

Assad offers assistance on Gilad Shalit

Written by Chris Perver

Wednesday, 04 April 2007 17:00

Syrian President Bashar Assad has said that he is willing to work for the release of the Israeli captives that are being held by Hamas and Hizbullah. His comments came during US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to the country, a move which has irked both the US and Israel, who see Assad as one of the prime sponsors of terrorism in the region. Her trip follows that of US Pastor Rick Warren, who visited Assad [last year](#) and praised Syria as a tolerant nation. As Rick Warren flew home to brief his congregation on his visit, a prominent Lebanese Christian politician was shot dead by Syrian terrorists. It also follows visits earlier in the year from several European Foreign Ministers, including [Javier Solana](#), the High Representative for the European Common, Foreign and Security Policy.

Quote: *"On Wednesday Pelosi said that she brought a message to Assad from Prime Minister Ehud Olmert that Israel was ready for peace talks with Syria. However, Olmert's office said in a statement later this would only be possible if Assad stops supporting Hizbullah and Hamas. Olmert's office said it had no comment Thursday due to the weeklong Pessah holiday. After meeting for three hours with Assad, Pelosi said that he is "ready to engage in negotiations for peace with Israel."*

Rumours of peace? Perhaps. I think Assad has become fairly confident that the West is not interested in "regime change" in Syria, and that if he co-operates in the Middle East peace process, Western leaders will make it worth his while. Solana told Assad in February, much to the ire of Israeli politicians, that the EU was working towards Syria regaining the Golan Heights. The only "hardliners" that Syria has to "win over" are the US and Israel, and Pelosi's visit goes some way toward removing one of those obstacles. Israeli Prime Minister Olmert, I suspect, is willing to do a deal with Syria but can't admit that publicly. Assad's offer to negotiate on the release of the Israeli hostages is likely to sweeten that deal. It's not that I support Pelosi's visit to Syria, or that I believe Assad genuinely wants peace with Israel. I think it's more of a case that each has what the other wants, and both may be prepared to give up something of their own to get it. The Bible states that during the tribulation period, the Antichrist will divide the land of Israel for his "own gain", and I believe we are starting to see what that gain will be.

Assad offers assistance on Gilad Shalit

Written by Chris Perver

Wednesday, 04 April 2007 17:00

Source [Jerusalem](#) [Post](#)