

**THE MIDDLE EAST ROAD MAP: OVERCOMING  
OBSTACLES TO PEACE**

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**HEARING**  
BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NEAR EASTERN  
AND SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS  
OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS  
UNITED STATES SENATE  
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## THE MIDDLE EAST ROAD MAP: OVERCOMING OBSTACLES TO PEACE

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2003

U.S. SENATE,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NEAR EASTERN  
AND SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS,  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:57 p.m. in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Lincoln Chafee (chairman of the subcommittee), presiding.

Present: Senators Chafee, Lugar, Coleman, Boxer, and Corzine.

Senator CHAFEE. The hearing of the Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs Subcommittee of the Foreign Relations Committee will come to order. I thought what we might do is begin with opening statements of Senators and then receive testimony from the panel under a 10-minute time limit, and finally take some questions. We have lots of questions.

To begin with, of course, welcome to our witnesses. Some of you traveled a long distance and we appreciate that very much. If we have to break for votes, I apologize. We will try and keep that disruption to a minimum.

My perspective is influenced by having just returned from a trip to Iraq and Afghanistan. Our delegation also stopped in Turkey and Jordan. In these and other meetings I have had in my position as a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, we have been asked over and over again, "where is the U.S. initiative on the Road Map," which is so crucial to making progress on this most intractable of dilemmas.

That is a question I have difficulty answering: What are we doing as Americans? I think hearing from this panel is very important, at a hearing titled "Obstacles to Peace." There always are going to be obstacles—we knew that when we went to Aqaba—and we want to be able to surmount those obstacles. With the events of this morning, we are seeing a different trend: Americans are now being attacked for the first time. This is a trend that I think we have to address.

The most recent effort at studying the region is a report entitled "Changing Minds and Winning the Peace, the New Strategic Direction for U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Arab and Muslim World." This study showed that people in the Arab and Muslim world generally like Americans, but they have some grave differences with our policies. I think that is what we are all here to discuss this afternoon.

Now we will turn to the ranking member Senator Boxer.

Senator BOXER. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, for holding this important hearing on the Middle East Road Map. I think we both were a little disappointed that the administration is not testifying today at this session, but I think it is important to note they did testify before us in a closed session, and I found that extremely helpful. Ambassador Burns said he would be willing to work with us to address us in an open session, and I look forward to that in the near future.

Little did we know that this would be the day that we woke up to the news that there was a tragic attack on Americans today, as our chairman said, the first such attack aimed directly at Americans, Americans who were going to interview Palestinian students who applied for Fulbright scholarships. I mean, that is a sick, a sick day for all of us.

We need optimism. Mr. Chairman, you are an optimist and I am an optimist, and we make a good pair I think across party aisles here. But it is hard to come by. We were told by Mr. Wolfowitz, in answer to a question you asked him, that the Iraqi war was going to help solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I was skeptical of that. I see these as very different situations. We certainly do not see it happening.

We were told that Abu Mazen would change things and, sad to say, he is gone from the picture, I think because he really wanted to change things.

We need a real heroic effort and we all have to work together across party lines to have that heroic effort for peace. Former President Bill Clinton, I think everyone would say regardless of the outcome of his efforts, put forth an incredible amount of energy, and I think the Honorable Dennis Ross was an integral part of that. While he was not successful in negotiating a final agreement for peace, his efforts in and of themselves gave hope to good people on both sides.

I remember the sense of despair that I felt when Yasser Arafat went away after being offered essentially 90 percent of what he wanted. I thought that was a signal of a real bad turn of events.

To the last days of the last administration, President Clinton tried to bring lasting peace to the Middle East. We all know when President Bush took office he was concentrating on other things, and he had a hands-off approach to the intifada, and I believe he disengaged with the Middle East and then came back and engaged, but important time was lost.

I was glad when the President spelled out in a speech in July a Road Map to peace. He called for a Palestinian leadership that is not only free from terrorism, but willing to dismantle the terrorist organizations that oppose peace. I think that was a very clear and important message. That speech did lead to the unveiling of the Middle East Road Map to peace.

Again, unfortunately for the first time Americans were a target on that road and I for one have not taken it all in yet as to what it means, and I am hopeful that some of you can step back a little bit. Maybe there is a way we can move forward from it.

So I look forward to hearing from the panel of witnesses today. Clearly, I have very strong opinions about Yasser Arafat's lack of

real engagement in dismantling the terrorist organizations. I hope I could be proven wrong. We want to know who did this to our people today. We want those people brought to justice, and clearly we need a vision to get back on some kind of a road.

I thank you very much.

Senator CHAFEE. Thank you, Senator Boxer.

Chairman Lugar.

The CHAIRMAN. No.

Senator CHAFEE. Senator Coleman.

Senator COLEMAN. Just very briefly, Mr. Chairman, because I do want to hear from the witnesses. We need a path to peace. The President laid out a Road Map. I have been strongly supportive of his vision for peace, but it has proven very difficult. And optimism—we need optimism, but it is really hard, really difficult. As the Senator from California notes today, it makes it even more difficult, more personal, with Americans being targeted, being attacked.

Yet we have to figure this out. Jews and Palestinians have to figure out how to live side by side, protecting the security of Israeli, having a Palestinian state, but one in which there is an end to terrorism, in which there is transparency and democracy. I just hope that we stay the course, but in the end I would like to get a better sense that we can get there.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator CHAFEE. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Corzine.

Senator CORZINE. Thank you. I will just welcome the witnesses, and I appreciate very much your holding this hearing, Mr. Chairman. This accelerating element of violence that we have seen capped only today by this attack on Americans I think alarms everyone, is something that I think challenges a lot of the assumptions of the actions that have taken place, at least with regard to our major venture into Iraq, in my view.

I have a single question: How do we find that path to hope? How do we move away from this accelerating sense of chaos and anarchy? I welcome hearing the thoughts on this because, no matter how vigorously we seem to defend the actions that we take, the actions that follow do not seem to justify it. I believe in self-defense, so I am looking for, as I think all of us are, what is this path that we need to be looking for.

Senator CHAFEE. Thank you, Senator.

Let us start with the Honorable Dennis Ross. Mr. Ross is the director and Ziegler Distinguished Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy here in Washington.

**STATEMENT OF HON. DENNIS ROSS, DIRECTOR AND ZIEGLER  
DISTINGUISHED FELLOW, THE WASHINGTON INSTITUTE  
FOR NEAR EAST POLICY, WASHINGTON, DC**

Mr. ROSS. Thank you. I have a statement that I am going to submit for the record, but let me encapsulate what I think the essence of what you are all looking for is. It is sobering for me to be here today because the road where the attack took place today is a road that I was on no less than 200 times. In the past when I would take that road in there, it was not very clear—

Senator BOXER. Is your mike on?

Mr. ROSS. Is it now? You want to hear me also.

Senator BOXER. I want to hear what you said in the beginning.

Mr. ROSS. I was saying that the road where the attack took place is a road that I have been on at least 200 times. In the past when I would go into Gaza and I would have security and I would have Palestinian security, the one thing that was very clear: There would never be such an attack because Hamas or Islamic Jihad or whoever is responsible for this would have understood that the consequences for doing it would have been so disastrous from their standpoint they would not even have contemplated it.

They knew from the Palestinian side, which by the way is ultimately the way you are going to solve the terrorism problem, that they would face an incredible onslaught from the Palestinian security forces if they carried out such an act. Now, obviously that imagery does not exist today for them. This was not a random act. It took intelligence, it took planning, it took organization. And the kinds of groups—even though no one has taken credit for it yet either Hamas or perhaps Hezbollah helping groups like Hamas are the only groups with this kind of capability.

We had a moment in the spring to change the situation not to make peace. Three years ago we were talking about making peace. You have to understand where we are today. We are talking about ending a war. The intifada started as an uprising and it got transformed into a war, and that is what we have had for the last 3 years.

When Abu Mazen became the Palestinian Prime Minister, you had a moment. We were not able to capitalize on that moment. I was in favor of the President going to Aqaba, but to make the most of Aqaba the administration needed before the summit was to work out the details on the ground of what the cooperation between the two sides was going to be. That was not done.

The Road Map represented a set of guidelines. It did not represent a blueprint, because nobody had the same understanding of what its 52 paragraphs represented. This was a concept that was negotiated by the U.S., the EU, the Russians and the U.N. None of these four parties had responsibility for carrying out even one of its steps. The parties who had to carry it out were the Israelis and the Palestinians and they were asked for their comments, they were told it was not negotiable.

If you did not work out with the two sides how they understood each of the obligations, if you did not work out what were the standards of performance so everybody understood in the same way what was expected of them, you were not in fact going to see the Road Map materialize. Now that moment has been lost. Abu Mazen is gone, and now we will see whether or not there can be a new Palestinian Prime Minister.

To answer what I think you are most interested in hearing—namely, what can be done now—let me suggest that I think that there are six options before us right now not to make peace, but to end the war. That is not the issue right now. First things first. We have to reestablish the possibility of the peace process before we can be talking about what peace is going to be.



The six options are basically what I call: first, the muddle down option. Not muddle through; muddle down. Muddle down means you continue the way you are going now. You operate on an assumption that the two sides will reach a level of exhaustion where they will be so exhausted, in such pain, that they will find a way to work out of the current predicament.

I say “muddle down” because the situation will continue to get worse. The reason I am not an enthusiast for this option is because one of the things I think we have to learn from the past is that both sides, in fact, have an enormous capacity to suffer. So if we think that they just have to suffer a little bit more and it is going to be OK, I am afraid that is not the case. Moreover, I am afraid that the hole will be dug so deep that by the time some new opportunity arises we are going to find that it is too hard to climb out of the hole that has been dug. So the muddle down option is an option that some people may believe in, but I think it is not one that can work.

The second option: It is basically assuming that Abu Ala, the person Arafat has appointed in the emergency cabinet to be the emergency Prime Minister, who is himself saying that at this point he may not serve more than another 25 days; this option assumes that Abu Ala will in fact stay as Prime Minister and he will seek in fact to work things out by coopting Yasser Arafat. To coopt Yasser Arafat he has to deliver something to Yasser Arafat; he can only do so if he coopts Ariel Sharon. In reality Abu Ala cannot deliver anything to Yasser Arafat unless he can deliver something to Ariel Sharon.

What is it that he delivers to Yasser Arafat? Well, he probably delivers a couple of things. First right now, in the aftermath of what happened today, Arafat is likely to be afraid. He is likely to believe that the possibility of the administration being less concerned about whether the Israelis expel him or not is a possibility that perhaps he ought to be taking very seriously. He is likely to be concerned that maybe the U.S. right now will give a yellow light to the Israelis about expulsion, and that will concern him, No. 1.

No. 2, what he really wants more than anything else is a two-way ticket. Sharon has offered him a one-way ticket. He wants a ticket out and he wants to be able to return to the West Bank of Gaza. Is Ariel Sharon prepared to offer him anything like that? Not likely. That is why I say that Abu Ala is going to have to coopt Ariel Sharon as well.

The only way that Ariel Sharon will be coopted is if he believes that in fact Abu Ala will deliver on security, and that means that Abu Ala is given a *carte blanche* to organize the security forces and to take on Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades.

Now, Ariel Sharon might well do that, particularly because he does not have many other options. I would not bet the farm on it, but I will tell you, if the next 6 months look to him like the last 2 months have looked, he might well look for a deal with Abu Ala. If the Israeli options were so good right now, I am not sure they would have attacked the terrorist training camp in Syria.

The reality is they do not have wonderful options right now. Expelling Arafat is not a great option from Sharon's standpoint, but

it reflects a mood in Israel and his own mood. Going into Gaza the way they have gone into the West Bank is an option, but it is very expensive, and it does not deal with what is in fact the threat that took place in Haifa on October 4. Accelerating the fence may be an option, but it is not a near-term option that is going to produce.

And doing more against the Palestinians on the West Bank militarily is something that in fact is difficult to do at this point. The Israelis have almost a complete siege on the territories. It is not just that you cannot as a Palestinian move from the territories into Israel, you cannot move around within the West Bank itself. The siege is there for a reason. All the checkpoints are there because if you lift checkpoints the number of terrorist attacks in Israel will go up, not down. So it is not like the Israelis can do a lot of other things.

