

OUT OF EGYPT: A Christian Analysis of Obama's Cairo Speech

Part 1 - Undermining the Legitimacy of Israel?

President Obama recently did something historic and unprecedented. He gave an address to the entire Muslim world, and that from a Muslim capitol, Cairo. This was an ambitious undertaking, for the Muslim world comprises no less than one billion people, and it is far from monolithic in its perspective.

It is not my intent to give a complete political or historical analysis of the speech, for there are many who have done so, representing points of view from the entire cultural spectrum. What I want to major on is the parts of the speech, which would, or should be of concern for Christians.

From a Biblical point of view, the fact that the speech was given from Egypt has spiritual and even typological significance. Al Azhar University, the setting for the speech, is the Harvard or Yale of the Islamic world. It is the ideological breeding ground for the Islamist movement. Recently its president Ahmed Al Tayyib justified Palestinian suicide bombing as a valid expression of resistance. (See <http://www.jihadwatch.org/archives/019026.php>)

Obama opened with a job description that no doubt was a surprise to most Americans,

"I consider it part of my responsibility as President of the United States to fight against negative stereotypes of Islam wherever they appear." (Obama Speech)

President Obama is merely demonstrating that he is the product of the more than 40 years of multicultural conditioning, which has permeated the education establishment in most of the west.

There were seven major items of concern that Obama wanted to address to the Muslim world, but for purposes of brevity I will comment on two of them.

"The second major source of tension...is the situation between the Israeli's, Palestinians, and the Arab world America's strong bonds with Israel are well known. This bond is unbreakable. It is based upon cultural and historical ties and the recognition that the aspiration for a Jewish homeland is rooted in tragic history that cannot be denied."(Obama speech)

To an American or western audience this sounds like Obama is re-affirming our support for Israel in the strongest possible way.

"Around the World the Jewish people were persecuted for centuries. And the anti-Semitism in Europe culminated in an unprecedented holocaust." (Obama Speech)

Sounds good doesn't it? Obama even chided those in the Arab world who deny the Holocaust as ***"baseless... Ignorant...and hateful"***. Furthermore he boldly stated that

“threatening Israel with destruction or repeating vile stereotypes about Jews is deeply wrong...”

There is much to commend in Obama’s attempt at telling the truth to the Muslim world, and he is rightly being credited for doing so. However as Caroline Glick points out in the Jewish World Review article ***“Obama’s Arabian Dreams”***,

On the surface Obama seemed to scold the Muslim world for its all-pervasive Holocaust denial and craven Jew hatred. By asserting that Holocaust denial and anti-Semitism are wrong, he seemed to be upholding his earlier claim that America’s ties to Israel are “unbreakable.” Unfortunately, a careful study of his statements shows that Obama was actually accepting the Arab view that Israel is a foreign — and therefore unjustifiable — intruder in the Arab world. Indeed, far from attacking their rejection of Israel, Obama legitimized it. The basic Arab argument against Israel is that the only reason Israel was established was to sooth the guilty consciences of Europeans who were embarrassed about the Holocaust. By their telling, the Jews have no legal, historic or moral rights to the Land of Israel.

<http://www.jewishworldreview.com/0609/glick060509.php3>

From an American Christian perspective, in view of God’s promise to Abraham that he would *“Bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you”*... An American president delegitimizing Israel, in an address to one out of seven people in the world, who largely chafe at the very existence of the state of Israel, is ominous.

When Obama went on in his speech to sympathetically address the plight of the Palestinian refugees, he pledged that,

“The American people will not turn their backs on the legitimate Palestinian aspiration for dignity, opportunity, and a state of their own.” (Obama speech)

The significance being, that the state he pledged us to support would be created by the dividing of the land God gave to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

For behold in those days and at that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all nations, and will bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my inheritance, Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations and have parted my land.

Joel 3:1-2

One must parse Obama’s language carefully, to see what is actually being said, for he is actually speaking to two different constituencies, the Muslim world, and the West, who each will hear the same words but receive different messages according to their respective worldviews.

Palestinians must abandon violence. Resistance through violence and killing is wrong and does not succeed. For centuries Black people in America suffered the lash of the whip as slaves and the humiliation of segregation. But it was not violence that won full and equal rights. (Obama speech)

Glick again, points out the subtlety of the use of the word “resistance”. By using that word rather than the word, Intifada, Jihad, or terrorism, Obama legitimizes again the Palestinian claims.

Even worse than his willful blindness to the historic, legal, and moral justifications for Israel's rebirth, was Obama's characterization of Israel itself. Obama blithely, falsely and obnoxiously compared Israel's treatment of Palestinians to white American slave owners' treatment of their black slaves. He similarly cast Palestinian terrorists in the same morally pure category as slaves. Perhaps most repulsively, Obama elevated Palestinian terrorism to the moral heights of slave rebellions and the civil rights movement by referring to it by its Arab euphemism, "resistance."

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