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The “Root Cause” of the Middle East Turmoil

Would peace descend if the Arab-Israeli conflict were resolved?

There are many who are convinced that the existence of Israel and its “alien” presence in the predominantly Muslim Middle East is the “root cause” of the ongoing and never-ending violence in the area and of terror in the world. James Baker, the former secretary of state and head of the U.S. Iraq Study Group (no friend of Israel and of the Jews), also propagates this “root cause” theory of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

What are the facts?

Israel is a tiny country, with only six million inhabitants (a million of whom are Arabs). It is surrounded by 22 Arab countries, with 300 million people. Arab propaganda has convinced the world that Israel is the mighty Goliath compared to the puny Arab states. It is a supreme irony that six million Israelis, surrounded by implacable enemies who are fixated on their destruction, are considered a mortal danger to the Muslims and to the peace of the world. And that, if it were not for Israel and for the Jews, peace would descend upon the world and terror would cease.

Israel is not the “root cause” of this strife and turmoil in the Middle East. Violence and war are endemic in Arab society and in Arab history. Israel was not involved in the deaths of the millions who perished in the Iraq-Iran war. Israel certainly has nothing to do with the slaughter in Iraq, in which on an average day, 100 people or more are killed in the deadly and never-ending Sunni-Shiite conflict. And even though Israel is the common enemy, it has nothing to do with the daily killings between the rival factions of Palestinians. Arab-Muslims killed over a million of black Christians and animists in the Sudan and brought intolerable suffering to that impoverished region. The Sudanese government, dominated by Arab-Muslims, hasn’t lifted a finger to help its citizens. The slaughter goes on. Israel is certainly not involved in that. The thousands whom Hafez Assad, the father of the current president of Syria, slaughtered in the city of Hama for having voiced opposition to his rule have no connection with Israel. Abdal Gamel Nasser, the self-appointed president of Egypt, mortal enemy of Israel and instigator of the Six-Day War, did not invade Yemen and gassed its people because of Israel. Saddam Hussein did not torture and kill tens of thousands of his own people and did not invade Kuwait because of Israel. The Lebanese did not stage their civil war and kill tens of thousands of their own

people because of Israel. And there are many more examples of intra-Muslim and intra-Arab slaughter and mayhem. Israel was uninvolved in any of those.

And how about terror? Again, many believe that Israel is the “root cause” of the terror that Arab-Muslims have visited and continue to visit upon the world. The attack on our country on September 11, 2001, the destruction of the two U.S. embassies in West Africa, the bombing of trains in Spain, the murderous attacks on the London subway

system, and so many other acts of cowardly terror would have taken place even if there were no Israel. They are a reflection of the hatred that the Muslim world harbors against the West and its institutions. That hatred has nothing to do with Israel. And many believe that if only the United

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States would withhold its support from Israel (and get out of Iraq), terror would cease and the world would no longer have to fear the scourge of suicide bombings, the devilish invention that Arab-Muslims have visited on the people of the earth. It is an illusion. That hatred would continue even if Israel would cease to exist tomorrow.

Many claim that Arab-Muslim terror is the result of despair, hopelessness and poverty. But that is patently absurd. The Arabs are some of the richest people in the world, although, instead of using their enormous wealth to benefit their people, they squander it in bizarre luxury excesses for a privileged few. The nineteen hijackers were not poor or desperate. They were, without exception, well-educated people, members of upper-middle class families. The leaders of such Arab-Muslim terror organizations as Hamas, Hezbollah or Islamic Jihad are educated people, from the upper reaches of their societies. No, terror is the customary response of Arab-Muslims to express their grievances. It is a result of their culture and of their history. It has nothing to do with Israel and would not be any different if Israel had never existed or would cease to exist.

The proclivity to war and to terror on the part of the Arab-Muslims has nothing or little to do with Israel. It is the result of their culture and of their history. For centuries, the historical Muslim empires of the Middle East were confident societies, which long led the despised Christian West in terms of science and economic well-being, as well as in military power. But then a lasting reversal and decline set in, in which the loss of Spain and the ascent of the West and its towering achievements in every human endeavor played a key role. This thirst for war against each other and against the hated infidels – foremost among them Americans and Israelis – and the lust for terror will not end until Arab-Muslims come to terms with the West and accept its predominant role. But that may take a very long time – in fact, it may never happen.

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