If in fact a deal with Abu Ala is possible, if that means the Palestinians are policing themselves and not permitting Hamas and Islamic Jihad to operate and organize attacks like we have seen today, then that may not be such a bad option from Ariel Sharon's standpoint. So this option two of coopting Arafat and coopting Sharon means a deal between the Israelis and this Palestinian Authority, with this Prime Minister, assuming he stays.

Obviously, he is going to have to be satisfied that he can work out something with Arafat, and his own negotiations with Arafat right now are not going so easily and that is one of the reasons he has threatened not to stay.

A third option: A greater intervention by the United States to create a reason for the Israelis to pause in what are their daily attacks against Hamas operatives and Islamic Jihad operatives and leaders. The Palestinian Authority will not go after these groups while the Israelis are doing so. At the same time, our intervention must create a justification for the Palestinian Authority to act against Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

Now, that kind of intervention by us would require us to do our part with the Israelis, and the Arabs to assume a real responsibility with the Palestinians. The President would need to go to a collective of Arab leaders and say to them: You now have to make it clear that what Hamas and Islamic Jihad are doing is a threat to the Palestinian cause, a threat to Palestinian interests, certain to undermine the possibility of ever achieving a Palestinian state. You have to publicly condemn these groups, you have to embrace the Palestinian Authority as it confronts these groups, and also deal with Yasser Arafat so he does not block Abu Ala and the security forces, from taking on Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

Now, that would take a big move by this administration and it would take a revolution among Arab leadership, who to date have never condemned Hamas and Islamic Jihad by name.

Option four would be the expulsion of Arafat. But Arafat is an icon to the Palestinians. He put the Palestinians on the map. He is the one who gave them standing and recognition. You do not beat something with nothing. If you want to expel Arafat, what you have to do is show that there is a solution and that the reason the solution is not possible is because he blocks it, he is the obstacle.

You believe it and I believe it. Almost all Israelis believe it. But Palestinians do not necessarily believe it, and what they have to

see is that there is a solution out there, something that looks like the Clinton parameters, which would have created a state in 100 percent of Gaza and 95 to 97 percent of the West Bank and would have made the Arab part of East Jerusalem the capital of that state, or something that would make it clear that this Israeli Government is prepared to embrace statehood on the Palestinian side, not surrounded, not fragmented, which means that many settlements will have to be evacuated, and Israelis are prepared to pursue that kind of a vision once it is clear that Arafat is gone and there is a Palestinian leadership that truly rejects terror.

A fifth option would be the option of trusteeship. There are some who argue for trusteeship on the grounds that the Palestinians are never going to be responsible, are simply too dysfunctional to be able to build a state on their own, so basically the international community, led by us, has to come in, we have to go ahead and build the institutions for them, we have to assume the responsibility for security, taking on Hamas, Islamic Jihad, so that over time the Palestinians will be able to build a state.

There are a lot of reasons I think trusteeship cannot work. I do not think that the administration will be too keen to engage in nation-building in Palestine given its other obligations in nation-building right now. But even beyond that, Arafat's most pernicious legacy for the Palestinians is a legacy of having created a concept of victimhood, not as a reality but as a strategy. Being a victim of strategy creates a sense of entitlement, a sense that you never are responsible, you are never accountable. No failure is ever yours. Someone is always responsible, not you. Somebody else has to do, not you. Somebody else has to deliver, not you.

Trusteeship will reinforce a psychology that is inconsistent with peacemaking because it will tell Palestinians once again: Somebody else is out there to do it for you. That is not a great option.

The last option is what I call the default option. This is not one that I normally would be in favor of because basically it reflects the failure of diplomacy, not its triumph. But if you do not have option two, which is basically an Abu Ala-Sharon cooptation option, if you do not have option three, which is basically having the Arabs come in and assume a responsibility to put the Palestinian house in order and make it easier for Palestinians to confront those in their midst who reject peace and use terror—and we will not do our part with the Israelis in terms of affecting settlement activity—you will not have diplomacy as an option and you will not have a partner. If you do not have diplomacy you will not have security. And if that is the case you are going to have the fence or the barrier or the wall.

Now, the critical thing here is to build it in a way that makes it possible still to have a political solution. That requires using three criteria to govern how you approach the fence. One is security, building it in a topographical way that makes it difficult to infiltrate into Israel. Two is demographics because you are trying to preserve Israel as a Jewish state and that means you cannot be building this in a way that absorbs Palestinians into the state. And three is preserving a political solution, which means the Israelis have to get out of the Palestinians' lives so that they are not controlling Palestinian lives, so you reduce the pool of anger and alien-

ation, but also so that Palestinians still have an incentive to negotiate.

I am not in favor of building the fence on the Green Line except where demographics dictate that. The Palestinians have to know that this fence, part of which they will not like, can be there 1 year, 2 years, or 50 years. It is up to them to make the choice to assume responsibility, and what that means in practical terms is we would pursue parallel unilateralism: working with the Israelis to build the fence on those three criteria, working with the Palestinians so that they would assume their responsibilities wherever the Israelis withdraw.

The red light is on, so I will stop.

[The following submitted testimony of Mr. Ross is an article that appeared in the Fall edition of *The National Interest*.]

SUBMITTED TESTIMONY OF AMBASSADOR DENNIS ROSS, DIRECTOR AND ZIEGLER DISTINGUISHED FELLOW, THE WASHINGTON INSTITUTE FOR NEAR EAST POLICY, WASHINGTON, DC

#### TAKING STOCK

##### THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION AND THE ROADMAP TO PEACE

When the Bush Administration assumed office in January of 2001, it shifted direction in a number of foreign policy areas. Nowhere was the shift in direction and priority more pronounced than in the approach to Arab-Israeli diplomacy. It was not only that the President would not be engaged; it was also that there would be no American envoy to the peace process. Indeed, in the first months of the administration, the very words “peace process” were banned from the public and private lexicon.

The policy was one of disengagement. A number of assumptions seemed to guide the new approach: the Clinton Administration erred in wanting peace more than the parties, with the President having been far too involved; Yasir Arafat was indulged too much; the new Ariel Sharon-led government in Israel would now rule out being able to achieve much; and U.S. interests in the region were threatened far more by Iraq. Dealing with that problem—as opposed to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—was more likely to transform the landscape of the area.

Whatever one thinks about the wisdom of America’s intensive, high-level engagement in the 1990s, disengagement from peacemaking efforts was clearly not the answer. In the first years of the Bush Administration, with very limited American diplomacy between Israelis and Palestinians, the *intifada* was transformed into a war with a vast escalation in the suffering on both sides. For Israelis and Palestinians alike, the price they paid for having no peace process was very high.

To put this in perspective, the number of Israelis killed in the first four months of the *intifada* (until the end of the Clinton Administration) was 42. By June 2003, over 800 Israelis had been killed. Palestinian fatalities went from 350 to nearly 2,500.<sup>1</sup> The wounded amount to ten to twenty times the numbers killed. The economies on both sides have also paid a severe price. While the Israeli economy is in crisis—having declined in absolute terms every year for the last three years—the Palestinian economy has been devastated. More than 60 percent of Palestinians are presently living below the poverty level, and 1.8 million in the West Bank and Gaza are now dependent on subsistence from the UN and other international agencies.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>In early 2001, *The Toronto Star* reported that 42 Israelis, as opposed to some 350 Palestinians, had been killed in the first four months of the Al-Aqsa *intifada* (“Global Effort is Necessary to Stop Pain in Mideast”, February 11, 2001). According to the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), 841 Israelis have been killed in the period beginning on September 29, 2000, the start of the *intifada*, to August 2003.

<sup>2</sup>On July 17, 2003, *The Financial Times* reported that 50 percent of the Palestinian population is currently unemployed, while 60 percent lives below the poverty line (Christopher Patten, “A Road Map Paid for in Euros”, *The Financial Times*, July 17, 2003). In his speech on May 26, 2003, Prime Minister Sharon mentioned the dependence of over half the Palestinian population on foreign aid as a key determinant for ending the occupation. Speaking before the Knesset, the Israeli premier asked, “Today, 1.8 million Palestinians live thanks to support from international organizations. Do you want to take responsibility for them yourselves?” (Chris McGreal, “Peace hopes lie heavy on new force”, *The Guardian*, June 3, 2003).

But there has been another casualty as well: The psyches of both sides have been deeply wounded. Both Israeli and Palestinian publics have come to doubt whether they have a partner in peace on the other side. The problem is less a loss of confidence and more a loss of faith. And that cannot be restored overnight.

#### *The Beginnings of Change*

Under pressure from Arab leaders, especially Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, the Bush Administration decided to re-engage in Middle Eastern diplomacy in August 2001. The President sent a private letter to the Crown Prince, establishing for the first time that U.S. policy would be to support a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the Saudis and others were told that the President would have a brief meeting with Yasir Arafat on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly meetings in New York.

None of this was announced, and September 11 interrupted the advent of a new diplomacy. Given the administration's understandable preoccupation with the war in Afghanistan, a new effort on Israeli-Palestinian diplomacy was put on the backburner. Notwithstanding limited efforts to produce a ceasefire later in fall and early winter 2001-02, the administration's reluctance to engage itself seriously remained the guiding principle of its approach. The hesitancy was reinforced by perceptions that Arafat was doing little to stop terror, had frustrated General Anthony Zinni's effort to negotiate a ceasefire agreement, and had lied to the administration about trying to smuggle Iranian arms into the territories. Following the IDF's sweep of West Bank cities and an unproductive trip to the region by Secretary Powell in April 2002, the administration again came under increased pressure to do something.

The result was President Bush's speech of June 24, outlining his vision for peace-making. He publicly called for a two-state solution to the conflict. However, by emphasizing a performance-based approach to peace, he effectively told the Palestinians that if they wanted a state they would have to earn it. They must reform themselves, build credible institutions, end corruption, fight terror and create an alternative leadership untainted by terror. If the Palestinians did all this, Israel needed to accept statehood and "end the occupation that began in 1967."<sup>4</sup>

While long on exhortation and short on plans, the President's speech did create a new basis for the international community to address the issue. Palestinian reform became the focal point for activity, with emphasis put on creating transparency and accountability in the Palestinian Authority (PA). But translating this new emphasis into a new reality on the ground was bound to be difficult. There was nothing immediately practical in terms of what had been proposed. Reform as an objective was very important, but it was unlikely to be achievable unless the Israelis would relax their grip on the territories so reformers could move, meet and plan. For its part, the Israeli government might be a supporter of Palestinian reform—particularly if it meant sidelining Arafat—but it was not inclined to relax its grip on the territories if the result of doing so would be new terror attacks in Israel.

The stalemate remained. Finding a mechanism to act on the President's vision is what gave birth to the concept of a roadmap.

#### *Tactical Objective, Strategic Consequence*

Ironically, it was Arab leaders who initially raised the concept of a roadmap, notwithstanding their concern that the President's speech demanded too much from Palestinians and too little from Israelis. Desperate for the United States to intervene, they embraced the President's ultimate vision but called for a plan—a roadmap—to get there.

Here again, the administration did not rush to develop a roadmap. Arab leaders and Europeans were pleading for one to act on the President's words. Both argued

<sup>3</sup> While the Clinton parameters presented to the two sides in December 2000 would have provided for an independent Palestinian state, the parameters represented ideas to resolve the differences between the two sides, were never stated as formal policy, and were withdrawn at the end of the administration.

<sup>4</sup> Published on April 30, 2003, the roadmap called for a comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict based on two states, Israel and Palestine. Linked to this resolution, the roadmap specifies, "the settlement will resolve the Israel-Palestinian conflict, and end the occupation that began in 1967, based on the foundations of the Madrid Conference, the principle of land for peace, UNSCRs 242, 338 and 1397, agreements previously reached by the parties, and the initiative of Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah—endorsed by the Beirut Arab League Summit—calling for acceptance of Israel as a neighbor living in peace and security, in the context of a comprehensive settlement." During his speech on June 24, 2002, President Bush outlined a similar principle, defining the parameters of a two-state solution to mean "that the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 will be ended through a settlement negotiated between the parties, based on UN Resolutions 242 and 338, with Israeli withdrawal to secure and recognized borders."

that the U.S. position in the Middle East was being threatened by the administration's reluctance to defuse the Israeli-Palestinian war and its apparent eagerness to go to war with Saddam Hussein. Faced with the uncertainty of who to deal with on the Palestinian side and with the tactical need to gain support for its Iraq policy—or at least the prospect of acquiescence in it—the administration agreed to work with the EU, the UN and Russia in forging a roadmap to carry out the President's vision. While the United States would not let these other countries determine its response to Iraq, it would let them shape the conduct of U.S. diplomacy between the Israelis and Palestinians—an unprecedented step in the U.S. approach to Arab-Israeli issues. Few things better indicate that the real objective here had less to do with Middle East peace and much more to do with the Bush Administration's Iraq policy. Arabs, Europeans and others would find it easier to tolerate what the United States was doing in Iraq if the administration could point to its making a serious effort on Israeli-Palestinian peace—or so the thinking went.

