

The Cycle of Conferences – The Geneva Accord

War on Terror – The Hydra Challenge

It has been five years now since the declaration of the “global war on terrorism” in response to the attacks on New York and Washington, D.C. and reviewing this period, we have seen a number of conflicts entered as a part of this strategy. Most recently it is the fighting in southern Lebanon that has formed another “front of the War on Terrorism”. However, despite these efforts, one of the most striking features of these last five years is the increase in international and state sponsored terrorism and accompanying this, a growing sense of fear and confusion in the societies that are meant to be protected.

While we know from history that war is sometimes justified and even necessary, declaring “war on terror” reveals a mindset that is focused on the world of effects rather than centered on understanding the psychology of terror. Terror by its very nature thrives on opposition – it needs separateness, welcomes hostility and feeds on the fear and negativity generated by conflict. Etymologists suggest that ‘war’ originally meant “to bring into confusion”, and we can see that con-fusion is a product of the separative mind, a stance that is against fusion. Clearly confusion and a measure of chaos have been among the results of declaring the “war on terror”, ironically not for the terrorists but for the nations who are actively fighting it. Although governments and police forces around the world now collaborate much more closely, confusion has escalated as to how to flush out terrorists without the growing alienation of many who share some religious or racial characteristics with them but who do not support terrorism in any way. Confusion also remains about appropriate security measures and how to defeat a foe that not only has no concern for its own survival but also regards its own death as martyrdom and glory.

Declaring war on terror demonstrates little understanding of the chain of causes that have led to the current situation nor acknowledges any responsibility for its existence. It is a confrontational approach that attracts yet more confrontation, and the aggression it employs draws to itself further acts of provocation. The more we invest in aggressively fighting terror, it seems, the more there is to fight. This is reminiscent of one of the labours of Hercules where he was set the task of destroying the Hydra, a monster with nine heads. Severing one head immediately resulted in two heads growing in its place and with each such attack the monster grew stronger, not weaker. So the usual strategies were worse than useless and Hercules found that he was only able to overcome this foe through kneeling and lifting the creature into the purifying air and light where it had no power.

Like Hercules, we find the need to lift the threats we face out of the realm of fear and confusion and into the clear light and air of the mental plane where the energies of fusion are available to defeat them. Fortunately, there are many enlightened thinkers around the world and they point out that a first step in stopping terrorism is to examine its underlying causes and to address legitimate complaints, thus removing from the equation some of the excuses for terrorist activities. In the case of the Middle East conflict, it is clear that much that is used to justify terror would be removed if the powers concerned were more courageous in following the Road Map proposed several years ago, and more committed to address the legitimate rights of the Palestinians to a sovereign state.

Now that the ceasefire in the Middle East is in place, action needs to be taken to usher in a period of order instead of even more confusion. Yossi Beilin, head of Israel’s opposition

Meretz party and one of the main architects of the Geneva Accord, has recently called on the European Union to organise a second Madrid conference on the Middle East. This would be in the spirit of the original conference held after the Gulf war in 1991. That conference formulated a framework for a Middle East peace process based on the return of the occupied territories. Beilin remarked that "Madrid cleared the way for the Oslo agreements and the agreement with Jordan, and Madrid 2 should obtain agreements with Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinians." He added that the role of the European Union should be to convince the United States to call such a conference.

Through the use of the will-to-good, a meditation group can help to clarify and charge the subjective atmosphere so that truth and right relationships can flourish. So let us hold these thoughts in mind over the months ahead and pray that more enlightened thinking will guide the words and actions of the world's leaders away from the use of the negative misnomer of a war on terror, and focus instead on a sustained campaign for dialogue, reconstruction and peace.

Headquarters Group
Cycle of Conferences

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