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Special Article. Creation of Delusions

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-----About the author. At the age of 15 Dr. Karl Ericson was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia. After electroshock and high doses of thiorazine, he recovered enough to gain some insight into his condition and developed self-help methods for himself which were published in the Journal of Humanistic Psychology. Since then he has created a web site that combines his thoughts on politics, self-help, religion and philosophy and has written a preliminary online computer aided self-help program (3). Having suffered from delusions and paranoia, Dr. Ericson is acutely aware of delusions and paranoia in society and in political thinking. He published "Creation of Paranoia" in IBPP during 2001.

In a previous article (Ericson (1)) I discussed the parallels between paranoia in groups of people considered mentally healthy and in the mentally ill and why both the mentally ill and mentally healthy groups may create paranoia. In this article, I discuss the creation of delusions in mentally healthy groups and the mentally ill but focus on the creation of non-paranoid delusions.

Defining the term delusion has been a challenging task for psychiatry. If psychiatrists define delusion as a false belief, they run into the problem that many emotionally healthy people have false beliefs. If they define it as a strongly held false belief held with absolute conviction that is not discarded despite invalidating evidence (the DSMIII-R definition), they run into the problem that many people who are not mentally ill hold on to false beliefs with absolute conviction, despite invalidating evidence. Not all patients considered delusional hold their delusions with absolute conviction (DSMIV), which makes them even less distinguishable from the normal population. If psychiatrists define delusions as beliefs that result from illogical thinking, they run into the problem that many normal people make errors in logic. If they define delusions as beliefs that are deviant from the norm, they run the risk that the deviant idea may actually be the correct one, and the risk of justifying forced psychiatric treatment of those who believe the truth! Let's say a person lives in a secular society and believes in witches. According to the definition that delusions are beliefs that are deviant from the norm, the believer in witches is delusional. If the reverse situation exists, and a secular person who does not believe in witches lives in a religious society that does believe in witches than according to the above definition, he is also delusional!

Jaspers, in an essay "Delusion and awareness of reality," stated that "to say simply that a delusion is a mistaken idea that is firmly held by the patient and which cannot be corrected is superficial and incorrect." He wrote that delusions are as follows:

1. Held with extraordinary conviction, with an incomparable subjective certainty
2. Maintained imperviously to other experiences and compelling counter-arguments
3. Impossible in content
4. Underlying all delusional judgments is a transformed experience of reality.

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Because many normal people fit the first two categories, the first two items in Jasper's list do not distinguish delusional people from normal ones. The third item that their content is impossible, is debatable: almost anything is possible. If someone says he/she was kidnapped by aliens, who communicated with him/her through a helmet they placed on his/her head, although that is highly improbable, it is within the realm of possibility. MRI machines using functional imaging are currently capable of observing changes in the brain associated with thoughts. Many things that people have thought were impossible are present-day realities.

Jaspers, when he says that underlying all delusional judgments is a transformed experience of reality, appears to refer to hallucinations. Hallucinations probably do distinguish the mentally ill from the mentally well. Maher (2), like Jaspers, proposed that a delusional individual suffers from primary perceptual anomalies, fundamentally biological in nature--e.g., hallucinations or strange sensations. Maher argues that the individual seeks an explanation that is then developed by processes of reasoning that are entirely normal. Tests of the reasoning of people who suffer from delusions show their reasoning to be mostly normal, with the difference that delusional people tend to jump to conclusions a little more than normals. These tests support Maher's arguments. Maher argues that the delusion is maintained in the same way as any other strong belief; just as scientists are resistant to disconfirmation of their theories, so are deluded people equally resistant. Furthermore, he suggests that delusional beliefs are reinforced by the anxiety reduction that accompanies the development of an explanation for disturbing or puzzling experiences.

Chris Frith (3) wrote that:

"It follows from Maher's hypothesis that delusions follow from a normal explanation of an abnormal experience. Direct evidence that this is not the case comes from two sources. First there are generated abnormal experiences which have been hypothesized as associated with delusions of control by distorting the sound of the speaker's voice Cahill et. al (4). This manipulation induced delusional attributions in patients in an acute phase of schizophrenia. ("I hear the devil speaking when I speak"), but not in normal controls or patients who were symptom free ("you are distorting my voice with that box") Second, abnormal experiences are a frequent consequence of brain damage, but do not typically produce delusional explanations. A striking example is the "anarchic hand (5)." This is a sign that sometimes follows unilateral damage to supplementary motor area and the corpus callosum. The hand opposite the lesion performs inappropriate low-level actions not in accord with the patient's will, such as grasping door knobs or scribbling with a pencil. The patient typically tries to prevent the hand from doing these things, but does not develop delusions that the hand is controlled by alien forces. This is in striking contrast to the patient with delusions of control associated with schizophrenia. In this case, the patient will report that his or her actions are being controlled by alien forces even though the actions being produced are appropriate and correctly performed (6).

