

## Meshaal delivers speech on Obama's position on peace process

Posted: 07 Jul 2009 12:15 PM PDT

By Khalid Meshaal, June 25, 2009

*On June 25, Khalid Meshaal, head of the Hamas Political Bureau gave a televised speech in Damascus and said, in part:*

"... The Obama administration brought a change in rhetoric, but the question is what brought about this change. Even just the change on the level of the language, who effected this change? Was it for the sake of our beautiful eyes or for some defect? What brought this change about is that uncompromising perseverance of the living peoples of the region, when they resisted in Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq, and Afghanistan, and rejected the occupiers and their oppression and orders. So, they thwarted the policy of the previous administration and its old and neoconservatives.

"This perseverance transformed that administration's adventures consisting of hegemony and pre-emptive wars into an utter failure, drowning them in the swamps of the region and creating successive crises which then prompted the American voter to go for the option of change to protect his own interests, not for the sake of our interests. Those who accepted the policy of the former administration, those who went along with it and brought tidings of it are not the ones who made the change or contributed towards it. Had the peoples of the region listened to them, the policy of Bush and his neoconservatives would have succeeded. The conditions in our region would have been in an unimaginably bad state.

"We sense a change in the American tone and rhetoric towards the region and the Islamic world, as was evident from President Obama's speech in Cairo. We welcome this with great courage. We evaluate any change in an objective manner. However, we are not entranced by speeches. Speeches do not win us over. The effect of rhetoric is temporary. We are looking for change in the policies on the ground. This is the yardstick of our judgment of stances and changes. What is required of the leaders of the superpowers and more important

countries is firm actions, decisive stances, and serious initiatives that restore rights to their owners and end illegitimate occupation. What is required is not mere speeches that reveal intentions and promises.

"The ability of any US Administration to curb Israel and find a real solution to ending the occupation shall not be realized before curbing the Zionist influence on the US decision-making institution and before ridding US foreign policy from the burdens of Israeli interferences and its priorities that deplete and involve it. Whoever follows history, particularly contemporary history, learns that President Eisenhower was not strong enough to compel Israel to withdraw from Sinai after the attack on Egypt in 1956 until after he rebelled against the Zionist influence in Washington.

"The United States talks today about freezing settlements and the Palestinian state is well and good, but it is not new. Many administrations have spoken about freezing settlements. Furthermore, this talk is not enough. More important is the extent of the response to the rights of our people and the reality of the Palestinian state they are talking about, its borders, and its sovereignty. For this reason, we are still assessing the Obama administration.

"...Does the Obama administration truly want to end the Israeli occupation up to the lines of 4 June 1967? Or is what is required the mere resumption of talks and re-launching the so-called peace process, after which the United States and the world can relax and get rid of the headache of the region? It is as though what is important for them is keeping people in the region busy playing a game, while a pot of pebbles is being cooked up from which there can be no result.

"Here, I would like to decide without pointing any finger of accusation: The West — and here I am talking about the regimes and governments, not the people — the West represented by Europe and America or the United States shoulders a big responsibility for Israel's extremism and stubbornness. Were Israel not to receive all this ongoing political, military, and economic support it would not have put itself above the law, international resolutions, and humanitarian standards.

"...Listen to me carefully, O leaders of the world: The only thing that convinces these Palestinian forces and masses and behind them, the Arab and Islamic nation, is the presence of true willingness and effort on the part of the United States and the international community to end the occupation, remove the injustice of our people, and enable them to practice their right to self-determination and realize their national rights. When the Obama administration takes the initiative to do so, then we and the forces of our people shall be ready to cooperate with this administration and with any international or regional effort that pours towards this.

"...The Palestinian problem is not about autonomy, government, flag, anthem, security services, or money from donor countries. The problem of Palestine is about homeland, identity, freedom, history, sovereignty, Jerusalem, and the right of return. Land for us is more important than authority and liberation comes before the land. For this reason, the programme that represents the bare minimum for our people, which we accepted in the national accord document as a joint political programme for all the Palestinian forces, is the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state within the borders of 4 June 1967 with Jerusalem as its capital after the withdrawal of the occupation forces, the removal of all the settlements from this territory, and the implementation of the refugees' right of return.

"The return of the Palestinian refugees to their homes from which they were expelled in 1948 is a general national right and an individual right that belongs personally to 5 million or more refugees, and no leader or negotiator can forfeit or concede it."

"...We confirm that we cling to resistance as a strategic option to free the homeland and regain our rights. No country in the world has the right to deprive our people from their right to resist the occupier.

"...We value Obama's new rhetoric towards Hamas for it is a first step in the right direction leading to direct dialogue without preconditions and we welcome this. Dealing with Hamas and the Palestinian resistance forces must be based on respect for the Palestinian people's willpower

and their democratic option and not through the imposition of conditions such as the Quartet conditions.

"...We sent a painful memorandum to the leaders and officials of the nation a few days ago on these oppressive measures by the authority, by Salam Fayyad's government and by its security services under the supervision of US General Dayton. There is a premeditated plan in the West Bank to target the resistance and its weapons, and strugglers from all military wings. They carry out security cooperation with the occupation to arrest or kill them. The Qalqilyah incidents a few weeks ago are just a tip of the iceberg and the unconcealed example of the painful state of affairs. This behaviour unfortunately is based on decrees issued in Ramallah considering every grouping that resists the occupation as an illegal and outlaw grouping.

"...I call on President Obama to pull out this general from the West Bank and bring him back to the United States. This will be in harmony with the change that you are calling for and because the establishment of a repressive authority over the heads of our people blatantly conflicts with the principles of democracy that you espouse. Attacking the resistance, destroying the organizational frameworks and the national institutions in the West Bank does not serve our people's security and interests. It is a gratuitous service to the security of the Israeli occupation. Why boast about the gratuitous implementation of the Palestinian security commitments in accordance with the ill-omened and nationally rejected road map while the Israeli occupier does not implement any of its provisions?

"...The international public opinion has started to shift against Israel. This transformation is the fruit of the resistance and steadfastness and not the fruit of the negotiations. Negotiations beatify the ugly Zionist face, while resistance exposes its true appearance..."