This tactical objective led to a reversal of the traditional approach to Arab-Israeli diplomacy. Rather than working out understandings with the parties, the administration engaged in a negotiation with the members of the Quartet (the United States, EU, UN and Russia). Consequently, the roadmap reflected agreement with parties that had no responsibility for carrying out even one of the steps for which they were calling. Conversely, the parties that would have to implement these steps were presented the roadmap after the Quartet had already agreed to it. They were each offered the opportunity to make comments but not to engage in a negotiation about its content or how it might actually be implemented. Perhaps the need to avoid negotiating with Yasir Arafat—as well as the desire to have an international consensus that would be difficult to reject—influenced the administration's approach.

By definition, however, the roadmap could never be brought to life if it were based only on the understandings of outsiders. Indeed, it could only materialize with clear and unambiguous understandings between the “insiders” on what each side would actually do, when they would do it, where they would do it and how they would do it. Not surprisingly, the roadmap, once unveiled, could not actually be launched without an agreed trigger. Though President Bush publicly announced the roadmap in March, before the beginning of the war in Iraq, it took active diplomacy in June, after the Aqaba summit to produce an agreement on initial steps that each side might take.

#### *The Impact of the War in Iraq*

Defeating Saddam was never going to yield peace between Israel and the Palestinians. The conflict between two national movements with competing historic claims to the same territory was not created by Saddam Hussein and was not going to be resolved by his demise. But the war and the fall of Saddam's regime did have an impact on U.S. diplomacy and on the Israelis and Palestinians. For his part, President Bush—as part of the effort to build support for the war—made promises to a number of leaders, including Arab leaders, that he would make a serious effort on Israeli-Palestinian peace after dealing with Saddam Hussein. The more he repeated this privately, the more he became sincerely wedded to doing it, and the roadmap, whatever the initial motives the administration had for it, suddenly became the President's avowed policy.

As for the Israelis and the Palestinians, neither wanted to say no to President Bush, who glowed in the aftermath of Saddam's defeat. Prime Minister Sharon—knowing that most Israelis believed that the United States had removed a strategic threat to Israel—was not about to reject an initiative by the triumphant President. Similarly, neither Arafat nor Palestinian reformist leaders had any interest in denying a U.S. initiative under these circumstances. On the contrary, Palestinians sought the intervention of the world's only superpower to transform the situation on the ground.

There is a big difference, however, between avoiding saying no, on the one hand, and actually saying yes to the specifics of what the United States might be asking, on the other. Not rejecting the U.S. initiative was consistent with wanting to stop the war. Saying yes might mean moving toward the difficult decisions involved in peacemaking. Such a positive response requires a different mindset—one which must demonstrate a willingness to confront constituencies that resist compromise and think not only in terms of their own political needs but their counterpart's as well. While Saddam's defeat did not necessarily create these impulses on either side, it did suggest that change was possible and that the moment should be seized at least to produce relief for both sides.

In this sense, the President's initiative came at a moment when both Israelis and Palestinians were ready to stop the day-to-day struggle that was imposing such pain

on each of them. On this point, they basically agreed. Their “agreement” did not extend to the content of peace negotiations or even to the content of the roadmap. But it did reflect important developments within each society.

#### *New Realities*

Among Palestinians, the attitude toward the violence had begun to change in the period preceding the war in Iraq. Though a majority of Palestinians favored violence from the beginning of the *intifada*—especially as a way to inflict pain on Israelis who were inflicting pain on them—this sentiment began to change in early 2003. In February, polls indicated that a slim majority now opposed the violence. By June, that slim majority became a more decisive one, with 73 percent of the Palestinians in the territories favoring an end to it.<sup>5</sup> Palestinians were longing for a return to a more normal life—one in which the Israeli siege could be lifted and movement of people and goods could be restored. No end to the violence would mean no lifting of the checkpoints.

Under duress, Yasir Arafat appointed Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) as the first-ever prime minister of the Palestinian Authority. The administration skillfully used the Palestinian desire for American intervention to increase the pressure on Arafat to make the appointment, saying it could only unveil the roadmap when there was a credible prime minister. Arafat may have made the appointment only because of international pressure, but it was Palestinian reformers who first raised the idea of a prime minister. Indeed, Palestinian pressure on Arafat for reform pre-dated President Bush’s June 24 speech, emerging when no one predicted it. Following the Israeli operation “Defensive Shield” of March-May 2002, in which the IDF entered every Palestinian city in the West Bank except Jericho and destroyed extensive parts of the old cities of Jenin and Nablus as they sought to root out terrorist cells, most observers expected the Palestinians to be driven by their anger at Israel. No doubt there was anger, but the overwhelming sentiment in the territories after Defensive Shield was the desire for reform. Reconstruction was what Palestinians wanted: they did not want to reconstruct the “rot” that had been Yasir Arafat’s government.<sup>6</sup>

Palestinians were not prepared to embrace efforts to unseat their icon Yasir Arafat, but they wanted him to share power. The emergence of Abu Mazen as prime minister represented what reformers had sought, even if his cabinet, being the product of difficult negotiations with Arafat, was not exactly what they had in mind. No one on the Palestinian side had more consistently opposed violence than Abu Mazen. At one point, he publicly challenged those, including Arafat, who argued for the *intifada*, saying that it yielded the opposite of their stated goals: it extended Israeli occupation, tightened the Israeli control of East Jerusalem and strengthened Prime Minister Sharon. To Abu Mazen, the continued violence was producing a disaster for Palestinians and threatening the cause itself.

The new Palestinian Prime Minister was not alone in this assessment. Critical support for stopping the violence came from Tanzim leaders. The Tanzim are the Fatah activists who control much of the grassroots organization, especially in the cities of the West Bank. Though Marwan Barghouti is certainly the most prominent Tanzim leader, the Tanzim tends to be more of a horizontal than a vertical organization. Their leaders produced the first *intifada* from 1987-90 and have played an important role in the second one. As several of their leaders explained to me in June, they initially believed that this *intifada* would prove to the Israelis that force would not work on the Palestinians. Instead, it was now clear that force could work against either side. Worse, as the *intifada* continued, their agenda of a two-state solution, produced through negotiations, was being supplanted by the Hamas agenda of ongoing struggle. Lest there be a break in the situation, they were now concerned that the ability to produce a two-state solution could be lost.

The push for a ceasefire came strongly from the Tanzim and certainly also reflected the mood of the Palestinian public. In these circumstances, Hamas was not about to oppose a ceasefire, believing that it could use the respite to rebuild, and

<sup>5</sup>A survey conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research from June 19-22 found that 73 percent of Palestinians favored a *hudna*, a one-year voluntary cessation of violence against Israelis. Moreover, 80 percent of respondents favored a joint Israeli-Palestinian ceasefire of unlimited duration.

<sup>6</sup>A poll conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research from May 15-18, 2000 found that 91 percent of Palestinians supported “fundamental reforms” in the Palestinian Authority. Equally noteworthy, respondents favored a number of specific actions by a wide majority—including 85 percent supporting unification of security services, 95 percent supporting the dismissal of ministers accused of mismanagement or corruption, 83 percent supporting holding elections and 92 percent supporting the adoption of a basic law or constitution.

that sooner or later the Israelis would create a pretext for going back to the struggle.

In Israel, there was also a readiness to transform the situation. Certainly, the Israeli public was ready for it, with two-thirds opposing the resumption of targeted killings by the IDF.<sup>7</sup> But coupled with the desire to see the violence end was a feeling that the Palestinians, having imposed the recent violence on Israel, must show they were serious about stopping it.

With the emergence of Abu Mazen as prime minister, the Israeli public and Prime Minister Sharon saw an opportunity. With President Bush's initiative, he saw a need, but the ongoing economic crisis in Israel also motivated him. Sharon came to believe that Israel's economy could not recover unless the war with the Palestinians stopped—and for the first time he publicly began to say so. His call to his constituency to understand that Israel must give up the occupation and be ready to “divide the land” was justified in terms of the occupation not being good for Israelis, for Palestinians or for “Israel's economy.”

Exhaustion on both sides certainly helps to explain why there may now be a moment to end the war and resume a peace process. Can a peace process now be successful? Is the roadmap the vehicle for producing success?

#### *The Problems Ahead*<sup>8</sup>

The roadmap is not a detailed plan. Having been forged with outside parties, it lacks the clarity and definition to be anything other than a set of guidelines. Its basic concept makes sense: establish mutual obligations and phases designed to restore an environment in which the two sides can, in time, once again tackle the core issues of the conflict.<sup>9</sup>

Truth be told, the roadmap tries to create a pathway that restores the core bargain of Oslo: The Israelis get security. The Palestinians get their freedom. Both sides assume responsibilities to fulfill their side of that bargain. This is a fair sounding proposition in theory, but devilishly difficult to translate into reality.

The two sides were not involved in developing the roadmap, so it should come as no surprise that they would each try to redefine it. The Israelis have been public about their concerns and created 14 conditions—primarily related to security and sequence—that the current administration has promised to “take into account.” The Palestinians have publicly accepted the roadmap without qualification; nonetheless, they are trying to redefine it in its application. For example, the *hudna*, or truce declared as an agreement among Palestinian factions, is not a part of the roadmap. There is supposed to be an immediate, unconditional ceasefire, with the commencement of arrests and the dismantling of terrorist infrastructure. But Abu Mazen explained that he needed to build his capabilities before taking on the main Palestinian obligations in the first phase of the roadmap. He is betting that, with calm, the Israelis will take steps both within and outside of the roadmap that will allow him to show he is delivering. By showing that his way works, that life for Palestinians improves, he will build his authority and his leverage on groups like Hamas.

The irony is not lost on the Israelis: a roadmap that was to pressure the Palestinians to produce first on security issues before Israel had to take difficult steps is one that in practice pressures the Israelis to perform prior to Abu Mazen fulfilling his side of the bargain. Indeed, this irony even extends to items not in the roadmap—neither Palestinian prisoners nor the “fence” are addressed in the roadmap, but releasing prisoners and halting construction of the security fence in the West Bank have become part of the new list of Palestinian needs. Israel, recognizing its stake in Abu Mazen's success, released some prisoners, lifted some checkpoints and even planned additional withdrawals. But the Israelis were never likely to withdraw extensively prior to seeing more of a Palestinian effort to constrain terrorist groups and their capabilities in additional areas of the West Bank. Moreover, Sharon was

<sup>7</sup> Following the failed IDF attack against Hamas leader Abdelaziz Al-Rantissi, a poll published in the Israeli daily *Yediot Ahranot* found that 67 percent of Israelis opposed the recommencement of targeted killings. Within that group, 58 percent backed a temporary suspension of strikes against militant leaders in order to afford Abbas an opportunity to curb the activities of extremist groups. Only 9 percent of Israelis objected to the policy of targeted killings irrespective of circumstances (“Poll: Israelis Oppose Military Strikes”, *Associated Press*, June 13, 2003).

<sup>8</sup> This issue was going to press as Prime Minister Abbas resigned on September 6, but the prescriptions for Abbas contained herein apply equally to his successor.

<sup>9</sup> The first phase is designed to produce Palestinian reform and Israeli security, with the Palestinians cracking down on the infrastructure of terror in their areas and the Israelis withdrawing their forces to where they were in September 2000. The second phase involves the creation of a Palestinian state with provisional borders, creating at least juridical equality between Israelis and Palestinians as they negotiate on the existential questions of borders, Jerusalem and refugees. The third phase is supposed to resolve those basic questions.



unlikely to carry out the tough steps that the roadmap calls for in the first phase—freezing all settlement activity and dismantling all unauthorized settler outposts established since March 2001—before seeing Abu Mazen take the tough decision to dismantle terrorist infrastructures in the West Bank and Gaza.

