



Death of the Bush Doctrine

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The Bush Doctrine -- born on Sept. 20, 2001, when President Bush bluntly warned the sponsors of violent jihad: "You are either with us, or you are with the terrorists" -- is dead. Its demise was announced by Condoleezza Rice last Friday.

The secretary of state was [speaking to reporters](#) aboard Air Force One en route with the president to Kuwait from Israel. She was explaining why the administration had abandoned the most fundamental condition of its support for Palestinian statehood - namely, an end to Palestinian terror. Rice's explanation, [recounted here by The Washington Times](#), was as striking for its candor as for its moral blindness:

"The 'road map' for peace, conceived in 2002 by Mr. Bush, had become a hindrance to the peace process, be-

cause the first requirement was that the Palestinians stop terrorist attacks. As a result, every time there was a terrorist bombing, the peace process fell apart and went back to square one. Neither side ever began discussing the 'core issues': the freezing of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, the right of Palestinian refugees to return, the outline of Israel's border, and the future of Jerusalem.

"The reason that we haven't really been able to move forward on the peace process for a number of years is that we were stuck in the sequentiality of the road map. So you had to do the first phase of the road map before you moved on to the third phase of the road map, which was the actual negotiations of final status,' Rice said. . . . What the US-hosted November peace summit in

Annapolis did was 'break that tight sequentiality. . . You don't want people to get hung up on settlement activity or the fact that the Palestinians haven't fully been able to deal with the terrorist infrastructure. . .'"

Thus the president who once [insisted](#) that a "Palestinian state will never be created by terror" now insists that a Palestinian state be created regardless of terror. Once the Bush administration championed a ["road map"](#) whose first and foremost requirement was that the Palestinians "declare an unequivocal end to violence and terrorism" and shut down "all official . . . incitement against Israel." Now the administration says that Palestinian terrorism and incitement are nothing "to get hung up on."

Whatever happened to the moral clarity that informed the president's worldview in the wake of 9/11? Whatever happened to the conviction that was at the core of the Bush Doctrine: that terrorists must be anathematized and defeated, and the fever-swamps that breed them drained and detoxified?

Bush's support for the creation of a Palestinian state was always misguided -- rarely has a society shown itself [*less* suited for sovereignty](#) -- but at least he made it clear that American support came at a stiff price: "The United States will not support the establishment of a Palestinian state," Bush said in his landmark [June 2002 speech](#) on the Israeli-Arab conflict, "until its leaders engage in a sustained fight against the terrorists and dismantle

their infrastructure." He reinforced that condition two years later, confirming in [a letter to Ariel Sharon](#) that "the Palestinian leadership must act decisively against terror, including sustained, targeted, and effective operations to stop terrorism and dismantle terrorist capabilities and infrastructure."

Now that policy has gone by the boards, replaced by one less focused on achieving peace than on maintaining a "peace process." No doubt it *is* difficult, as Rice says, to "move forward on the peace process" when the Palestinian Authority [glorifies suicide bombers](#) and [encourages a murderous yearning](#) to eliminate the Jewish state. If the Bush Doctrine -- "with us or with the terrorists" -- were still in force, the peace process would have been shelved once the Palestinians made clear that they had [no intention of rejecting violence](#) or accepting Israel's existence. The administration would be treating the Palestinians as pariahs, allowing them no assistance of any kind, much less movement toward statehood, so long as their encouragement of terrorism persisted.

But it is the Bush Doctrine that has been shelved. In its hunger for Arab support against Iran -- and perhaps in a quest for a historic "legacy" -- the administration has dropped "with us or with the terrorists." It is hellbent instead on bestowing statehood upon a regime that stands unequivocally with the terrorists. "Frankly, it's time for the establishment of a Palestinian state," Rice says.

When George W. Bush succeeded Bill Clinton, he was determined not to replicate his predecessor's blunders in the Middle East, a determination that intensified after 9/11. Yet he too has succumbed to the messianism that leads US presidents

to imagine they can resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. Clinton's legacy in this arena was the second intifada, which drenched the region in blood. To what fresh hell will Bush's diplomacy lead?