

Mike Powell
News-Post
Frederick, Md. 21701

9/20/91

Dear Mike,

In too much haste, with too many interruptions when I was too tired, this submission for oped consideration. If you are interested, please do anything you'd like with it.

If you might consider them, I could do a few more based on what he says in this column alone.

One that I have in ^{my} kind could use and I can provide a map that would be more informative than the one with Jan Thompson's piece of the fourth, showing all of the original Palestine, not just what is west of the Jordan River. Most people do not know that more than three-quarters of Palestine is Arab, originally Trans-Jordan, now Jordan.

On another subject, I think you can get a good fair human-interest story from the woman, who happens to be a friend, Barbara McKnight, who I hear swept the knitting honors.

Her knitting begins with the sheep. She processes the wool on an old-fashioned spinning wheel.

She also is a psychologist and she has specialized in the past in teaching children with acute problems.

She is married to Dr. Gerald McKnight. ^{Jerry} ~~He~~ is the popular Hood history professor about whom you have carried several stories.

Best,

Harold

I do think that what Bush has done and is doing is certain to make the dangerous Middle East situation worse.

Roy Meachum



9/20/91

'Anti-Semite'

The *New York Times* first reported the story that was confirmed by other news organizations: An Israeli cabinet minister dubbed George Bush an anti-Semite and a liar.

Welcome to the club, Mr. President. The membership is rather large. It includes the *Times'* Thomas Friedman, the author of "From Beirut to Jerusalem." Mr. Friedman was accused of being an anti-Semitic Jew, for not adhering to the Israeli hardliners' view in his best-selling book.

In Mr. Bush's case, the name-calling was prompted by his reluctance to guarantee immediately \$10 billion in loans for Israel. The money is necessary to house and settle refugees from the Soviet Union, arriving by the thousands every month.

On its own, the small nation has neither the resources nor the credit rating to approach lenders. Moreover, its economy is absolutely reliant upon U.S. grants, amounting to more than \$1,200 annually for each man, woman and child.

At this stage, at least, no one is suggesting the United States fork over billions when America's domestic needs are badly underfunded. With the help of its expanded population and an increased national product, Israel hopes to repay the loans, counting on a traditionally generous World Jewry to bridge any gaps.

Understand: The president has not turned down Israel's request. He wants the matter delayed until after next month's hoped-for Middle East peace conference. Offering the guarantee is not the problem, but the Shamir government's avowed intent to move the refugees into territories conquered by Israel during the Six Day War.

In right-wing Israeli eyes, Mr. Bush's real "crime" consists of his administration's continuance of the long-standing U.S. policy of opposing Israeli settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

No president has supported the settlements since Israel occupied the territories in 1967. The White House has consistently joined the United Nations in calling for the land's return to Arab hands.

The crux of the Middle East crises for these 24 years has been: Who should control what is left of pre-

World War II Palestine?

Zealous Zionists have never made a secret of their intention to hold on to every millimeter for a Greater Israel. They reached for the Bible to justify keeping the territories. Their official documents call the West Bank Judea and Samaria, using names bestowed by antiquity's Israelites.

In Arabic, Palestinians are still called Philistines. Their forefathers were the Israelites' most hated enemies, as the Bible testifies. On the basis of ancient claims, if the

Palestinians were to give up the remnants of their pre-war country, then, in fairness, they should be awarded a slice of richer western Israel, where their ancestral homeland was once centered.

No responsible leader has suggested the swap, for the obvious reason it makes no sense in today's world.

To his great credit, in bringing the proposed peace conference this far, George Bush puts to shame some great names from the past, including Charles deGaulle and Henry Kissinger. The Shamir cabinet should give the president a medal, not sit by while a minister calls him names.

The conference's single most important objective will be realized when Israel's modern enemies sit down with representatives of the Jewish state. At that moment, no one can seriously deny Israel's place among the family of nations.

Radical Arabs will no doubt continue to shout their invectives, claiming all of pre-war Palestine for their people, but in growing isolation. The peace conference has the potential of converting the radicals from patriots into outlaws in the eyes of the entire Arab nation, with the possible exception of Iraq's Saddam Hussein and Libya's "mad" Gadhafi.

