

## Obama's stunning offense to Israel and the Jewish people

2009-06-13 16:31:13 by Southern

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President yet again makes his intentions clear

President Obama's Cairo speech was nothing short of an earthquake — a distortion of history, an insult to the Jewish people, and an abandonment of very real human-rights victims in the Arab and Muslim worlds. It is not surprising that Arabs and Muslims in a position to speak were enthusiastic. It is more surprising that American commentators are praising the speech for its political craftiness, rather than decrying its treachery of historic proportions.

Obama equated the Holocaust to Palestinian "dislocation." In his words: "The Jewish people were persecuted. ...anti-Semitism ...culminated in an unprecedented Holocaust.... Six million Jews were killed.... On the other hand, it is also undeniable that the Palestinian people — Muslims and Christians — have suffered in pursuit of a homeland." This parallelism amounts to the fictitious Arab narrative that the deliberate mass murder of six million Jews for the crime of being Jewish is analogous to a Jewish-driven violation of Palestinian rights.

Speaking in an Arab country to Arabs and Muslims, Obama pointedly singled out European responsibility for the Holocaust — "anti-Semitism in Europe culminated in an unprecedented Holocaust." In other contexts, the European emphasis would be a

curiosity. In Egypt, it was no accident. The Arab storyline has always been that Arabs have been forced to suffer the creation of Israel for a European crime.

In fact, Obama's Egyptian hosts would have been only too familiar with Arab anti-Semitism during World War II (and beyond). After all, Obama was speaking in the country that schooled and later welcomed back Grand Mufti Haj Muhammed Amin al-Husseini as a national hero. This was the man who spent the war years in Berlin as Hitler's guest facilitating the murder of Jews.

Obama thought he would prove his even-handedness towards Israel by boasting of Friday's trip to a concentration camp and rejecting Holocaust denial. In this context, however, the move of doing Jews these supposed favors appears to be cynical political opportunism, especially having just set the Holocaust side-by-side with the "suffering" and "pain" of Palestinians "for more than 60 years." After all, the president made no emotive references to the "intolerable" "suffering" of Israeli victims of Arab terror "for more than 60 years." The word "terrorism" never left his lips. Far from bolstering the fight against terror and the anti-Semitism driving it, such maneuvers embolden more hate and violence against Israelis.

Instead, Obama sought Arab and Muslim approbation by drawing a moral equivalence between those who have rejected Israel from the outset (and still seek its outright destruction or a "right of return" intended to terminate a Jewish majority) and the Jews who have kept them at bay since May 14, 1948. In his words: "There has been a stalemate: two peoples with legitimate aspirations, each with a painful history.... It's easy to point fingers — for Palestinians to point to the displacement brought about by Israel's founding, and for Israelis to point to the constant hostility and attacks." Calling the Israeli-Arab conflict a "stalemate" represents an abysmal failure to acknowledge historical reality. The modern state of Israel emerged after an internationally approved partition plan of November 1947 that would have created two states, one Jewish and one Arab; this plan was accepted by Jews and rejected by Arabs. One people has always been prepared to live in peace, and the other has chosen war in 1948 and 1956 and 1967 and 1973 and 1982, and renewed terrorism after its every loss.

Bereft of the most basic understanding of Judaism and Jewish history, Obama claimed that "the aspiration for a Jewish homeland is rooted in a tragic history that cannot be denied," for "around the world, the Jewish people were persecuted for centuries." A Jewish homeland in Israel is not rooted in tragedy or in centuries of persecution around the world. It is rooted in a wondrous, unbroken, and spiritual relationship to the land of Israel and to Jerusalem for thousands of years. Coupled with the president's stress on "European responsibility" for the Holocaust, his words reinforced the lethal belief that Israel is the creature of transplanted, alien Jews.

Obama's stunning offense to Israel and the Jewish people went farther. Israelis have come to occupy territory in response to Arab-initiated wars of intended annihilation, but Obama analogized Palestinian "daily humiliations ...that come with occupation"

to the "humiliation of segregation" of black slaves in America and the "moral authority" of "people from South Africa." His Arab audience understood that the president of the United States had just given a nod to the single most potent defamation of the Jewish state today — the allegation that Israel is a racist, apartheid state.

After expressing his belief in a moral equivalence between the claims of Palestinians and the claims of the victims of slavery and apartheid, Obama juxtaposed his admission of Israel's "right to exist" with his assertion that "the United States does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements." Every word of this speech was carefully weighed. It was therefore no mishap that for the first time a U.S. president has denied the legitimacy of Israeli settlements, period. Such an assertion abrogates every agreement between Arabs and Israelis, which have always left the ultimate determination of which settlements will stay or go to a bilateral peace process and final status negotiations. Even the Roadmap reads: "Phase III: Permanent Status Agreement and End of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict ...a final, permanent status resolution ...on borders, Jerusalem, refugees, settlements."

Furthermore, the idea that Jews are not permitted to live in any territory that might become part of a future Palestinian state means only one thing: apartheid Palestine. Twenty percent of Israel's population, 1.5 million people, are Arab (with more democratic rights than in any Arab state). But the notion of any Jewish presence in Palestinian territory is allegedly an abomination. Why should a future transfer of governmental authority mean "no Jews allowed"?

But judging by Obama's speech, only one "dislocation" counts. After placing the Holocaust side-by-side with the Palestinian "pain of dislocation," he ignored the dislocation of 800,000 Jewish refugees from all over the Arab Middle East in response to the creation of Israel.

Jewish refugees from Arab intolerance were not the only human-rights casualties the president chose to dismiss. Three different times Obama defended the right of Muslim women to cover up their bodies. Never once did he mention the right of Muslim women to refuse to cover up their bodies — a right denied on pain of arrest and death by many of the very communities he was addressing. In the name of "freedom of religion" he chose to "welcome efforts like Saudi Arabian King Abdullah's interfaith dialogue." The Saudi Arabian government criminalizes the public practice of any religion but Islam. This manufactured human-rights fantasy has done a tremendous disservice to the oppressed across the Arab and Muslim world.

President Obama's meticulously planned and executed Egyptian speech marks the lowest point in the U.S. presidency's understanding and appreciation of the Jewish state, its history, and its people's future. Added to his administration's evident infirmity on Iran, the speech of June 4, 2009, by the supposed leader of the free

world will be remembered as a major decline in human history.

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