There appears to be a contradiction here. On the one hand, studies have shown that delusional people reason like normals. On the other hand, Chris Frith is citing studies that show that delusional people draw different conclusions than normals. Why is this? There is a crucial difference between these studies. In one study, reasoning is tested in a situation where prior false assumptions of the patient do not come in to play. For example, a patient might be told that there are two bottles, one 3/4 full of black balls and 1/4 full with white balls and the other 3/4 full of white balls and 1/4 full of black balls and then asked questions such as "If 3 balls are pulled out of a bottle, and they are all black, which bottle are they probably from?" A patient is unlikely to have prior assumptions that will affect his conclusions in this type of experiment. In the speech- distorting experiment, prior assumptions are likely to come in to

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play. If one starts with the prior assumption that there is a devil and the devil is against oneself and trying to take control of oneself, then the idea that the devil is controlling one's voice is not so far-fetched. If one is in a paranoid frame of mind, paranoid explanations seem more probable. By paranoid frame of mind, I mean an emotional state that one is under attack and that others are hostile. Also, if one has developed a system of paranoid delusions already, then the paranoid explanation that fits those delusions seems the most probable. One would expect someone who believes that hostile aliens are attacking him to believe that aliens are controlling his hand if he had an anarchic hand. I know a delusional person who performs well at a computer job that requires logical thinking, yet when he has headaches and nightmares, he believes it is a result of his being poisoned. If one already believes that one is being poisoned, then it is not a big leap to think that a headache one is experiencing is the result of poison that was put in one's food. Paranoid conclusions are reasonable if one starts with paranoid assumptions.

A recent theory of delusion is that there is a delusional continuum and that delusional people have a problem with evaluating probabilities of events. Peters et. al. (7) made an exam that measures delusional thinking (The Peters Delusions Inventory or PDI) and tested it on "normals" and "deluded people." They found that people with delusional disorder have been shown on the average to be more likely to jump to conclusions based on insufficient evidence than normal people, although there is overlap Garety et. al (8).

In all the above theories, the only definition that makes delusions exclusively belonging to the mentally ill is the requirement that there be a hallucination that gives rise to the delusion. Undoubtedly, hallucinations give rise to delusions, but does that mean that they are a requirement for delusions? In the studies cited by Chris Frith, the people who concluded that the devil was controlling their voice or their hands did not draw this conclusion as the result of a hallucination.

It is likely that the requirement that hallucinations be part of the definition of delusion came from the uncomfortable fact that all the other definitions fit both the mentally ill and the mentally well and those making the definition were operating under the assumption that only the mentally ill suffer from delusions. What if they're wrong?

Plenty of political commentators use the term delusional and deluded thinking when referring to the politics of those with whom they disagree. These commentators are not implying that those they disagree with have hallucinations. If we look at the definition of delusion in society and not the psychiatric definitions, there is no requirement that hallucinations be a component.

In a previous article, I quoted Eugene Bleuler, who in 1911 described paranoia as the "construction, from false premises, of a logically developed and in its various parts logically connected, unshakable delusional system without any demonstrable disturbance affecting any of the other mental functions and therefore, also without any symptoms of deterioration if one ignores the paranoiac's complete lack of insight into his own delusional system."

Paranoid delusions in Bleuler's view did not require hallucinations but only false premises. Could this apply to all delusions? In this article, I will operate under that assumption. The definition of delusion that this article will be based on is the following:

A strongly held belief that is not justified by available evidence and that is not discarded despite invalidating evidence.

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Why would anyone believe something without evidence to support their belief and in spite of invalidating evidence?

Consider the following:

- 1) The desire to believe that something is true
- 2) The desire to protect one's self esteem from the revelation that one's cherished beliefs are wrong.
- 3) The assumption that one is correct makes irrelevant or even invalidating evidence appear to support one's beliefs.
- 4) Paranoia toward one's opposition make's any valid objections of theirs appear suspect.
- 5) The need to explain bad things that are happening so one can do something about them.

Examples of the first 4 of these will be given throughout the remainder of the article. I believe the fifth example occurred during my adolescent experience with paranoid schizophrenia. I felt like I was under attack and had to explain it and came up with delusional explanations, because I didn't understand that the mind could create the stress and weakness and other things that I felt, and that some of my experiences were hallucinations created by my mind. The following is a historical example of society clinging to a delusion in order to deal with a threat.

Early in 1348, the Black Death struck Europe, spreading with terrifying rapidity. As more and more people were struck down, panic grew and the need to find the cause and destroy it. Nicholls writes (9)

It will be no surprise that blame fell on the Jews. That spring, as deaths multiplied, Jews were attacked. At Narbonne and Carcassonne, Jews were dragged from their homes and burned to death.

Clemente VI tried to stop this by issuing a bull that said Christians who blamed the Jews for the plague had been "seduced by that liar, the Devil." He pointed out that everybody, including Jews, was falling victim to the plague. It existed equally where there were no Jews and where Jews did live they were suffering from it like their neighbors. He was ignored.

Creation of Delusion

The reasons I listed above for holding on to delusions can also be reasons for creating delusions in one's mind in the first place. If one desires to believe something is true, then one may convince oneself that it is. The reason for creating delusions that one does not share in others, stems from perceived self-interest. One may even think it is in the interest of others not to know the truth. Withholding the truth from others because one thinks one knows better is the behavior of the Anointed, a concept introduced by Thomas Sowell, discussed later in this piece. Perhaps the prime vehicle by which delusion is created in society is the media. This topic could fill several books and will not be addressed in this article due to space limitations.

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Examples of Delusional Thinking Regarding the Middle East:

Delusions of grandeur can be considered a delusion that the person who has them wants to have because it boosts his self-esteem. Thomas Sowell (10) wrote a book about political leaders, with such delusions. He calls such leaders the Anointed. Rael Isaac followed up on Sowell's theme in her article "Israel's Anointed (11)." She wrote

The Anointed, Sowell writes, have a vision that offers something deeply satisfying--"a special state of grace for those who believe in it." The vision becomes intertwined with the egos of those who believe it. "Despite Hamlet's warning against self-flattery, the vision of the anointed is not simply a vision of the world and its functioning in a causal sense, but is also a vision of themselves and of their moral role in that world. It is a vision of differential rectitude....Problems exist because others are not as wise or as virtuous as the Anointed." For the Anointed, it is never the theory that must be brought into line with reality, but reality that must be brought into line with the vision.

