

Donald Trump Takes Sides on Israeli Settlements Issue

For a guy who said he didn't want to take sides in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, presumptive Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump sure has an interesting way of showing it.

In an exclusive interview with the United Kingdom's *Daily Mail* newspaper this week, he definitely took sides in the ongoing conflict. Asked whether there should be a halt to construction of settlements in the West Bank as a condition of any peace deal—a main point of contention and a prerequisite established by President Obama's two-state peace plan—Trump flat-out said “no.”

“No, I don't think there should be a pause,” he said. “Look: Missiles were launched into Israel, and Israel, I think, never was properly treated by our country. I mean, do you know what that is, how devastating that is?”

“With all of that being said, I would love to see if peace could be negotiated. A lot of people say that's not a deal that's possible. But I mean lasting peace, not a peace that lasts for two weeks and they start launching missiles again. So we'll see what happens.”

Trump, who authored the book “The Art of the Deal,” has made it abundantly clear he thinks a lasting Middle East peace deal would be the “ultimate deal,” and has made it one of his goals, if elected president. But he's also made it clear that lasting peace must be brokered honestly by both the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Democratic presidential front-runner Hillary Clinton has said she largely agrees with the Obama administration's position, which not only includes a halt to West Bank settlements but

also Israel returning to its borders prior to successive wars in the 1950s and 1960s. In those wars, Israel won the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights and the West Bank.