

Terrorists Without Borders

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It is amusing to watch CNN and the BBC and hear all of the talk about “freedom” coming to Egypt, particularly when the Muslim Brotherhood — one of the main future beneficiaries of a revolution — is presented as a “peaceful conservative religious organization.”

In fact, the Muslim Brotherhood is not just your run-of-the-mill fundamentalist organization; it is the mother of all Islamist fundamentalist organizations, the one from which all others have sprung.

The writings of one of its most influential and radical former leaders, Sayyid Qutb, can be compared in influence to Karl Marx’s “Das Kapital.” Don’t forget that it was the Muslim Brotherhood that founded Hamas as a splinter organization. Moreover, Osama bin Laden has said his ideology is based on ideas expressed by Qutb.

It was Qutb who called for the restoration of the Muslim caliphate from Spain to Indonesia and for waging jihad against the existing Muslim authorities whom he claimed had sunk to the level of the Jahiliyyah, a Quranic term describing pagan Arabs prior to the appearance of

Muhammad.

More important, it was the Muslim Brotherhood that first adopted the practice of publicly proclaiming themselves to be a peaceful organization while covertly practicing terrorism and branding any retaliation by the authorities to such attacks as “unwarranted aggression.”

Islamist fundamentalism could increase in power all across the Middle East due as much to the shameful weakness of the West as to the strength of the fundamentalist movements themselves.

After the Soviet Union collapsed, Western bureaucracies, having gained a bloodless victory over totalitarianism, were desperate for a new cause to champion. Nothing escaped their zealous attention — from global warming to regulating the shape of cucumbers. With the collapse of the world’s largest totalitarian regimes, humanitarian organizations Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch began hunting for new victims of injustice. Those poor, misunderstood and mistreated extremists apparently fit the bill. For example, Amnesty International began defending al-Qaida member Moazzam Begg, and Human Rights Watch raised money in Saudi Arabia to expose all alleged crimes of the bloodthirsty Israeli military.

Islamist fundamentalists fully appreciated the fact that any attempt by Israel or the United States to fight terrorism was immediately followed by deafening criticism from humanitarian organizations, the international bureaucracy and the liberal media that the extremists’ rights were being violated. The fundamentalists created entire organizations for feeding misinformation to the infidels — all the more because such tactics are condoned by the practice of takkiyi, which justifies deliberating lying if it is done to infidels.

The time for half-secular, half-Islamic dictatorships in the Middle East has come to an end. Those dictatorships have maintained their existence by deft maneuvering and striking a balance between Moscow and Washington, and for the last two decades they were just staving off their own demise by virtue of their iron rule. Religious totalitarianism is waiting in the wings to replace the secular autocracies.

Apparently, the world is moving toward a new confrontation between two camps, and it will be no less tense than was the 20th-century standoff between open society and secular totalitarianism. The responsibility for letting the situation reach this level of confrontation is borne not only by bin Laden and Qutb and their followers, but the West as well. If the West does not have enough backbone to defend its own values against religious extremism and terrorism, it would be utterly naive to believe that those values will be championed in the Middle East.

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The views expressed in opinion pieces do not necessarily reflect the position of The Moscow Times.

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