



Conferencia del Del Dr. Jonathan Fine Universidad Ben Gurion

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What focus best explains relations between Middle East and Europe?

A European Union policy? Or a State policy?

How does the EU understand conflict sides and how do both sides understand the EU?

State policy is the approach Dr. Fine used to explain recent relations of European countries towards Middle East. Why? Because Europe does not stand as a whole in foreign relations. Take for example the recent war in Iraq; both Spain and England actively supported the US attack and even sent troops, while France and Germany did not.

He said “Security is the prime concern for the Israeli state, I have two teenagers that take the bus everyday, and I have to deal with the fear that they could be sitting on a car-bomb.”

Why should Europe be concerned in Middle East problems?

Well because many people that belong to Islam are migrating to Europe (for example, to the UK and to Spain) and although they are hardworking people and are not involved in terrorism at all, they have not integrated successfully to society This means that fundamentalist Islamic groups can use them as part of their terrorist organizations. For example, after the recent attacks in

Madrid, Spanish intelligence found out that the whole area surrounding the train stations was packed of Muslim migrants, who were involved indirectly with the bombing. These migrants were hardworking people that some way or another helped out in the logistic of the attack.

We have to understand that terrorist groups are different now, and it is a misunderstanding to think that these groups care about third world countries for example. During the “marchas” in Spain against the war on terror, many people used “pancartas” with images of Che Guevara, Free the North Pole Whales, Bin Laden, and all sorts of revolutionary movements from the past. “How is this possible? What does Che Guevara have to do with Al Qaeda?” One of the leaders answered back at Dr. Fine “Che Guevara stood up for third world countries, and so does Bin Laden.” Dr. Fine was astonished at the ignorance of these “manifestantes”.

The logic of social movements in the past (in Latin America, Europe, etc) was very specific they either had one of these goals:

1. Autonomy (political and religious)
2. National autonomy
3. Social economic changes

And also they all had a complete agenda (concerning politics, economy, etc.), their tactics and strategies were defined and they all kept close dialogues with governments. This does not occur with fundamentalist terrorist groups.

Now there is "silence", there is no dialogue between terrorist groups and governments, terrorist demands are “killing as much people as they can”, to understand this phenomena we must look at the ideology behind it.

The "Religious Agenda" was defined by Iranian Ayatollah Khomeini as: "anything from the west is banned for Islam; it is a duty for Islamic people to fight the west." He convinced many people that “all men were born evil” and so to committed suicide was an option to purify their soul. He made the shias an active terrorist-minded society through rather “innocent” religious processions.

We also must understand the role of religious leaders; they are political leaders and ultimately decision-makers. They decide whether or not a terrorist attack takes place, and behind them is a team of people who carry out the dirty work.

The contribution by Osama Bin Laden came during his first international conference when he stated "it is our obligation to fight heretics". He totalized and generalized the problem by making it religious, the only thing he needed to do was to define who are the heretics. The important question Osama answered indirectly was "Who has the religious truth? Muslims." During his second international conference, the message was different, sitting next to him on the right side were two very important religious leaders from Pakistan and Bangladesh, the interpretation was "terrorist organizations cooperate with each other." Osama does not take part directly in terrorism; he is seen as the "black box" where all the ideas come from. He gives inspiration for all movements to have a reason of being.

He has made religion: "moral and operative", against this little states can't deal with the problem. According to Dr. Fine a problem that must draw the attention of all the world.

What to do?

Dr. Fine pointed three way in which states could cooperate to fight terrorism

- Intelligence cooperation
- strengthen states and cooperate with Muslim states that are against terrorism
- and fight them

He did not explain how to follow the path of cooperation. His lecture was focused mainly on pointing out why fundamentalist groups were dangerous and explaining the logic behind their agenda. A short video of a religious ritual in a shia community of Hezbollah in Lebanon and honoring suicide to fight for Ala was played.