

INITIATIVE POUR LA PAIX AU PROCHE-ORIENT

PARIS - VENDREDI 3 JUIN 2016



The Peace Process Needs New Approaches

The French Conference held in Paris on June 3-4 has not done anything for the peace. On the contrary, it has undermined its prospects. By celebrating this conference, the participants (the US, the EU, China, France, and up to 26 nations) have pushed away Israelis and Palestinians even farther from the negotiating table.

First, the conference did not have the main players: Israelis and Palestinians. Without them, the conference lacked legitimacy and the power to attain real compromises for peace.

On the one side, Israelis are feeling more isolated due to the fact that the international community is putting all the pressure on them while forgetting to put demands on the Palestinians. On the other side, Palestinians have felt support for their strategy to not yield in the previous negotiations (even by not accepting to sit with Israelis without preconditions) and, inexorably, they will not solve all the problems they have in order to achieve peace (incitement against Israelis, corruption, conflict with Hamas, etc.)

Second, the international community has again blamed Israel for intransigency, while dismissing the bad situation that Israel faces. If the trend of accusing only Israel for what happens in the conflict with the Palestinians, a diplomatic tornado can be deployed on the Jewish State again. As Eran Etzion, senior fellow at the Middle East Institute, has pointed out, France could initiate a diplomatic move in the UN this summer to recognize the Palestinian State in the Security Council — a motion that could be backed by the US. If so, leading Western countries as the US and France could accuse Israel as the sole culprit for the stagnation of the process, and reward the Palestinians for their unwilling attitude to sit with the Israelis to negotiate.

Third, in the Joint Statement of the conference, the participants put at the same level the indiscriminate terrorism carried out by Palestinian militants and settlement activity. There is no mention either about the incitement by the PA

official media. The French conference has ignored the wave of knife stabbings and car rammings against innocent civilians, and has applied a double standard to Israeli victims. Peace cannot be built if the Palestinians are not willing to coexist with Israel, a fact that the attendees to the French Conference have left out.

Forth, as established by the Oslo Accords, the negotiations have to be bilateral and direct, and no solutions must be imposed to the parties. If the French proposal sought to continue in the Oslo spirit, it has failed from the first moment.

In spite of all that, Israel is committed to continue the peace talks, even with Arab countries, as Netanyahu suggested speaking about the Saudi Peace Plan as a basis of negotiation, which has been saluted by the French Conference attendees.

The conflict between Israelis and Palestinians has been going on for more than six decades. Over this long period of time, dozens of international peace summits have been held (Madrid, Camp David II, Annapolis, Sharm el-Sheikh, Geneva, Washington, Amman, etc.), and several peace plans have been designed by external actors (Roadmap, Saudi Plan, French proposal, etc.) with the noble purpose of getting both parties to sign, once for all, a just and lasting peace.

However, and despite some progress, no initiative, conference, plan, or negotiation has led to peace, mainly because of Palestinian intransigence to coexist with Israel. Yet that is not the only reason behind the failure of all the conversations and peace plans; also, Palestinians need better institutions, non-corrupt leadership, and a more developed economy.

Perhaps, after the unsuccessful outcomes of the diplomatic interventions, now is the moment to innovate; or concretely, to delve into why the Palestinian side is unwilling to achieve peace and unable to build a nation-state. The strategy must obviously change. The international pressure should be directed to other major issues that Palestinians need to solve if they want to establish a viable nation. Peace, in sum, requires new approaches.

Spotlight

The Orlando and Tel Aviv Attacks: The Same Enemy

Tel Aviv and Orlando, icons of freedom, were hit by jihadist terrorists in the same week, as Paris, Brussels, or Copenhagen have in the recent past. These brutal acts confirm, once again, that we, Western societies, are living under an enormous threat. Whether it is the Islamic State, or Hamas, which are branches of the same tree, liberal democracies have to overcome the jihadism challenge.

The first step to solve a problem is to identify the problem. In Tel Aviv, terrorists killed four people and tried to kill hundreds more in a popular leisure center; in Orlando, the jihadist shooter murdered 49 people and injured 53 more in a gay club. The Orlando massacre has been the deadliest mass shooting in U.S. history and the worst and biggest terrorist attack on American soil since 9/11. The terrorists did not only kill people indiscriminately, they also attacked our way of life. Centers and places where people rightfully exercise their liberties and free choices, staples of Western liberties and proof of democratic diversity, are part of our civilization that has cost so much to build over the centuries.