Even should Abu Mazen begin to build his authority; it will not be easy to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure. Old habits die hard, and Palestinians abhor the idea of civil conflict (*fitna*). Moreover, there is another paradox: the longer the *hudna* goes on, the more Palestinians will likely say, “why rock the boat? Why invite civil war?” For the Palestinians, and the Arab world generally, Palestinian obligations in the roadmap have come to be understood as doing the *hudna* and nothing more. Somehow, everything else is up to the Israelis.

Naturally, Yasir Arafat adds to Abu Mazen’s challenges in this regard. While claiming that he accepts the roadmap, Arafat opposes the disarming of the groups—especially the Al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigades—and criticized Abu Mazen for not getting more from the Israelis for the ceasefire. Recall that the roadmap calls for an immediate, unconditional ceasefire. This was not something to be negotiated but adopted. For Arafat, however, highlighting Abu Mazen’s failings are essential to demonstrating his own indispensability. He needs Abu Mazen to fail to prove that he (Arafat) is not the problem. In this regard, Arafat’s own iconic status, as well as his control of half of the security apparatus, makes him a formidable obstacle to implementing the roadmap.

Does this mean the roadmap cannot succeed? No, but it is important to remember that, at this stage, the parties are not even talking about the core issues of the conflict. To succeed, even on the initial challenges of the first phase, very intensive U.S. efforts will be required.

#### *Lessons from the Past*

Israeli and Palestinian expectations about the roadmap continue to be different. The United States cannot afford for each to believe that the other will take certain steps when it cannot or will not. If Abu Mazen cannot deliver soon in certain areas, we must work out what he will do, when he will do it and what he needs from the Israelis to do it. For example, even more than releases of prisoners, Abu Mazen urgently needs to show that checkpoints are being lifted and, at least in some areas of the West Bank, the transit of people and goods is being restored. What do the Israelis require to withdraw from certain cities and the areas around them? What kind of responsibilities must they see the Palestinian security forces assuming to enable them to do this? If there are acts of terror, what would it take for the Israelis to refrain from carrying out targeted killings? The administration’s role now must be to pose, and help resolve, such questions.

On the basic issue of dealing with the terrorist infrastructure—which will soon confront Abu Mazen in a moment of truth—the United States needs to take several steps. First, it will need to publicize what is expected of both sides. Abu Mazen will need a public posture from the United States on the Palestinian obligations under the roadmap to explain why certain actions are necessary, especially if the Palestinians are to see performance from the Israelis. (Sharon will need this no less than Abu Mazen.) Second, the United States should conduct three-way security discussions with the Israelis and the Palestinians and reach an understanding on which steps would be most feasible for dealing with the terrorist infrastructure. While the Palestinians have every reason to emphasize the daunting nature of this challenge, the history of confronting Hamas should not be ignored. In the past, when there were confrontations with the PA, it was Hamas that always retreated, and it was not only because of relative strengths but also because they, too, shied away from civil war. Third, Abu Mazen and Muhammad Dahlan, the Palestinian minister of security, need capabilities—especially vehicles, command and control support and communications equipment—which the United States has promised but not yet provided. This should be a high priority, and, if we have a problem furnishing it quickly, the Bush Administration should go to its European or Arab partners to fill the gap. (In 1994, the United States provided vehicles from excess stocks in Europe, and Secretary of State Warren Christopher literally arrived with a C-130 carrying vehicles for the Palestinian police.)

This raises the larger question of assistance. The Israelis are not the only ones who can take steps to demonstrate that Abu Mazen is delivering. Knowing its stake in showing that Abu Mazen is making a difference for Palestinians, the administration should have focused on generating a rapid infusion of material assistance. It should have used the G-8 for this purpose; it should now organize a donor conference with very specific targeted projects in mind. Everywhere the Israelis pull out, there should be highly visible projects to aid in the reconstruction immediately. Abu Mazen must be seen not only affecting Israeli behavior, but also producing tan-

gible assistance from the international community quickly. This, of course, also requires Abu Mazen to identify critical projects with Palestinian managers ready to take charge of them with their international counterparts.

Politically, the administration will also have to give meaning to its readiness to monitor the implementation of the roadmap. John Wolf, the head of a U.S. monitoring team, cannot perform that role adequately unless clear standards of performance are established. The roadmap created the illusion of specificity. It contains 52 paragraphs, with extensive obligations enumerated for each side. Monitoring of its implementation ought to be straightforward, but it is not because each side interprets each obligation differently. The Israelis interpret the Palestinian obligations—making arrests, collecting illegal weaponry and dismantling terrorist capabilities and infrastructure—far more expansively than the Palestinians. In turn, the Palestinians interpret the Israeli responsibilities—improving the humanitarian situation, stopping the confiscation of property, dismantling unauthorized settler outposts and freezing all settlement activity, including natural growth—far more expansively than the Israelis. Presently, there is no definition of what would constitute performance by either side. Whose interpretation are we monitoring? What constitutes fulfillment of obligations?

One of the most important failings of the Oslo process was its lack of accountability. Absent this, neither side felt it necessary to fulfill its obligations. This is a critical lesson from the past, and President Bush has been right to say that the United States will hold each side accountable. But there will be no way to do so until very clear standards of what constitutes progress on every obligation.

If the United States imposes its own criteria without discussing the matter both bilaterally, and multilaterally, it runs the risk of creating standards that cannot be met. The Bush Administration must strike a balance between what is feasible and also meaningful—without getting into long, drawn out negotiations with each side and the other members of the Quartet. But the administration will have to resolve the issue of standards, preferably sooner rather than later, all while recognizing that it may make one or both sides unhappy in the process.

This sounds like a daunting task, and indeed it is. Unfortunately, no peace process can be had on the cheap. Maybe, the United States can sustain a period of calm for longer than three months because both sides want a tactical respite. But at this point the administration has not yet re-established a peace process. Obligations are being avoided more than they are being implemented. If the ceasefire is to last, if the current moment is to be translated into something more than only a ceasefire, then the United States is going to have to do what it takes to create accountability—a goal to which the administration has not yet come close.

Two other lessons from the past must be integrated into the administration's approach. Israeli and Palestinian leaders must condition their publics for peace, and Arab leaders must assume real responsibilities. Oslo was plagued by the absence of any serious or systematic effort to get both publics ready for compromise. On the Israeli side, under Barak there was at least some conditioning, even if it was largely done through press leaks. Somehow, at any rate, the far-reaching concessions that Barak contemplated came as no surprise to his public. Palestinians, on the other hand, were never told they would have to compromise on the core issues. On the contrary, Arafat repeatedly emphasized to the Palestinians that they would get everything, never suggesting they might have to compromise.

At this point, Ariel Sharon has begun speaking about painful compromises and the division of the land. He has accepted Palestinian statehood. But this is a state without borders, powers or a capital. No one should expect Sharon to offer his fundamental concessions in advance of a negotiating process, but at some point the Israeli public needs to hear that Israeli withdrawals will form a part of a negotiating process; that Israel must give up control of Palestinians; that no viable independent Palestinian state can be surrounded by Israel; and that a viable Palestinian state must have territorial contiguity, not an illusory contiguity that would come by connecting different parts of the West Bank by tunnels and bridges.

For his part, Abu Mazen needs to build his authority before he can begin to condition Palestinian attitudes towards compromise on existential questions of self-definition and identity. But sooner or later this will be necessary. It will not be easy, given a history in which any compromise on the core issues has been treated like a betrayal. It certainly will not be easy as long as Yasir Arafat retains a leading role: he will accuse Palestinian leaders of selling out if they even hint at accepting less than total capitulation on borders, the status of Jerusalem and refugees. That, of course, is exactly what peace requires; curbing expectations and surrendering mythologies.

This is why Arab leaders must assume responsibilities in the process. Ariel Sharon cannot prepare his public to make hard choices if the Palestinians are avoiding

making any of their own. There will never be a Palestinian state unless the Palestinian leadership is willing to confront those who remain determined to use the territories to attack Israelis. So long as the terrorist infrastructure is intact, how can a Palestinian state—even one with provisional borders—be recognized? To confront groups like Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, Abu Mazen and the Palestinian leadership will need Arab public backing. They will need the umbrella of legitimacy that Arab states can provide.

Arab backing is also a prerequisite for neutralizing Arafat and for justifying the idea of making hard compromises. This Arab willingness must consist not simply in pressuring Arafat, but also in it publicly criticizing his efforts to subvert Abu Mazen's policies. Few steps are more likely to temper Arafat's behavior than the possibility that the Arabs question him publicly on his stewardship of the Palestinian cause. Arafat has always directly identified himself with the cause, and Arab leaders have tacitly accepted that formulation.

Similarly, an Arab willingness to broach the idea of compromise to the Palestinians could make it far more palatable for Palestinians to do so. Supporting the need for internal confrontation when necessary, neutralizing Arafat and being prepared to reaffirm the necessity of compromise on the part of the Palestinians as well as the Israelis would represent a sea-change for the Arab world and give a genuine peace process a chance to succeed. A sea-change, indeed, for Arab leaders have always found it useful to pledge their hearts and souls to the Palestinian cause—provided, of course, that it cost them nothing.

Surely, no single cause in the Arab Middle East is more evocative than the Palestinian one. No one wants to be on the wrong side of this issue. No single Arab leader wants to be accused by Arafat of asking the Palestinians to surrender their national rights, and this is the real reason no one criticized Arafat for turning down the Clinton ideas in December 2000, even as President Mubarak, Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, King Abdullah of Jordan, President Ben Ali of Tunisia and King Mohammad of Morocco all conveyed to President Clinton the sentiment that the ideas were historic.

Arab leaders must assume their proper role, or there will be no success in the near term, when Abu Mazen must confront Hamas and company, or in the long term, on the core issues, without Arab leaders assuming their part. Their own insecurity and sense of vulnerability may again intrude on their assuming responsibilities. The key will be how they evaluate the impact of a continuing war between Israelis and Palestinians on their polities and their rules. Will it foment anger towards them on their streets? Or will it remain an issue that generates anger and hostility that can be more easily deflected onto the United States?

One thing is certain: No peace process will succeed without the Arabs. If they decide that their stability depends on ending the conflict, they may finally do their part. In such a circumstance, the United States will have to do its part, which includes making sure that no one is let off the hook.

Senator CHAFEE. Thank you, sir.

Now we will go to Rabbi Michael Melchior. He is a Member of the Knesset and a former Deputy Foreign Minister. Welcome, Rabbi.

**STATEMENT OF RABBI MICHAEL MELCHIOR, MEMBER OF THE ISRAELI KNESSET AND FORMER DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER, JERUSALEM, ISRAEL**

Rabbi MELCHIOR. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Also, with your permission, I would like to submit my full statement for the record and just begin my remarks first of all with expressing of course my deep condolences for the terrible loss and the tragedy, the crime, which we saw with the killing of the three Americans in Gaza.

I would like to congratulate you for conducting this hearing and thanking you for inviting me to participate. There are few reasons for optimism in our part of the world and I think that maybe this careful research and study by a committee like yours will increase your involvement, commitment, and care about ending the violence in the Middle East.

I would like to say that one of the things which is important before we go ahead is to try to see what went wrong in all the previous attempts. We often do not do that. I myself was a Cabinet Minister in Barak's government and later Deputy Foreign Minister, as you mentioned. I was part of many of the attempts which have been, which Dennis Ross played a very central role in. I think that it is important to reach the conclusion that there were important elements which were lacking the whole way through in all the different attempts we made.

I think one of the things we have to reach and accept is that the post-cold war conflicts are different in essence than what has been during the last century. I would say even in many ways that we are back to the pre-World War I conflicts in that the most dangerous wars which we see now in the world in general are the wars which are based on, say, civilizational aspects. They cannot be solved in the same political, economic, and territorial solutions which were in the last century.

One of the best examples, of course, of this is Yugoslavia, where Europe thought that it could pour in economic aid, it could hold Yugoslavia together, and what it got was ethnic cleansing. I think that we have to realize that also in the Middle East a much more central place than what has been attributed up until now in the process is on the issues of ethnicity, religion, culture, much more than what we consider on economy and so on.