Dr. Isaac argues that former prime minister of Israel, Shimon Peres, considers himself one of the Anointed. One of many examples given by Dr. Isaac of Shimon Peres's rejection of invalidating evidence is his response, to David Makofsky in an interview for the Jerusalem Post (12). Makovsky said to Peres

You have suggested that when Arafat spoke of jihad or holy war in a recent videotaped appearance it was merely rhetoric. Yet Arafat's critics charge that this reveals his true intentions. What is the basis for your viewpoint? Why are the critics wrong?

Peres replied

Yes [it is rhetoric], partly said to justify the past. What counts is not the intentions of the Palestinians. What counts is the confrontation between two realities.

Dr. Isaac writes

In part, these words from the Foreign Minister of a beleaguered country sound insane (the intentions of the enemy do not count) and, in part, they seem to be gibberish (what counts is the confrontation between two realities). But once we recognize Peres as what the great sociologist Max Weber would call "an ideal type" of the anointed (someone who embodies the type to the highest degree), what he says can at least be understood. The two realities are the "old" reality of conflict and hatred, and the "new" reality, which is Shimon Peres's vision of cooperation and harmony. By the very fact that he has conceived of it, this now is an "equal" reality.

Around 1995 in the days of Israeli Euphoria about the Oslo peace process, Shimon Peres was asked about the dangers of terrorism that might result from Israeli concessions and replied

I am far more worried about the danger of infiltration into Israel of cable television than about the danger of infiltration of Palestinian terrorists.

Major Shawn Pine (13) quoted Peres saying that reality was not what objectively existed or happened; it was what was going to happen, what could still be shaped and fashioned by people.

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And who knows what is going to happen? The anointed Peres of course. Peres also said that leadership, in my judgment, means to be elected by the constituencies of yesterday and to represent the constituencies of tomorrow. We have to answer to a constituency that doesn't exist.

Who knew what that future constituency would want? Peres admitted that he might not know but then it wasn't important that he know. He said

As a protege of David Ben Gurion, I subscribe to his philosophy that "I may not know what the people want; I do know what is good for the people."

Dr. Sowell writes about the arguments used by the Anointed to dismiss evidence that they are wrong. When they propose a policy and critics predict a detrimental result of the policy the Anointed dismiss these predictions as absurd and simplistic, if not dishonest. When the detrimental results come to pass, the Anointed dismiss those who explain those results as being a result of their policies as being simplistic for ignoring the complexities involved as many factors went into determining the outcome. Indeed, it is often asserted that things would have been even worse were it not for the wonderful programs that mitigated the inevitable damages from other factors. Dr. Isaac points out how in Israel the Anointed actually argue that invalidating evidence supports their beliefs

In Israel, the Anointed's response is even more audacious. As the terrible consequences of their policies become ever more evident, they insist that those policies must be pursued with even greater vigor for only when they are fully implemented will the promised benefits finally flow. The anointed make no attempt to explain why, if giving the PLO Jericho and Gaza has doubled terror, turning over all the territory of Judea and Samaria will reduce or eliminate it. They simply proceed to turn over the territory.

The reasoning in the face of failed policies that not enough has been done leads to a policy of sweetening the pot or making even more concessions which predictably leads to more failure.

Dr. Isaac writes about how the Anointed create paranoia toward their opponents and how this also leads to their arguments to be discounted. She writes

Sowell zeroes in on what he rightly considers the most important -- and dangerous--characteristic of the vision of the Anointed, its resistance to evidence. Opponents are not people who evaluate evidence differently; they are the "benighted," morally inferior, unworthy of attention. Rabin's brutal dismissal of opponents in Israel, "crybabies," "ayatollahs," "let them spin like propellers," is typical of the perspective of the Anointed. Opponents are accused of polarizing the country; the Anointed never consider that their policies are responsible for the polarization with its potential for tearing the country apart.

One consequence of demonizing the opposition, Sowell writes, is to cut off retreat from positions, which become progressively less tenable with the passage of time. It would be too devastating to admit the opposition was right, after all. Sowell observes that the vision becomes "self-contained and self-justifying--which is to say, independent of empirical evidence." To affirm it is to be one of us, to oppose it one of them. Logical argument is replaced by "preemptive rhetoric or, where an argument is made, its validity remains unchecked against any evidence, even when such evidence is abundant."

One way the Anointed resist evidence is by creating paranoia to those who disagree with them. Caroline Glick, in an article called "A Tale of Two Realities" (14) note the following

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Oslo began to go awry in April 1994, when the Palestinians introduced the suicide bomber to civilians for the first time. Undeterred, the messianic Left found an excuse for this steep rise in violence. That excuse was the Right and, specifically, the settlers. In two significant ways, Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres contributed actively to this attempt to blame the settlers for everything wrong that happened after Oslo. First, both sought to play down the significance of Palestinian terror that escalated exponentially after the Oslo process began. Peres coined the Orwellian phrase "victims of peace" to describe terror victims. In so defining the victims, Peres was able to ignore the strategic implications of the fact that by the time Rabin was assassinated, two years into the process, 183 people had already been killed by Palestinian terrorism. Equally important was both men's use of the term "enemies of peace." These "enemies" were defined as the internal opposition to the Oslo process on both the Israeli side and the Palestinian side.

