

Duquesne University

Duquesne Scholarship Collection

Hallowed Secularism

The Collective Works of Bruce Ledewitz, Adrian
Van Kaam C.S.Sp. Endowed Chair in Scholarly
Excellence and Professor of Law

8-24-2013

August 24, 2013: Charles Krauthammer Loses His Way

Bruce Ledewitz

Duquesne University, ledewitz@duq.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dsc.duq.edu/ledewitz-hallowedsecularism>



Part of the [Constitutional Law Commons](#), and the [Law and Philosophy Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Ledewitz, B. (2013). August 24, 2013: Charles Krauthammer Loses His Way. Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/ledewitz-hallowedsecularism/771>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the The Collective Works of Bruce Ledewitz, Adrian Van Kaam C.S.Sp. Endowed Chair in Scholarly Excellence and Professor of Law at Duquesne Scholarship Collection. It has been accepted for inclusion in Hallowed Secularism by an authorized administrator of Duquesne Scholarship Collection. For more information, please contact beharyr@duq.edu.

Title: Charles Krauthammer Loses His Way

Date: 2013-08-24T15:04:00.004-04:00

8/24/2013—In the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette today, Charles Krauthammer has a column in which he calls the decision by the Egyptian military to stage a coup a "Hobson's choice." There were no good alternatives according to Krauthammer. The United States, he suggests, should not be so emotional about this loss of democratic rule. Sometimes autocracy is better even for democracy in the long run. Krauthammer likens the choices in Egypt to situations in which the United States used to have to choose in the Cold War between communism and authoritarian regimes. Those authoritarian regimes sometimes could evolve into democratic regimes. This faux realism is exemplified in an observation made toward the end of the column. After pointing out that autocratic regimes like that of Pinochet could become Democratic over time, Krauthammer asks, sort of rhetorically, "how many times have communists or Islamists allowed that to happen?" But of course the answer to that question, in light of the coup in Egypt, is, how many times have Islamists been allowed to leave office peacefully? The Islamists in this instance in Egypt were democratically elected. The choice was in no sense between rival dictatorial movements. Krauthammer answers this implied criticism not by making his own judgment, by attributing a judgment to the General who staged the coup: "General Abdel Fatah al-Sissi seems to have calculated that by then [three years from now when elections were scheduled] there would be no elections — — as in Gaza, where the Palestinian wing of the brotherhood, Hamas, elected in 2006, established a one man one vote one time dictatorship." Krauthammer is making a serious mistake. He does not see that the possibilities were broader than coup or no coup. If the United States were seen as supporting the end of democracy in Egypt, this would be further proof to the Muslim world that the United States does not really care about democracy, but only about containing Islam. Of course it is true that there might have been a coup by the brotherhood itself, and elections canceled. But the Army could have acted then. In any event, the larger question is, can there be Islamic democracy? The only way to find out is by letting popularly elected Islamicists rule. This question — can there be Islamic democracy? — — is the key to long-term peace in the world. That is why the United States must not be seen as supporting this coup. And I notice that Krauthammer's allies are much less interested in a secular Constitution in the United States than they are in such a Constitution in Egypt. A genuine democracy in Egypt is not going to exclude those devoted to Islam. The idea that such a democracy could exist, a secular democracy in that sense, is behind Krauthammer's support for the military coup. This means that Krauthammer really does not want democracy in Egypt. He is afraid of what the people of Egypt might really want in their foreign policies and military policies.