

Huckabee Says Two-State Solution "Unrealistic"

✖ Former Republican presidential hopeful Mike Huckabee said it is "virtually unrealistic" for a Palestinian state to be placed "in the middle of the Jewish homeland" and that Israel should be able to build settlements where it wants, according to the Associated Press (AP).

While on a three-day tour of Israel this week, the former Arkansas governor and one-time Southern Baptist pastor told reporters on Tuesday that the international community should consider establishing a Palestinian state elsewhere.

"The question is should the Palestinians have a place to call their own? Yes, I have no problem with that," Huckabee said. "Should it be in the middle of the Jewish homeland? That's what I think has to be honestly assessed as virtually unrealistic."

Huckabee's view puts him at odds with President Obama, who has called for a freeze on Israeli settlement activity on lands the Palestinians claim. To a lesser degree, he also veers from conservative Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has expressed support for some form of demilitarized Palestinian state.

In a posting on his blog, Huckabee said he was "amazed" that some would justify a policy that "would force Jewish settlers to not live in some areas of their own nation."

"I can only imagine what an American would say if someone suggested that Baptists wouldn't be allowed to live in some neighborhoods, while Catholics would be banned in others," he added.

Huckabee, who is viewed as a possible 2012 presidential

candidate, was being hosted by the Jerusalem Reclamation Project, which seeks to block efforts to divide Jerusalem as part of any peace deals. The trip was to end Wednesday.

Huckabee plans another trip to Israel in February with Mat Staver, founder of the Christian legal group Liberty Counsel.