

Two-state double standard

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Even Israel's peace efforts get used against it

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stepped up this week and accepted the idea of a Palestinian state as part of a Mideast peace settlement. His good deed did not go unpunished.

In return for envisioning "two people ... side by side in amity and mutual respect," Netanyahu was branded, in far too many corners, as an obstacle to peace for placing what were called "conditions" on his offer.

Chief among them was a call for Palestinian demilitarization and "public, binding and unequivocal" Palestinian recognition that Israel is "the state of the Jewish people."

How dare he insist on the very survival of his country!

The negative responses to Netanyahu's outstretched hand show how dangerously and successfully the Palestinians have waged the propaganda war to portray Israel as an oppressor rather than the target of a relentless campaign to wipe it off the map.

Next case in point: loathsome remarks by former President Jimmy Carter yesterday on a visit to the Gaza Strip. The great crusader for human rights proclaimed that Palestinians there are being "treated more like animals than human beings."

Gallingly, in territory that the Palestinians had turned into a rocket-launching pad after the Israelis ceded it for self-rule, Carter added:

"Never before in history has a large community like this been savaged by bombs and missiles and then been deprived of the means to repair itself."

There was a reason Israel staged strikes against Gaza last year. In fact, 7,000 reasons: missiles Hamas lobbed before Israel had to defend itself.

And there's an excellent reason Israel imposes tight security on Gaza: suicide bombings sponsored by the Hamas terrorists who run the place. Carter didn't mention those.

Or that the chief Palestinian negotiator ran away from the idea of negotiating with Netanyahu, declaring that the prime minister's security concerns made it impossible even to consider discussions. Get it? If it doesn't make Israel more vulnerable, Saeb Erekat doesn't want to talk about it.

Meanwhile, President Obama continued the wobbliness he has shown since his Cairo speech. Saying he detected only "some positive movement" in Netanyahu's address, Obama placed both sides on an extraordinarily imbalanced moral scale: Israel was responsible for halting settlements that irk the Palestinians, while the Palestinians were responsible for an "end to violence" against Israel.

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