IRAQIS AS THE NEW JEWS

It was widely noted, most passionately by the Iraqi blogger Hammorabi, that when Tony Blair reminded the House of Commons that many countries had been scourged by the terrorists in recent years, he omitted Iraq from the list. His speechwriters had Iraq in a different part of their database; Iraqis weren't victims of terrorism in the same way as Brits, Americans, Kenyans, and Indonesians.

One's instinct is to let it go as an oversight, but there was another country missing from the list, and this case was somewhat less widely noted: Israel. And at this point, one is forced to do some thinking. What do these two countries have in common, that they should both be ignored in the British government's response to the London attacks?

Iraq and Israel are arguably the two major victims of Islamic terrorism. Yet they did not come to Blair's mind. Or maybe they did, and maybe there was a reason they were omitted.

In the growing recent literature about Great Britain's appeasement of Islamic terrorists over the past decade and more, we've come to understand that London was, in many ways, the epicenter of the terror network. Terrorists wanted in other countries were given safe haven in the United Kingdom, and the most amazingly hateful language was spewed out, openly and proudly, by various sheikhs and imams, all left to incite the faithful to terrible acts against innocent people the world over.

For all this, her majesty's government had its reasons. There was a reluctance to offend "the Arabs," the richest of whom had long used London as a home away from the sand, and as their financial and banking center of choice. Moreover, there was a traditional disdain of the Arabs, born out of long experience and expressed in open doubt that "those people" would ever constitute a serious threat, or indeed anything serious.

Further, there was a long tradition of open and boisterous political speech, which reflexively protected even terrorist preachers from official rebuke or punishment. To these traditions, there was the usual deadly overlay of political correctness, what Mark Steyn calls the multi-culti view, according to which people with traditions different from ours should be respected and certainly not silenced.

To do that would not only be anti-multi-culti, it would risk the advantages of the special relationship with the Arab world.

Those of us who have had the frustrating experience of speaking with British diplomats (or journalists, especially those elegantly speaking fellows from the BBC) about the Middle East have invariably encountered a dismissive, slightly bemused, and firm conviction that anyone who worries greatly about "the Arabs" is at least ignorant and at worst malignant.

And those of us who had the gall to argue — publicly, even — that the terror war is indeed serious and that appeasement of Saudis, Syrians, and Iranians would only lead to more and more terrible actions against us all, were relegated to the category of misguided souls, at best.

The final component of British blindness on the subject of the Middle East is one we are not supposed to talk about in good company: the Jews. Yet I don't know any country this side of the Levant in which there has been so much anti-Semitism, so many complaints that "Zionists," "Likudniks," "Jewish hawks," and — the single epithet that sums up all of the above — "Neocons" had manipulated America and its poodle Blair into the ghastly blunder of Iraq.

The BBC has devoted hours of radio and television to slanderous misrepresentations of places like the American Enterprise Institute, where I sit, and of such Jewish luminaries as Richard Perle, Douglas Feith, William Kristol, and Paul Wolfowitz. Sometimes it seemed one was reading translations from the Saudi or Egyptian or Iranian press, so total was the hatred of the Jews.

This fit nicely with the desire of the British establishment to carry on their special relationship with some Arab leaders, and many British elites often seemed a micro-step away from saying that the world would be a better place if only Israel weren't there. The Middle East would be so much easier, you know.

And when London was bombed, you can be sure — indeed you can read it — many of these people blamed Israel and the Jews, both those in the Middle East and those in New York and Washington. Indeed, within minutes of the attack, a story appeared according to which the Israelis had advance notice, and had instructed Finance Minister Netanyahu to stay put, instead of going to give a speech.

The story was as false as the one according to which Israelis had stayed away from the World Trade Center on 9/11, but they both reflected a state of mind. An anti-Semitic mind.

All too many Brits (as some Americans, albeit far fewer) would prefer to devote their national energies to the elimination or "taming" of Israel, and, as they see it, the silencing of their own Jews, rather than fighting Islamic terrorism. Combined with the desire to keep Arab money in London and special access for British businessmen and diplomats and scholars in the Arab world, it explains why HMG gave sanctuary and indeed benevolent assistance to the Jihadis in their midst.

And so Israel was not on the prime minister's list. What about Iraq? The Iraqis are viewed much the same way, and are at some risk of becoming the New Jews of the Middle East.

Anyone looking honestly at Iraq today would have to be filled with admiration for the enormous dignity and courage with which the Iraqis have reacted to the barbaric savagery to which they have been subjected. Ministers are killed, leaders of civil society are kidnapped and beheaded, independent thinkers are intimidated, yet others come forward to fight for their national

independence and integrity.

When is the last time you read anything, anywhere (with all too few exceptions — like Arthur Chrenkoff's "good news" beat in the Wall Street Journal), celebrating these rare qualities of spirit? And this question goes hand in hand with its twin: When is the last time you read anything about the incredible performance of the State of Israel, similarly under siege and similarly stressed by the crisis that surrounds it?

It is therefore not surprising that Iraq and Israel were omitted from Blair's list; it is a symptom of the corrupt and self-destructive patterns of emotion (I will not call it "thought") that led Great Britain to house a vast terrorist infrastructure.

This sickness is certainly not limited to Great Britain; we find it here as well, in such personages as Pat Buchanan and Juan Cole, along with their acolytes. But in America, by and large, such venom is relegated to the margins, probably because American Jews are a lot feistier than their British co-religionaries (think timid).

We do, however, run a risk similar to the British: We, too, are unconscionably passive in the face of radical Moslem religious indoctrination that is designed to produce a new wave of terrorists. As I wrote long ago, of all the problems we face in the war against the terror masters, this will prove the most intractable.

The absolutist interpretation of the First Amendment — free speech extends even to license — stops us from taking proper steps to shut down the terror factories. Justice Holmes taught us that the Constitution is not a suicide pact, and that no one has the right to scream "fire" in a crowded theater. London taught us that these principles require vigorous application.

Faster, please.