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Shalom Bar Tal

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Right can't afford to turn other cheek

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Naomi Ragen

Ever since the disengagement, I think there is a great sigh of apathy from the voting public, who no longer believes that their participation in the democratic process assures them the honest use of power by their elected representatives. Check the polls: the public faith in politicians is at an all time low.

This sigh is coming most loudly from the right, those like myself who brought Arik Sharon into power. The stunning about-face of Mr. Sharon from defeating terrorists to giving them new hope, time-out to rearm with unimpeded weapons flow from Egypt, unmonitored checkpoint crossings, was like a huge slap across the face. Our ears are still ringing. We are confused.

The left, on the other hand, which somehow got its way despite the democratic process, seems more energized and focused than ever.

Kadima, Meretz no different

But before Kadima, or Labor or Meretz brings out the victory champagne (no big difference in their platforms, as far as I can tell, except that Meretz thinks the Road Map peace plan isn't fast enough. We should give them our country, and not, God forbid do anything as insulting as asking them to disarm terrorists in exchange) let me say this: The confusion and inactivity of the right is temporary.

Because never in our history have our options been clearer:

The Palestinians are set to vote in Hamas, whose platform is rivaled only by Adolph Hitler's Mein Kampf in its barbaric anti-Semitism and fanaticism. If we don't oppose them, they'll slaughter us. What clearer proof do we need that land for peace (with or without a partner) is not a solution; and that the Palestinians don't want a state, they want our state?

Iran, which has openly declared its intention to wipe Israel off the map is merrily developing an atom bomb to accomplish just that.

Likud is the answer

The U.S. Road Map, which called for territorial concessions at the same pace that the Arabs give up their terrorist networks, has been a non-starter and will remain that way. Because no Muslim terror organization anywhere in the world will give up its weapons willingly.

What the average voter is waiting to hear is an articulate and realistic response to these existential threats.

As much as I hate to admit it, I heard such a response in Herzliya from Benjamin Netanyahu a few days ago: in business there are no free lunches, and this is also true with politics, there can be no free withdrawals. The policy of mutuality works both ways. He who acts positively will receive goodwill in kind. He who acts negatively receives negativity back.

When the right, which has always been more realistic, begins to realize just what is at stake they will vote Likud, despite their distrust and anger at BiBi.

Because we on the right simply cannot turn the other cheek and give it to Ehud Olmert - who might, like his boss - deliver yet another stunning blow, one we just might not recover from the next time. We simply can't afford to be confused anymore.