

Killing Arafat is "sick"

By Timothy D. Naegele

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The Jerusalem Post's editorial (September 11, 2003), which advocated the targeted killing of Yasser Arafat, is merely another example of the lunacy - and yes, "sickness" - that is pervading the Middle East. Understandably, the latest killings in Israel have given rise to great sorrow, sadness, fear, frustration, anger and a lashing out in all directions, but killing Arafat is not a solution to anything. Indeed, the Post's editorial is irresponsible and should be disavowed.

At the least, Arafat would become a martyr to one or more generations of Palestinians, who may vow until their dying day to destroy every Jew in Israel. Arafat's killing will not help the "innocents" in either Israel or among the Palestinians, who will endure the burden of future deaths. The killing "frenzy" that the Post advocates will simply provoke the killing of more "innocents" on both sides and accomplish nothing, and the senseless killings will go on and on, with no end in sight.

When has the biblical notion of an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, done anything except increase the weeping of Israeli and Palestinian mothers, children and others, and produce enough tears to fill many a lake? Neither the killers nor those who advocate targeted killings ever think of the "innocents" who will suffer from their actions and words, because their hatred is so blinding. How many "little Arafats" will be unleashed now or in the years to come if Arafat is killed?

One's thoughts go back to the killing of Yitzhak Rabin, that wonderful and courageous man, at the hands of a Jew. There are haters in each and every society, as well as those who would justify killing when there seems to be no other

solution; however, the latter are just as guilty as those who pull the triggers or set off the bombs.

Five years ago, a prominent American (who is a Jew and a strong supporter of Israel) told me: "I have long thought that Israel will not make it, if only because of what are cavalierly called WMD [weapons of mass destruction] and its very tight geographical compression. All else is immaterial, including the Palestinians, or us, or the nature of Israel's [government]." I was stunned by this person's words, and I have reflected on them many times since. I do not subscribe to the notion that anything is inevitable or "written."

The Bush administration's "Roadmap," however, represents the only viable option in the Middle East today. Israel and the Palestinians must pull back from the edge of the abyss; it holds no future for anyone. Peace is the only answer, regardless of how difficult its path. Absent peace, be it this generation of Palestinians or some future generation, they might not be fighting with sticks and stones, or even with suicide bombers anymore. They may be fighting with biological, chemical and/or nuclear weapons against which Israel's military cannot defend.

Finally, while the targeted killing of Arafat may be viewed as symbolic and a necessary act by some, it will likely accomplish nothing except add fuel to the growing anti-Semitism in various parts of the world, and thereby jeopardize the safety and lives of innocent Jews. Yes, revenge - which is satisfying to many - will have been exacted, but at what price?

Views expressed by the author do not necessarily reflect those of israelinsider.