



Columbia University professors rally in solidarity with their students' rights to protest free from arrest at the Columbia University campus in New York, on April 22, 2024. ● AP

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and they see those connections with each other.

There has been a qualitative change in the minds of American students about global relationships and it comes from the fact that they see how their government has been lying, how their government has been hiding a genocide and massacre, torture, and rape. They can see that all of that has been happening and their government, the one that they put their trust in, has been hiding the truths from them.

So, they are questioning, "Is this democracy? Is this human rights?" So, they are questioning all these things that the government of the United States was insisting. They're questioning it, saying, "Are you?" "No, you're not."

If you (US government) support this genocide, and continue to fund it, if you continue to give weapons to it, while watching children burn to death, then we know what the fabric of you is. We know that you lie and that you are on the wrong side of history.

And that is a qualitative change in the minds of - I want to safely say - a 100% of students in the United States, from University of Michigan to UCLA, Columbia University and Ohio State University and all of these places and as a result of that there's continuous protest.

**You mentioned the protests in Columbia University. As I know these students are not from the ordinary class of the American society; rather, they are the children of congressmen, senators, businessmen and the ruling political class in the country. In fact, these students will be the new leaders of the US. This revolution has started in a prestigious American university such as Columbia University in New York - the city that is a stronghold of the Zionist lobby. Does this suggest that the future generations of the US may not be influenced by Zionism like their fathers and ancestors were.**

I think that's completely true. Columbia University is a very expensive University. It's a private university and the tuition is extremely high. So, the students, who make it to Columbia come from extremely rich echelon of society. Yes, they usually are children of the ultra-rich. What has happened is that even their minds have been changed because they can see what the structure of liberal democracy is. They can see what liberal democracy accomplishes - death, genocide, weapons manufacturing, and bombing all over the world. They can see that and they put two and two together. They're very smart students. They can see that, and as a result, this kind of US policy is becoming extremely distasteful.

Another point is that at Columbia (University), where US policymakers

claim to uphold the bastion of free exchange of ideas and free speech, they have banned students from wearing Keffiyehs or displaying Palestine solidarity emblems on their computers. For example, students are banned from using posters of Palestine or little stickers "Free Palestine" on their computers at the library, because these things are illegal. So, what kind of freedom of speech is there? What kind of freedom of expression is it, if you can't even put a sticker on your computer and sit in a library?

So, these things have really made it vividly clear that Columbia University is not about the freedom of speech. Columbia University is not about freedom of exchange of ideas and these things have been a big blow to the minds of young people, who for all of their lives thought they were living in a society that free speech is cherished and all of this is encouraged. So, when I tell you that this events in Gaza have been a huge wake-up call to the student body all over the United States, this is what I mean.

**Over the past year, over 44,000 people in Gaza have been killed, tens of thousands injured, and millions displaced. Meanwhile, the narrative of the Palestinian people's victimhood and the Israeli aggression has become more apparent to the world. Do you also think like many others in the world that the Palestinian outburst on October 7 was inevitable?**

First of all, there is a lot more than 44,000 dead people in Gaza. Because there was an estimate study done by Lancet that wrote in July, "In recent conflicts, such indirect deaths range from three to 15 times the number of direct deaths. Applying a conservative estimate of four indirect deaths per one direct death to the 37,396 deaths reported [by June 19, 2024, according to the Gaza Health Ministry], it is not implausible to estimate that up to 186,000 or even more deaths could be attributable to the current conflict in Gaza. Using the 2022 Gaza Strip population estimate of 2 375 259, this would translate to 7.9% of the total population in the Gaza Strip. A report from Feb 7, 2024, at the time when the direct death toll was 28 000, estimated that without a cease-fire there would be between 58,260 deaths (without an epidemic or escalation) and 85,750 deaths (if both occurred) by Aug 6, 2024."

And your question. The outburst is inevitable. The outburst - the October 7th event - is a result of what happens in a society when it has been tortured, abused, jailed, and had its children and parents killed in front of each other for 75 years. What happens to such a society is that it becomes a construct of the mind where the only response is to break out. And a portion of that society will inevitably break out. Imagine the mental picture of the

world for the youth, who attacked Israel on October 7. They've grown up under extreme limitations. The Gaza Strip is completely closed off, and Israel has imposed severe sanctions, effectively turning it into a closed death camp. They have no control over their lives, and every few months, Israeli forces break in, kill hundreds, and leave.

What does that do to your mindset? You don't see the world as having the worst to offer; instead, you're driven to get out. And when they break out, it's not a surprise. This is something that's been pushed to the brink. The population has been resisting, and they've been doing so without regrets. They knew this resistance was inevitable, and they knew it would happen. And now, it's happening.

I think the burden of this death and destruction is not only on the Palestinians, but also on the Lebanese, Syrians, and Yemenis, as they're all entangled in this war. It's also on the Iranians, because we're constantly aware of it. We're constantly thinking about what's happening in the world. Yes, the outburst was inevitable. It wasn't something that could have been prevented, because the mental state of nearly three million Palestinians had reached a point that you could not choose. You had to break out. So, this event was not preventable.

**How do you envision the end of this war?**

I think that very positive things are coming to the Middle East. The total dismantlement of Israel will happen just like in South Africa. South Africa was an apartheid state and it was dismantled and it was replaced by a popular government. One man, one vote; that is coming to Palestine. It will be one person, one vote. There will be no distinction between who is Jewish, who is Muslim, or who is Christian, and that is a very good thing. Freedom for Palestine means freedom for the Middle East. It means across the Middle East countries that their governments are in the grip of Western imperialism, my guess is that they would fall or they would weaken if not fall. They would become weaker and at the end of it the situation will improve for people of the Middle East when once Israel is gone.

Israel and Zionism will be dismantled and a lot more freedom will come to the Middle East. So, there will be huge political changes in the Middle East. It is coming - and it's coming fast, not slowly. I think it will come quickly. What it will mean is that in the Middle East, people will be better in charge of their lives. They will have the freedom to manage their resources as they please, and that will be very good for the Middle East. Freedom for Palestine means freedom for the entire Middle East.



**Important note from interviewee**

*Exposing devastating consequences of war*

By profession, I'm an environmental toxicologist and I have done extensive research in Iraq. Looking at pollution caused by US wars, we have found that increase in birth defects and congenital anomalies have been at the same time as increase in war contamination. So, right now the US and Israel are using depleted uranium ammunition in Lebanon and potentially in Gaza. What we need to do is to bring that to the attention of the world and say that they are using banned weaponry in these areas. They've been doing this in Syria, Lebanon and Gaza and in multiple other places, in the Balkans in the past. Therefore, our duty right now to the children of the Middle East is to expose this and make sure that the world knows that what the US and Israel are throwing at us will damage our DNA and our next generations and this is a war crime.