

{OCTOBER 16 2004}

# THANK YOU, DUBBY

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**W**hat really is important is not what he said or why he said it, but the world-view that animates him. By now, everybody has had a go at analyzing the interview with Dov (“Dubby”) Weisglass, Ariel Sharon’s most intimate confidant. But there is precious little to analyze. His statement is crystal clear: the “redeployment plan” was designed to “freeze” the peace process for decades, to put all peace plans “in formaldehyde”, to put an end to the possibility of a Palestinian state, once and for all.

A dozen small settlements will be dismantled in order to keep practically all the 250,000 West Bank settlers where they are. Israel will “concede” the Gaza Strip, which constitutes 1.3% of pre-1948 Palestine, in order to take permanent possession of the West Bank, which is 16 times larger. The Gaza Strip will be cut off from the world on land, by sea and in the air, as will the seven or eight similar Palestinian enclaves that will come into being on the West Bank.

Why did “Dubby” disclose this plan? After all, the disclosure was like spitting in the face of the Labor Party, exactly when Sharon needed them most!

The answer is simple: Sharon wants to convince the right and has only contempt for the left. 13 out of the 40 members of his Likud faction in the Knesset abstained from voting for him this week, although the vote was about nothing more than a resolution to “take notice” of an unimportant speech of his. Sharon wants to explain to the extreme right wing of his own party that “disengagement” is a war-plan rather than a peace-plan, a plan to annex territories rather than a plan to “give up” territories, a plan for the rapid expansion of the West Bank settlements rather than a plan to dismantle the settlements in the Gaza Strip.

Sharon cannot say so openly without making a fool of George W. Bush. That’s why he sent his trusted lieutenant to say it instead of him. The settlers know, of course, that “Dubby” is His Master’s Voice.

Sharon can afford to treat the “left” with disdain. Witness the farce with Shimon

Peres: he analyzed Weisglass' statement in an uncompromising Knesset speech and condemned Sharon acidly. Immediately afterwards he assembled the Labor Knesset faction and asked them not to vote against Sharon. But the Members were so convinced by his speech that they overruled him, 10 to 9. "I was too successful," Peres complained.

Thereafter, the two "leftist" parties, Labor and Yakhad (formerly Meretz) announced that they were going to vote for the disengagement plan when Sharon submits it to the Knesset. No disclosures will cause them to desist. Sharon knew that he could rely on their feebleness, and how right he is.

Only Weisglass himself may pay a price. It is difficult to believe that the beautiful friendship between Dubby and Condoleezza, between Weis and Rice, will hold after Weisglass practically undressed her in public.

But that is not what is really important. After all, Weisglass did not reveal anything new to those who know Sharon's intentions. And whoever wants to deceive himself will continue to do so.

What is really important is the Weltanschauung, the world-view of Sharon as it emerges from Weisglass' long interview. When he exposes Sharon's ways of thinking, this sheds light on the basic beliefs and perceptions of his master.

Sharon's world is one-dimensional, as limited as the flat world before Galileo. A world where brute force, and only brute force, reigns supreme. This is a world where there are no past and no future, no lessons of history and no foreseeing of things to come. Whatever exists now will exist forever. This is a world without moral constraints, where the opinions of mankind do not count. The world of Stalin, who once asked contemptuously: "How many divisions has the pope?"

His world looks like this: The only thing that counts is the interest of Israel and the Jewish people (as seen by Sharon). Their interest is to take possession of all of the territory between the Mediterranean and the Jordan (at least). The Palestinians are powerless. Hence, they are nothing more than an object to be kicked around as much as one pleases. Europe is a pathetic lot. To hell with Europe.

There is only one real power in the world: The United States. They are the "world management". All the power of the US is concentrated in the White House. The President and a handful of other people are the managers. That's how it is now, and that's how it is going stay in future.

Therefore, all we need is to maintain the power of the Israeli army and the alliance with the White House. All the rest is nonsense, fantasies of eggheads.

The Israeli army and the White House – that is the winning combination. With it we shall take complete possession of the whole country. There is no need for a peace

process, indeed, there is no need for peace. The Palestinians are a negligible factor. Let them vegetate for the time being in their ghettos. In due course, they will disappear from the country.

This is, in free translation, the world of Sharon according to Weisglass.

On the face of it, a realistic picture. Sharon's thoughts are primitive, and perhaps because of this, one might believe, he sees things as they really are.

Really? Is this in truth the real picture? History shows that brute military power is a blunt instrument that cannot solve complex problems. A leader who puts his sole trust in it will discover that it is a broken reed which wounds the hand that grasps it.

What Thomas Jefferson wrote in the American Declaration of Independence about "a decent respect for the opinions of mankind", was not just an empty phrase. It was a realistic appraisal: world public opinion influences in a thousand ways the behavior of nations and governments. It can have far-reaching effects. "The pen is mightier than the sword," according to a British poet. And the pope does indeed have divisions, even if they don't march on the parade ground.

Military might is but one of the forces active in the world. Economic forces do not have a smaller impact; as a matter of fact, their impact may be much bigger in the long run. Moral forces are invisible, but their impact is immense. One of the greatest military leaders in history, Napoleon, was well aware of this.

The human craving for freedom is invincible, and so is the struggle of oppressed nations for liberation. To ignore this is not realism, it is blindness.

Even George W. Bush, himself no less primitive and brutal than Sharon, is learning that the "world management" is subject to severe limitations, as he slowly sinks into the morass of Iraq. The belief that Israel's problems can be solved solely by an alliance with the "world managers" is an illusion.

The world is not one-dimensional, even though one country has attained an impressive military superiority. The world is a very complicated place; numberless forces are at work, nothing stays in one place. "Everything is in flux," as the ancient Greek philosopher said.

One is tempted to paraphrase Hamlet: "There are more things in heaven and earth, Ariel, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

The world-view of Sharon, which at first appears so realistic, is the very opposite of realism. It is a view that will lead us to disaster.

And to Dubby, who disclosed it, whatever his motives, many thanks.