will not commit suicide. They are willing to negotiate a settlement with the Palestinians, but will not allow themselves to be bullied into following self-destructive policies.

To those who call me an alarmist, I reply that I'll be happy to apologize if I am proven wrong. But those who stand silently by and watch the Obama administration abandon Israel, to whom will *they* apologize?

The writer is a former New York City mayor.