Minister Bonino on Radio Radicale

2013-08-12

Bonino on Syria: the goal is a conference; hoping for opposition stability

“The goal of a Geneva conference was reiterated at our meeting with the Russians in Rome. We agree that there is no military solution to the conflict, even if the Russians are supporting the Assad regime and, therefore, there is divergence on how to achieve a transition and on what it would consist of”, said Emma Bonino in an interview with Radio Radicale on the Syrian situation.

“The hope is that the Syrian opposition finds some form of stability and consistency, even though it continues to be much contested internally. In recent hours the conflict between the most extreme part of the Syrian opposition and the Kurds, who are not under the opposition’s umbrella, has worsened. The situation is more complicated than it seems”, Bonino concluded.

Egypt: risk of a bloodbath, says Bonino

“The situation is one of very nervous expectation. It is unclear what will happen in the coming hours, with the demonstrations – practically encampments – arranged by the Muslim Brotherhood, and the army’s declared intention to disband them”. This was Minister Bonino’s comment on the situation in Egypt. “Clearing these squares, as a result of how they have been organised, means using heavy military apparatus, with the obvious risk of a bloodbath”.

“But it has truly been impossible to reconcile the two fronts. What will happen in the coming hours is very tenuous, attached perhaps to the negotiations currently underway, and of which we have only heard rumours. International diplomatic sources have really thought everything, from the information that I have had. I recently spoke with Minister Westerwelle and the Dutch foreign minister. But reconciling the two fronts appears a very difficult prospect. Our presence continues, but for the moment I have no reason to believe that a compromise will be forthcoming”, the foreign minister concluded.

Immigration: no magic solution to halt a desperate exodus

“What we are seeing along the Italian coasts is the consequence of a desperate exodus, because it unites two phenomena: those fleeing war and those fleeing poverty”, the minister continued, referring to the boat landings of recent days.

“The borders south of Lebanon, which are very difficult to patrol, are seeing the passage of Sudanese, Nigerians and many others. The Syrians are passing through Lebanon and then Egypt; the refugees are going from Iraq through Turkey and then Greece, another country like ours and Spain,that is bearing a very heavy burden”.

And the reasons are multiplying, all fueled by hopes for a better life but, whether dream or illusion, these people risk ending up in the hands of veritable vendors of illusion or death. But these are people who are escaping hunger, or war, or a mixture of the two, and that’s why there is no magic solution. Just look at what is happening in Lebanon, where there are over one million Syrian refugees, or in Jordan where there are 600,000”, the minister said.

“Just last week we met with the Justice, Defence and Interior ministers to try to be a bit more prepared to confront an emergency that is already here, but there is no magic solution. There was discussion in Europe of a directive, but many countries were against it precisely because, when it comes to temporary reception, every country wants to be assured that it is, in fact, temporary. We are more a transit country than a destination, we are not the dream of these immigrants”, the minister concluded.

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