

TERROR'S GLOBALIZATION

Manfred Gerstenfeld

The September 11th attacks have demonstrated again how closely linked the globalization of terror is to that of Arab and other Muslim populations. A few decades ago, the Palestinians were at the forefront of the internationalization of terror. The worldwide presence of Al Qaeda has recently become its more visible aspect. Even if many Western Muslims are moderates, their communities often shield fanatics. This will remain a continual threat to the Western world.

This process of the globalization of Islam, combined with those of anti-Semitism, politics, terrorism, non-conventional weapons and the media contains many more menaces to both Israel and Diaspora Jewry, however. In order to carry out counteracting measures, all these issues should be analyzed together.

With the ongoing naturalization of immigrants to the West, voters originating in Muslim countries by far outnumber Jewish ones in many elections. This development is most advanced in France, frequently a problematic country for Israel and the Jews. Arab leaders are attempting to create anti-Israeli alliances. Local politicians are often motivated by what they consider Realpolitik which, however, has anti-Semitic undertones. Voices related to the French Socialist Party have suggested, in light of their voting potential, that the party re-orient its policies toward Arab voters' wishes. In some areas of Great Britain and the United States also, Muslim or Arab lobbies have been attempting to achieve the same result.

The globalization of anti-Semitism is being demonstrated in many other ways. Since the Second World War the cry "Death to the Jews!" in the streets of several Western European cities has mainly been heard in demonstrations by extremist Muslims. Most attacks on Jewish institutions in Europe since 2000, the largest number since the Kristallnacht, originate in Arab circles.

The globalization of politics goes hand-in-hand with that of anti-Semitism. The United Nations, the majority of whose members are non-democratic, is providing a key platform for this. Arab governments were the source of the defamation of the Jews in Durban, supported by many

Muslim countries. Countries that turn beheadings with the sword and amputations into a public spectacle are now being aligned with several progressive Western NGOs, including human rights organizations.

Recently Michel Friedman, the German president-elect of the European Jewish Congress, told the daily *Die Welt* that combatting anti-Semitism can no longer be done at a national level only. He expressed the fear that collaboration might develop between Islamic extremists and rightist radicals.

Another aspect of the globalization of politics was the exclusion of Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East, from the coalitions against Iraq and the Taliban. A further threat is the globalization of communications: everybody sees the same images. Is it too far-fetched to assume that the self-censorship and anti-Israel bias of several global media helps them operate in the Arab countries, none of which are democratic?

What can Israel and the Jewish people do to mitigate the combination of these fearsome threats? Monitoring developments must provide the basis of knowledge. Continuous interpretation of these will show how wide-ranging the newly-packaged Arab recycling of Nazi motives and methods is already. Many of their European allies on both the left and the right have reverted to other anti-Semitic attitudes witnessed before, during and immediately after the Holocaust. A much more detailed understanding of these phenomena is required to improve Jewish information policies.

Several other avenues should also be taken, including the strengthening of contacts with the few moderate Muslims who dare to dialogue with Jews and Israel. One of the best-known is the secretary-general of the Italian Moslem Association, Sheikh Abdul Hadi Palazzi. Furthermore, even if one prefers permanent friends, Israel must search more intensely for *ad hoc* alliances on specific issues with Western bodies who are, at best, indifferent to its cause.

Most importantly, Israel must collaborate better with its supporters. Non-Jews are much more convincing when they stress both the heavy economic price that the globalization of terror is already exacting from Western society and the fact that serious threats to it continue to emanate from the Muslim world. They are also in a much better position to point out that Western Muslim communities often shelter fanatics who threaten every citizen, including moderates in their own communities.

Israel is a small country and, together with the Jewish people in the Diaspora, will remain limited in numbers. The Arabs are much more numerous and have the backing of large parts of the Islamic world. That does not mean to say that one must remain passive in face of the many, seemingly amorphous menaces posed by globalization. The more efforts are made, and the more creative the approaches developed, the more allies can be mobilized.

The author is Chairman of the Steering Committee of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, and an international consultant on business strategy.