Something Rotten in State of Israel

Like an overeager suitor, President Obama professed his love for and lavished praise on Israel during a three-day visit, causing some Israelis to blush at his fawning rhetoric and promises of endless fidelity. But Obama on bended knee failed to note a malodorous reality, says Lawrence Davidson.

By Lawrence Davidson

It is said that the devil has about him the smell of fire and brimstone (sulfur). Evil deeds are often described as “most foul.” On the other hand, people who appear, accurately or not, as always innocent are described as “smelling like roses.” There seems, then, to be a longstanding association between behavior and smells.

The Israeli army has recently dedicated itself to demonstrating this association. On March 6, the Middle East Monitor reported “Israeli forces have sprayed Palestinian homes in the village of Nabi Saleh with Skunk as a punishment for organizing weekly protests against the Apartheid Wall built on occupied land. Human rights watchdog B’Tselem published a video showing Israel’s armored tanker trucks fitted with ‘water canons’ [spraying] the foul fluid.”

Skunk is a fluid so offensive smelling that people automatically retreat from any place or anyone doused with it. This is not the first time the Israelis have used such noxious tactics. Zionist settlers are fond of diverting the sewage from their illegal settlements, which are usually placed on high ground, into the fields and towns of Palestinians living in the valleys below. This is apparently done with the knowledge and approval of the Israeli state.

I doubt if many of the Israelis involved in these maneuvers have ever read Dante’s Inferno. In that epic poem, Hell is a place steeped in sewage and rot, and Israeli actions seem intent on reproducing this scenario. Are the Israelis then trying to turn the Holy Land into Hell? Well, yes, at least for the Palestinians. To this end the settlers and soldiers mimic Dante’s demons.

How far does the bad smell of Israeli actions reach? We can be sure that it reaches as far as London, where MP David Ward of the Liberal Democratic Party recently wrote in a Holocaust Memorial book that “having visited Auschwitz twice . . . I am saddened that the Jews, who suffered unbelievable levels of persecution during the Holocaust, could within a few years of liberation from the death camps be inflicting atrocities on Palestinians in the new State of Israel and continue to do so on a daily basis in the West Bank and Gaza.”
Ward’s reference to “the Jews” has been qualified, because not all Jews support Zionism or Israel’s claim to “Judea and Samaria,” much less the pogrom-like way the Israelis are going about ethnically cleansing the areas under their control. In fact, an increasing number of American Jews are expressing alienation from such behavior in Israel.

Yet Ward was correct when it comes to the “Jewish state’s” behavior. Perhaps Mr. Ward’s confusion was a product of Israel’s constant insistence that it represents all the world’s Jews.

Not everyone seems to smell the odor emanating from Israel. Mr. Ward’s Liberal Democratic Party called him to account for daring to draw attention to the fact that foul acts continue to be committed against the Palestinians by the self-proclaimed representative of the Jews.

A quiet word to Ward about avoiding generalizations would probably have sufficed but, using a process similar to those carried out by totalitarian regimes, Ward’s party ordered him “to meet with the party’s ‘Friends of Israel’ chapter to ‘identify and agree on language that will be proportionate and precise when he speaks out again on the Israeli-Palestine conflict.’” He did so and issued the required apology. This smells like censorship to me.

It’s one thing to punish someone for calling attention to Israel’s rank behavior. It is something else to insist that foul is actually fair to say the sewage smells like roses. Who would be reckless enough to imply such a nauseating thing and do so with a straight face before cameras with the whole world watching? How about the President of the United States? He lives in Washington D.C., where denial of Israel’s malodorous nature is almost unanimous.

President Obama had an interview with Israel’s Channel 2 TV station on March 15, just before he left to visit that country. In the interview, he stated that he admires Israel’s “core values.”

In a subsequent analysis, the Israeli journalist Gideon Levy, who has an honest nose for these things, asked, “which values he was talking about? The dehumanization of the Palestinians? The attitude toward African migrants? The arrogance, racism and nationalism? Is this what he admires? Don’t separate buses for Palestinians remind him of something? Doesn’t two communities living on the same land, one with full rights and the other with no rights, ring a bell . . . ?

“To admire ‘core values’ while knowing we’re talking about one of the most racist countries there is, with a separation wall and apartheid-like policies, means betraying the core values of the American civil rights movement that made
the Obama miracle possible.”

Nonetheless, upon arriving in Israel, President Obama said that U.S. support for the very same Israel Levy describes will “be forever.” It might be added that, at the same time, the President insisted that the Palestinians cease demanding a halt to the building of settlements, with their targeted open-sewer policies, before any further “peace” negotiations with the Israelis.

When it comes to Israel, President Obama, and most of the Congress as well, can’t tell the difference between fair and foul. That is because they live in a peculiar professional world whose parameters, in reference to Israel and Palestine, are defined by a Zionist lobby with Orwellian powers.

In this special world, double-think abounds. Racism, apartheid, ethnic cleansing, and the tactical use of Skunk and raw sewage disappear and are replaced by imaginary “core values” that smell like roses.

The President can privately smell garbage and call it roses all he wants. But when he tries to sell the rest of us on this connection, the credibility of his language sinks into the gutter. Remember what George Orwell tells us about the potential for harm in the misuse of political language.

Misused, such language offers a “defense of the indefensible” and is “designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and give an appearance of solidity to pure wind.” That is what most politicians’ language has sunk to when it comes to Israel/Palestine.

