

Speaker Pelosi: After Damascus... Tehran?

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE NANCY PELOSI should be applauded for taking a bipartisan group of Congressmen to Damascus to talk with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Her visit, which was sharply criticized by President Bush and Vice President Cheney, was clearly in the national interest.

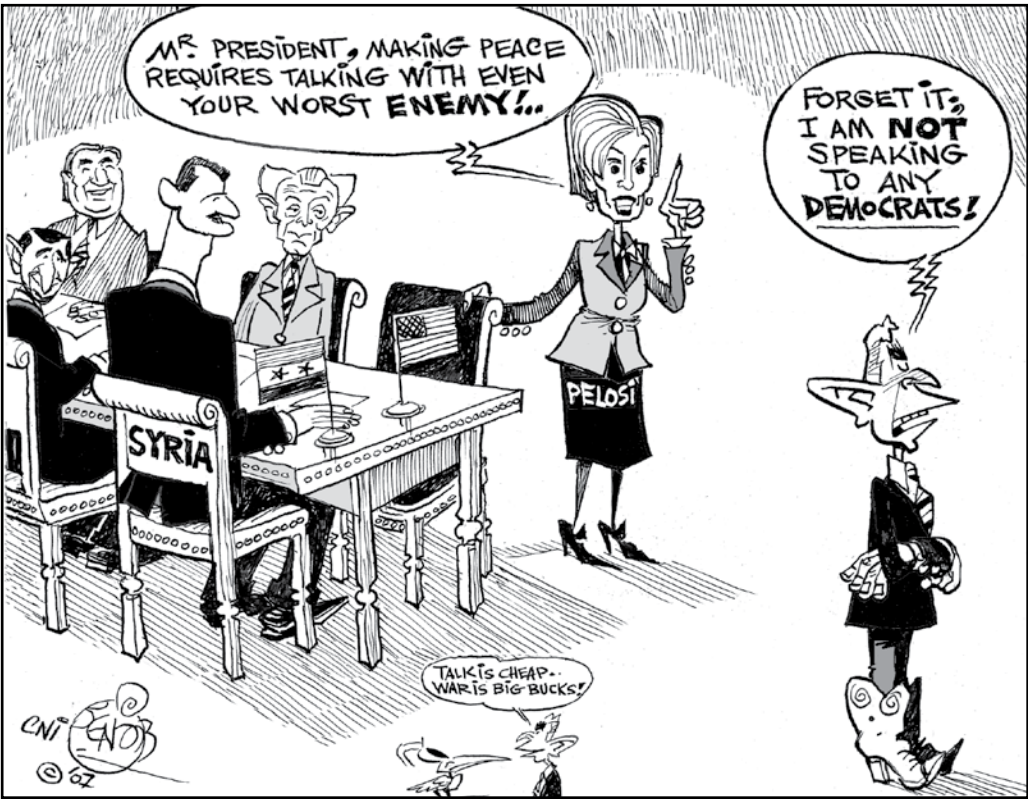
Taking a tip from the Iraq Study Group Report, Speaker Pelosi acted responsibly to encourage change in the U.S. foreign policy dynamic in the Middle East. For the last six years, the region has reeled under the impact of war and counterinsurgency in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, and more recently Lebanon. Talking to the head of state of Syria marks a promising beginning of greater realism, less ideology in the conduct of foreign policy.

Opening up a congressional dialogue with the Iranians is the next logical step. Only by talking to all parties concerned can solutions be found to the difficult and complex issues in Iraq and elsewhere in the region.

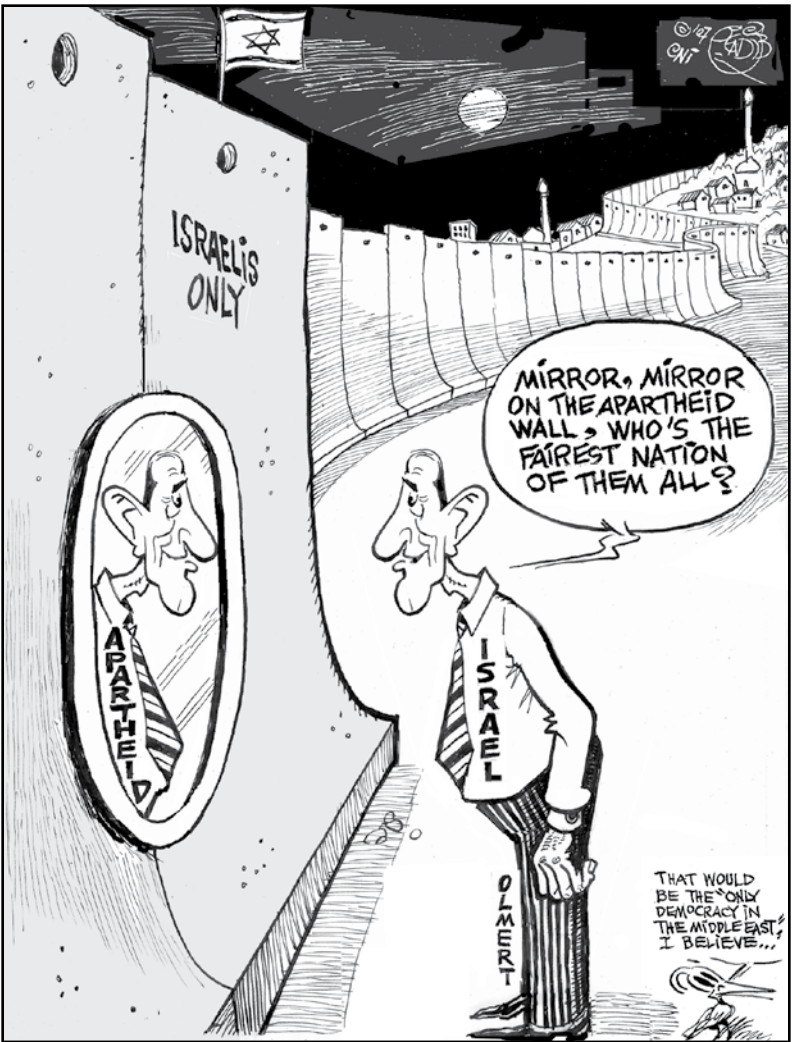
Continuing on to Riyadh, Speaker Pelosi gave important and needed recognition by the American people to King Abdullah’s extraordinary effort to reopen the moribund Arab-Israeli peace process, so crudely ignored by Israeli Prime Minister Olmert and President Bush. To try to end the callous suffering of the Palestinian people, the king successfully intervened earlier in the year to resolve the differences between Hamas and Fatah and to bring about a unity government. This should have allowed the resumption of foreign aid.