Islam, The Religion of Peace Delusion:

Is the Middle East Conflict a conflict over territory that was wrongly seized by Jews from peace loving Muslims, or is it a religious conflict of Islam against the non-believing Jewish infidel? The appropriate policy for bringing peace to the Middle East (if that indeed is possible) depends to a large degree on the answer to this question.

Syndicated columnist Don Feder (15) gave a speech arguing that the U.S. belief that Islam is a religion of peace is a delusion. He wrote

Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to say a few words to you -- Nigeria, the Sudan, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Armenia, Macedonia, Yugoslavia, Kosovo, Bosnia, Chechnya, Russia, the Kashmir, Pakistan, Indonesia and the Philippines.

What do they all have in common? In each country or province, there is an ongoing struggle involving Moslems and non-Moslems. Samuel Huntington, author of "The Clash of Civilizations," tells us that out of 22 active conflicts in the world today, 20 involve Moslems and someone else – Moslems and Christians, Moslems and Jews, Moslems and Catholics, Moslems and Orthodox, Moslems and Hindus.

This phenomenon might be explained in one of three ways:

Possibility #1 -- For some bizarre and inexplicable reason, no one else can get along with Moslems, and so we all are driven to make war on and persecute them. By the way, many Moslems – who have an active persecution complex, notwithstanding that they are the ones usually doing the persecuting – firmly believe this.

Possibility #2 – These jihads, terrorist wars, religious persecutions and instances of ethnic cleansing all are the work of Moslem militants, extremists, fundamentalists, fanatics who have somehow, again inexplicably, gotten it all backward and transformed a religion of peace into a religion that looks remarkably like the St. Valentine's Day Massacre....

Possibility #3 – In fact, Islam is not a religion of peace. It is a religion, which, throughout its 1,400-year history, has lent itself well to fanaticism, terrorism, mass murder, oppression and conversion by the sword. Long before the age of political correctness and multicultural indoctrination, Winston Churchill, that keen observer, described Islam as, "that religion which above all others, was founded and propagated by the sword – the tenets and principles of which are ... incentives to slaughter and which in

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three continents had produced fighting breeds of men (and) stimulates a wild and merciless fanaticism”....

And still our leaders desperately insist that Islam is a religion of peace. As the body count mounts, and the atrocities become more outrageous, the pronouncements become more bizarre. Islam is a religion of peace. No, wait, it's not just a religion of peace, it's also a religion of tolerance, charity and compassion. Jihad isn't holy war. Why no indeed, it's a spiritual struggle, an effort to overcome bad habits, a Tony Robbins-style self-improvement program...

Why do our leaders insist on telling us these soothing lies? And why does a credulous public readily believe them? Basically, there are three reasons for these delusions about Islam:

Reason #1: Pragmatism. Arab Moslems have the oil – energy resources on which the West, thanks to environmentalists, is heavily dependent. Further, a number of Moslem states are ostensibly allied with us – Egypt and Saudi Arabia most prominent among them. Our leaders have decided that to tell the truth about Islam would offend our Moslem friends and suppliers – the guys we supposedly need to help us control the extremists and keep the pumps operating. By the way, relying on Saudi Arabia to control Moslem “extremists” is like expecting Tony Soprano to fight organized crime.

Reason #2: The American tradition of tolerance. Religious tolerance was one of America's founding principles....

In this frame of reference, candor about Islam seems like vile bigotry, the type of religious intolerance that goes against the American ethos. The problem is, today's situation is unique. America has never experienced a phenomenon like Islam before. The closest we came to it was in our encounters with fascism and communism in the 20th century – ideologies that were, I hasten to add, quasi-religious in character.

How does one tolerate the intolerant? How does one accommodate a creed that elevates homicide to a religious obligation, which – in the name of its faith – is killing Christians, Jews and Hindus the world over – a religion which, given the opportunity, would remake America in the image of Saudi Arabia or Iran?

Reason #3: Fear. If Islam isn't a religion of peace, what are the implications for the West and others in a world with almost a billion Moslems – a world where Islamic states have powerful armies, ballistic missiles, weapons of mass destruction, terrorist auxiliaries and millions who are willing to die – and kill – for the glory of Allah and his prophet? What are the implications for Europe, with its burgeoning Moslem populations? What does it mean for the United States, whose Moslem population could reach 10 million by the end of this decade? What does it mean for the West, where a new mosque opens twice a week?

It's simply more comforting to tell soothing lies than to confront unpleasant truths...

Regrettably, avoiding reality doesn't change reality. In and of themselves, words do not alter that nature of things. We can tell ourselves until we're blue in the face that Islam is kinder and gentler – a Methodist service, but in Arabic, with prayer rugs and sans shoes – and terrorists will still be trying to kill us in the name of their god.

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If Islam is not a religion of peace, the question is raised as to why there are moderate peace-promoting Islamic organizations such as The American Islamic Congress (16) and the Italian Muslim Association. Clearly, their version of Islam is a peaceful one. However, Don Feder makes a very convincing case that there are violent strains of Islam as well. For that reason, it's wrong to generalize that Islam is a religion of peace. Generalizing that Islam is a religion of peace is burying one's head in the sand in the face of the reality discussed by Mr. Feder. One problem with this denial of reality is that it blinds American policy makers to the Islamic roots of the Middle East conflict and so leads to harmful foreign policy decisions.

