



LIEBERMAN'S PLAN.

“DECLARE GAZA HOSTILE POLITICAL ENTITY”

Declaring Gaza a hostile entity and an enemy state is part of the new political plan presented by the Israeli Deputy PM and Minister for Strategic Affairs Avigdor Lieberman on May 31. (Lieberman is the chairman of the *Yisrael Beiteinu* party - “Israel our House.”)

The main points of the plan include complete severance of ties with the Gaza Strip, isolating the Strip from the West Bank [Judea and Samaria], bombing Gaza in retaliation for Kassam attacks, canceling Palestinian prisoners’ visitation rights until kidnapped soldier Gilad Shalit is released, and ending all contact with Palestinian Authority [PA] President Mahmoud Abbas.

Lieberman explained that current Israeli perception offers only two options on how to deal with the Palestinians: Acknowledgment and acceptance of the existing situation, which consequently rewards terror; or dialogue with the Hamas government in an attempt to find a way out of the situation. He claimed that both alternatives are equally wrong: “They both validate the axis of evil, and they both shed doubt on the future of the State of Israel.”

The new political plan, which was presented to government officials in the United States and Europe this week, has not yet been introduced to the Israeli government. Nonetheless, Lieberman plans to follow through on his plan, which constitutes *Yisrael Beiteinu*’s vision as part of the current government. According to Lieberman, this plan presents a pragmatic approach, which will bring Israel a practical solution to the state of chaos with the Palestinian Authority.

In his plan, the deputy prime minister refers to the West Bank and Gaza as two separate entities, both on the political level and on the practical level. Israel will address both entities separately. Any negotiation with the PA will only apply to the West Bank. “Gaza will be defined as a hostile, independent political entity for all intents and purposes,” Lieberman explained.

Lieberman suggested practical steps to implement his plan: There will be no movement between Gaza and the West Bank, not of goods, and not of people. This restriction of movement includes the Palestinian president’s aides and Palestinian VIPs. Workers will not be permitted to leave Gaza to work in Israel.

Taxes for the Gaza Strip will not be collected. The Ashdod port will not transfer any goods to the Strip. All crossings, including Karni crossing [between Gaza and Israel] will be sealed. Israel will not provide Gaza authorities with any type of infrastructure

or resource. The Gazans will have to find their own solutions to problems of fuel, water, and electricity.

Lieberman said that the process of complete severance of ties will begin in 2008, when all contact between Israel and Gaza will be cut off. "Gaza's fate will be like that of Sinai," Lieberman's plan said. "Just as Israel did not continue to provide anything to Sinai after it withdrew, there is no reason why it should act any differently toward Gaza, especially in the current situation."

Leading up to the complete separation from Gaza and from that point onward, Israel will treat any security threat coming from the Strip very severely. Israel will work toward thwarting the threat by any means available, just as any sovereign country is meant to do in order to protect its citizens from an enemy attack. "It's very simple," said Lieberman, "Sderot's fate will be similar to that of the Gazan neighborhood of Rimal. If Sderot is hit, the Rimal neighborhood will be hit just as hard at the very least."

"The security situation will change only when NATO forces and the European Union take full responsibility for what goes on in the Gaza Strip. NATO will act to enforce public order and preserve security in the region.

The EU will take responsibility for the construction and opening of alternative infrastructure and provide employment for the residents of Gaza. Financial activity will include not only money transfers, donations, and investments, but the management and close supervision of projects being started, and infrastructure being built. Otherwise, the money will evaporate or be used to fund terror."

Lieberman added that "as long as (Gilad) Shalit is held captive with no one able to visit him, not even the Red Cross, visitation rights of all Palestinians security prisoners held in Israel should be cancelled."

Israel should also admit to the failure in its attempt to strengthen Abbas, said Lieberman, adding that the Jewish state should "admit that every attempt to strengthen him, or place him as a partner who is capable of getting the job done, has failed. Israel should wait for an authentic replacement with leadership potential and a pragmatic outlook." - Ynetnews.com, May 31, 2007