Gibson) will publicly deny the Holocaust, and that will set off more public outrage, and usurp the tentative warming towards the Muslim world that was taking place in the US.

Because of my ability to take huge leaps in imagination (all in the name of self-discovery) I have now become very anxious about my President's safety and what his untimely demise will mean for all of us. And when I say all, I mean ALL. Not just the American people.

The Israelis must be thinking: Mr. President, you are not playing ball. I thought this fact would make me happy. I have been waiting for years for the White House to look at the crisis in the region with fairness and integrity, but the image of Obama, with his hand on Mahmoud Abbas' arm in a convivial manner as opposed to his rather stiff reception of Bebe Netanyahu, sent chills down my spine. Unless of course that was purposefully done as well. To throw Arabs off the scent, perchance?



King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia (left) welcomes US President Barack Obama, on his arrival at the Royal Terminal of the King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. (photo: Hassan Ammar/ AP)

You see? My head is spinning. My six months in Dhaka have changed me. I am starting to be mistrustful, to question my belief in human intention; *niyoth,* in Bangla. I have always believed that if one's intentions are pure, then no matter what happens, it will end well. In this case, I am only one hundred percent certain about one intention: Israel does not want peace with the Palestinians. Israelis voted in the right wing, just as we voted ours out, which is fascinating. While the rest of the world rejoiced at Obama's election and many were even inspired by it to make drastic changes in their own governments, Al Qaeda, and Israel did not join the party. Al Qaeda calls Obama a criminal, the very definition of irony (are these guys even aware of what comedians they are?) and Israel is visibly put out by the President's sense of justice.

The President's articulate and inspiring entreaty to the Muslim world was that the US needs partners in the healing and re-building process—remember it takes two, count 'em two to engage in a tango. Many people seem to think that assigning blame to one party in every conflict is somehow rational and go to great and petty lengths to justify this, miring themselves in a dirty deadlock and dragging others down with them. This sort of thing is played out regularly in well-appointed parlours in Dhaka and is indicative of the greater issues plaguing this and many societies. What is not immediately apparent is that these instincts, played out on a collective, global scale, reap catastrophic results. They lead to brutality, bigotry, fear, suffering, and misery. They lead to Aucshwitz.

Therefore, without real partnership between the West and the Middle East, Obama's goals cannot, will not, be reached. Case in point: just two days before his trip to Egypt, Hamas and Fateh started shooting at each other in the street in the Palestinian territories, killing several people, and further undermining their position. You see, I can decry Israel and AIPAC until I am blue in the face, but when Arabs gun each other down in the streets, form factions and fuel centuries of clannish antagonism, I am hard pressed to maintain hope or sympathy. Imagine the glee of their detractors. "Good!" they must be saying. "Maybe they'll kill each other off and save us the trouble."

A BBC commentator stated that Obama's plan of action in the Middle East is somewhat unclear. He will be relying on his charm, perhaps, they said. I am having difficulty trusting my President's intentions as well because I know what his olive branch to the Muslim world might cost him, his family, and his people. Enemies of peace abound; surely he knows that, so how can he really believe that his efforts in bringing it to the Middle East will be allowed to succeed? Peace in the region would mean loss for some very powerful people and entities. Is he as delusional as me? Well, you know, I always thought we had a special connection.

So these are the thoughts running rampant in my somewhat cluttered head and I cannot find it in me right now to think well of the enemies of peace and send them happy thoughts. I cannot seem to imagine taking their hand and dragging them across that daisy field. They probably planted mines all over it anyway. How will we navigate? Are the daisies and the sunshine obscuring the mines? What will trip them off? But the beauty of course is, that since I have thought of this, Mr. President has as well. Finally, a person in the White House smarter than me. That does give me hope. ■