That this should go on “forever,” as the President claims, is just hyperbole. Consider the fact that a recent CIA report calls into question the Zionist state’s ability to last for more than another twenty years.

No, the bad smell coming from Israel denotes internal socio-political rot, as well as rotten tactics toward non-Jewish inhabitants. Sooner or later everyone possessing a humane conscience, to say nothing of a functioning honest nose, will refuse to have anything to do with this “apartheid-like” state.

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Throwing the First Cyber-Stone

Director of National Intelligence James Clapper calls cyber-attacks a top national security concern, but these U.S. alarms sound hypocritical after the joint U.S.-Israeli cyber-sabotage of Iran’s nuclear industry, as Dutch computer expert Arjen Kamphuis explains.

By Arjen Kamphuis

A few years ago, Israeli and American intelligence developed a computer virus with a specific military objective: damaging Iranian nuclear facilities. Stuxnet was spread via USB sticks and settled silently on Windows PCs. From there it looked into networks for specific industrial centrifuges using Siemens SCADA control devices spinning at high-speed to separate Uranium-235 (the bomb stuff) from Uranium-238 (the non-bomb stuff).

Iran, like many other countries, has a nuclear program for power generation and the production of isotopes for medical applications. Most countries buy the latter from specialists like the Netherlands that produces medical isotopes in a special reactor. The Western boycott of Iran makes it impossible for Iran to purchase isotopes on the open market. Making them yourself is far from ideal, but the only option that remains.

Why the boycott? Officially, according to the U.S., it’s because Iran won’t give sufficient openness about its weapons programs, in particular, military applications of its nuclear program. This concern is fairly recent and, for some reason, has only been reactivated after the U.S. attack on Iraq in 2003 (a lot of the original nuclear equipment in Iran was supplied by American and German companies with funding from the World Bank before the 1979 revolution).

The most curious aspect of the West’s allegations about Iran is that they are never more than vague insinuations. When all 16 U.S. intelligence agencies in 2007 produced a joint study there was a clear conclusion: Iran is not developing a nuclear weapon. (To see a recent speech by the leader of this study, click here.)

And that’s what’s strange. For if the 16 American intelligence services and their Israeli colleagues, the Mossad, can all agree that Iran is not making nuclear weapons, how do you justify an attack against Iran’s civilian industrial infrastructure via the Stuxnet computer virus? And this is the equivalent of a military attack as would be clear if you consider what would happen if Iran had been caught in a cyber-attack on Western installations in Borssele or Indian Point.
Stuxnet is designed for a single purpose: the damage of nuclear enrichment facilities in Iran, a country that may just be performing these activities in accordance with the international agreements stipulated in the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Iran, like most other countries in the world, signed this Convention. The countries outside the NPT are Israel, India, Pakistan, North Korea (which withdrew) and the newly independent South Sudan.

Under the NPT, a civilian nuclear industry is allowed, a detail that sometimes escapes the attention of editors. I’m not saying the Iranian government is filled with darlings, but Iran has not attacked anyone in the past 200 years, unlike some NATO countries.

But Stuxnet has made some things very clear to Iran and the rest of the non-Western world. It does not matter that you abide by established agreements and treaties. It does not matter that you’re not a threat to the West. It does not matter that the countries that accuse you most of violating the non-proliferation agreements (U.S. and Israel, for instance) are themselves egregious violators; U.S. by delivering plutonium to Israel and Israel by not signing the treaty and secretly holding 100-200 nuclear bombs.

So, there appears to be no reason for you to stick to agreements or treaties because doing so does not guarantee that the parties on the other side will do the same. Plus, it may offer a strategic disadvantage. And if you going to have the disadvantage of such alleged conduct (facing boycotts and threats of bombing when you’re not building a nuclear weapon), it is logical that you might want the benefits.

It is almost rational for Iran to develop a military nuclear program. Certainly North Korea seems to get away with it. As a bonus, North Korea now has a few nuclear weapons and that is still the best guarantee that the U.S. will not be showing up with unsolicited packages of “democracy” (although a lack of oil wells also seems to help).

Similarly, the invasion of Iraq in violation of international laws against aggressive warfare showed that the U.S. again does not comply with the standards that it happily tries to impose on others. The attack on Iraq was carried out based on lies. Key U.S. and UK officials knew Saddam Hussein had no WMDs.

Now, with the U.S.-Israeli cyber-attack on Iran, it’s clear that no one takes standards decrying offensive use of cyber-warfare seriously either. The world and cyberspace are becoming a Wild West shooting gallery.

And that’s exactly what you do not want in a world where a handful of angry hackers from China, Russia, Iran, Iraq or any other country can anonymously and
in secret take down your critical infrastructure. Western countries are much more vulnerable due to their high degree of automation than countries that have just outgrown their Third World status.

Cyber-weapons are relatively inexpensive and developing them is more difficult to detect than the construction of missiles and aircraft carriers. The best defense against cyber-war is the prevention of an arms race. Everybody loses in a cyber-war. Safety in such a context is created by moral leadership (starting with: follow your own rules) and actively working at de-escalation. And that is exactly what the U.S. and Israel have not done.

With such behavior, we are assured of a continuous stream of new enemies in countries that mainly want to be left alone, but that arm themselves just in case the “free West” is on the prowl in their region. If you live in a glass house, not throwing stones (and not motivating others to do so) is the smarter move.

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