The danger, what the fundamentalists are afraid of, is that an American-sponsored peace will introduce a cheap, Westernized secular value and destroy a traditional society. It is not a coincidence that the intifada, which we now see did not come—it came at the peak of the peace process. It came not in order to end occupation, because if they wanted to end occupation they could have done it; we know that. It is an intifada el Aqsa, el Aqsa of course being the mosque on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

It is based on a religious concept. Therefore I think it is important to understand that what the Hamas and the Islamic Jihad and the Al Aqsa Martyrs which we are talking about, what they want to achieve is to defend their faith. They have built a myth that we are in the Middle East only to get rid of Islam and to blow up the mosques. That is much more important to them than for the Palestinian, I think justified, request and demand to have their rights fulfilled.

Now, the problem is that we continuously are empowering the most extreme and totalitarian religious factions in the conflict. We are doing it in the press, we are doing it by listening to them. They are deciding the paradigms of the issue.

I would like to suggest to you today that we, instead of doing that, empower a coalition of moderate forces which are in the opposing cultures in the Middle East. I think that the good news I could tell you about is that I have been involved in many different efforts of this kind. One of them resulted in quite a famous summit meeting of all the religious leaders of the Middle East in Alexandria, Egypt last year, and in consequent meetings we have involved cultural personalities, educationalists, and so on.

We need to make that coalition in order to agree that the religious leaders of the Arab world who believe that sanctity of human

life is a supreme value of Islam—these people have to be empowered and not always the al-Qaeda and the Hezbollah and the Hamas people. It can be a religious war and that is what it is turning into. If it is a religious war we will never be able to solve it. If it is my god against your god, you cannot compromise. If it is my civilization against your civilization, a clash of civilizations, we will never get there.

But if we, as we have seen, can find the kind of leaders who are willing to agree that maybe we have different religions and different identities—and do not forget, religion is the central identity of the peoples of the Middle East both on our side and on the other side. If we can come to an agreement that maybe our god and his messengers have different messages, but both of our gods and their prophets will not accept us killing each other, then a partnership can begin, a totally different partnership than we have had up until now.

We have to take the cultural clash, the clash of civilizations, and turn it into an intra-civilizational fight. We of Israel, the Jews, we have to fight the extreme elements also amongst ourselves, which led to the Baruch Goldstein tragedy, to the assassination of our Prime Minister, to what many of our extremists are doing today when they know very well which buttons to press on the other side in order for there not to be progress.

The other side of course has to do and empower—I think that the Nobel Peace Prize which was declared just this week was an important step of empowering forces, intra-civilizational forces, and I think that we should applaud that. We need to hear the voice of the coalition in schools, synagogues, mosques, media, because if we only broadcast the theory of radicals, the totalitarians, then they have a built-in advantage because in public exposure it is always more interesting. Political leaders alone cannot stop the bloodshed. If it is not creative, we will not be able to proceed.

Now, however, I want to become practical also. Besides from doing this, I want to become very practical. The first thing is that we have to come to an agreement—maybe this is a followup of what Ambassador Dennis Ross said—that we cannot come with an overall peace solution now at this stage. We should not even attempt it, because every time we attempt it and we fail the despair, the frustration and the lack of hope is opening then again for the extremist elements to be much more dominant.

Therefore, I think that what we should do is what we are doing all kinds of other places in the world: We are trying to control and manage conflicts and we are not trying to solve them. Look at Cyprus, look at Kosovo, look even at Kashmir, although there it is not always successful. We are not trying to solve those conflicts now. We hope to do it in the future. We are trying to manage them. Those are the new kinds of conflicts, which are mainly dominated by religious and ethnic opposing sides.

Therefore what I think we should do now is to dominate—is to control the conflict until we can get to a stage, maybe some time in the future, but not with dates which will press us and then they will not be followed and then the frustration would come again.

I would like to make just four short observations about what we need to do immediately. One is to centralize the Palestinian Au-

thority, to centralize the military forces and so on. You cannot have a state with 20 different armies. It does not exist anywhere in the world. It will not exist with us, and the Palestinian leadership if it wants a state and it needs a state has to do that, No. 1.

No. 2, we have to understand that today to demand of them a Western-style democracy is not achievable at this stage and we should not put in a precondition that will not get anywhere. If we had demanded that of our neighbors, we would never have had peace with Egypt, we would never have had peace with Jordan. We have to be able to accept this, although of course democracy should be the final goal and aim and we should do everything for that to happen.

No. 3, we have to understand it is not enough to fight terrorism or put up a wall. We have to at the same time give other options which are political options.

No. 4, we need today a Palestinian state. It cannot wait until the end of some road or in 5 years or in 10 years. I want to say very clearly, if there are not two states there will be only one state and that state will not be a Jewish and a democratic state. Therefore, we as Israelis need—it is not something which is a gesture to a Palestinian wish. We need it now.

If it cannot be done—and there my conclusion is the same as Ambassador Ross's. If it cannot be done under an agreement, which is of course to be preferred in every way and sense, we have to do it unilaterally and we have to do it fast. Then of course we will have to move to our side of the fence, if we say it in that way. The settlements which are on the other side, it is not going to be easy to do it, but we will have to do it. You cannot build a fence which is security and then continue to pour more and more people into the other side of the fence.

So just to sum up in 1 minute because the red light is on, I will say we need to empower a rational, moderate coalition of religious, educational, cultural leaders. It is not a fringe thing. It is not something you pay lip service to. This is the essence of the conflict.

No. 2, we need a workable, realistic plan which will allow us and the Palestinians to live with our differences, but to control the violence and stabilize our situation until we can get to the biblical dreams of the peace, an absolute prophetic peace. We will work for it, but if we do not end the bloodshed today it will deny us also the dream of having an overall peace, which of course has to be the target.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Rabbi Melchior follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RABBI MICHAEL MELCHIOR, MEMBER OF THE ISRAELI  
KNESSET AND FORMER DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER, JERUSALEM, ISRAEL

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by congratulating you for conducting this hearing, and thanking you for inviting me to participate. In the part of the world where I live, there have been all too few reasons for optimism of late. The continued concern and commitment of the government of the United States to help the sides reach an agreement, is one of those few. We pray that as a result of careful research and study conducted by committees such as this, your government's concern and involvement will increase and be even more effective, so that we can together arrive at a plan to end the violence which plagues us in the Middle East.

The last decade has, indeed, seen numerous attempts to solve the Middle East conflict. From the outset I personally was a strong supporter of the Oslo Accords, and as a minister in Ehud Barak's cabinet I was closely involved in the Camp David negotiations and their aftermath. In spite of all the hope generated by Oslo, in spite of all the international support it and later efforts received, none brought the desired result. It seems that every time a peace effort is to bring us a step forward towards resolving the conflict, we would be driven two steps back by yet another terrorist attack. All the peace efforts—some of the most serious of which, of course, were sponsored by your government—were well intentioned and the products of fine minds. Yet I think that before we embark on yet another new peace initiative, we would be wise to examine the previous efforts to see if perhaps there was an important element missing in them all.

In the tradition of solutions that ended many of the conflicts of the twentieth century, recent peace initiatives aimed at an overall political solution to the Middle East conflict. I would like to suggest, however, that there is a difference between ours (as well as some of the other troubling conflicts of the twenty-first century) and those of the last one hundred years. In an interesting way, I submit, post-Cold War conflicts contain an element more similar to pre-World War conflicts, than to those of the 1900's.

The most dangerous wars of the twentieth century—the wars you and I grew up with—were wars of conflicting territorial, economic, or nationalistic interests. Today's conflicts may have territorial aspects as well, but—like those of more than one hundred years ago—they are seen as mostly cultural, ethnic, and religious. They are not wars fought between countries; they are wars between civilizations.

Recent peace-making efforts have been unsuccessful, I submit, because they offer only twentieth-century style political/economic/territorial solutions to what are no longer just political, economic, or territorial conflicts. The Europeans thought they could hold Yugoslavia together by pouring in economic aid and by suggesting clever political solutions. What they got was ethnic cleansing. Today's efforts to solve our conflict must be different. Though we think otherwise, extremist elements in the Middle East wish to turn the Arab-Israel conflict of today into one aspect of the new century's overall clash between the Western Judeo-Christian civilization, and Islam. It is not hard to realize why they do so. Jews and Moslems see their religions as a major element in determining their identity. If fundamentalists persist in portraying an American-sponsored peace as an invasion of cheap Western, secular values, then peace initiatives become threats to the traditional lifestyles and religious values that zealots would die to preserve.

Totalitarian Moslems see Israel as an outpost and vanguard of Western, secular society. Making peace with Israel, recognizing its legitimacy, is a threat to the integrity of Moslem civilization in its heartland, the Middle East. No territorial compromise with "the small Satan" [the U.S.A. is "the big Satan"] is possible, and no suggestions for political or economic resolution to the conflict can be sufficient.

Extremists among the Palestinians have demonstrated this repeatedly. We must remember that the present "Intifada" began in the immediate wake of the Camp David negotiations where the Palestinians were offered a much more than just "generous" offer of territory and economic benefits. The violence today is not—as the Palestinians would have the West believe—about Israel's "occupation" of Palestinian territory. Mr. Arafat was offered an end to "occupation", and he turned it down! Rather than embracing political, territorial, and economic solutions offered, the Palestinians began the current wave of violence, calling it "Intifadat el Aksa". [El Aksa is a mosque on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.] They have denied historical fact, and replaced it with a myth. They now claim that there never was a Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. Our sincere concern for what is in fact Judaism's holiest site, is depicted as a fabrication to hide Israel's secret aim of attacking the mosques now there. Palestinian terrorists seek—and receive—support from Moslems all over the world, glorifying the blood they shed as part of this century's historic and holy fight to defend Moslem civilization from an attack by Western civilization's puppet in the Middle East, Israel.

The Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and el Aksa Martyrs who terrorize Israel as part of "Intifadat el Aksa" are not out to end Israel's occupation of parts of the Gaza strip or the West Bank. They are out to defend Islam from the threat of the West. Offering to satisfy the territorial or national aspirations of the Palestinians will not satisfy them. They are not Palestinian nationalists fighting a twentieth-century kind of war. They represent maximalist, totalitarian elements in Islam that cannot tolerate any foreign impingement on Moslem territory. They see themselves as Moslems defending the faith, more than Palestinians fighting for their rights.

If we accept their paradigm, that the Arab-Israel conflict is in fact a clash of civilizations (modern Western society versus traditional Islam) rather than a conflict of

national interests (Palestinians versus Israelis), we will be guilty of empowering the most extreme, totalitarian religious factions involved in the conflict, and condemn ourselves to ever-escalating violence led by zealots. I would like to suggest an alternative. I would suggest that world leaders instead empower a coalition of civilizations of moderate forces from within opposing cultures. I hope that the world's political leadership will seek out Moslem and Jewish religious leaders, who—while not compromising their faith—still recognize the need to suspend implementation of fundamental beliefs, in favor of achieving peaceful co-existence with a neighboring civilization. Once found, these moderate religious leaders must be joined in a cross-cultural coalition to counter the extremists in each camp. This, ladies and gentlemen, is the only way to avoid a violent clash of West versus East, of Christians and Jews versus Moslems. And—unlikely as it may sometimes seem—it is viable. Though the totalitarian radical elements of Islam gain headlines today, I can assure you from the work I have done in recent years, that there are religious leaders in the Arab world who teach that the sanctity of human life is a supreme value of Islam. Extremists in my own religious camp pervert Jewish teachings to justify dastardly acts like that of Baruch Goldstein and the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin, and manipulate holy texts to prevent progress towards peace. But rabbis in Israel know that our true Torah is a Torah of peace, and our holy texts in fact teach us the need to live in peace with our neighbors.

An imam and a rabbi may disagree over many things. One's God and His Messengers may not be like the other's. But if both agree that neither of their gods and prophets wants us to kill each other, then a partnership can begin. I have met many prominent Moslem, Jewish, and Christian leaders in the Middle East who are ready to join such a coalition. In January of 2002, in Alexandria, Egypt, religious leaders of the highest stature (including the Archbishop of Canterbury, the dean of the el Azhar seminary in Cairo, and the Chief Rabbi of Israel) met and laid the foundation for a coalition of rational, moderate religious leaders. Subsequent contacts and meetings, with top religious leaders of Sunni Islam in the Palestinian Authority and all over the Moslem world, demonstrate that the coalition is not only needed, but practically feasible.

