

Negotiations with the Palestinians Keep Failing because the Arabs Still Think They Can Win: To Prove They Can't, Expert Says, Give War a Chance

All actions taken by Israel should be judged on the basis of whether or not they serve to demoralize the Palestinians, leading them to the conclusion that it would be in their best interests to sue for peace because the Jewish state cannot be destroyed and the Arabs cannot win this war, according to a Middle East expert who said, looked at this way, assassinating Hamas leader Ahmed Yassin was a "positive."

"Does the action increase the possibility of Palestinian acceptance of Israel or diminish that possibility?" said Dr. Daniel

Pipes, suggesting that the Sharon government's planned unilateral retreat from Gaza will be portrayed by Arab leaders as a Palestinian victory over Israel, definitely a "negative" in terms of convincing the Palestinians that they cannot "win."

"In a war, each side has goals and ways of seeing victory and defeat. One side will win and the other will lose. Compromise comes later," said Dr. Pipes. "Diplomacy in time of war is doomed to failure."

He made his remarks in Manhattan last month at a meeting of the Middle

East Forum, which he serves as director.

Convincing the Arabs

For Israel, he said, victory will come when the Palestinians accept Israel's right to exist. For that to happen, he said, the Palestinians will have to be convinced they cannot win.

"They don't have to like the Jewish state, but they have to accept it," he said, explaining that such acceptance will be characterized by the absence of all forms of Palestinian violence, including suicide bombers. Instead, Palestinians will learn to write letters and mount peaceful protests to express their unhappiness, he said.

"We will know we have arrived at peace and an Israeli victory when the Jews of Hebron have no more need of security than do the Arabs of Nablus," he said.

Enemies and Partners

According to Dr. Pipes, the US has prevented Israel from properly waging war, and this delay has postponed prospects for real peace. The problem, he said, is that while the US sees its enemies—Saddam Husein and Osama Bin Laden—as opponents to be destroyed, the White House sees PA leader Yasir Arafat as Israel's peace partner.

Dr. Pipes characterized the US position as: "You must defeat your enemy; you don't defeat your peace partner." The problem, he said, is that, at present, Israel does not have a peace partner and will not obtain one until it wins the war in the Middle East. To accomplish a Palestinian defeat, Israel will eventually have to demoralize and impose its will on the enemy.

Israel will have to resume using strong measures of deterrence and, according to Dr. Pipes, the US will have to give Israel its full support to do so. This means, he said, that, regarding Israel, the US must "shift from a diplomatic paradigm to a paradigm of war."

"At the end of a war, one side gives in, and then it's final. It can't be undone. Then there can be negotiations," said Dr. Pipes.

Completed Wars

He cited World War II as an example of a war that was completed. Germany and Japan were defeated once and for all. World War I, however, was not decided conclusively. In 1918, the Ger-



Daniel Pipes

mans were left with the sense that they could still win, and so the seeds of World War II were sown, said Dr. Pipes.

In 1991, he said, the US conclusively won the Cold War with the Soviet Union.

For the US, the only war that was decisively concluded as an American defeat was the one with Vietnam.

"In April 1975, it was final. America had lost. There was nothing that could be undone. That's how it has to be between Israel and the Palestinians," he said.

On the other hand, the war with North Korea did not end conclusively in 1953, and, said Dr. Pipes, the ramifications of that indecisive conclusion continue to this day. Neither Iran nor Iraq won the war between them in the 1980s, and their relationship is tenuous at best.

Nothing Decided in Lebanon

When Israel withdrew from south Lebanon in 2000, there was no conclusive victory for either side, but, said Dr. Pipes, the Arabs took the Israeli retreat to mean that Hezbollah-style violence against the Jewish state could be successful and that negotiations with Israel—always seen by the Arabs as distasteful—were unnecessary.

"There is a direct line from the Israeli retreat in May 2000, to the Palestinian intransigence at Camp David in the summer of 2000, and to the start of the intifada violence in September 2000," he said.

He pointed out that while Israel has won all its wars, they were tactical, not decisive, victories. After each round, the Ar-

abs were left with the impression they could still win. Usually, Israel was restrained by the US from continuing on to victory.

Asked how the US could be convinced to shift its policy, Dr. Pipes said it was important to show that all previous policy suggestions did not work.

"At best, all the plans—Oslo, Tenet, Mitchell, Zinni, Saudi Arabia's Abdullah, and the Road Map—were innocuous. At worst, they were counter-productive. When something repeatedly fails after such a long time, it's clear that something else is needed," he said.

Cross-Cultural Misunderstanding

He pointed out that while Israel had entered into the now-failed Oslo

Accords with high hopes for achieving peace, the Palestinians entered into the accords with hopes only that they could somehow use the agreement to defeat Israel and win. The Israelis wanted recognition of their sovereignty and they thought the Palestinians wanted dignity and autonomy.

"It was a cross-cultural misunderstanding," said Dr. Pipes, adding that the Israelis who participated in negotiating the accords displayed a combination of "fatigue and arrogance."

He did not deny that they were tired of war and wanted nothing more than to be "a regular Western state," but they also

showed their arrogance by insisting that, despite all the concessions they were making, Israel was still "imposing its will on the Palestinians to force them to end the conflict." The "Oslo Israelis" and their supporters pointed to Israel's then-booming economy and strong military, including the hinted-at nuclear weapons.

According to Dr. Pipes, the Palestinians saw only that "post-Oslo Israel was not the Israel of old."

"Israel had given up its policy of deterrence and had adopted post-Zionism. The Palestinians saw they could breach the agreement and suffer no consequences for it. Israel seemed totally demoralized. The Palestinians thought they could give it one kick and it would all fall down, especially after Israel retreated so quickly from Lebanon," he said. He



Killing Sheik Yassin was a positive towards ending the war

singled out groups such as the "Four Mothers" protest movement which most Israelis see as at least partially responsible for convincing the country's then-left-wing government to retreat from Lebanon.

"To the Palestinians, Israel seemed to be a country ripe for defeat, and the Israelis failed to see how the signals they were transmitting were being interpreted," he said.