

Birds Are Spies, at Least in the Middle East.
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Critical thinking is not a natural attribute of human beings. Most of us are more inclined to believing anything in print or that we hear, or believe those things that support our already existing prejudices. It takes hard work to question statements that seem reasonable on their face. Too many of us are ready to believe anything, even when ridiculous.

One recent example is a trend of Middle East countries that so fear Israel's capabilities that they are ready to believe that birds, squirrels, and even rats can be programmed to spy on them. The reasoning behind these notions are lame, but believers are always ready to be sucked in.

The reality of all the spy-bird myths is that Israel, being a modern state, tags certain birds to track their migrations. This is what scientists do. But when a heron was found in Egypt with a tag on its foot with Hebrew University written on it, the locals assumed the worst. The educational level of most people in that part of the world is such that scientific tracking of wildfowl is a totally alien concept. However, belief in any sort of conspiracy theory is daily fodder.

Now from Turkey, which used to be a rational modern state before electing an Islamist President, comes the report that a European bee-eating bird (a pretty little thing) was found out of its orbit with "one nostril larger than the other." This, they thought, must mean that Mossad (Israel's intelligence service) has programmed its beak with a camera to spy on Turkey. Although this bird's migratory route was being tracked by Israeli scientists, so far, no camera has been found in its nostril. The Turkish security service is now pouring over the bird, straining to support this latest conspiracy theory, while Israelis are having fun laughing at the story of the big-nosed bird.

Lest we feel smug over the credulity of Middle Easterners, we have a ready audience for this sort of stuff in the US. There are still gullible idiots out there who insist that President Obama is not a "real American" because we all know that Hawaii is foreign, and they produce false birth certificates, don't we? It is painful to me, a die-hard professor, to learn that one of our better institutions, University of California Irvine, has hosted a speaker, Imam Abdel Malik Ali, invited by the Muslim Student Union's annual "Palestine Liberation Week." The good Imam professes that Zionists are responsible for the global financial meltdown and President Barack Obama is a puppet for powerful white people gearing up for full-scale military conflict to colonize Africa. He also told his gullible student audience that "there's no such thing as al-Qaida." He asserts that al-Qaida is a made-up lie to cover up clandestine actions of Mossad and the CIA. Furthermore, he claims that suicide bombers are heroes and martyrs, and their mothers should be proud about all the people they kill and maim. Is this appropriate for university students with nobody challenging it?

Free speech is a guaranteed right in this country. With a university in particular, we would want our students to hear and be able to debate all sides of an issue, which is how critical thinking is cultivated. But the Muslim Student Union wants free speech only for themselves. When an Israeli Ambassador was invited to speak at Irvine, the MSU organized a mob to intimidate both the speaker and the audience. The speech was aborted and, happily, the ringleaders arrested.

A California jury convicted 10 students from Irvine and Riverside who conspired to silence Ambassador Oren. Now the MSU has attempted to congratulate the ten as "martyrs." Are the students at this and other universities that host the MSU learning to think critically, or are they being indoctrinated?

The FBI has been criticized for keeping an eye on these Muslim Brotherhood-supported college clubs. The FBI doesn't even need to use a bird to do the spying, as appealing as that might be. They can just listen to MSU speakers.

678 words

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