On the other hand, the conference will fail unless it achieves some accommodation with Palestinian hopes to remove the occupation army. Nothing can be gained, including the complete recognition of Israel's right to peaceful existence, until the West Bank and the Gaza Strip pass back to Arab hands.

Land-for-peace, as an idea, originated in the time when Mr. Kissinger

roamed the Middle East for the Nixon White House. It was preached in the forum of the Knesset, Jerusalem's parliament, by Anwar Sadat, who died for his efforts to stop the region's blood-letting.

In my book, the foul-mouthed Israeli cabinet member is a brother-in-hate to the Arab extremists who gunned down Egypt's Nobel Peace laureate, President Sadat.

When asked by reporters, Defense Minister Moshe Arens, a former Israeli ambassador in Washington, denied his offensive colleague spoke for the entire cabinet. Hardly an apology.

Mr. Shamir should have been on the phone, before the story broke, tendering his regrets to the White House; he may have been too busy.

Israel's prime minister has ordered his Washington lobbyists to turn the Congress against the president on the loan guarantee issue. It rapidly turned into a bitter, no-holds-barred fight, pitting Israel's clout against White House prestige.

At this writing, the battle over the settlements rages on, which means the name-calling certainly continues.

Harold Weisberg

MEACHUM'S CLUB

"Welcome to the Club, Mr. President," Roy Meachum wrote (9/20), referring, modest as always, to his own club, of those accused of being "an anti-Semite and a liar."

Meachum was referring to the name-calling of a minority-party Israeli cabinet member, there only because that democratic society has proportionate representation.

"In Mr. Bush's case," Meachum wrote, this was because of Mr. Bush's "reluctance to guarantee immediate ¹⁴\$10 billion in loans for Israel" for housing for Russian refugees.

Typical of Meachum's inability to report anything relating to the Middle East with the accuracy expectable of a high-school reporter, all of what he says is not true except that there had been agreement for these loans and that they were to be guaranteed by the United States. (There is no basis in anything but Meachum's prejudice for what he later suggests, that the \$10 billion ^{might} ~~would~~ ^{come} ~~be~~ ^{from} U.S. taxpayers.)

Whether ¹"Immediately" was not up to the President. It was up to the Congress, where all legislation originates.

The guarantee also was up to the Congress.

"Reluctance" does not describe what anyone who reads any newspaper or hears any radio or sees any TV news knows very well what Mr. Bush said.

He did not want Congress even to discuss the agreed-to legislation for at least a third of a year, during which time those refugees would be without any place to live, with thousands more arriving weekly. And that in a country already short in housing.

Not only did he not want Congress to even consider it for at least that long, and not only would the legislative process take still more time, but Mr. Bush said that if it were considered and were ^aenacted before he said it could be, ~~meaning the supposedly independent legislative branch of government had to agree to domination by the executive branch, if it did, then he would veto it.~~ ^{This amounts to an invitation for additional Arab stall ing.}

Meachum's explanation of Mr. Bush's position is that "He wants the matter delayed until after next month's hoped-for Middle East peace conference."

If Meachum does not know that there is very little likelihood of any such peace

next month or at any time in the foreseeable future he has no business writing a column at all.

Why has there been no peace conference in the 40 years since Israel was established?

Because the arabs have refused peace, ^{Egypt} all states other than ^{ing} Israel remain in a state of war with Israel.

Long ago Israel agreed to this conference. Some of the Arab powers also have. Syria, for example, still on the U.S. terrorist list despite Secretary of State Baker's frequent visits to its dictator, Assad, the Assad to whom Mr. Bush has been cozying up since the beginning of the Gulf war, ^{But he} agreed, ^{ed} stipulating ^{only} that all ^{he} it wants ~~to obtain~~ to obtain at the conference be guaranteed ~~to~~ in advance.

This, naturally, makes any conference irrelevant.

The Palestinians have not selected their representatives.

There are innumerable ways in which ^{some} the arabs can delay this conference, as they ^{do} have and give every indication of continuing to ~~delay it~~.

So, what Mr. Bush has done in the name of assuring that there would be a conference is the exact opposite: he may well have wrecked it entirely and he certainly has delayed ^{mean} it. While those refugees will be exposed to sun, wind, rain and cold.

