

Labor/Peres vs. Likud/Netanyahu:

A Comparative View

May 23, 1996



Brief Analysis

Following are excerpts from the Labor and Likud Party platforms and direct quotations from the two parties' prime ministerial candidates on key issues in Israel's May 29 national elections.

LABOR PARTY

Oslo Accords: "On the basis of the breakthrough in the peace process over the past few years, Israel will continue negotiations on a permanent peace with the Palestinian Authority, Syria, and Lebanon." (Labor Party Platform)

"The negotiations [with the Palestinians] will be based on the Oslo Accords and Israel will stand by the following principles in the negotiations: a. A united Jerusalem, the capital of Israel, under Israeli jurisdiction. b. Israel will not rule over the Palestinian people. c. The Jordan River will be the eastern security border of Israel and there will be no other army west of it. d. Separation which will answer the needs of security and national identity. e. Sovereignty over the Jordan Valley, Northwest Dead Sea area, the Etzion Bloc, and areas essential to the security of Israel. f. Palestinian, Jordanian, and Israeli economic cooperation. g. Settlement of the Palestinian refugee problem outside the borders of Israel, rejecting the right to return. h. Maintaining Israeli jurisdiction over most of the Israeli settlers. (No new settlements will be established.) The permanent solution, arrived at through negotiations, will be brought for approval in a referendum vote." (Labor Party Platform)

"The Likud sees in the autonomy a permanent solution, and we see in the autonomy a step toward a permanent solution. . . . I distinguish between a political and an economic separation, which I was always against and I am still against. But otherwise, if the alternative is a binational state, I will support the nation having its own entity. Clearly that is the meaning of separation." (Shimon Peres, in Jerusalem Post, 4/5/96)

Syria: "The Labor Party regards the Golan as an important region to the State of Israel. The peace negotiations with Syria will continue on the basis of the Security Council

LIKUD PARTY

Oslo Accords: "The Government of Israel will carry out negotiations with the Palestinian Authority to achieve a permanent peace arrangement, on condition that the Palestinians fully honor all their obligations." (Likud Party Platform)

"The Government of Israel will enable the Palestinians to manage their lives freely, within the framework of self-government. However, foreign affairs, and defense, and matters which require coordination will remain the responsibility of the State of Israel. The government will oppose the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. . . . Security areas vital for the defense of Israel and Jewish settlements will remain under full Israeli sovereignty. Israel will keep its vital water resources in Judea and Samaria. There shall be no infringement of Israel's use of its water resources. . . . The Jordan River shall be the eastern border of the State of Israel, south of Lake Kinneret. This will be the permanent border between the State of Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The Kingdom of Jordan may become a partner in the final arrangement between Israel and the Palestinians, in areas agreed upon in the negotiations." (Likud Party Platform)

"We will not return to the six cities that have already been handed over to the Palestinians. A Likud government will recognize the facts created by the Oslo agreements, but will act to reduce the threats they pose. . . . We will maintain regular contacts with the PA on all the issues pertaining to committees and joint patrols. However, if we talk about moving toward negotiations on the permanent arrangement, we first demand that the PA stop terrorism, put a halt to anti-Israeli propaganda, and amend the Palestinian Charter. We are prepared to let the Palestinians run their own affairs, with the exception of

Resolutions 242 and 338. The agreement we are seeking will be based on secure borders and dependable security arrangements, guaranteed water sources essential to Israel, and the establishment of full, normal relations between the two countries, emphasizing economic cooperation. The agreement with Syria will accompany agreements with most of the other Arab states. The permanent settlement will be brought to a referendum vote after the negotiations. (Labor Party Platform)

"The first thing I will do [if I am elected] is to renew the peace process with the Syrians. . . . I say from experience that in the coming four years we can reach a comprehensive peace. We must have compromises, even on the Golan." (Peres interviewed on Israel Channel 1, reported 5/7/96)

Jerusalem: "Jerusalem, capital of the State of Israel and the focal point of the Jewish people, will remain united and undivided, under Israeli sovereignty. . . . The government led by the Labor Party will guarantee continuation of the freedom of access, the freedom of expression, and the freedom of worship in the holy places in Jerusalem, to people of all nations and religions." (Labor Party Platform)

Settlements: "I don't think we have to dismantle settlements, I don't think we have to add settlements. That is my position. No adding and no dismantling." (Peres, in Jerusalem Post, 4/5/96)

U.S.-Israel Relations: "The relations between Israel and the United States have reached a peak in terms of the quality of the relations and the deep friendship between Israel and the Administration, Congress, and the American people. The government will act to add an extra dimension to these relations with the establishment and the implementation of the Strategic Alliance and the Alliance for War Against Terror between Israel and the United States of America." (Labor Party Platform)

Security: "Israel will continue to develop its qualitative advantage over the Arab armies. . . . The fight against terror and subversion must be a central factor in the peace and security policy of Israel. The Israeli government will see itself as free to choose the place, manner, means, and timing for the war against terrorism." (Labor Party Platform)

two spheres: foreign relations and security." (Benjamin Netanyahu to Israel Council on Foreign Relations, 4/21/96)

Syria: "The Tenth Knesset passed a resolution proposed by the Likud government to apply Israeli law, jurisdiction, and administration on the Golan Heights, thus setting Israeli sovereignty over the area." (Likud Party Platform)

". . . in the case of the Golan Heights, the land from which we were attacked contains vital assets needed to prevent a future war. . . . We do not have to reach an agreement at any price with Syria. I want to reach a good agreement. The agreement might have to be made in stages. It is possible that some things still have to reach fruition in Damascus." (Netanyahu in Jerusalem Post, 5/10/96)

Jerusalem: "United and undivided Jerusalem is the capital of the State of Israel. Activities which undermine the status of Jerusalem will be banned, and therefore PLO and Palestinian Authority institutions in the city, including the Orient House, will be closed." (Likud Party Platform)

Settlements: "I certainly don't rule out new settlements, that's obvious. But my view about settlement activity has always been . . . that . . . it has to be built on economic infrastructure which means larger urban centers." (Netanyahu, in Jerusalem Post, 5/10/96)

U.S.-Israel Relations: "I will make good relations with the United States a cornerstone of our policy. I don't believe in purchasing American or international support by giving up our most precious national assets, including security. . . . I would adopt a long-term plan to wean Israel off American financial aid beginning with the \$1.2 billion of economic aid." (Netanyahu, in Jerusalem Post, 5/10/96)

Security: "Security is the basis for durable peace in our region. Israel will make security a first condition in any peace agreement. . . . The IDF and other Israeli security forces will enjoy complete freedom of action, as needed, in all places in their struggle against terror." (Likud Party Platform)

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