Stairwell Summit

The Global Community was shocked this week as a sudden conference took place between a multitude of Middle Eastern countries, including Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Palestine (Hamas and Fatah), Pakistan, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt. Official statements from Palestine Hamas and Pakistan insist that the conference was “... between nations of common interest...” (Hamas, Sept. 30th, 2008) about “... how to create more peace in the Middle East.” (Pakistan President Asif Zardari, Sept. 30th, 2008)

Officials included those from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan

“Common interest”?  

Historically, the countries involved in this conference have expressed strong anti-semetic views, especially in Pakistan. These countries surround Israel, and have been involved in multiple wars with Israel in the past, as well as having positive relations with Palestine. According to the leader of the Palestinian government, Hamas, their current goals include, but are not limited to, independance from Israel, sovereignty, and recognition of their government by the United Nations. And how does Hamas plan to achieve these goals? A recent quote from an allied nation of “common interest” might shed some light on that subject. During a recent interview with Iranian President Ahmadinejad on Sept. 29th, 2008 the President gave this statement about current relations with Israel.  

“... Israel is an uninvited state in Palestine’s land and must give back to the Palestinian government the land that belongs to them.”

After violent threats made this summer by Iran towards Israel, this could be a clear indication of Middle Eastern intentions.

“Peace in the Middle East”?  

The entire premise of this conference was to create “peace in the Middle East.” Quotes from the involved countries expressed strong hostility to any press involvement. If peace was, in fact, the goal of the summit, then why were all the attendants so unwilling to involve the global community in their “hopes for peace”? Relations with Israel may be our only indicator of events to come.

INTERNATIONAL COMMENT

Russia  

The Stairwell Summit has appeared to have frustrated Russia because of their lack of invitation to the conference. Putin believes that the Middle East is forgetting its allies, based on the fact that the majority of the countries attending this conference have oil pipelines going through Russia.

China  

Although China’s Premier Wen Jiabao received an invitation to the Summit, he refused to attend. Furthermore, he refused to sign the contract written during the summit. Jiabao stated during an exclusive interview that he believes the conference is creating more problems than it is solving, and is intended to create a common enemy for the Middle East, and confusion and ambiguity in the international community. “We cannot have peace with [countries] isolating themselves from the global community.” (Jiabao, Sept. 30th, 2008)

United States  

The United States also did not receive an invitation to the conference. At this point in time, America’s relations with many of the Middle Eastern countries are strained. Two weeks ago, Pakistan threatened to cut off oil to the United States if they refused to provide more financial aid. These negative relations are also influenced by the massive suicide-bomb attack on a Marriot Hotel on September 20th, 2008, resulting in the blame being pointed at the government’s pro-American policies, and on America itself. Furthermore, America is frustrated with Pakistan’s refusal to take serious action against the Taliban and al-Qaeda.

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