The true "culture clash" will actually be an intra-civilizational fight to change public opinion in the two societies, a clash between the totalitarian extremists (both Moslem and Jewish) on the one side, and the rational moderates (both Moslem and Jewish) on the other. The political leaders of today must do much more than pay lip-service in support of the religious moderates. It must be a top priority for the enlightened world to empower them. We should all applaud the Nobel Peace Prize committee for taking a first step in this direction. The governments of the world must summon all the creativity and resources at their disposal to enable a coalition of moderate religious leaders to change the way their constituents perceive adherents of competing civilizations. The voice of this coalition must be heard overpoweringly in local media, in schools, synagogues and mosques. The media prefer to broadcast fiery radicals, and extremists have a built-in advantage in the competition for public exposure. Moderate religious leaders must be given whatever tools they need to redress this imbalance, and educate their peoples towards realistic moderation, rather than romantic martyrdom. Otherwise, the extremist religious elements will continue to dominate public opinion and fan the flames of violence.

My call to empower a moderate religious coalition, I know, runs counter to conventional wisdom. But the peacemakers of today must not repeat the mistake of their predecessors, and ignore religious issues. It was a mistake to believe that if political issues could first be solved, religious issues would somehow work themselves out later. Religion is the core of the cultural identity of both Arabs and Jews. It must be given a top priority in any agreement between them. Religious and cultural leaders, therefore, are needed at the outset and in the forefront to address our problems in the twenty-first century. Political leaders alone cannot stop the bloodshed.

What are the realistic goals of those who would end the violence in today's world? Let me begin by stating clearly: an immediate resolution of the differences between civilizations is not a realistic goal. The differences among civilizations—especially when religion is an important element—are so profound that we cannot expect them to be resolved in the near future.

That does not mean, however, that the situation is hopeless. Though we cannot resolve our differences, we may still learn to live with them. We may not be able to end the tension between us, but we can keep it from running out of control. Previous attempts to bring an overall peace to the Middle East were admirable and honorable. They offered solutions to what were perceived as the basic problems dividing Israel and its neighbors. But they failed. The differences between us and the



Arabs are deeper and of a different nature than yesterday's peacemakers realized. In addition, the rash of terrorist attacks on our population centers has changed public opinion in Israel. Sadly I report to you, that many even of our moderate citizens doubt the intentions of the Palestinians, and consider an overall peace agreement unrealistic. Controlling the violence is the most Israelis think can be achieved in the foreseeable future.

The Biblical vision of world peace, when the wolf dwells happily with the lamb, remains a dream for the End of Days. We can, however—sadly perhaps—lower our sights and aim not for a full resolution of the conflict, but for control and stabilization of the situation. An end to violence, a partial peace, a “piece of peace” if you will, is achievable, and our best alternative until, some day, the dream of an overall peace will become real.

Ours, of course, is not the only conflict of this century where ethnic, cultural, and religious differences exacerbate the tension. There are those who see the tensions in Kosovo, Cyprus and Kashmir as clashes of civilizations, no less. There, world leadership has—wisely, I think—proposed practical methods to control violence and stabilize the situation, rather than trying to reach an overall resolution to the vast differences between the cultures in conflict. Though those practical proposals have not yet proven uniformly successful, the world recognizes they are the best means to address the situation. I find it curious that only in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, does the world repeatedly press for an overall resolution of the problem. The “piece of peace” approach has not failed elsewhere. I suggest we give it a try in our part of the world as well.

What are the elements necessary for us to have our “piece of peace”? I would like to share with you four observations that I think will help us bring violence under control and learn to live with our differences.

Firstly, if the Palestinian leadership wants a state of its own, it must realize that no state can exist with uncontrolled armed militias in its midst. It must take immediate steps to centralize authority and control the terrorist organizations many of which, by the way, threaten its own legitimacy as well. (Totalitarian extremists have no tolerance for less-extreme elements in their own society, either.) It will not be easy to disarm Hamas and the Islamic Jihad, but the Palestinian leadership has no choice but to face up to the challenge.

Secondly, we cannot insist on Palestine becoming a Western-style democracy as a pre-condition for ending the violence. Demanding that the Palestinians become a democracy makes good sense, for we know that democracies don't make war on each other. But, if we were to insist on making agreements with democracies only, we would not have peace today with any of our neighbors. We'll be happy when the Palestinians show more of an inclination towards forming a true democracy, but we don't have to suspend our efforts to stabilize the current situation, while we wait for them to do so.

Thirdly, though we must do all in our power to combat terror, we must realize that stopping today's terrorists is not our only goal. It is in Israel's best interest that the Palestinians have a viable, prosperous state. The humanitarian catastrophe visited on the Palestinian people by the current conflict pains us as moral human beings, as well as—on a practical level—provides a breeding-ground for future suicide bombers.

And finally, we must physically separate ourselves from the Palestinians. We shall have to divide into two states: one Jewish and one Palestinian. As Zionists, we know that Israel must be a Jewish democracy where human rights are safeguarded. Given the demography of the region, if there will be only one state between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River, it will not be Jewish, and/or it will not be a democracy. We would like to negotiate with the Palestinians to bring about this separation, but given the problems with the present Palestinian leadership, imminent success for such negotiations seems unlikely. Until we can negotiate agreed borders, we may be forced to pull out of the Gaza Strip and much of the West Bank unilaterally, and establish a secure division between us and the Palestinians. I wish to emphasize that we consider an agreed-upon border to be preferable (and would likely be better geographically for the Palestinians), but Israel has the right to secure borders, and will in the meantime assert that right unilaterally, if necessary. This will be no easy matter for us in Israel. Many well-intentioned idealistic settlers will have to be uprooted from the homes they built and have lived in for thirty years. In addition, a unilateral withdrawal risks being seen as rewarding the terrorists, who will undoubtedly claim that it was their violence that drove the Jews out of occupied territory. I submit, however, that true victory for terrorism is the continuation of the uncontrollable violence of today. If we take these admittedly painful steps to bring the situation under control and to manage it on our terms rather than

theirs—we will have sent a message to the terrorists that their days have become numbered, that their cause eventually will be lost.

Ladies and gentlemen, there is today despair among Palestinians and Israelis. After every terrorist act, with every funeral, even those who once thought there was a chance for peace find it harder to believe that there are partners left on the other side. Unsuccessful peace initiatives by powerful and well-meaning friends, only deepen the despair.

Totalitarian factions would turn our national differences into an insoluble clash of civilizations. We ask our friends to help us empower a rational, moderate coalition of religious and cultural leaders from both sides, who will provide an alternative to those totalitarian extremists who now dominate public opinion and make real peace impossible.

Our friends who would help us achieve peace must appreciate that full peace may not be as immediately attainable as we had all hoped. Rather, we ask that they help us develop a workable, realistic plan that would allow us and the Palestinians to live with our differences, control the violence, and stabilize our situation.

Ladies and gentlemen, we Jews end all our prayers with a blessing and wish for peace for our people. When we depart, as it were, from our sanctuary of prayer, we bow and take three steps backwards. The late Chief Rabbi of the British Empire, Rabbi Emmanuel Jacobovits, pointed out how proper it is that before asking the Almighty to make peace for us, we step back and thus make room for others. If we are so full of ourselves that we cannot make room for others, there can never be peace among us. And there is no greater blessing for Israel than peace. Let us pray that the leaders of the world have the wisdom to encourage all of today's combatants in all of today's conflicts, to allow room for broad cultural, religious, and ethnic spaces, wide enough to accommodate others and their hopes for peace, as well. And if the Peace of our Biblical prophets must remain a dream for tomorrow, let us have the wisdom to end the bloodshed today, that would deny us even that, our cherished dream.

Senator CHAFEE. Thank you, Rabbi, very much.

Now we will go to Mr. Dror Etkes, who is the coordinator of the Settlements Watch Project for Peace Now and has also come here from Jerusalem. Welcome, Mr. Etkes.

**STATEMENT OF MR. DROR ETKES, DIRECTOR OF PEACE NOW'S SETTLEMENTS WATCH PROJECT, JERUSALEM, ISRAEL**

Mr. ETKES. Thank you, Chairman Chafee, Ranking Member Boxer, and other distinguished members of the subcommittee: Shalom.

My name is Dror Etkes. I am the director of the Israeli Peace Now movement's Settlements Watch Project. First I want to express my grief and outrage over the attack this morning against America officials in the Gaza Strip.

It is a great honor and a tremendous privilege for me to appear before you today on behalf of Peace Now to discuss the settlements movement and its relationship to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. As an Israeli who is deeply committed to his country and works every day to preserve its future as a Jewish and democratic state, I deeply appreciate the subcommittee for taking such an interest in my homeland in our search for peace. I also appreciate the high level of support that the Congress has provided to Israel since its birth.

Before I discuss the settlements, I want to say a brief word about the organization that I represent and mention that my written testimony contains many more details about the points I will make in the opening comments this afternoon.

Peace Now was established in 1978 when 348 reserve officers and combat soldiers of the Israeli Defense Forces issued an open letter urging Israel to reach a peace agreement with Egypt. What

was true then is still true today: We are a Zionist organization with roots in the military and security establishment that believes peace is essential for ensuring Israel's long-term security.

Peace Now established Settlements Watch because we have always thought that settlements in the occupied territories threaten our existence as a Jewish democratic state, weaken the security of Israel, drain our economic resources, and serve to maintain Israeli rule over another people, thereby preventing Israel from reaching peace with the Palestinians. The settlements today pose an existential threat to the future of Israel. The West Bank and Gaza are not empty. Beside the settlers, there are now about 3.5 million Palestinians and, given demographic trends, those Palestinians combined with Israeli Arabs who live inside the Green Line will guarantee that Jews will soon be a minority and Arabs will be the majority in the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

When that day comes, Israel will cease to be a Jewish democracy state. We will no longer be a Jewish country because Israeli Jews will be outnumbered by our Arab neighbors. As a result, we will be forced to become a binational state lacking any prospect for stability. Or we will choose to forego all acceptable norms of democracy in order to maintain Jewish minority supremacy over an Arab majority. Both of these options should frighten all friends of Israel.

Settlements weaken our security because each settler, each settlement, and each bypass road requires protection from the Israeli military. In the West Bank the Israeli line of defense is roughly ten times longer than the Green Line because of the need to protect the settlements and their supporting infrastructure.

A recent extensive study by, Ha'aretz found that Israel spent a little under half a billion dollars a year to maintain about 10,000 troops in the occupied territories prior to the intifada. Ha'aretz also found that our Defense Ministry is spending roughly double that amount today, more like \$1 billion, because of the ongoing violence. Beyond stretching Israel's defense capabilities, the settlements movement costs Israeli taxpayers at least \$556 million in extra non-military spending each year, according to Ha'aretz.

Finally, Peace Now is concerned about settlements because they work to ensure that the Israeli and Palestinian populations are woven together throughout the territories and to make it impossible to separate the two societies into two viable independent states.

Now let me turn to the question of the role the settlements play in the peace process at the present time. It is important to keep in mind that, despite the fact that settlements are a significant obstacle to peace, there is no moral equivalency between settlements and terrorist attacks, nor are settlements the only cause of tension between Israelis and Palestinians. At the same time, settlements have a lot to do with what Israel has failed to deliver through negotiations with the Palestinians that are based on the concept of exchanging land for peace.

Here are the basic facts. There are approximately 230,000 settlers today living in 145 settlements in the West Bank and Gaza considered official under Israeli law. In addition, over 120 settlement outposts have been established since 1996 without proper

Israeli authorization. Settlement construction covers only a tiny fraction of the occupied territories, but Israel has expropriated approximately 50 percent of the West Bank land through various methods. Contrary to popular belief, settlement expansion actually continued during the Oslo years, between the years 1993 and 2000, with the settler population nearly doubling. In addition, thousands more settlement housing units were built.

The ultimate fate of official settlements is left as an issue for Israel and the Palestinians to resolve in a final peace agreement. But the Road Map details specific steps that Israel must take in the first phase of the process in order to prevent settlements from becoming an even worse dilemma. These steps should be taken by Israel whether or not this particular plan is successful.