That has not happened. During her entire Middle East tour, Speaker Pelosi never once called for a clear start of negotiations for resolving the core issue confronting Middle East peace – the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As the Iraq Study Group Report states, “The United States does its ally Israel no favors in avoiding direct involvement to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict.” The Israelis continue to undermine prospects for peace by constructing the separation or Apartheid wall, expanding Jewish colonies in the West Bank, annexing Palestinian land around Jerusalem, and destroying Palestinian homes in the occupied territories.

Can we have any hope that the Speaker will now show as much courage on the Palestinian issue as she has shown in going to Damascus?



But First Deal With Israeli Apartheid in Palestine!



PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER caused an uproar by daring to title his recent bestseller about Israeli policy in the occupied West Bank and Gaza “Palestine Peace Not Apartheid.” Before the book was even published, Speaker Pelosi joined other Democrats in condemning Carter’s use of the word Apartheid, which he defined as the “forced separation of two peoples in the same territory with one of the groups dominating or controlling the other.”

As former Israeli Minister of Education Shulamit Aloni argues, “The U.S. Jewish establishment’s onslaught on former President Jimmy Carter is based on him daring to tell the truth which is known to all: through its army, the government of Israel practices a brutal form of Apartheid in the occupied territories. Its army has turned every Palestinian village and town into a fenced-in, or blocked-in, detention camp.”

On June 9th the world will mark the 40th anniversary of Israel’s oppressive military occupation of Palestine – the longest occupation in modern history. Yet the U.S. government continues to fund, support and even encourage Israel’s policy of colonization, Apartheid, and imprisonment of the Palestinians.

Israel has turned Gaza and the West Bank into open-air prisons. Only Jewish people are allowed to live in Israeli settlements in the West Bank – housing that is highly subsidized by the U.S. taxpayer, at the rate of \$500 million per year. Israel’s intimidating wall, built on Palestinian land, separates Palestinians and their goods from Israelis, from the outside world, and, most perversely, from 100,000 other Palestinians living on the “wrong” side of the wall.

Among a population of 2.5 million Palestinians on the West Bank, Israel has strategically placed nearly 500,000 Jewish settlers, supported by a vast network of settler-only bypass roads and military checkpoints that crisscross the territory, making a two-state solution to the conflict impossible. It is a simple grab for land and water.

The military and political domination of Palestinian Muslims and Christians by Israel’s Jewish population could not continue without U.S. support, including \$3 billion in annual military aid from U.S. taxpayers. Meanwhile, U.S.-imposed sanctions on the Palestinians have led to skyrocketing unemployment in the occupied territories. More than two-thirds of Palestinians now live in poverty. Such senseless sanctions on an entire people are a violation by the U.S. and Israel of the Geneva Convention’s prohibition on collective punishment.

Speaker Pelosi must make the step that the Bush Administration has so far been unwilling to take and insist that resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must be a central component of our foreign policy. That would be an honest step towards ending our quagmire in the Middle East.

CNI FOUNDATION

Council for the National Interest Foundation
1250 4th Street SW
Suite WG-1
Washington, DC 20024

Phone: 800.296.6958
or 202.863.2951

Email: inform@cnifoundation.org
Website: www.cnifoundation.org

The CNI Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, non-partisan grassroots organization founded in 1989 by former Congressmen Paul Findley (R-Illinois) and Pete McCloskey (R-California) to promote a U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East that is consistent with American values, protects our national interests, and contributes to a just solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The CNI Foundation relies entirely on individual donations from Americans of all faiths and backgrounds. Donations are tax-deductible to the full extent allowable under the law.

Join our email list to receive action alerts and updates from Washington by sending in the attached coupon or visiting our website.

Donate Online!
www.cnifoundation.org

Join the CNI Foundation national ad campaign to end the Israeli occupation!

CNI FOUNDATION
Council for the National Interest Foundation
1250 4th Street SW, Suite WG-1
Washington, DC 20024

☐ **YES**, I would like to see more full-page ads like this one published in national newspapers and seen by millions of readers.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
E-MAIL _____

☐ I enclose a donation in the amount of:

☐ \$5,000 ☐ \$1,000 ☐ \$500

☐ \$250 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$35 ☐ Other \$ _____

☐ I would like to donate \$ _____ using my credit card:

☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express

Name on Card _____

Card # _____

Exp. Date _____ Code number _____ (3 or 4 extra digits)

Signature _____

☐ As a thank you gift for donating \$100 or more, I would like to receive “**The Tipping Point: Changing Perceptions of the U.S.-Israel Relationship.**”

This CNI Foundation DVD features John Mearsheimer, Stephen Walt, Rashid Khalidi, and Tony Judt.



☐ I would like to receive information about the next 18-day CNI Foundation “political pilgrimage” to visit Israel and all of her neighbors.