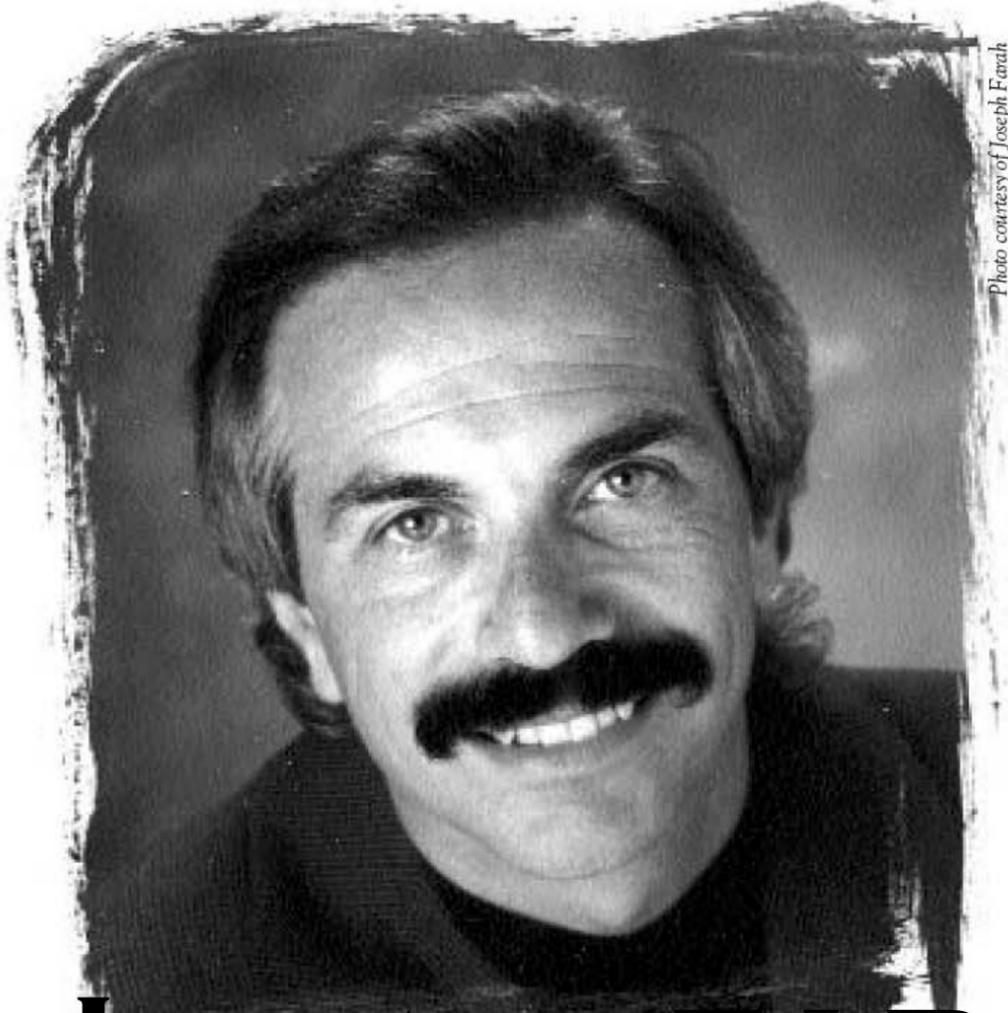


Tell Me Who Your Friends Are



JOSEPH FARAH REVISITED

BY ALIZA DAVIDOVIT

I once called Joseph Farah an “Arabian Knight.” For, I had rarely come across anyone who would risk his life and well-being to defend someone else's country--especially when that country is the State of Israel. But Joseph Farah has done just that. With an arsenal of well-founded words, Farah, editor and CEO of WorldNetDaily.com, has fired back against Israel's detractors and has stood by the tiny country through very difficult times proving himself to be an editorially stalwart ally. By strict definition, however, Joseph Farah should be an unlikely friend of the Jewish homeland--he is, after all, an Arab-American.