Why has Mr. Bush done this? ~~xxxxxxx~~ Because, he said, Congressional consideration of the proposal would be objected to by the arabs, who then would not attend the conference.

Not a single Arab power had made ^{this} a single objection, for all the publicity. Not until some time after Mr. Bush went public with his threat. And then, ^{for the first time, it was} the day before this Meachum column appear, ^{ed.} ~~for the first time~~, taking the hint from Mr. Bush, there was a protest.

There was hardly a single thing Mr. Bush dared do that had a better chance of wrecking the conference he wants us to believe is so important to him that what he did do, order the Congress not to consider the agreed-to legislation, ^{under threat of veto} then threatening to veto it if they ~~did~~, all the time telling the arabs they were supposed to oppose it, until they finally took the cue and did.

3
This column is still another of the endless examples of the grim fact that the one way readers of the papers are certain not to have any real understanding of the ongoing Middle East tragedy is to read Roy Meachum's columns. I don't think I've missed one and I ^{can't} ~~can't~~ remember a single one that was straight, that did not mislead and misinform readers, a single ^{one} ~~one~~ that was not so pro-Arab it amounts to propaganda rather than independent columning. It follows that all have been anti-Israel and intended to incite dislike if not hatred. *for Israel in particular and Jews in general.*

There are innumerable other illustrations in this one column.

It began with this distorted account of what caused the immediate crisis and it ends with still another incitation and a slander of American Jewish leaders:

"Israel's prime minister had ordered his Washington lobbyists to turn the Congress against the president on the loan guarantee."

about 1,000
"Those were not Israel lobbyists, they were ^{about 1,000} Americans, the leaders of American Jewish organizations and a variety of ^{other} people, many prominent in American public life.

They were not "ordered" by any one, least of all Shamir, another of Meachum's intended slanders.

And it was not a question of turning the Congress against the President. It was the President who interfered publicly in the functioning of the Congress, and then threatened it with another veto. While this interpretation ^{can be disputed} ~~is debatable~~, the fact is that the legislation had been agreed ^{to} and it was Mr. Bush himself who inspired the first opposition by any Arab power.

In doing this Mr. Bush had to know that there was little he could do that was as likely to delay if not wreck the peace conference ^{he} ~~Mr. Bush~~ claims to want so much.

It was a partisan intrusion that he knew without question Israel ^{might} ~~would~~ not accept and might find cause for not going to an already-^{ed} ~~stack~~ conference.

So, from beginning to end, ~~what~~ ^{was} ~~village~~ ^{was} Meachum's ~~nothing~~ ^{was} straight.

He also knew that the versions he was giving were calculated to make it appear as though Israel opposed the conference when the opposite is true.

9/17/97

Meachum unfairly criticized by the 'lunatic right'

It is not easy to criticize Roy Meachum unfairly but James E. Keenan was up to it (Sept. 12).

In a lengthy letter ostensibly responding to Meachum's alleged "unusually inane diatribes" Mr. Keenan cites not a single word of any single column in support of his characterization. Instead, like others of the irrational right extreme he uses his letter for other political objectives, describing all who do not see the world through his contorting eyes as "leftists," "liberals" and even coup plotters.

Irrational hardly describes Mr. Keenan's own diatribes, like:

"Gone are the dreams of the leftist coup to install an American Stalin in the White House. Gone are the dreams of the Red Army marching in triumph down Pennsylvania Avenue. Gone is a future in which an American Soviet Republic would join the USSR in imposing Marxism-Leninism on the world."

Dream? This is Mr. Keenan's nightmare, without any foundation at all, but then those who think like he does do not contaminate what they say with fact or reality. The horror he invents never existed, never was in any Meachum column I read, never was in any Democratic mind. What he writes is insane and disgraceful.

It also reflects a bankruptcy of ideas if he cannot oppose what he does not agree with without adopting the method and thought of "Mein Kampf."

The Keenan method, of saying one thing and talking of anything but that to argue political preconceptions, is SOP for the lunatic right. And it is crazy.

HAROLD WEISBERG
Frederick