Defends Israelis in Lebanon

To the Editor:

In his guest column of April 22, Ed. Mr. Ristad questions Jeanne Kirkpatrick's right to address the students of the University of California at Berkeley on the grounds that she is representing a government which supports repressive regimes throughout the world. He cites, among other examples, Israel's actions in Lebanon last summer as a case in point that Mrs. Kirkpatrick and the government she represents deserve only our contempt for supporting Israel. But concerning the situation in Lebanon, it is interesting to recall what Ambassador Ghouma, Lebanon's representative to the United Nations, had to say as long ago as 1976: "The Palestinians increased the influx of arms into Lebanon ... They transformed most of the refugee camps, if not all, into military bases..."This was, then, the situation in Lebanon before Israel launched its campaign. Now, as a result of this action, Lebanon has the potential for sovereignty within its grasp for the first time in almost a decade. Though the Lebanese peace talks have bogged down, there is confidence on the part of the Lebanese, Israelis, and Americans that a solution will be reached. Indeed, our government's avoidance of seeing that this Israeli action results in a long-sought peace was only reinforced after the tragic bombing of our embassy two weeks ago in Beirut. This support given by our government to the Israeli action and the ensuing peace process coincides with the principles of democracy and human rights which Mr. Ristad so strongly supports, yet so gravely misunderstands.

Steven W. Luderer

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