The Palestinian Version of Islam

Is the Islam of the Palestinian Arabs a peaceful Islam? On May 3, 1999, Yasir Arafat's official Palestine Authority (PA) radio station (Voice of Palestine) broadcast the following religious sermon (at Jerusalem's Al Aqsa mosque) instructing all Muslims that Israel is part of Palestine and that Israel's survival is "forbidden by religious law"

The land of Muslim Palestine is a single unit, which cannot be divided. There is no difference between Haifa and Nablus, between Lod and Ramallah, between Jerusalem and Nazareth. The division of the land of Palestine into cantons and the recognition of the occupation is forbidden by religious law, since the land of Palestine is sacred Wakf land for the benefit of all Muslims, east and west. No one has the right to divide it or give up any of it. The liberation of Palestine is obligatory for all the Islamic nations and not only for our Palestinian nation....All Israeli politicians across their entire political spectrum, regardless of their labels, they all have a single Zionist view embodied in the occupation of the land and the establishment of the Zionist entity at the expense of the Muslim Palestinian land....Allah shall free the captives and the prisoners, Allah shall grant victory to our jihad warriors.

The preacher Dr. Ahmed Yousuf Abu Halabiah, a member of the Palestinian Sharianic (Islamic religious law) Rulings Council, and Rector of Advanced Studies, the Islamic University, said on Palestinian Television that (17)

it is necessary to slaughter them and murder them, according to the words of Allah... it is forbidden to have mercy in your hearts for the Jews in any place and in any land. Make war on them any place that you find yourself. Any place that you encounter them, kill them. Kill the Jews and those among the Americans that are like them... The Jews only understand might. Have no mercy on the Jews, murder them everywhere....

Dr. Muhammed Ibrahim Madi said on Palestinian Television (18)

We the Palestinian nation, our fate from Allah is to be the vanguard in the war against the Jews until the resurrection of the dead, as the prophet Muhammad said: "The resurrection of the dead will not arrive until you will fight the Jews and kill them..."

Islamic Jihad leader, Ramadan Abdalla Shalah said (19)

In the end Israel will disappear as the Koran states. From the standpoint of the Koran, there is no place for Israel and its existence is not justifiable.

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These are just a few of the many examples of the "peaceful" nature of Palestinian Islam. Clearly American policy makers need to face up to this reality or their peace making will continue to lead to more violence in the region the way the Oslo accords did.

The Oslo Accords

In September 1993 Israel signed the Oslo Agreements with Yasser Arafat. Evelyn Gordon wrote (20)

Within two and a half years after Oslo was signed in 1993, Palestinian terror had claimed as many victims as it had during the entire preceding decade, which included the period of the first intifada. By five years after the accords were signed, the terrorist death toll had surpassed that of the 12 worst years of the pre-Oslo period the years of Yasser Arafat's mini-state in Lebanon (1970-82), which included such spectacular attacks as the Munich and Ma'alot massacres and the Entebbe hijacking. And all this is before we even get to the 500 Israelis killed in the last 20 months. In total, almost 800 Israelis have been slain by Palestinian terror since September 1993 nearly five times the 162 deaths of the 1970-82 period.

After it was clear that the Oslo Accords were a failure, the American Jewish Congress took out a full-page ad in The New York Times (Nov. 12, 2000) headlined "It takes a big organization to admit it was wrong." The text read, in part: "We were persuaded that despite [Arafat's] history of terrorism he had chosen the path to peace. Perhaps we wanted to be persuaded (21)."

Although Israeli concessions failed to lead to peace, American policy makers, instead of facing that their policies were faulty, decided that Israel had not made enough concessions and decided to sweeten the pot for the Palestinians. Together with the European Union, the UN and Russia the United States put together a plan for peace they called the Road Map.

The Road Map

In an address to the UN on June 24, 2002, President Bush announced his two state "vision" for settling the Arab-Israel conflict. Rael Isaac, a founding member of Americans For A Safe Israel, wrote in an article called "Hubris" (22) that

The speech was widely praised at the time, even by Israel's staunchest friends, and Americans for a Safe Israel was almost alone in pointing up its disastrous potential. yet the peril should have been clear. Pursuing a mirage, shimmering but unattainable because it has no substance - the Arabs want to eliminate Israel, not make peace with it - can only lead to bitter disappointment...

While it might be objected that hindsight is 20/20, our vision was 20/20 when Bush made the speech, immediately following it, in the July-August 2002 Outpost, under the heading "And When the Policy Fails?" this writer asked: "So what happens when the kind of benign government Bush hopes to see replacing Arafat's regime fails to come into being?" Will President Bush tell the Arab world the Palestinian Arabs have missed their opportunity?" I wrote that would happen was all too foreseeable. The President would find "sufficient 'progress' being made to focus on the second half of his speech - driving Israel back to lines approximating the borders of 1949 and creating a Palestinian state." ...And sure enough, although Yasser Arafat was still in charge, terror in full flower, incitement against Israel in the media as virulent as ever, PA corruption endemic, institutions unchanged, the mere appointment of longtime Arafat lieutenant Abu Mazen as a toothless Prime Minister was enough "progress" for our President to sign off on a "provisional" (whatever that means) Palestinian state by the end of this year...

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With the ink scarcely dry, the Road Map has already gone from folly to farce. The Road Map calls for the Palestinian Authority to dismantle and disarm terror groups. Prime Minister Abu Mazen promptly announced he intended to do no such thing. Instead, he proposes to form a unified national leadership with Hamas, Islamic Jihad and other terror factions and incorporate their members into the police, to be trained by the CIA. As Aaron Lerner of the IMRA news agency points out, "Senior Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Tanzim terrorists aren't going to come in as buck privates - they will be officers. And the men they bring in, steeped in both ideological fervor and basking in the glory of past battles, will have no trouble turning the PA security service into a wing of Hamas/Tanzim."...It is precisely as if Afghanistan's Taliban government, in the wake of 9/11, had offered to include Al Qaeda's leaders in the government and turn over the army to its operatives, while the U.S. trained them to become more efficient fighters...

