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Blinded by Misperceptions: Time to Recognize the Revolt of Islam

by Joel Gilbert



In the West, there is a huge gap in understanding Islam on every level, from the man on the street, to Jewish and Christian religious leaders, to our elected officials. Only by gaining an understanding and appreciation of Islam's world view, through its historic trials and its theology, can the West begin to deal with the real issues and challenges.

Misunderstanding leads to war. Israel's lack of understanding of Islam, its values and goals, have lead it to a policy of surrender of territory, based on the belief that it will achieve "Peace" in Western terms. In reality, "Western Peace" between Israel and Islam is unattainable. Peace can only be achieved in Islamic terms - "Peace with Justice" - which requires the elimination of Israel as a Jewish state. Muslims have 1,400 years of experience and holy scriptures to refer to that deal with Jews. Because Judaism predates Islam, Jews have no such foundation in dealing with Muslims, hence the Israeli misunderstanding, and the Islamic advantage.

There is no such thing as "Radical Islam." Islamism is not a war against the West, it is an internal struggle for the revival of Islamic society - a "revolt" against their failed secular governments. The attacks of 9/11 are completely misunderstood by the West. In fact, 9/11 was only a provocation by a small group of Islamists, hoping to use the West's response to inspire the masses in Islam's internal struggle. The 9/11 attacks were successful only because George Bush played into the hands of the Al-Qaeda, first by invading Afghanistan and Iraq, then by adopting Al-Qaeda's agenda for government reform across the Middle East - helping to pave the way for Islamist parties to come to power.

Unfortunately, it is a natural tendency to dismiss ideas and values that are not understood or shared - thus one judges other societies through one's own world view. Because the West considers its own historic development of concepts of "nationalism," "freedom," and "separation of church and state" as the natural advancement of humanity, it has a hard time accepting that its values don't apply to others. This is why Western media doesn't even know what questions to ask. For instance, "Why can't Islam accept Jewish statehood? Why don't Western concepts of secularism and nationalism fit into Islamic society? Why do Muslims consider America to be "The Great Satan"? Contrary to popular media

concepts, the Middle East is very understandable and predictable looking through the eyes of the Muslim world, rather than our own Western world view.

It is indisputable that when Israel negotiates anything, it gives up everything and gains nothing. The Camp David Agreement of 1979 with Israel and the 1993 Oslo Accords were simply part of what I call "The Diplomatic Strategy Against Israel," with the same goal as a military Jihad, the transformation of Israel from a Jewish state into a Muslim state. There is complete consensus across all schools of thought in the Islamic world that Israel's existence is an injustice, and must be eliminated on the path to successful Islamic revival.

Iran is acquiring strategic weapons in order to shift the balance of power with Israel, which it believes will precipitate Israel's destruction and Islam's revival. Even without attacking Israel, the mere capability of Iranian missiles to lay waste to Tel-Aviv would create a "strategic umbrella," preventing Israel from using its superior strategic assets in a conventional war. With Israeli missiles neutralized, Muslim countries could overwhelm Israel with their superior numbers, conventional armor and short range missiles.

There is a coming war in the Middle East, and it will be here soon, a war for the revival of Islam. Islam must reacquire Palestine to redeem itself from Westernization and the humiliation of a Jewish state. After years of diplomacy and withdrawals, Israel is no longer a strategic asset for the United States, but instead a security burden. George Bush or Shimon Peres will say that "Peace" in the Middle East is at hand between Israel and "moderates." But anyone who believes that just doesn't understand the reality, or is in denial. Islamism is on the march, and Israel is the number one target and obstacle in the path of Islamic revival. Misunderstanding of the realities of the Middle East by the United States and Israel will result in the erosion of Western security and a calamity for Israel.

Joel Gilbert, writer and director of the controversial new documentary film FAREWELL ISRAEL: Bush, Iran and The Revolt of Islam, is a graduate of the University of London where he studied at the School of Oriental and African Studies and the London School of Economics (BA 1986), with a concentration in Islam and Middle Eastern Studies. Gilbert is considered one of the few Western authorities on historic Islamic-Jewish relations, and has lived, studied and traveled throughout the Middle East.

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