Therefore, we cannot delude ourselves. These barbarian acts have not been episodes of a person with a mental disorder, or lone-wolf attacks. The Hamas terrorists did not shoot against hundreds of innocent Israelis due to the Palestinian conflict; Omar Mateen did not choose a LGTB club as a revenge for the invasion of Iraq in 2003. On the contrary, they carried out such evil acts because they hate everything that has to do with freedom and democracy. What has happened in Tel Aviv and in Orlando constitutes reflections of the same phenomenon: A terrorist-political movement seeking to destroy our civilization as we know it. They are the same enemy. No more and no less. If we do not accept this tough reality, the West is destined to disappear under chaos and terror.

Lately, the indiscriminate shootings have emerged as the jihadist new way to bring terror to our towns and they are extremely hard to stop.

Within our borders, the situation is worsening. Today experts and media tend to identify and highlight that the radicalization of Muslims happens via an online process. However, according to analyst Peter Nesser, author of the

book *Islamist Terrorism in Europe*, In it, one can find that the determining factor in recruitment and radicalization is not Internet, but an acquaintance, usually a family member, in charge of giving moral and psychological legitimacy to the recruitment. Given this tricky framework, the prevention through surveillance, novel techniques and new approaches in the homefront are essential to confront this menace.

Nonetheless, the improvement and innovation in homeland security, or the military operations overseas, are futile if there is no political agenda. As Colonel Richard Kemp explains, Western liberal values are under attack in Tel Aviv, Orlando, Brussels, and Paris. A successful strategy against jihadism and radical Islam requires, on top of it, to claim that our laws, our institutions, our customs and traditions are worth protecting. We owe it to the victims and our children will thank us.

In this regard, now is the time to unite against terrorism, to stand together with our allies, shoulder to shoulder, and to reaffirm our values and principles. To say with one voice, loudly, that we shall prevail, that we will never surrender to these evil forces.

We have said it hundreds of times: This is a war and we have to win, not only with weapons, but also with conviction.

FOII'S ACTIVITIES

High Level Home Front Group Assessment Mission to Israel



Following the success of the Lawfare Military Project and the creation of the High Level Military Group, the Friends of Israel Initiative (FOII), due to the knife intifada in Israel and after the wave of terrorist attacks in Paris, Brussels, Copenhagen, and Orlando, took the decision of forming a group of top Western Home Front officials to evaluate Israel's expertise in this matter. Hence, FOII has led a Home Front High Level Group, from June 13 to 17, made up of top intelligence, counter terrorism and police officials from the US, UK, Spain, Netherlands, Australia, Italy, and Colombia, which has evaluated the Israeli experience in preventing and stopping indiscriminate attacks in cities as well as the recruitment of terrorists. The outcomes of this project will help Western countries to find and apply the best measures to halt these waves of terrorism and radical recruitment. The High Level Home Front Group (HLHFG) met with top Israeli intelligence and homeland security officials and with Israel's PM Benjamin Netanyahu. As it happened with the HLMG, the level of access granted to the HLFG was unprecedented for a foreign group.

After this assessment, the HLHFG is going to elaborate a final report on how to effectively fight jihadist terrorism and radical recruitment at home and abroad. The conclusions of the High Level Home Front Group and the publication of the report will be available worldwide in the media and will also be promoted at top decision levels in the security and intelligence community in the West.

HLGM Advisors Working Session: The Nature of Hybrid Warfare Today.



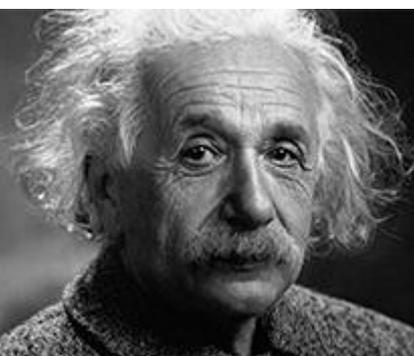
On June 22, FOII gathered a group of top military and defense experts in Washington in order to develop a working session about the future of warfare and its hybrid nature.

The war against non-conventional forces and non-state actors was the core issue of the Comparative Study released by the High Level Military Group at the beginning of the year. After the findings of the report, the HLMG and its advisors have been delving into how to confront these kinds of non-regular forces and how they use the Law of Armed Conflict and the Rules of Engagement in their benefit, seeking to undermine the military actions of Western forces.

Working Paper: "Risky Business: Perils and Pitfalls of Entering Iranian Markets"

After the signature of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, a nuclear deal which postpones Iran's acquisition of the nuclear bomb, Iran is open for business. In this regard, big companies and Western governments are queuing to do business with Iran. However, the Iranian market presents many perils and pitfalls to consider. Emanuele Ottolenghi explains them all, among others, the Iranian Republican Guard Corps involvement in the economy, or the Supreme Leader's network of corruption.

[Read](#) the Working Paper.



"Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results."

Albert Einstein

Help us now

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