

Earl Raab

December 6, 1983

MISSING THE POINT

You remember Goliath? Well, it seems that David was able to knock him over because Goliath was suffering from a rare disease.

At least, a couple of medical scientists at Vanderbilt University have just published that diagnosis. According to them, Goliath was suffering from multiple endocrine neoplasm, a disease which caused him to be a giant in the first place- but which also created a soft spot on his forehead, enabling David's pebble to be lethal.

All of which proves that some people will go to any length in order to miss the point. If the point was David's courage, it can be assumed that he didn't know about neoplasms. If the point was the intervention of divine will, well, who caused the neoplasm in the first place?

Missing the point is not the sole province of medical scientists; it is a major industry in and about the Middle East. Last week there came to San Francisco a representative of the Quakers, an organization well known for its "peace and human rights" agenda. She was worried about the disgraceful way the U.S. was treating Syria. She explained that Syria had some legitimate grievances, and would be more likely to come to peace if supported rather than humiliated by the U.S.

A participant in the meeting expressed some puzzlement. How come this woman's organization was calling for the removal of all American support from El Salvador because of its bad human rights record---but was calling for American support of Syria despite a documented record of human rights violations by the Syrian government, including mass slaughter, which at least matches El Salvador's?

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A point was being missed someplace. The human-rights lady never did find it. Or maybe she was hiding it someplace in her subconscious. Maybe the hidden point was that El Salvador was allied with a bad country, the United States, and therefore needed punishment; while Syria was fighting a bad country, Israel, and therefore needed support. Often, a point which seems to be missed may just be hiding under a rock someplace.

The point is that, according to Amnesty International, the Syrian government executed 1000 prisoners in one day in a Damascus prison; murdered 550 people during houses searches in April, 1981; slaughtered 25 thousand innocent civilians in Hama in February, 1982. The point is that Syria has brought hundreds of Khoumeini Iranian terrorists to Lebanon; the trucks which Iranians used to car-bomb the American Marines and French, were brought from Syria.

The point is that if Israel did not exist, if the Palestinian Arabs had another state, then Syria would now be engaged in some more unrestrained form of warfare against the Palestinian Arabs, Jordan and Lebanon (all of which Assad considers Greater Syrian).

The point is that Syria is now the chief Soviet base and the chief anti-American base in the Middle East, armed with billions of dollars of advanced Soviet weaponry. The point is that Syria has no interest in making peace unless it has no choice.