

Throwing the Jews Under the Bus

By Arnold Kling : [BIO](#) | 24 Mar 2006

"...with any luck the 2008 Presidential campaign will be the first since September 11 to move beyond the 'stolen election' of 2000 and openly debate what course we should follow in the long war ahead. It's a debate that will touch on everything: military preparedness, our core beliefs, demography and the structure of civilization itself because we have finally come to accept that in the end nothing will be the same in the way that it was." -- [The Belmont Club](#)



I wish I could be confident that both parties will nominate candidates with a serious outlook on the war against militant Islam. As I see it, there is still a large segment of the Democratic Party that wants a crusading anti-war candidate, in the mold of [George McGovern](#). That wing of the Democratic Party does not look very attractive to those of us who have voted Democratic in recent Presidential elections but who believe that militant Islam poses an existential threat to the values we hold dear.

For what the anti-war view entails, consider a recent "academic" paper by [John J. Mearshimer and Steven M. Walt](#), of the University of Chicago and Harvard University, respectively.

"The U.S. national interest should be the primary object of American foreign policy. For the past several decades, however, and especially since the Six Day War in 1967, the centerpiece of US Middle East policy has been its relationship with Israel. The combination of unwavering US support for Israel and the related effort to spread democracy throughout the region has inflamed Arab and Islamic opinion and jeopardized US security."

This is where I believe the leftist view of foreign policy ultimately leads: throw the Jews under the bus to appease the Islamic radicals, because the Jews have "jeopardized U.S. security." To which I say, fine: go ahead and try to throw us under the bus. It won't be the first time the elites decided that anti-Semitism is the fault of the Jews -- that was the conventional wisdom among the elite opinion in the 1930's, also. But I would warn you that this time a lot of us are going to fight before we get thrown under the bus again. (Dave Kopel reminds us that [there were fighters](#) in the 1930's.)

I see myself as an American, first and foremost. I value America for its [folk beliefs](#) in liberty. Militant Islam is the enemy of everything that I value about America.

True, it is a fact that militant Islam threatens Europe more than it threatens America. And it is a fact that militant Islam threatens Israel more than Europe. But those facts do not imply that the destruction of Israel or the conquest of Europe by militant Islam would serve the U.S. national interest. Those facts do not imply that for America a passive, defensive approach to militant Islam will be less costly in terms of American lives than an aggressive, offensive approach.

I also suspect that if one's goal is to avoid a conflict between Israel and its neighbors, then weakening Israel may not be the best approach. Israel's aggressiveness in dealing with Iran or the Palestinians may turn out to be inversely related to American support for Israeli security. Czechoslovakia complied meekly with the dictates of Munich in 1938. Israel, having seen the consequences of appeasement, will not be so willing to sacrifice the future of its people for "peace in our time."

Questions for Candidates

Here are some questions that I have for Presidential candidates of either party in 2008.

Do you believe that it is possible for America and its values to co-exist with a militant Islam as strong and as popular as it appears to be today?

If your answer is "yes," then:

- Does that mean that you envision a world in which American values have a sphere of influence and Islamofascism has its sphere of influence, and we achieve a sort of detente?
- What parts of the world are you prepared to see come under the Islamofascist sphere of influence?
- Are you prepared to see the Islamofascist sphere armed with nuclear weapons?
- How would you defend the American homeland if Islamofascists choose to attack?

If your answer is "no," then:

- Do you believe that Islamic militancy can be reduced through appeasement, or does it have to be opposed militarily?
- Who do you see as our key allies, and who do you see as our key adversaries?
- What is your strategy for limiting the military capability, particularly access to weapons of mass destruction, of Islamic militants?
- How important are American values in this conflict?
- How would you go about promoting American values abroad?

I take the view that militant Islam does pose an existential threat. I believe that appeasement will fail. I see our key allies as Australia, Great Britain, India, Israel, and people in other countries who share our commitment to liberty. I see our key adversary as Iran, with dangerous concentrations of enemies also in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and the unassimilated Muslim population of Europe.

I would ask Congress to declare war on Iran unless it allows weapons inspectors to monitor its nuclear activities and discontinues its policies of supporting terrorism. I would use this declaration of war not to conquer Iran but to destroy its regime, much of its internal gestapo apparatus, and its nuclear weapons capability.

I believe that we will find more allies and obtain higher-quality international support if we stand up for American values than if we apologize for them. I think we need to make clear our strong commitment to preserving our own liberty and our support for anyone who shares such a commitment.

I do not believe that American interests will be advanced by throwing the Jews of Israel, or Jews in America, under a bus.

Arnold Kling is author of [Learning Economics](#).