

Mr. Charles Krauthammer
The Washington Post
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Dear Mr. Krauthammer,

Your "No Way to Make Peace" column is excellent. I write to thank you for it and to make a few suggestions, what I hope you'll think about for future columns.

I think you misread Bush in saying that he is motivated by a "settlements obsession."

I think that long ago he opted a pro-Arab policy he does not dare enunciate. He needs and has used foreign crises to divert us from the ever-increasing domestic problems. If he does not have other objectives.

There was an overt change in U.S. policy when the State Department and the rest of the administration deliberately misrepresented what Arafat said when under pressure. He did not recognize the right of the State of Israel to live at peace within secure borders. The word he used is "people" and to him and to the PLO and according to its unchanged charter, this means Arabs have the right to live there, not Jews.

What Bush has been doing is insisting that what is to be negotiated be given away without and prior to any negotiations.

If the Arab powers really wanted a Palestinian state they would have created it when for 20 years they controlled what is misleadingly called the West Bank and Gaza. They did not and in fact they did nothing to improve the lot of those people and did all they could to prevent Israel's efforts to improve their conditions. As one Egyptian source put it, the refugees are their artillery in their continuing war against Israel.

I think your optimism about the possibility of peace there is misplaced. Perhaps some states would agree but not all and that would not mean peace for Israel. More, in the remote event all the Arab states did agree to peace, there is no way the many terroristic gangs they supported and support could be compelled to abide by any agreement, the record is clear that they will not, and Israel would not be at peace.

I believe that no Arab power wants a genuinely democratic state in that area and thus they are using the Palestinians and that issue to divert their own people from their own very serious problems.

I am older than you. I can remember the many assaults on Israel and its people once they established that state and they continued with intensity until Israel captured the Golan heights.

Meanwhile, in all of this, there never is any mention of whether Israel has any legitimate claims to Samaria and Judea, ancient or recent, and those places are always referred to as Israeli-occupied Arab lands. They were Israeli lands occupied from the time of Mohammed, if I recall correctly. The Arabs were in fact the occupiers.

Again thanks, sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