Thus, when Farah writes a column on his popular news site, WND.com, titled: “I've Given Up on Israel,” Israeli leadership should prick up its ears, as did his monthly readership of 60 million international viewers. For never has the expression “tell me who your friends are and I'll tell you who you are,” been more poignant. “I am through defending Israel,” Farah has said, “at least the current regime in power, this useless coalition [i.e. Olmert's government] seemingly hell-bent on committing national suicide.” Farah would still love to stand by Israel's side if its leadership would actually stand for something and stop falling for everything.

His gripe is very simple: stop giving away God-given ground in exchange for paltry peace processes and hollow promises. The facts are underground—count the bodies. “Israel has made the mistake many times throughout history of compromise with its ruthless enemies who seek not only the

destruction of the Jews but the oppression of their own people,” he states. Quoting a wise sage, Farah says, the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again while expecting different results. “Enough of ‘land for peace,’” Farah implores. “It has never worked--not in Israel's nor in any other nation's history. *Enough of retreat; enough of unilateral withdrawals; enough of staged surrender; enough of the appeasement with evil; enough of the madness.*”

Farah feels the troubles in the Middle East will not be solved by the creation of a Palestinian State. “Land cannot possibly be the contentious issue as the Arab and Muslim states in the region already have 800 times as much territory as Israel and 21 states of their own,” he emphasizes. “It's difficult to imagine how one more will bring peace to a region.” He says that even if Israel was eliminated tomorrow, there would still be the same violence as was seen between Iran and Iraq. “The problem is the fervor of Islamic expansionism, which is intolerant of everyone and believes in evangelizing with the sword,” he stresses. Farah explains that abandoned land will be, like Gaza, used as terrorist staging grounds and forward operating bases that will threaten not only Israel but neighboring Jordan and Lebanon as well.

As for dividing, Jerusalem, the “eternal” capital of the Jewish people, it's indeed a wonder to him when the word “eternal” came to be redefined as “only until a misguided ego-maniacal Israeli PM decides to edit out the immutable adjective.”

But if Farah is tough on leaders of the Promised Land, it is because he still sees the promise therein.

He believes in the biblical legitimacy of the Jewish State. And, conversely, he has put many a word to paper blowing apart what he calls “the Arab myths that have come to revise history” and continually attempt to shape reality in the Middle East. “Arabs are good at spinning myths,” Farah says. But he quickly unravels the icon of Palestinian statehood, Yasir Arafat, who was not even born in the disputed region, but in Egypt.

What amazes Farah is how Arab “mythmakers” have been so successful at shaping the international community's whole Middle East agenda. In a groundbreaking and ground assigning article, Farah wrote, “There has never been a Palestine governed by Palestinians.”

He points out that the Palestine Liberation Organization was established in 1964, three years before Israel secured the West Bank and Old Jerusalem. What was the PLO trying to “liberate” then? Clearly, the pre-’67 state of Israel.

In addition, Farah reminds that Israel did not seize Judea, Samaria and East Jerusalem from the Palestinians; those were areas controlled by Jordan from 1948 until Israel won the Six-Day War in 1967. Farah questions why the Palestinians made no serious demands on Jordan for a Palestinian homeland and why it was only when Israel took control of those regions that longing for Palestinian nationhood in the so-called “occupied territories” erupted.

Farah has exposed how ironic it is that the Arab population in Israel and in the territories administered by Israel has been freer than the population in any Arab state. Arabs in Israel vote. They elect leaders to the Knesset. They have their own political parties. They have their own newspapers. They have full rights to citizenship. They are free to speak their minds. *“As an Arab-American journalist who has spent a good deal of time covering the region, I can tell you there is more freedom for Arabs in Israel than in any Arab state,” he says.* “If conditions for Arabs are so bad in Israel, why is the Arab population exploding--and I don't mean because of suicide bombers? Why do Arabs continue to flock to the tiny Jewish state from virtually every Arab and Muslim land in the world?”

In his effort to debunk what he called “falsehoods that have taken on a life of their own” Farah wrote an article called “Myths of the Middle East,” which earned him both accolades and death threats. He wrote:

“The truth is that Palestine is no more real than Never-Never Land. The first time the name was used was in 70 A.D. when the Romans committed genocide against the Jews, smashed the Temple and declared the land of Israel would be no more. From then on, the Romans promised it would be known as Palestine.