The parallels between the road map of 2003 and the Munich sell-out sixty five years ago are of course striking - the diktat to the victim-state, even the fact that, then as now, four political entities signed off on the road map for peace "in our time." So will the consequences be similar, should today's road map be implemented. Just as Chamberlain was self-deluded to place any credit in Hitler's protestations that he had no designs after Czechoslovakia, so is President Bush deluding himself if he thinks that the Moslem world's chief quarrel with the West is over Israel. Far from satisfying the Islamic tiger, the prize of Israel will only whet its appetite. The little Satan gone, conquered by Arab determination and Western folly, can victory over the Great Satan be far behind?

Daniel Pipes (23) wrote about his concerns with the roadmap as follows

Yet I worry. Won't human nature and governmental inertia combine to induce the Bush administration to push the road map through to completion, riding roughshod over the pesky details to keep things moving forward? Suppose Palestinian violence continues; won't there be a temptation to overlook it in favor of keeping to the diplomatic timetable?

Such has been the historic pattern whenever democracies negotiate with totalitarian enemies to close down their conflicts, starting with the British-French attempts to appease Nazi Germany in the 1930s, then the American-Soviet détente in the '70s, the Israeli-Palestinian peace process in the '90s and South Korea's sunshine policy with North Korea since 1998.

In each case, the delusion that sweetening the pot would bring about the desired results persisted until it was dashed by a major outbreak of violence (the German invasion of Poland, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the second Intifada).

When Israel requested amendments to the roadmap, the United States refused, saying that the roadmap would not be changed. However, in effect the United States has changed the roadmap by adding the demand that Israel release Palestinian terrorists, and the demand that Israel cease building a security fence to stop infiltration by suicide bombers. These new demands have been made even though the Palestinian Authority is not living up to its agreement to dismantle the terrorist apparatus of Hamas and Islamic Jihad. The United States continues to send \$200 million a year to the Palestinian Authority and is considering increasing that sum to \$1 billion (24). Arlene Peck wrote the following about the absurdity of American policy. (25)

I'm astounded that there seems to be a growing contingent of morons out there who are pressuring Israel to release between 3,000-5,000 terrorists that have murdered Jews.

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Personally, I find it mind-boggling that Israel has already released over 350 of these terrorists. One has even been honored upon his return to the Palestinian Authority, gave his customary kisses to Arafat and then was appointed to the post of an advisor. This man, incidentally, planned and carried out an attack against a school bus which was loaded with children. The parents of one family, where three of their children lost limbs as a result of a deadly explosion, are still in mourning. And Israel opens the jailhouse doors? Am I the only one who sees insanity in this?"

The major flaw with the "sweetening the pot" approach to American foreign policy should be clear to anyone with the slightest grasp of behavioral psychology. Rewarding intransigence and terror with concessions will only lead to further intransigence and terror, which is exactly what it had done in the Middle East.

Appeasement

The idea that appeasement will bring peace is a very appealing belief. The desire to believe that war with an aggressor can be avoided by making concessions that strengthen the military position of the aggressor is a delusion that has led to some of the greatest folly and betrayals of history, one of the most notable being Chamberlain's sacrifice of the Sudetenland to Hitler. A more recent example may be the appeasement of North Korea.

Appeasement of North Korea

According to former Defense Secretary William Perry (26)

The nuclear program now underway in North Korea poses an imminent danger of nuclear weapons being detonated in American cities

Jack Kelley wrote (27)

North Korea was imploding fast in the mid-1990s. Had we not provided the massive aid we provided when we provided it, this vile regime probably would have collapsed.

South Korea appeased the North with aid as well. Lee Hahn-koo an opposition lawmaker in Seoul said former President Kim Dae-jung's government provided \$3.3 billion over the past five years, including \$900 million in cash. Lee said in a news release that (28)

The North's military would not have been able to achieve its current capacity without the Kim Dae-jung government's financial aid...

In October of 1994 the United States promised North Korea billions of dollars in aid in exchange for Pyongyang's pledge to halt its secret A-bomb effort. As part of the agreement the United States gave free light water reactors to North Korea. Gary Milhollin, the director of the Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms control testified before the Senate Committee of Foreign Relations about the risk of the light water reactor gift as follows (29)

"The risk? These reactors will make more bomb-grade plutonium than the graphite reactors North Korea has now, including the ones under construction. Press reports to the contrary are simply wrong.

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Although light water reactors (LWRs) are less efficient at producing bomb fuel, these two giant reactors could turn out at least 70 bombs' worth of "weapon-grade" plutonium per year. North Korea's existing graphite reactors are only one eighth as big, and could make only about 25-30 bombs' worth per year...

I should also point out that light water reactors are unnecessary if the goal is simply to provide power. The United States could provide coal or oil-fired plants much faster and at a much lower capital cost...

It should have been obvious to the Americans who negotiated the agreement with North Korea that their demand for light water reactors instead of coal or oil fired plants was because they wanted plutonium for nuclear weapons. It is likely that they wanted the agreement so much that they rationalized away this obvious truth and created the delusion in their minds that they had stopped North Korea from developing nuclear weapons. Gary Milhollin also testified that

Now, the Clinton administration has made a deal that will probably push the problem into the next administration, since that is when a breach by North Korea is most likely to occur. Pushing problems off to one's successor may be irresistible politically, but it is a risky way to deal with the spread of nuclear arms.

