

“Bush has been convinced by self-appointed spokesmen for Israel and the Jewish community that endless war is in Israel’s interest. He needs to hear in no uncertain terms that Israel is ready for dialogue, that the alternative—endless jihad—is unthinkable. Now is time to change the tune.”

‘A Coalition of Sanity’

What the “change in tune” entails is very simple. Beilin explained to the National Public Radio interviewer Terry Gross Aug. 23—when she asked about the present situation of “Islamic extremism” and anti-Semitism, and how it affected Israel’s security—that the task is to create a “coalition of sanity.” As Beilin said:

“I would like to reject the idea that what we have is a war of civilizations, or war of religions. I think that everywhere, and also in the Islamic world, you have extremists, you have moderate people, and you have pragmatic people. The wisdom is to create, always, the coalition of sanity, of those people who are much more moderate, much more pragmatic on both sides, and who want to live, and who want their kids to live. These are the majorities, by the way, everywhere.

“So the coalition of sanity is something which is available, and I think that the role of the peace camp is to put an end to the war situation in the inner circle so that the inner circle—meaning Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Palestinians—will not create a pretext for those who want to fight forever, that they are fighting for some kind of a just cause, like the idea of the Palestinian state, or something like that.

“And this was the idea of the late Itzhak Rabin. He wanted very much to have peace in the inner circle, before Iran is becoming a nuclear power, and before the hatred towards Israel is so big in the Arab world, that anybody who would make peace with us will be seen as a traitor. And he was right. And it is still not too late.”

The U.S. partners of the Israeli peace movement in the past have too often been American individuals who themselves hate the United States, such as Noam Chomsky. But now the opportunity demands a broader “coalition of sanity” in the United States itself, linking the Israeli peace camp with a wide range of U.S. institutional forces—including the military—who are working to overthrow the policies of the Bush-Cheney Administration with a sane alternative based on economic development for the entire Southwest Asia region.

Turning around the situation in Israel, where the neo-operative Bibi Netanyahu is ready to relaunch the fighting, down to the last Israeli soldier, in large part depends on what the LaRouche movement and its allies can bring into play in the United States. The peace possibility does exist. As Yossi Beilin told interviewer Terry Gross:

“I’m far from being pessimistic—I’m not just an optimist who believes that the situation will be better tomorrow. I believe that it is my task to make it so.”

Documentation

Beilin: Facing the Challenge

These are excerpts from the opening remarks of Yossi Beilin, member of the Israeli Knesset (parliament), to a conference call sponsored by the Jewish Alliance for Justice and Peace, Aug. 20. The transcript and an audiotape are posted at <http://btvshalom.org/resources/transcripts.shtml>, under the title “After the Ceasefire: What Comes Next?”

I believe that we find ourselves—in the beginning of the ceasefire after 33 days of the second war in Lebanon—in a very strange situation. One of the most interesting results is that it is a kind of a meeting point of weak leaders. . . . The question I am asking myself, and I am asking you, is whether in certain situations one can hope for a change just because of this weakness. Is it possible to use . . . this weakness so that decent leaders will understand that they might find a common denominator by going for something big enough, which might serve the national interest and save their political lives?

I do believe that the role of the peace camp, wherever it is—Israel, Palestine, in other places, in the United States—is to try and push for this big thing, and one of the options for such a big thing is to have a second Madrid Conference 15 years after the first one, which took place on Oct. 31, 1991. My idea is that we should push for something like this so that Syria, Lebanon, Palestinians, Israelis, and of course America, or the Quartet, will participate in such a conference, will launch bilateral talks between Israel and Syria, Israel and Lebanon, Israel and the Palestinians, and try to suggest that in a few months it could be possible to have peace treaties with our neighbors.

I must admit that right now it might seem quite detached from reality. The reality seems very gloomy when you think about Israel. . . .

So the question right now is whether the embarrassment, the confusion, the gloomy feelings, and the weakness of the leaders, might lead us, at the appropriate time, to go toward something which will attract the attention of the peoples in the region, of the peoples in the world, away from this sadness, or darkness, into a hope and into light. This is the question. . . . I don’t want to analyze exactly what went wrong. . . . I can only tell you, that had we only been wise enough to make peace with Syria and with the Palestinians and with the Lebanese when it was possible years ago, we wouldn’t have found ourselves in this situation and in war with Lebanon at the beginning of the 21st Century.

But we failed in the past, we made our mistakes, and we have to face the future and the new challenges, and ask ourselves whether it is possible now. . . .