

The Palestinian Authority's recent announcement that it would seek UN recognition as an independent state dominated the news and the political debate in the United States last week, though in truth it should mean very little to us. Only a political class harboring the illusion it can run the world obsesses over the aspirations of a tiny population on a tiny piece of land thousands of miles away. Remember, the UN initiated this persistent conflict with its 1947 Partition Plan.

Unfortunately the debate is dominated by those who either support the Israeli side in the conflict, or those who support the Palestinian desire for statehood. We rarely seem to hear the view of those who support the US side and US interests. I am on that side. I believe that we can no longer police the world. We can no longer bribe the Israelis and Palestinians to continue an endless "peace process" that goes nowhere. It is not in our interest to hector the Palestinians or the Israelis, or to "export" democracy to the region but reject it when people vote the "wrong" way.

I have reservations about the Palestinian drive for UN recognition. Personally I wish the United States would de-recognize the United Nations. As most readers already know, in every Congress I introduce legislation to end our membership in that organization. The UN is a threat to our sovereignty-- and as we are the main source of its income, it is a threat to our economic well-being. Increasingly over the past several years, we see the United Nations providing political and legal cover for the military aspirations of interventionists rather than serving as an international forum to preserve peace. Neoconservatives in the US have grown to love the United Nations as they co-opt the organization under the guise of endless "reform." Under the sovereignty-destroying doctrine of "Responsibility to Protect," adopted at the 2005 World Summit, the UN takes it upon itself to intervene in internal conflicts of its member states whenever it believes that human rights are being violated. Thus under "Responsibility to Protect," the UN provides the green light for a kind of global no-knock raid on any sovereign country.

If asked, I would personally counsel the Palestinians to avoid the United Nations. UN membership and participation is no guarantee that sovereignty will be respected. We see what happens to UN members such as Iraq and Libya when those countries' leaders fall out of favor with US administrations: under US and allied pressure a fig leaf resolution is adopted in the UN to facilitate devastating military intervention. When the UN gave NATO the green light to bomb Libya there was no genocide taking place. It was a purely preventative war. The result? Thousands dead, a destroyed country, and extremely dubious new leaders.

While I do not see UN membership as a particularly productive move for the Palestinian leadership, I do not believe the US should use its position in the UN Security Council to block their membership. I believe in self-determination of peoples and I recognize that peoples may wish to pursue statehood by different means. As we saw after the Cold War, numerous new states were born out of the ruins of the USSR as the various old Soviet Republics decided that smaller states were preferable to an enormous and oppressive multi-national conglomerate.

The real, pro-US solution to the problems in the Middle East is for us to end all foreign aid, stop arming foreign countries, encourage peaceful diplomatic resolutions to conflicts, and disengage militarily. In others words, follow Jefferson's admonition: "Peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none."