Gary Milhollin turned out to be 100 percent correct because he was willing to see the obvious. In accordance with his prediction, North Korea did breach their agreement during the next administration, and we are now faced with a very dangerous situation. Another threat faced by the United States is the growing nuclear capability of the government of Iran.

Appeasement of Iran

Max Boot, in his article "The End of Appeasement (30)," wrote how, when the British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, announced in 1968 that Britain was withdrawing from its military commitments "east of Suez," President Nixon outsourced the protection of the Gulf to America's great friends, the Shah of Iran and the king of Saudi Arabia, who became two of the world's biggest buyers of U.S. arms. Nixon saw them as "Twin Pillars" of stability in the region, but Max Boot points out they were also twin pillars of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. Max Boot writes

Oil fields across the world had been developed at great risk and expense by Western oil companies. At the stroke of a pen, various dictators in effect stole these assets--and heard nary a peep of protest from Washington. The trend had begun in Mexico in the 1930s and spread to the Middle East in 1951, when Prime Minister Mossadegh crafted, and the shah signed, a law nationalizing Iran's oil industry. All British oil company employees were summarily booted out of the country.

This decision, which occurred amid turmoil and violence (a previous, anti-nationalization prime minister had been assassinated by Islamic terrorists), caused great consternation in London, since a British company (Anglo-Iranian, forerunner of British Petroleum) held the Iranian oil concession. But Washington nixed Prime Minister Clement Atlee's plans for military intervention to take back Anglo-Iranian's refineries....

This was a major financial loss for Western oil companies and paved the way for oil embargoes and the oil monopoly of OPEC. Between 1970 and 1980, the price per barrel of oil went up from \$3 to \$30.00. As the price of oil went up the U.S. economy went down. OPEC's oil monopoly became an oil weapon, which was used to embargo the United States and may be used again. The vast wealth that accrued by

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OPEC countries has been used to fund radical Islam, throughout the world as well as to support terrorism. Iran has used its oil money to purchase and develop rockets that can strike at Europe and is on the verge of producing nuclear weapons.

Appeasement of Egypt and Syria

In return for Egypt signing a peace treaty the United States has been arming Egypt to the teeth. This raises the questions "Why does Egypt need arms if it's at peace?" and "Who is Egypt preparing to fight"? With a regular army of 450,000 soldiers, the Egyptian army is larger than the combined NATO forces. . Caroline Glick in her article, "Not a Cold Peace – A Cold War (31)," wrote

Egypt actually spends between twenty and twenty five billion dollars annually on its defense budget. This sum equals one third of Egypt's GNP. According to Stav, "The only country that spent a third of its GNP on its military was Nazi Germany on the eve of World War II. Even the allies, at the height of the war did not allocate a third of their GNP on the war effort. To what possible end is this impoverished country, whose per capita income is smaller than Jordan's or the Palestinian Authority's arming itself? Egypt has no external threats. This is offensive militarization directed entirely against Israel."

Egypt has already threatened to go to war with Israel, in response to Israeli battles with the Palestinians. Yet President Bush now wants to give Egypt harpoon missiles. The United States has offered Syria arms in return for a peace treaty with the Israel as well. The belief that these arms will not be used is a delusion in every sense of the word.

Appeasement of Saudi Arabia

No discussion of U.S. appeasement would be complete without mention of American policy toward Saudi Arabia.

If you are a woman unfortunate enough to have had children with a Saudi Muslim, and he decides to leave with the kids to Saudi Arabia, don't expect any help from the U.S. State Department in getting them back. Pat Roush wrote a book about her experiences trying to bring her children back to America called *At Any Price*. A Saudi told Pat Roush

Mrs. Roush, your government doesn't want you, and your state department will not help you. You will see your children if and when we decide.

Roush told *WorldNetDaily* (32) that

The U.S. State Department has worked hand-in-glove with the Saudi Arabian government to keep my innocent daughters captive inside Saudi Arabia, They have deliberately thwarted all my efforts to have my daughters, who were illegally stolen from me, brought back to America where they were born. The State Department not only destroyed all my deals that were arranged with the Saudis to return my girls, but they have participated in cover-ups, lied to Congress, and taken sides with the Saudis.

And that:

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There are hundreds, maybe thousands, of American woman and children inside Saudi Arabia who cannot leave. They are terrified of being killed or beaten by either their Saudi husbands or the Saudi government. They told this to Congressman Burton last year. One woman told Burton's aide, 'My husband told me he would bury me alive and let my children watch me die.' Another begged, 'Please, just put me and my children in the belly of the military plane and get us out of here.'

Roush has asserted for years that the State Department has an alternative agenda in protecting its relationship with the oil-rich kingdom – which has military bases critical for the coalition's operation in Iraq – and deliberately works to suppress all "bad news" concerning the Saudis.

After the news that Princess Haifa al-Faisal, wife of the Saudi Arabian ambassador to the United States, had given many thousands of dollars to a person connected to two of the 9/11 suicide hijackers, State Department spokesman Richard Boucher praised Saudi efforts to prevent the financing of terrorism as "very strong." Daniel Pipes wrote that after the News Colin Powell said (33)

I think it's unlikely that Prince Bandar or her Royal Highness would do anything that would support terrorist activity.

and that:

The president's press secretary, Ari Fleischer, promoted the self-serving Saudi line that Osama bin Laden specifically recruited Saudi hijackers for the 9/11 attacks to "drive a wedge" between the United States and Saudi Arabia. (This idea is palpably false: That 15 out of the 19 hijackers were Saudi was not a political ploy but the results of the fact, as Stephen Schwartz explains, that "Saudis are the largest national contingent by far in al Qaeda.")

