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The Referendum is Here

by David Bedein

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Ehud Olmert, the acting prime minister of Israel, has made things quite clear. The March 28th elections are a referendum on the future of Judea and Samaria and on the creation of a sovereign Palestinian Arab nation-state west of the Jordan River.

In other words, the referendum that we asked for is here.

For the better part of two years, the zeitgeist of Judea, Samaria and Gush Katif was that the government of Israel must hold a referendum before any decision is made concerning the proposed destruction of our communities and the creation of an armed Arab entity, whose purpose would be to transform any area under its control into a launching pad to liberate the rest of "Palestine".

Meretz, Labor and Kadima have formed what could be the premonition of a coalition with one common purpose: the demonization and demolition of our homes and communities, and the fostering of a hostile Palestinian Arab state at war with Israel.

It now behooves our communities to sell themselves to the people in the center of the country as important to the survival of the state of Israel.

How we reach out to the rest of *Am Yisrael* (the people of Israel) is the question that we all need to address.

Not by playing on sentiments. We learned from the Gush Katif-Samaria debacle that these are the wrong chords to play on. Rather, by stressing to the nation that the danger brought to the Negev, thanks to unilateral withdrawal in the south, will be the precise fate of Jerusalem and the coastal region of Israel if Israel again abandons ground to the enemy.

Recently, I had the opportunity to tour the empty lands that lie between Metzad and Maaleh Amos, imagining the Arab paramilitary troops positioned right there, ready to fire mortars that would have Jerusalem and Efrat within easy range.

Perhaps the most effective tools to help address *Am Yisrael* in the populous Gush Dan area are the strategic maps that Israel's foreign ministers Abba Eban and Yigal Allon distributed in the 1970s. Those maps demonstrated the absolute strategic necessity of Judea and Samaria to preserve the lives of the people of Jerusalem, of Israel's coastal plain and of the Galilee region.

That is reality.

And remember: apathy is the tool of a totalitarian democracy.

The focus of energy must be in the heart of the country, in Gush Dan. Every workers council, every school, every community center, every major corporation, every women's organization, every retirement home, every sports arena and every possible group with any influence must be approached with a clear message: the fate of Judea and Samaria is the fate of Gush Dan.

The theme must be the warning that the danger posed by the "Disengagement" to the Negev, now under siege, would be transformed into ever-present danger for all of Gush Dan if Israel pulled off another so-

called "disengagement" from Judea and Samaria.

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