

Last update - 12:04 13/03/2006

Moving Right says polls are wrong, Kadima won't win

By [Nadav Shragai](#)

Acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's declarations regarding another unilateral withdrawal are inspiring optimism on the right that its activists will be able to grab eight seats from Kadima and the left, in the hope of creating a right-wing majority bloc of 61 Knesset seats.

Officials at the headquarters of a right-wing campaign called Moving Right, which is already using Olmert's words against him, said support for Kadima had significantly dropped even before Olmert announced his "convergence initiative" to pull out of most West Bank territory to a new border surrounding the large settlement blocs. Now, with what one official called the "sharpening of Olmert's leftist line," the right-wing camp expects the trend to pick up, with more voters leaving Kadima and returning to the right.

The force behind Moving Right, and its predictions, is Yaakov Sternberg, a prominent activist in the right-wing group Mateh Ma'amatz and one of the organizers of the mass rallies held to protest the Oslo Accords and the disengagement.

Basing his predictions on the comments of "thousands of respondents," Sternberg said Kadima does not have more than 30 seats, and that its popularity is on the decline. The responses were collected by Moving Right activists who go to door to door asking the public not to vote for Kadima. Sternberg's predictions have come true before: He foresaw that the Likud referendum on the disengagement would be voted down.

Sternberg and his associates are talking about the possibility that Kadima, despite the losses, will still end up as the party with the most seats, but said that "despite this, it will lose the elections."

"From our perspective, the battle is measured by the results between the blocs," said Sternberg. "Kadima, Labor, Meretz and the Arabs are on one side. On the other side are all the opponents of the disengagement and the future disengagements: the Likud, National Union-National Religious Party,

[Avigdor] Lieberman, Shas and United Torah Judaism. If in the 17th Knesset we manage to create, from all these groups, a bloc of at least 61 MKs, we have won. In such a situation we have a good chance of persuading the parties in the bloc to unite around [Likud chairman Benjamin] Netanyahu."

According to Sternberg's statistics, Kadima gets only 15 percent of the votes in Jerusalem. In Tel Aviv too, he said, Olmert is doing far worse than the polls indicate.

"At the University of Haifa, we have identified a large shift of voters from Kadima to National Union, to Lieberman, and also to Meretz," said Sternberg.

"The picture is similar in other places, but the picture is not expressed in the results of the polls in the media because the pollsters cut out a large amount of people who, according to our findings, refuse to cooperate. In my opinion, this is where the error lies."

The right-wing camp is trying to reach up to 800,000 households in an effort to get former Likud voters to the polls on Election Day.

"The main task of the right is to push a very large number of former Likud voters, who at the moment are leaning toward not going to the polls, to vote for one of the parties in the [right-wing] bloc," said Sternberg. "All our resources are centered around this goal ... We are working not only on house visits, but also with 1,000 phone volunteers, whose number will grow in the next few weeks."

Sternberg's activists pinpointed their target audience by finding 2,700 polling stations across the country at which at least 30 percent of the voters chose the Likud in the 2003 elections.

"That's the population we're working on," said Sternberg. "It's between 700,000 and 800,000 households. We won't get to all of their homes, but we'll reach all of them by telephone. We've made 100,000 phone calls and visited some 20,000 homes. Sixty percent connect with us, and the rest don't cooperate."

"At the moment, we need to move eight seats from one side to the other," he said. "The left and the Arabs have about 67 seats. The right-wing bloc has 53." Eight seats in less than three weeks, said Sternberg, "is possible."

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