

Daniel Pipes: First a Change of Heart, Then Peace

By J.R. Kropsky

NEW YORK—Perhaps the most surprising element of the current unrest in the Middle East is that Israel decided to fight, said an expert on Middle East affairs last month.

According to Dr. Daniel Pipes, it certainly shocked the Arabs who expected to find a people who would pick up their swords and run like they had from Lebanon. But this time, instead of achieving victory over a defeated, tired people, the Arab world was shocked to meet a hard-pressed, yet resilient Jewish population as its enemy.

Dr. Pipes, director of the

Philadelphia-based Middle East Forum, made his remarks at Hunter College. His topic was "How To Achieve a Lasting Arab-Israeli Peace."

Free Speech?

A number of Arab groups, however, were determined not to allow the former University of Chicago and Harvard University professor to speak uninterrupted. If they could have had their way, he would have been forbidden to speak all together.

For days before his arrival at the college's North Assembly Hall, the pro-Arab internet

lists had exhorted their followers to go to the school to protest and, if possible, shout Dr. Pipes down.

As an ardent defender of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's anti-terrorism policies, Dr. Pipes has elicited strong responses in the past for his positions.

To those who agree with him that Israel must combat terrorism before diplomatic relations with the Arab world can resume, he strikes a resonating chord. To those who disagree, he is perceived as a menacing threat and a leading defender of Israel's hard-line position.

Anti-Israel and Anti-US

Those approaching Hunter were greeted with a circular sponsored by the Arab group Al-Awda. Somehow, they had gotten the idea that Dr. Pipes, who had worked for the Defense Department during the Reagan administration, was still a member of the Department, and Al-Awda thought that could be used against him.

"Daniel Pipes is coming to Hunter College as an authority on 'peace in the Middle East,' yet he is an uncritical supporter of Sharon's dirty war on Pales-

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Dr. Daniel Pipes

tinians," said the circular.

Al-Awda continued by saying that Dr. Pipes "has made a career out of cheering on the worst atrocities US foreign policy has to offer. Whether it's the 'war on terror' or Israel's ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, Pipes is always there beating the drum for war."

The circular compared Dr. Pipes' visit to Hunter to that of a hypothetical defender of apartheid during the 1980's who, the Arab group supposed, would be "run off campus and rightly so."

"In 2002, Pipes has the nerve to come to Hunter and defend apartheid in Israel. Let's show him and his supporters that racism will not be tolerated, not now, not ever," concluded the piece.

But the audience, consisting of several hundred supporters of Dr. Pipes and those curious as to what he had to say, ignored Al-Awda's lack of tolerance and filled the auditorium.

"Closure is achieved through defeat. The Germans in World War I were not defeated until round two. At the end of the Second World War, they were finally defeated and a democracy was formed. The Palestinians need to be liberated from their dream of destroying Israel."

Dr. Pipes made clear that, despite the efforts of Al-Awda and their colleagues, he would assert his fundamental right to free speech and would not allow such groups to run him off campus.

Should Israel Exist?

He began his lecture noting that too many people have portrayed the current crisis as if Israel were committing undirected, meaningless violence against the Palestinians. Rather than focusing on the root cause of the current war—a pan-Arab rejection of the Jewish State—the world, educated by the media, diverts attention to an "undifferentiated violence."

"The key question is: should Israel exist or not," said Dr. Pipes.

In 1948, the Arabs rejected Israel, and although they lost the war, they did not relinquish their future ambitions of victory.

According to Dr. Pipes, the

1967 Six Day War was "the greatest in the annals of warfare." It provided Israel with a defensible position and a lesson in pre-emptive strike attack.

After the Six-Day War, the Arab world began to resign itself to Israel as a strong and resolute foe. Although the Arabs tried again in 1973, and halfheartedly during the first intifada in the 1980's, to defeat the Jewish state, it was clear Israel would, at all costs, maintain its own national security. Through a series of countervailing positions, including settlements, army outposts, and crack intelligence units, Israel established martial deterrents.