The name was derived from the Philistines, a Goliathian people conquered by the Jews centuries earlier. It was a way for the Romans to add insult to injury ... Palestine has never existed--before or since--as an autonomous entity. It was ruled alternately by Rome, by Islamic and Christian Crusaders, by the Ottoman Empire and, briefly, by the British after World War I.... There is no language known as Palestinian. There is no distinct Palestinian culture. There has never been a land known as Palestine governed by Palestinians.

What about Islam's holy sites? There are none in Jerusalem. Shocked? You should be. I don't expect you will ever hear this brutal truth from anyone else in the international media. It's just not politically correct.

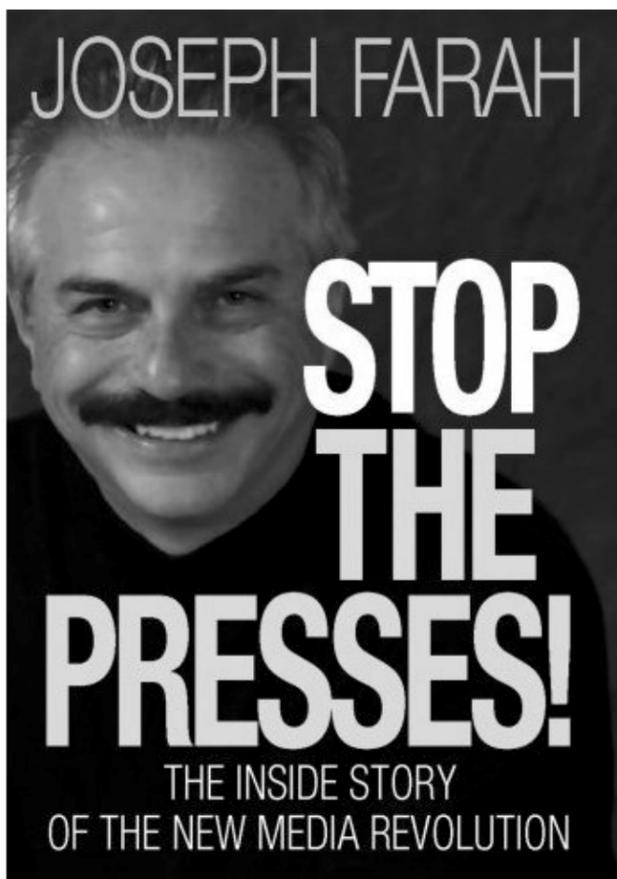
I know what you're going to say. “Farah, the Al Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem represent Islam's third-most holy sites.” Not true. In fact, the Koran says nothing about Jerusalem. It mentions Mecca hundreds of times.

It mentions Medina countless times. It never mentions Jerusalem. With good reason. There is no historical evidence to suggest Mohammed ever visited Jerusalem.... Meanwhile, Jews can trace their roots in Jerusalem back to the days of Abraham.”

Farah goes on to explain that the claim Jerusalem became the third-holiest site of Islam is based on a vague passage in the Koran, Sura 17:1, entitled “The Night Journey.” It relates that in a dream or a vision Mohammed was carried by night “from the sacred temple to the temple that is most remote.” He says that it is important to note that while Mohammed was dreaming of a remote mosque in an unidentified city, in actuality the city of Jerusalem was Christian dominated and filled with

churches. There was no mosque in the entire city. It was only later in the century that some Muslims identified the two mosques mentioned in this verse as being in Mecca and Jerusalem. It was not until six years after Mohammed died that Jerusalem first fell under Arab rule in 638 C.E. In actuality, the Al Aqsa Mosque was built 53 years afterward on the Temple Mount, Judaism's holiest site where both Holy Temples stood--the first temple being built by King Solomon 1,500 years before Mohammed's dream.

