

Roy's faint praise 2/21/91

In his Friday, Feb. 1 column Roy Meachum again damns Israel, but this time with the faintest praise — and that only long after the rest of the civilized world had done so, including some Arab states. Belatedly he says it was a good thing that Israel did not retaliate for Saddam Hussein's terror bombing of Israel.

Whether or not the case, this suggests, so much time having passed, that he awaited Arab approval before bestowing his own.

But even this too-little, too-late and almost invisible gesture at what has always been missing from his columns, he had to sully it with his customary rewriting of history to unjustly condemn Israel and its first and widely-revered Prime Minister, almost its founding father.

This time he quotes the expert he considers best-informed on all things Arabic and almost everything else as his authority — himself:

"Over the years this column has pointed out 'killing begets killing.' It called upon the Israeli government to break the vicious round of murders legalized, on both sides, by the continuing state of war that exists with all its neighbors, except Egypt."

While I do not recall that over the years he has ever condemned Arab murders of Israelis (it took him years to make even scant mention of wholesale Arab murder of Arabs), he does insist on what he has to know is false, as this quotation makes clear, that Israel insists on the state of war. Not only with its "neighbors" — it is the entire Muslim world except Egypt.

This noted authority states what is not true that it is Israel that insists on this state of war. That is, as he very well knows, the exact opposite of the truth. It alone has offered to and tried to make peace with those powers that from the day Israel was established insist on continuing a state of war.

This includes some who said they'd switch sides and join Mr. Hussein if Israel dared defend itself against his Scud terrorization.

In what I quote he says more than is false, that the state of war between those states and Israel "legalized" the murders and other terrors by some Palestinians, including to this day the PLO. There is no legalization of this at all and it is only in retaliation that Israel has taken any steps against these individuals, not those states.

The other matter about which he contorts and misrepresents history in damning ben Gurion for his alleged Old Testament policy of an eye for an eye, which he also says "never suited" that old man who wanted only peace.

Where in history, including our own, and from our very earliest days to the present, was this not every nation's policy?

Why else are we in Saudi Arabia now, giving up the lives and the best years of our youth and increasing our national debt?

HAROLD WEISBERG
Frederick