Israel is required to immediately dismantle settlement outposts erected since March 2001. These outposts were established without authorization for a specific reason, to complete the chain of Israeli settlements along the areas to remain under complete Israeli control according to the Oslo Accords, just about 60 percent of the West Bank, and to connect them with the other settlements deep in the West Bank in order to form more solid blocks of communities.

It was Ariel Sharon, then Foreign Minister, who in October 1998 called upon the settlers to grab the hilltops in order to establish new settlements to prevent the land from being turned over to the Palestinians. During this period, roughly 50 new settlement outposts were established. This process reached a peak during the first Sharon government, during which approximately 75 new outposts were built.

At this point, over 120 settlement outposts have been established since 1996. Few have been truly evacuated and the settlers continue to push to build new ones and strengthen older outposts every single day.

Israel is also required to freeze all settlement activity, including natural growth of settlements. Successive Israeli governments have used the excuse of natural growth as a loophole through which more settlements, housing, and bypass roads have been built and more settlers brought to the occupied territories.

It is true that some settlers move there for ideological or religious reasons, but they are a distinct minority. The vast majority of the settlers, 77 percent of them according to the polling results, moved to the occupied territories for quality of life reasons. Basically, Israeli governments have offered extensive economic incentives that make it significantly cheaper for Israelis to live in the West Bank and Gaza than inside the Green Line. A real freeze on all settlement activity would require an end to these subsidies, but in general they continue.

Peace Now hired an independent Israeli accounting analyst to examine government spending on West Bank and Gaza settlements in 2001. He found that in 2001 Israel spent at least \$440 million in what can be considered surplus spending on the settlements movement, not counting military and some civilian spending. Israel received \$838 million in its annual economic grant from the United States in 2001. This means that Israel spends the equivalent of over half of the amount on settlements that year, excluding secu-

rity expenses. As I mentioned earlier, the more extensive Ha'aretz study found that Israel now spends at least \$556 million a year extra on settlements activity, not including military expenditures.

Let me now turn to the controversy that surrounds the security fence that Israel is building in the West Bank. There is nothing inherently wrong with Israel erecting a security barrier between us and the West Bank. In fact, the whole idea of such a fence, which Peace Now supports, comes from the Labor Party and other concerned Israeli organizations. They pointed out in the early days of intifada that it is crazy for Israel to allow its border along the West Bank to remain wide open to terrorist infiltration. After all, a fence that runs along the 1967 border near Gaza has never been penetrated by a single Palestinian terrorist.

However, the security barrier that Prime Minister Sharon is building in the West Bank strays far from the original plan of erecting a fence along the Green Line. Prime Minister Sharon strongly opposed the initial concept of a fence because he knows that it has political implications. Building it along the Green Line would imply that settlements left on the other side would be likely candidates for dismantlement once final borders were established with the Palestinians. As a result, the settlers and their supporters began to clamor to have as many settlements as possible on the Israeli side of a fence.

It is only the prospect of using the fence to reinforce Israeli settlements and Israel's hold on about 50 percent of the West Bank that has gained the Prime Minister's support. Ironically, Prime Minister Sharon's proposed fence route would bring hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who live near the settlements inside Israel's line of defense. These Palestinians will be angry for being cutoff from their farm lands, relatives, and social services in the process.

Pushing the fence deeper into the West Bank also will greatly increase the cost to Israel of building the barrier, with the segment enclosing the settlement of Ariel adding about \$224 million to the price if it is completed.

Finally, a longer fence will place additional strain on the military, which will need to guard and defend the barrier along much more difficult terrain than if the fence ran along the Green Line.

Peace Now encourages the Senate to support Israel's right to build a security fence, but we also strongly urge you to support President Bush's objection to the specific route of the fence being proposed to accommodate settlements.

Last, it is important to point out that the positions that the Peace Now take on settlements are much more reflective of public opinion in Israel and the American Jewish community than those of the Sharon government. Independent surveys in Israel consistently show solid majorities in support of withdrawing settlements if a peace treaty is reached. Polls commissioned by Peace Now's U.S. sister organization, Americans for Peace Now, also show strong American Jewish support for a settlement freeze and an end to Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

Peace Now also recently commissioned an independent firm to survey settlers themselves about the peace process. We found that 83 percent of the settlers would agree to leave the West Bank and

Gaza in exchange for compensation. In fact, 29 percent of them would leave the settlements today if they could. Only one, up to two, percent would use all means to resist evacuation. In other words, should the time come when Israel has to make some tough decisions on settlements the vast majority of the settlers will not necessarily stand in the way.

Let me conclude by stressing that Israel's failure to meet its obligations regarding settlements is not an excuse for the Palestinian Authority's failure to meet its obligation to combat terrorism and undertake numerous reform efforts. Both sides must take steps in parallel to make this particular peace plan succeed. At the same time, I would suggest to you that, whether or not the Road Map is implemented, supporting the current Israeli government's policy on settlements and the fence is not in Israel's best interests. The continuation of settlement growth will spell an end to the Zionist dream regardless of whether terrorism is crushed today or not for the years to come.

Please, help us to meet this challenge. One way that you could help is to consider a proposal made by Americans for Peace Now about what to do with money that may be deducted from the loan guarantee package that Congress has generously provided to Israel. This money is to be deducted because of Israeli spending on the settlements. Instead of having Israel lose these guarantees, this portion of the guarantee should be placed in a set-aside account to help fund housing construction inside the Green Line for settlers who want to return to Israel. No account like this exists today. Helping establish one would send a constructive message about settlements. It would also demonstrate compassion for settlers who do not have the money to move back home.

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to testify before this distinguished panel. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have about settlements. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Etkes follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MR. DROR ETKES, DIRECTOR OF PEACE NOW'S  
SETTLEMENTS WATCH PROJECT, JERUSALEM, ISRAEL

Chairman Chafee, Ranking Member Boxer, and other distinguished members of this subcommittee:

Shalom.

My name is Dror Etkes, and I am the Director of the Israeli Peace Now movement's Settlements Watch Project. It is a great honor and a tremendous privilege for me to appear before you today on behalf of Peace Now to discuss the settlement movement and its relationship to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, which regrettably has stalled because of the violence and failure of both sides to implement their basic obligations.

As an Israeli who is deeply committed to his country and works every day to preserve its future as a Jewish, democratic state, I deeply appreciate this subcommittee for taking such an interest in my homeland and our search for peace with our neighbors.

I also appreciate the high level of support that Congress has provided to Israel since its inception. Your consistent backing has been, and will continue to be, essential to the well-being of my country.

BACKGROUND OF PEACE NOW AND SETTLEMENTS WATCH

Before I discuss the settlements, I want to say a brief word about the organization that I represent.

Peace Now was started in 1978 when 348 reserve officers and combat soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces issued an open letter to then-Prime Minister Menachem

Begin urging him to reach a peace agreement with Egypt. From this beginning, Peace Now was born and quickly became the largest grassroots movement in the history of Israel.

What was true then is still true today: we are a Zionist organization with roots in the military and security establishment that believes peace is essential for ensuring Israel's long-term security.

Over the years, Peace Now has organized large demonstrations—involving hundreds of thousands of Israelis—on behalf of peace, as well as established a series of projects to do research and analysis about issues that are related to the peace process. One of these projects is called Settlements Watch, which I currently direct.

Settlements Watch was established because Peace Now has always thought that settlements in the occupied territories threaten our existence as a Jewish, democratic state, weaken the security of Israel, drain our economic resources, undermine our society's moral fiber, and serve to perpetuate Israeli rule over another people in a way that prevents Israel from reaching peace with the Palestinians.

The settlements today pose an existential threat to the future of Israel.

Let me be very clear: it is in Israel's own best interests to separate itself from settlements and the occupied territories that the settlers would have us bind to the state.

The former head of Israeli military intelligence, Yehosephat Harkabi, summed up the problem like this in a lecture to an American audience during the Cold War. He said, "You Americans have the most powerful army in the world. No one can challenge you. But if you had 120 million Russians living in America—all completely loyal to the Soviet Union—your great army would be of no use and you would not be safe. That is our situation. The simple fact is that we must either have a Palestinian state in our neighborhood or we will become a Palestinian state."

Our circumstances have not improved since Harkabi spoke those words. The West Bank and Gaza are not empty—besides the settlers, they are now home to about 3.5 million Palestinians. And given demographic trends, those Palestinians, combined with Israeli Arabs who live inside the Green Line, will guarantee that Jews will soon be a minority in the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

When that day comes, Israel will cease to be a Jewish, democratic state. We will no longer be a Jewish country because Israeli Jews will be outnumbered by our Arab neighbors, and therefore we will be forced to become a bi-national state, with the prospects for a civil and stable bi-national state being virtually impossible. Or we will choose to forego all acceptable norms of democracy in order to maintain Jewish minority supremacy over an Arab majority.

Both of these options should frighten all friends of Israel in the Senate and elsewhere in the United States. But we will rapidly be forced to choose between these options unless firm measures are taken immediately to free us, our allies, and our neighbors from the stranglehold of the settlements.

Settlements weaken our security because each settler, each settlement, and each bypass road connecting Israel to the settlements requires protection from the Israeli military. Our soldiers are required to put their lives on the line every day to defend Israeli communities deliberately placed in the midst of Palestinian population centers in order to break up Palestinian territorial contiguity. In the West Bank, the Israeli line of defense is roughly ten times longer than the Green Line because of the need to protect the settlements and their supporting infrastructure.

A recent extensive study by a leading Israeli newspaper, *Ha'aretz*, found that Israel spent a little under a half billion dollars a year to maintain about 10,000 troops in the occupied territories prior to the Intifada. *Ha'aretz* also found that our Defense Ministry is spending roughly double that amount, more like \$1 billion, these days because of the ongoing violence. These are troops and money that could be committed to defending our border.

Beyond stretching Israel's defense capabilities, the settlement movement costs Israeli taxpayers at least \$556 million in extra non-military spending each year, according to the *Ha'aretz* study.

Total spending on settlements has amounted to over \$10 billion since 1967.

Settlements also harm Israeli interests by undermining the political authority of moderate Palestinian leaders, the sort of leaders who are interested in stopping terror. For these leaders to be able to advance their political agenda, they need to prove to their constituents that a non-violent path of negotiations can lead to a future Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. They are battling every day for the hearts and minds of the Palestinian street. Settlement construction delivers a message layered in concrete and steel that Israel is not interested in negotiations.

Finally, Peace Now is concerned about settlements because they work to ensure that Israeli and Palestinian populations are woven together throughout the terri-

teritories and make it impossible to separate the two societies into two viable, independent states.

This is not an accident. This is the result of deliberate planning by the settlement movement and its supporters in different Israeli governments over the years, especially our current Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon.

#### SETTLEMENTS AND THE PEACE PROCESS

Now let me turn to the question of the role that settlements play in the peace process at the present time.

It is important to keep in mind that despite the fact that settlements are a significant obstacle to peace, there is no moral equivalency between settlements and terrorist attacks. There is obviously a difference between building a red-roofed home in the West Bank and sending a suicide bomber to take the lives of innocent Israelis. I would echo the sentiments of both Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch in emphasizing that terrorist attacks against civilians—including settlers—are war crimes and crimes against humanity.

I also recognize that settlements are not the only cause of tension between Israelis and Palestinians.

At the same time, in a process that is supposed to see Israelis and Palestinians exchanging land for peace, settlements have a lot to do with what Israel is supposed to deliver through negotiations to the Palestinians, but has largely not provided.

Here are the basic facts: according to Israeli government sources, there are approximately 230,000 settlers today living in 145 settlements in the West Bank and Gaza considered official under Israeli law and over 120 settlement outposts established since 1996 without proper Israeli authorization (although not all of these outposts are still in existence since around 20 of them—mostly uninhabited—have been dismantled). Roughly 7,000 settlers live in the Gaza Strip in 17 settlements, with the rest of the settler population living in West Bank communities.

Although settlement construction covers only a tiny fraction of the occupied territories, Israel has expropriated approximately 50% of West Bank land, which has been taken over as “state land,” seized for “military purposes,” declared to be “abandoned property,” or expropriated for “public use.” Further, settlements and the territory they control are often placed near Palestinian communities to deny them the opportunity to expand or among Palestinian population centers to break up their contiguity.