Mark Steyn wrote an article detailing how subservient and accommodating the United States is to the Saudis. He wrote (34)

On 20 September, George W. Bush said, 'You're either with us or you're with the terrorists.' A couple of weeks later, a small number of us began pointing out the obvious: the Saudis are with the terrorists. But the US-Saudi relationship is now so unmoored from reality that it's all but impossible to foresee how it could be tethered to anything as humdrum as the facts. Seven of the nine biggest backers of al-Qa'eda are Saudi, and Riyadh has no intention of doing a thing about it; but the White House insists, as it did on Monday, that the Kingdom remains - all together now - 'a good partner in the war on terrorism'. Fifteen out of the 19 terrorists were Saudi, but the state department's 'visa express' programme for young Saudi males remained in place for almost a year after 11 September and, if it weren't for public outrage, Colin Powell would reintroduce it tomorrow. The overwhelming majority - by some accounts, 80 per cent - of the detainees at Guantanamo are Saudi, but the new rules requiring fingerprinting of Arab male visitors to the US apply to Iraqis, Libyans, Syrians, Sudanese, Lebanese, Algerians, Tunisians, Yemenis, Bahrainis, Moroccans, Omanis, Qataris, but not Saudis...At the specific request of the Saudi government, no Arabic speakers are appointed to the post (of U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia), a unique self-handicap by the US...We have a huge Saudi-financed pile of American corpses, the Saudis are openly uncooperative, and meanwhile back at the ranch it's ribs with Princess Haifa.

Former Federal Prosecutor John Loftus, wrote about how Americans appeased the Saudis (35)

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In this "Keystone Cops" affair, one wing of U.S. intelligence was hunting terrorists while another winked at the Saudis' recruitment of them. I have spoken to numerous FBI and CIA counter-terrorist agents, all of whom tell a similar story. Whenever the FBI or CIA came close to uncovering the Saudi terrorist connection, their investigations were mysteriously terminated. In hindsight, I can only conclude that some of our own Washington bureaucrats have been protecting the Al Qaeda leadership and their oil-rich Saudi backers from investigation for more than a decade.

I am not the only one to reach this conclusion. In his autobiography, Oliver North confirmed that every time he wanted to do something about terrorism, Weinberger stopped him because it might upset the Saudis and jeopardize the flow of oil to the U.S. John O'Neill, a former FBI agent and our nation's top Al Qaeda expert, stated in a 2001 book written by Jean Charles Brisard, a noted French intelligence analyst, that everything we wanted to know about terrorism could be found in Saudi Arabia.

O'Neill warned the Beltway bosses repeatedly that if the Saudis were to continue funding Al Qaeda, it would end up costing American lives, according to several intelligence sources. As long as the oil kept flowing, they just shrugged. Outraged by the Saudi cover-up, O'Neill quit the FBI and became the new chief of security at the World Trade Center. In a bitter irony, the man who could have exposed his bosses' continuous cover-up of the Saudi-Al Qaeda link was himself killed by Al Qaeda on 9/11.

Daniel Pipes in a hearing before the Committee on Government Reform of the House of Representatives (36) spoke about several ways in which the United States appeases the Saudis and said that the U.S. even breaks their own laws to appease the Saudis. One explanation for this given by Dr. Pipes is Saudi bribes. Dr. Pipes said

One finds over and over again that Americans in position of authority are acquiescing or even preemptively acquiescing to what they imagine the Saudis would like. An answer to why this is happening can be found in a statement by the current Saudi ambassador to the United States, Prince Bandar bin Sultan. He said the following, and this was quoted in the Washington Post of the 11th of February, 2002. He boasts of his success cultivating powerful Americans who deal with Saudi Arabia. "If the reputation then builds that the Saudis take care of friends when they leave office, you'd be surprised how much better friends you have who are just coming into office."

The heart of the problem is a very human one. Americans in position of authority bend the rules and break with standard practice out of personal greed. One finds over and over again that old Saudi hands are doing very well once they leave office. Over and over again, ambassadors-and I give names in my testimony-are now in positions of authority. Two or three of the individuals mentioned previously here today are in my testimony-Walter Cutler, Edward Walker, Wyche Fowler. Former Ambassador Horan has noted this pattern. Others have noted it.

In an article, New York Post Daniel Pipes repeated his allegations writing that the tie to Saudi Arabia is premised on (37) accommodating the kingdom's wishes and in return, being plied with substantial sums of money...A culture of corruption...pervades the upper reaches of the White House and several departments.

In addition, John Loftus, a former attorney of the Dept of Justice was quoted as saying (38)

State Department disease greed and self-interest have since the beginning of Mideast conflict between Jews and Arabs, infected powerful bureaucrats, perverting their sense of right and wrong. The ever-

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present temptation to enrich oneself and one's family through Arab oil-related favors and industry, has turned the political sympathies of countless officials in the State Department and CIA away from Israel.

Appointments to the State Department and to their committees may be influenced by Saudi money. In that case, delusion, corruption and the ideology of incoming officials are influencing U.S. policy. Unfortunately, this has resulted in a very dangerous situation for the United States and the free world.

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