For certain, many Muslims hate Farah for the things he writes, but he is by no means a self-hating Arab. He is very proud of his Syrian and Lebanese heritage. He has even named one of his daughters Jihan, after Anwar Sadat's daughter. As much as he supports the Jewish state, he would not be pleased if any of his daughters married a Jew. But as a veteran reporter of 30 years, who worked as editor-in-chief of the *Sacramento Union* and as executive news editor of the *Los Angeles Herald*



Examiner and as an author of two books, *Stop the Press: The Inside Story of the New Media Revolution* and *Taking America Back*, **Farah says he is committed to accurately conveying the unfolding of history, not tapping into the agenda of those trying to reinvent it.**

Farah's beliefs have greatly diverged from those of his childhood days when both his family's and his own sympathies were aligned with the Arabs. Born and raised in Fair Lawn and Paterson, New Jersey, he was 13 years old during the 1967 Six-Day War—and he wanted the Arabs to win. “To me it was a football game and the Arabs were my team,” Farah recounts. “You can't imagine how I felt growing up with many Jewish friends and watching how excited they were as every day brought Israel a new victory.”

Today, Farah believes that what happened in 1948 and 1967 was a fulfillment of prophecy and of God's covenant with Abraham. **He is appalled by Jews who ignore their historic claims and divinely ordained birthright. “If I see Jews willing to compromise on the Temple Mount, I come to the conclusion that those are not Jews, just as I conclude that antisemitic Christians aren't real Christians,” Farah says fervently.** “If they are really Jews they would understand that the Temple Mount is their centerpiece. I have no respect for those Jews,” whether they be prime ministers or not, or perhaps evermore so, if they happen to be a Prime Minister.

Farah's eye-opening journey began when he was a young journalist. His two beats as a reporter, Hollywood and the Middle East, could not have been more different, except in one regard: You just can't believe what you see on TV. Farah reported from Lebanon in the '70s and '80s before the Israelis invaded, spending much time in Christian enclaves in the south. He tells how the Christians and the Muslims were terrified of the PLO, who had come to Lebanon after King Hussein kicked them out of Jordan. The PLO had taken control of the high ground and used artillery shells as a means of intimidation. “There wasn't a building in southern Lebanon that didn't have bullet holes in it and wasn't partially destroyed by artillery shells,” Farah says. “That had nothing to do with Israel; they hadn't even set foot into Lebanon except to clean out the PLO once in a while.”



When Farah got back to America, he was shocked by the skewed portrayal of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon by the media. “I said, ‘Wow, you're getting it all wrong!’” Farah recalls. “When Israel finally invaded you saw pictures of devastation, but it was the same devastation wrought by the PLO that I'd seen a year or two earlier.”

Upon his return to the United States, he tried to network in the Arab-American community and write for local Arab newspapers. Although he was not as supportive of Israel then as he is today, the editors would nonetheless cut the conclusions in his articles that they did not like. It is for that very reason of censorship that Farah feels more compelled than ever to identify himself as an Arab-American. He wants it to be known that the Arab community is not as monolithic as it is portrayed by its self-appointed leaders. According to Farah, the Arab people are afraid to speak out against the more radical among them.

But despite threats or consequences, Joseph Farah is not afraid. As an evangelical Christian, he believes each man has a divine mission to tell the truth, come what may. He also believes that Israel has a divine mission: to be a light among the nations. Farah says that it is not so much another land concession that threatens Israel's ability to defend itself, but rather the spiritual concessions that would allow the yielding of God-given land. Thus Farah strongly urges Israeli leadership to be strong and to be determined or risk losing everything it has worked to build over the past 60 years. **There is an unyielding and conscientious war of attrition against Israeli patience, against Jewish history, against nerve wracked settlers, against green lines and red lines, against Israel's image, against Holocaust remembrance, against Israel's allies, against Jews and Judaism. It's reminiscent of the slogan they don't want peace, but rather one piece at a time—and then there was none!**

“There is no room to negotiate with people who want to destroy you,” Farah says.

Is Farah done with Israel? I hope not! For his Bible also calls the Jews a “stiff-necked people,” a people who are hard of learning. So as a friend to Israel, I hope he will patiently keep pointing out the errors of its ways until someone in the “light among nations” will finally see the light.