

No peace pipes: Daniel Pipes and the U.S. Institute of Peace

by [James M. Wall](#) in the [September 20, 2003](#) issue

Faced with strong U.S. Senate opposition led by Democrats Ted Kennedy, Tom Harkin, Chris Dodd and independent Jim Jeffords, President Bush waited until Congress had adjourned before giving Daniel Pipes an interim appointment to the U.S. Institute of Peace. For the next 16 months, Pipes will serve as one of 15 members on the board of a think tank created by Congress in 1985. The Institute of Peace claims as its purpose the use of “knowledge to promote peace and curb violent international conflict.”

After his appointment became official, 53-year-old Pipes gave an indication of what had galvanized his opponents in a statement made in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. “Conditions of peace have, by and large, been created through military victory,” he said. “We have differences with all our allies, but there is no possibility of resorting to force with them, and that is the goal which we all hope for. But that is not where we find ourselves now, as we found in Iraq and Afghanistan. We cannot always rely on nonviolent methods.”

Leading the fight against Pipes was the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), an organization Pipes attacked in a recent address to a Zionist conference. Pointing to CAIR’s objection to his selection, Pipes said, “[Stopping] my nomination is merely a stepping stone in their assertion of power to achieve a militant Islamic state. To put it more graphically: the substitution of the Constitution by the Koran.”

The *Wall Street Journal* reports that Pipes has strong support among neoconservative politicians, scholars and journalists: “After 9/11 [Pipes] made the obvious point that the best hiding place for radical Muslims in the U.S. would be in moderate Muslim communities and in mosques. He favors ‘profiling,’ which is to say paying more attention at airports to young Arab men than to American grandmothers.”

Pipes is the founder and director of the Middle East Forum in Philadelphia where, among other projects, he created a Web site called “Campus Watch” that monitors the work of Middle East scholars and professors for any pro-Arab bias in their classrooms or publications. Earlier, Pipes directed the Foreign Policy Institute in Philadelphia where he was instrumental in securing funding for Robert Kaplan’s strongly pro-Israel book, *The Arabists: The Romance of an American Elite*.

A major thesis of Kaplan’s book is that the Protestant missionaries who worked in Arab countries early in the 20th century (church leaders who built schools such as the American University in Beirut) encouraged their Arabic-speaking sons and daughters to enter the foreign service, and in so doing, helped create a pro-Arab mind-set in the State Department.

This thesis has been rejected as oversimplistic by retired State Department officials from that era, including former ambassador Richard B. Parks, who wrote in a review for the *Journal of Palestine Studies* that Kaplan was “careless about details, his portraits tend to be one-dimensional . . . He propagates a myth that a New England WASP elite that was emotionally involved with the Arabs dominated Middle East policy for 30 years after World War II without bothering to look at details which would have told him otherwise.”

In his highly favorable review of Kaplan’s book (*Wall Street Journal*), Pipes wrote that “as the Arabist cohort at State became increasingly dominant, it also brought strange prejudices to the government . . . Bound up in their own small world, Arabists lacked the imagination to understand either the U.S. or American interests abroad . . .”

Reporting for *Mother Jones*, Michael Scherer notes that Pipes shares many of the views of Vladimir Jabotinsky, the ideological father of the Israeli right wing, who wrote in 1923 “that there would be no peace until the Arabs in Israel were psychologically crushed.” At the Interfaith Zionist Leadership Summit in Washington in May, Scherer reports, Pipes was greeted as a celebrity, receiving standing ovations before and after he spoke.

Conservatives Gary Bauer and Alan Keyes also addressed the group. Bauer said that Israel is God’s gift to the Jews, while Keyes described Israel’s fight against Palestinian terrorism as a fight against evil. Pipes spoke in less theological terms, but adopted a more militant stance. He told participants that the Israeli military

must compel a “change of heart” by the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza—a sapping of the Palestinian will to fight which can lead to a complete surrender. “How is a change of heart achieved? It is achieved by an Israeli victory and a Palestinian defeat.”

Susannah Heschel, professor of Jewish studies at Dartmouth, opposed Pipes’s nomination with a simple declaration: “Daniel Pipes is not a peacemaker.” Heschel, the daughter of Abraham Joshua Heschel, knows peacemaking when she sees it. A book she edited of her father’s writings, *Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity*, includes these words which remain relevant today: “Who would have believed that our own nation at the height of its career as the leader of free nations, the hope for peace in the world, whose unprecedented greatness was achieved through ‘liberty and justice for all,’ should abdicate its wisdom, suppress its compassion, and permit guns to become its symbols?”