Demarcating Line

In 1993, believing they no longer had to prove themselves and might be able finally to end the conflict with the Arabs, Israel signed the Oslo Accords in Washington.

"In retrospect what happened was that the Arab world reassessed the situation and revitalized the idea that Israel could be destroyed," said Dr. Pipes.

As Dr. Pipes recounted and analyzed the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict, he was met by catcalls from dissenters in the audience. Several homemade banners were hoisted and a green flag of Palestine was raised.

After a series of raucous exchanges between those looking to disrupt the speech and audience members demanding that Dr. Pipes be heard unaccompanied, the relatively small, yet concentrated pro-Arab contingency tamped down under the threat of security escorts out of the building.

No Negotiations

Resuming his timeline, Dr. Pipes maintained it was not Israeli intransigence that caused the current crisis, but rather PA leader Yasir Arafat's "no show" at the Camp David Accords in the summer of 2000. According to Dr. Pipes, Mr. Arafat, along with the rest of the Arab world had no intention of dealing with Israel through negotiations. If the Lebanese Hizbollah succeeded in using violence to force the Israelis to run in the spring of 2000, then the PA militias should be able to do the same thing in the fall. Israel had vacated every bit of Lebanese land, and Mr. Arafat figured he could force them to leave all the land in the West Bank—and then some.

"In July of 2000, Israel offered the most extraordinary terms to Yasir Arafat, but the idea was already percolating in the Arab world to destroy Israel. The Israelis were not just

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to flee from Jenin and Ramallah, but from Tel Aviv and Haifa as well," said Dr. Pipes.

But rather than achieving their victory, the Palestinians were confronted by Israelis imbued with the same vigor they had had in years gone by.

"Since late 2000, violence has been counter-productive for Palestinians. It has galvanized the Israeli public. Arafat believed violence was supposed to end the conflict, but it actually revitalized the Israeli spirit," said Dr. Pipes.

A Band-Aid

According to Dr. Pipes, the key to the conflict is the fact that Arabs rejected Israel's existence from 1948 onward. All the major players in the Arab world deny Israel's existence, yet the onus has always been on Israel to fork over land.

"From Mitchell to Tenet to

Oslo, the world is putting a Band-Aid on cancer," he said, insisting that the real solution lies in establishing a change of heart on the Arab side.

"The Arabs must recognize that Israel is there and is a reality and will not go away," he said.

Dr. Pipes insisted that quick fixes and short cuts, tempting as they may be, will not work.

"Creating a wall, waiting out Yasir Arafat until a more congenial leader comes along, returning to Oslo—none of these addresses the basic question of Arab rejectionism," he said.

Arabs' Problem, Too

According to Dr. Pipes, the situation does not adversely affect only Israel whose fiscal situation is bleak. The Palestinians face a much harsher economic outlook than do the Israelis.

Only through a cessation

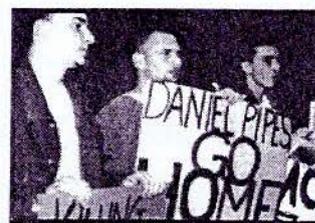
of violence and a real recognition of Israel can Palestinians ever attain economic prosperity, he said.

"Palestinians are a skilled and potentially dignified people. The idea is that only when they give up their ugly intent to destroy Israel, will prosperity follow," he said. "Only when Palestinians give up on their dream of destruction, will Palestinians and the Arab world as a whole, give up on anti-Zionism, irredentism, and economic despair."

Although Dr. Pipes, who lived three years in Egypt and is a scholar on issues relating to Islam and the Arab-Israeli conflict, is convinced that Arab states and their body politic are currently unwilling to countenance an agreement with Israel, he does not rule out the possibility of peace. But that final real-

ization, he said, may be a long way off. First, he said, the Arabs must endure a change of spirit.

"Closure is achieved through defeat. The Germans in World War I were not defeated until round two. At the end of the Second World War, they were finally defeated and a democracy was formed. The Palestinians need to be liberated from their dream of destroying Israel," he said.



Signs outside were freedom of speech, catcalls inside were not