

## Geert Wilders: 'Israel is West's first line of defense'

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The Israeli newspaper Haaretz has the following interview with Geert Wilders:

Dutch anti-Islam MP: 'Israel is West's first line of defense'

By Cnaan Liphshiz, Haaretz Correspondent

Israel will be a major part of Geert Wilders' next film on Islam, the rightist Dutch legislator said last week in an interview for Haaretz. He praised Avigdor Lieberman, observing "similarities" between Yisrael Beiteinu and the Party for Freedom - a small movement which has grown to become Holland's second most popular.

Wilders, a controversial anti-immigration politician, rose to international fame last year when he released a 14-minute film entitled Fitna, which attempts to portray what he considers as Islam's "violent nature." The film, which has been viewed by millions online, provoked mass protests throughout the Muslim world.

In April Wilders announced he was working on a sequel. Just as Fitna focused on genocidal anti-Semitism in the Muslim world, Wilders said that the sequel - which focuses on "Islamization in the West" - will show "how the forces of Islamization are specifically targeting Israel in a fight against all free societies."

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He added: "The film will demonstrate that the fight against Israel is not territorial, and hence Israel is only the first line of defense for the West. Now it's Israel but we are next. That's why beyond solidarity, it is in Europe's interest to stand by Israel."

Wilders is facing criminal charges for allegedly inciting hate by comparing the Koran to Adolf Hitler's Mein Kampf in the original Fitna film. His party's dark horse achievement in the European Parliament elections earlier this month, he said, is connected to the judicial system's decision to prosecute him.

The Party for Freedom - which has only nine seats in Dutch parliament - won five seats in the June 4 European elections, making it the second largest of all Dutch parties in Brussels. A recent poll shows that if elections were held now, the Party would become the country's largest or second largest.

"The appeals court's decision in January to prosecute me angered many people, as did the decision by the government of the U.K. not to let me enter Britain," Wilders told Haaretz. He added some of the anger manifested itself in the European Parliament election.

According to Wilders, his party's rise in popularity is reminiscent of how Lieberman's party grew to become Israel's third largest. "Our parties may not be identical, but there are certainly more similarities than dissimilarities, and I am proud of that," Wilders said about Yisrael Beiteinu.

"I've met Liebrman and called to congratulate him after the Israeli elections," said Wilders, who visits Israel frequently to meet with leading Israeli politicians, defense officials and opinion-shapers. "Lieberman's an intelligent, strong and clever politician and I understand why his party grew in popularity."

Israel under Benjamin Netanyahu is, according to Wilders, safer because it doesn't automatically accept the two-state solution. But he added: "I am more concerned now about Israel's situation because of the positions of U.S. President Barack Obama."

The president's speech in Cairo "shocked" Wilders, he says. "Until now Israel could rely on the U.S. for support even when the Europeans failed to offer it. Now Israel will have a tougher time," he added.

"The two-state solution is an internal Israeli matter and I hesitate to interfere. But my personal belief is that there is a two state solution for the Palestinians. One of those states is called Jordan," he added.

Wilders also said that Obama's preference for dialogue with Iran despite its ongoing drive to obtain nuclear weapons - according to Western intelligence reports - is "intolerable."

The Party for Freedom will not join any bloc at the European Parliament, Wilders said. "We will not join an rightist party with anti-Semitic or xenophobic inclinations," he explained. "The attempts to classify us as such are the result of our rivals' panic."

Wilders' party believes in halting immigration to the Netherlands, and banning the construction of mosques in that country. While defending gay rights and supporting animal welfare bills, the Party holds a hardliner assimilations stance on the integration of existing immigrants into Dutch society, and is consistently Eurosceptic.

"Our achievement in the European Parliament owed partly to a protest vote by people who do not accept that their tax monies are funding highways in Portugal and subsidizing Polish farmers. They want their money back - approximately five billion euros."

Described by some as "fascist" and "ultra-nationalist," other Dutch parties have shunned the Party for Freedom, treating it as a pariah movement. However, as its political power climbs, leading centrist politicians are advocating an alliance with Wilders, touching off a heated debate in their parties' ranks.

"We have no power but a lot of influence, and are now a serious force which cannot be ignored," Wilders said. "I think the stale political establishment of the Netherlands doesn't quite know how to close the window that let in our party, like a cool draft of wind."

<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1093861.html>