ICT's 9th International Conference - Closing Evening

10 September 2009

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The plan to terminate the Jewish state is no longer based on winning one major allout war. The planned strategy is based on two long-term operations. One is a continuous, low intensity, violent campaign. Such terror acts directed at civilians are aimed to break the citizens' will-power and to cause internal debates and chaos.

The other part of the strategy is taking place abroad. Activities aimed at spreading hatred against Israel and arguing that the Jewish state has no right to exist are taking place daily. Such as, for example, the claims that Israel is an apartheid state, a colonial state, a racist entity, a society that faked its history to claim rights to a land that does not belong to it, and so on. By doing so, public opinion is built to demand boycotts against Israel, to start criminal proceedings against I.D.F. commanders, to move governments and several nations to impose sanctions on Israel and finally, perhaps, to call international military activity against us.

It is a sophisticated process that can be especially effective against a small nation.

Substantial Arab resources are poured into accomplishing these results, buying all kinds of media and funding anti-Israel organizations. There is no doubt that innocent people are caught by the emotional, as well as ideological, propaganda against Israel.

The most extreme allegations against Israel are often made by a small anti-Zionist group of Israeli university professors. Their ideas are widely circulated and are especially effective because they are made by Israelis. Recently, in an article published in the Los Angeles Times, an Israeli professor called his audience to boycott Israel on all levels, to "save that apartheid state from itself."

How should a university respond to such writing? Is it a case of constitutionally protected free speech or academic freedom? There is a difference between internal democratic debate, what course should a nation adopt, when being called in for sanctions by other countries. The professor who wrote the L.A. article would probably support the use of international military forces, in case the sanctions fail its "save Israel from itself" campaign. Calling other nations to take action against your own country - be it by economic sanctions or military force – means turning your back on the internal democratic system. Such an attitude is morally right only if you believe that the situation has reached a point in which the system has entirely lost its legitimacy and thus merits revolt. If that is the case, it is very odd that such a professor is requiring a salary from a state university funded by the tax payers' money.

Freedom of speech is guaranteed to enable free debate in a society; it does not extend to calls for force, which will actually terminate debates. Such calls have also nothing to do with academic freedom. It is a joke to regard a call for academic boycott as being part of academic freedom.

The paradox of modern communication is that fundamentalist calls for the annihilation of one people are supported by arguments of self-proclaimed Human rights moralists. What we all need is the power to face evil, and the human decency to distinguish between right and wrong, oppose the call to eliminate the other and support the right of self-defense and freedom.

In eight days, the Jewish New Year starts. Let me wish all of you Shana Tova – a Happy New Year, a year free of violence, a year of joy and creativity.

Thank you for attending the conference.