

This is not Sharon's policy

uri dan, THE JERUSALEM POST

Mar. 7, 2006

Avi Dichter, the former Shin Bet chief, was a very effective technocrat in the war on terror. But this week, he made his first mistake as a politician running for the Knesset. Dichter announced that assuming that Kadima will form the next government, it will carry out an additional unilateral disengagement in Judea and Samaria and uproot additional settlements.

Israel Radio's political analyst Chanan Kristal, commenting on the same program with Dichter, immediately volunteered his interpretation - one that would have done any of the party's spin doctors proud - of Dichter's comments. The upcoming elections are exactly about this subject, said Kristal - about disengagement - and Kadima wants to win as many Knesset seats as possible in order to be able to carry one out in Judea and Samaria and uproot more settlements.

JPOST.COM HIT LIST

JPost.com's most popular articles this past week [[click here](#)]

On the same day Haaretz reported that a government headed by Kadima would look for a way to move away from the road map in return for support from the United States and the European community for unilateral steps by Israel to determine our borders in the West Bank. The rise of Hamas in the Palestinian Authority has turned the road map into a joke, expounded the pundit.

A truly bitter joke, yes. No one is able to marshal international support for recognition of permanent borders for Israel.

KADIMA PURPORTS to "follow in the footsteps of Ariel Sharon." Kadima is telling voters that it is following the course Sharon set, inspired by his vision. There is no greater insult to Sharon than these declarations, as he battles valiantly for his life in Hadassah hospital in Jerusalem for these past two months.

Sharon agreed to accept the road map because he believed that despite its many drawbacks it would serve as Israel's best international line of political defense, especially in light of the rise and strengthening of Hamas, a possibility he took into account. Only Sharon was able to build this diplomatic wall.

President George W. Bush completely supported Sharon regarding the first obligation of the Palestinian Authority - if it wants to see the implementation of the road map: It must first put an end to terror in all forms and dismantle the terrorist infrastructure.

Indeed, this section of the agreement is particularly suitable for the Hamas test - it fits like a glove. After all, who can compare with Hamas, which attained new heights in its murder of innocent Israelis and plans day and night to continue its war against Israel.

From my close acquaintance with Sharon spanning over 50 years, I have no doubt that at this time he would not agree to depart a millimeter from any of the articles of the road map. His staunch ally Bush knew that; and let us hope that he will save Israel from its inexperienced politicians.

It is exactly at this time that Sharon would make sure to honor his public commitment: "There will be no further unilateral disengagements."

But when Dichter gets up and announces that he is in favor of uprooting additional settlements in Judea and Samaria in the context of another disengagement, not only is he undermining Sharon's ironclad policy, he is also making a grave tactical error vis- -vis the Palestinians. Now, more than ever, with Israel living in the shadow of a Hamas government and is fighting against it, to make a promise to uproot further settlements is tantamount to awarding Hamas a prize.

But let's, in Dichter's defense, assume for a moment that Sharon would indeed have uprooted a number of additional settlements after the elections - would he have gotten up and announced the fact at a time when Israel is waging an international struggle against Hamas's legitimacy? Of course not.

AT A time like this, a promise of further withdrawals only encourages Hamas to intensify its extremist positions. It bolsters its supporters in Europe and the State Department, giving them the hope that additional pressure can be placed on Israel to make even more concessions.

Sharon himself repeatedly said that additional Israeli settlements would be uprooted from Judea and Samaria - but only in the context of negotiations over a final settlement, in accordance with the road map.

Dichter, of all people, who quite rightly threatened that Palestinian prime minister-designate Ismail Haniyeh could be eliminated if he continued on the path of terror, must understand that there is no chance whatsoever of conducting this kind of negotiation with a Hamas government.

So why is he in such a rush to offer to uproot settlements? Only in order to curry favor with voters who have been misled to believe that another unilateral withdrawal will increase our security.

The government has proved bankrupt in its inability to defend the thousands of residents of the western Negev and Ashkelon area from the daily showers of Kassam rockets. It should hardly be promising voters that it will rush to court a similar fate for Ra'anana and Kfar Saba.

This article can also be read at <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1139395556933&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>

[[Back to the Article](#)]

Copyright 1995-2006 The Jerusalem Post - <http://www.jpost.com/>