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Churchill or Chamberlain?

By Guy Senbel for Guysen Israel News

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Editorial of the week of the 17/02/2007

This week we would like to draw our readers' attention to one of the most serious situations of the start of the 21st century, the nuclearization of Iran and its consequences for the future of Israel and the planet.

The Iranian rush for nuclear power, a much discussed topic in editorials, universities, government ministries and cafes... The Iranian bomb is one of the most mediatized events in two years. The stakes are known: Iran is on a quest to become a superpower, Iran is a totalitarian regime dominated by religious fanatics; long courted by the West, Iran was both a source (for petrol) and a market (for arms).

On Iran and its danger, the politicians speak at length, often contradictorily. Called at the start of the summer by a foreign minister as a "stabilizing" country for the region, the subject of all speculations, all discussions, Iran is exacerbating political rivalries in even the biggest democracies. There are those who think that after all Pakistan and India have nuclear weapons, so it is not illegitimate for Iran to also acquire a "civil nuclear power".

There are those, who aware of the risk of a general war, prefer to avoid it and take voluntary shelter behind long winded discourse in order to avoid any risk of regionalization of the conflict. And then there are those who beyond the risk of war, remind us that a country whose president's ambition is to wipe Israel off of the map cannot be trusted. Let us understand well: Israel is not only the Jewish country, Israel is a market democracy, the only one in the region, so that when Ahmadinejad attacks Israel, he is certainly attacking Jews and Judaism, for whom he does not hide his visceral hatred, with his increasing number of hate filled speeches and denial conferences, but he is also challenging democracies everywhere and the entire free world.

Israel thus serves as a symbolic shield of a powerful Europe that is understanding too slowly what President George W. Bush said again on Thursday 15 February: «We are engaged in a long term ideological fight between the forces of moderation and freedom against the forces of destruction and extremism».

This is the shadow of Munich that still hovers over the great western capitals and there are many pretexts to behave like Chamberlain rather than like Churchill: the interminable war in Iraq, the perception of a regional conflict that is essentially between the Israeli and Palestinians, the futile last war in Lebanon, serving as a pretext.

Chamberlain's choice in 1938 led to a much longer and horrific war just one year later. And it was Churchill who won it despite the bad choices of the past. But at what price! Tens of millions dead for not having prevented one man from destroying the world at the right time.

It would seem that Europe has to understand quickly that it is strong and that it must maintain pressure on Iran and apply the sanctions provided by the UN resolution. Europe is concentrating its attention on the risks of a conflict with Iran instead of realizing that Iran is a country that is extraordinarily fragile and weakened.

In the last few months, Ahmadinejad has been challenged in his own country where the opposition has accused him of weakening Iran and of cutting Teheran off from the rest of the world. Ahmadinejad is also challenged in the street, by a society that is definitely patriotic, but also eroded by the censor, restrictions on liberty, the wretched isolation of a country whose cultural and social richness is in reality huge.

Europe's strength would be to exploit Iran weaknesses and to remember that Iran already supports and supplies Hamas, Hezbollah, and terrorism in Iraq. Iran has already started the war. And it has every intention of continuing

it. Today more than ever, Europe has to show its strength, its intransigence, its unity. Iran would not be able to resist the Europe of Churchill.

In Israel, two men have mobilized to sensitize European, international and Israeli opinion to the threats and the real dangers of the Iranian rush for nuclear power, a race against time, a race against the threats of sanctions that are weighing on Iran but which have not yet been applied. Two men are aware that president Ahmadinejad has for a long time adopted the posture of an Adolf Hitler of our start of the century.

Bibi Netanyahu and Shaul Mofaz are these two men whose historic conscience and the meaning of their obligations compel them to travel to Paris, London and New York, and all the cities of Israel, to communicate a realistic message of the risks of a nuclear Iran.

One is the former prime minister, and now head of the opposition, the other is the vice prime minister, former chief of staff and defense minister. In their speeches both men remind their audiences that the UN resolution 1701 has been neither applied nor respected since the Israeli soldiers Gilad Shalit, Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev, have not yet been released from their eight month captivity. Our thoughts this evening are with them and their families.

This week our thoughts are also with the family of Ilan Halimi (Z.L) who was reinterred on Friday 9 January in the land of Israel. Thanks to everyone who accompanied his relatives, forever in mourning from having lost their son in such terrible suffering. Guysen TV's editorial team did not fail in its duty, providing its viewers with scenes of this extraordinarily moving event.

Until next week ...

Commentaire:

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