Contrary to popular belief, settlement expansion actually continued during the years of the Oslo peace process, with the settler population nearly doubling and thousands more settlement housing units being built. This escalation of settlement growth strengthened the popularity of Palestinian rejectionists and undermined the standing of moderate Palestinian leaders who backed the Oslo Accords.

President Bush’s peace initiative explicitly recognizes settlements as an immediate problem and obligates Israel to deal with them.

Although the ultimate fate of official settlements is left as an issue for Israel and the Palestinians to resolve in a final peace agreement, the Road Map lays out specific steps that Israel must take at the beginning of the process in order to prevent settlements from becoming an even worse dilemma.

These steps should be taken by Israel whether or not this particular plan is successful.

#### OUTPOSTS

In the first phase of the Road Map, Israel is required to immediately dismantle settlement outposts erected since March 2001.

Not after the Palestinians have succeeded in fulfilling all of their security obligations, but immediately.

And not just those outposts that Israel considers unauthorized or illegal, but all those built since a specific date, which coincides with when Ariel Sharon first became Prime Minister.

Settlements Watch has been instrumental in raising the profile of the settlement outpost issue. We drive throughout the occupied territories and use aircraft overflights to document the establishment of these outposts and to track their growth.

We consider outposts to be those settlements built without pre-authorization from the state, located a significant distance from official settlements, and provided with basic infrastructure for existing as independent communities.

These outposts are established for a specific reason: to complete the chain of Israeli settlements along the areas that remained under complete Israeli control according to the Oslo Accords and to connect them with the isolated settlements in the heart of the West Bank in order to form more solid blocks of communities. This



has been done with the awareness, and often the assistance, of the Israeli military and numerous Israeli governments.

The outpost phenomenon is not new. This is the way that various settlements were started as early as the late 1960s. However, during the years of the Netanyahu government, settlers received support from right-wing Israeli politicians to use this method. It was Ariel Sharon, then Foreign Minister, who returned from the Wye negotiations in October 1998 and called upon the settlers to grab the mountain tops and establish new settlements to prevent the land from being turned over to the Palestinians. During Netanyahu's term, roughly 50 new settlement outposts were established. This process reached a peak during the first Sharon government, during which approximately 75 new outposts were built (although a few have been dismantled).

Prime Minister Sharon has occasionally gone through the motions of pretending to dismantle outposts, but this is a charade.

The method for supposedly dismantling an outpost takes a familiar pattern: the government selects the right political time to engage in a limited battle of wills with a small and isolated outpost. The settlers—particularly the rowdy “hilltop youth”—respond with resistance to Israeli soldiers and police, who are often subject to violence and other abuse during the process. The cameras film it all, and it looks good on TV. But when the reporters go away, the settlers put up new outposts either in the same location, some place close by, or in a very remote area that is hard for journalists to reach.

At this point, over 120 settlement outposts have been established since 1996, few have been truly evacuated, and the settlers continue to push to build new ones and solidify older outposts every day.

#### SETTLEMENT FREEZE

The second step that Israel is required to take under the first phase of the Road Map is to freeze all settlements activity (including natural growth of settlements).

As I mentioned earlier, settlements and the settler population have continued to expand over the years of the peace process, thereby creating facts on the ground that make negotiating their future more difficult. Successive Israeli governments have used the excuse of “natural growth” as a loophole through which more settlement housing and bypass roads have been built and more settlers brought to the occupied territories.

But, in fact, there is no such thing as “natural growth” when you discuss settlements.

“Natural growth” would imply that some version of Adam Smith's “Invisible Hand” is guiding Israelis to the West Bank and Gaza. While it is true that some settlers move there for ideological or religious reasons, they are a distinct minority. The vast majority of settlers—77% of them, according to an independent survey commissioned by Peace Now—move to the occupied territories for “quality of life” reasons. Basically, Israeli governments have offered extensive economic incentives that make it significantly cheaper for Israelis to live in the West Bank and Gaza than inside the Green Line. This allows settlers to maintain a better lifestyle than they otherwise could afford.

A freeze on all settlements activity would require an end to these subsidies, but by and large, Israel continues to underwrite inducements for settlement growth.

Peace Now hired an independent Israeli accounting analyst to examine government spending on the West Bank and Gaza settlements in 2001. The analyst, Dror Zaban, was formally with the Budget Department of the Israeli Finance Ministry and Assistant to the Director General of the Finance Ministry.

He found that in 2001, using the prevailing exchange rate of 4.1 shekels to the dollar, Israel spent at least \$553.6 million on settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, of which at least \$440.5 million can be considered “surplus” spending, that is, expenditures dedicated to settlers and settlements that would not have otherwise been spent on these individuals and their communities as part of normal budget allocations available to Israelis inside the Green Line.

Mr. Zaban did not examine military spending to protect settlements, nor was he able to determine expenditures for some civilian categories, such as education.

While these numbers may not sound impressive to members of the Senate who are used to dealing with much larger figures, by way of comparison, Israel received \$838.2 million as its annual economic grant from the U.S. in 2001, meaning that Israel spent the equivalent of over half of that amount on settlements that year, excluding security expenses.

The more recent study of Israeli government spending on settlements conducted by *Ha'aretz*, which I mentioned earlier, was even more extensive because its reporters were able to determine spending in areas that Peace Now was unable to.

As I said, *Ha'aretz* found that Israel spends at least \$556 million extra per year on settlement activity, not including military expenditures. This spending translates into annual surplus costs of over \$2,222 per settler. The main budget items include \$156 million in transfers to local settlement authorities, an estimated \$111 million from the Housing Ministry this year, and \$89 million for roads. The cost of income tax benefits provided to settlers was about \$29 million, although these benefits were canceled this past summer. Other items include surplus millions for electricity, water, industry, education, and health care, among other things.

Far from meeting its obligation to freeze settlement growth, the Sharon government has recently launched a huge new housing incentive program for the settlements and an expansion of investment in tourism in the occupied territories.

Peace Now believes that our government should freeze settlement growth and transfer the full \$556 million in surplus spending on settlements to the general welfare of Israelis living inside the Green Line.

#### SECURITY FENCE

A great deal of attention has been paid over the past few months on the security fence that Israel is building in the West Bank. Although the fence is not mentioned in the Road Map, it has nonetheless become a bone of contention between the Sharon government and the Bush Administration.

Let me say that there is nothing inherently wrong with Israel's erecting a security barrier between us and the West Bank. In fact, the whole idea of such a fence, which Peace Now supports, came from the Labor Party and other progressive Israeli organizations that pointed out in the early days of the Intifada that it is crazy for Israel to allow its border along the West Bank to remain wide open to terrorist infiltration.

Too many Israelis have paid a heavy price because nothing stood in the way of terrorists slipping into their communities. Israel has a right and an obligation to defend its borders, and it is not the first country in the world to use a fence as one way to enhance its security. While we believe that Israel must hold out a viable option for a negotiated peace with the Palestinians, we should not hesitate to protect our border until such a peace is possible.

However, the security barrier that Prime Minister Sharon is building in the West Bank strays far from the original plan of erecting a fence along the Green Line. Sharon strongly opposed the initial concept of the fence because he knows that it has political implications. Building it along the Green Line would imply that the settlements left on the other side would be likely candidates for dismantlement once final borders were established with the Palestinians. As a result, the settlers and their supporters began to clamor to have as many settlements as possible on the Israeli side of the fence, and it is only the prospect of using the fence to reinforce Israeli settlements and Israel's hold on about 50% of the West Bank that has drawn the Prime Minister's support.

Therefore, President Bush is right to object to the route of the fence that Sharon is proposing. As currently planned, this fence would clearly violate another Israeli obligation—not to take actions that undermine trust, including confiscation and/or demolition of Palestinian homes and property. Routing the fence so that it cuts off Palestinians from around half of their territory is certainly a confiscation of property, and it precludes a negotiated settlement, thereby undermining President Bush's vision of ending the occupation of 1967. Official Israeli sources say that 85% of the land confiscated for the fence in just its first stage of construction was expropriated from Palestinians.

It should be noted that one reason Israelis are enthusiastic about a West Bank fence is the success of the barrier that surrounds Gaza, through which not a single Palestinian terrorist has penetrated. However, the Gaza fence is built along the 1967 border, and this should be the precedent for a fence between Israel and the West Bank.

Further, the proposed fence route will bring tens of thousands of Palestinians who live near the settlements inside Israel's line of defense, Palestinians who will be angered from being cut off from their farm lands, relatives, and social services in the process. Prime Minister Sharon rabidly opposes any sort of Palestinian right of return (which would add tens of thousands of Palestinians to Israel), yet his fence would amount to a *de facto* annexation of approximately half a million Palestinians to our state.

Pushing the fence deeper into the West Bank also will greatly increase the cost to Israel of building the barrier, with the segment enclosing the settlement of Ariel adding about \$224 million to the price, if it is completed.

Finally, a longer fence will place an additional strain on the military, which will need to patrol and defend the barrier.

Here's what Israeli analyst Amir Rappaport wrote in the newspaper *Ma'ariv* on August 12th about the security problems with the route being advocated by the Sharon government:

"It would . . . oblige the IDF to allocate substantially larger numbers of troops to defend it for two reasons. Not only is the fence along the Green Line shorter, it is also located in more favorable terrain than the route that runs deep in Samaria, which is hillier terrain and more difficult to secure. Quite a few security officials believe that it would have made far more sense to plan from the outset to have the fence run more or less along the Green Line and to encompass, as needed, settlements in the territories within separate, internal fences (in any event, nearly all the settlements presently are fenced in). There are, therefore, good grounds to the argument that the fence was planned with a view to political interests in an attempt to keep on the Israeli side as much territory as possible, and less with a view to security interests."

Peace Now encourages the Senate to support Israel's right to build a security fence, while also supporting President Bush's objections to the specific route of the fence being proposed in order to accommodate settlements. Please use all your influence to ensure that the fence is built along the Green Line.

#### PUBLIC OPINION

Lastly, it is important to point out that the positions that Peace Now takes on settlements are much more reflective of public opinion in Israel and the American Jewish community than those of the Sharon government. In fact, even the majority of the settlers are reasonably moderate on some of these issues.

Let me explain.

Since the outbreak of the Intifada, Israeli public opinion polls have reflected increasing support for evacuation of outposts and other settlements, especially in the context of a peace treaty.

The Steinmetz Institute of Tel Aviv University has conducted a monthly survey of Israeli views on the peace process for the past decade. According to these polls, 60-70% of Israelis consistently say that they would support the withdrawal and dismantlement of part or all of the settlements if a peace treaty were signed today. These figures have been reflected in other surveys, as well. Further, a recent *Ha'aretz* poll found that 40% of the public is prepared to evacuate at least some settlements unilaterally, even without a treaty. That same *Ha'aretz* poll found that 55% of Israelis feel that settlements are more of an economic burden than a security asset, while 55% also believe that the benefits given to settlers should be abolished or reduced.

Surveys of American Jewish opinion conducted by Peace Now's U.S. sister organization, Americans for Peace Now, have found similar attitudes among your constituents. In a poll conducted this past July, Americans for Peace Now found that close to 71% of American Jews either strongly or somewhat support a settlement expansion freeze, and 58% of American Jews either support or somewhat support Israel ending its occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Further, 59% of American Jews would support a final status agreement between Israel and Palestinians roughly along the lines of where the parties ended our last formal negotiations in Taba, a plan that includes evacuating most settlements from the West Bank and Gaza.

I mentioned earlier that most of the settlers moved to the occupied territories for non-ideological reasons. This fact is reflected in the results of two extensive surveys that Peace Now commissioned an independent polling firm to undertake over the past year in which questions were put to settlers themselves about the peace process. The results may surprise some people because it turns out that the settlers are more moderate than many have been lead to believe.

For example, in our June 2003 survey, we found that 90% of settlers would not violate the law in response to a decision to withdraw from the territories, only 1-2% of settlers would actually use all means to oppose evacuation, and 83% of settlers would agree to leave the West Bank and Gaza in exchange for compensation. In fact, 29% of them would leave the settlements today if it were possible.

On political issues, 71% of settlers think that a peace agreement should be reached with the Palestinians, 66% of them think unauthorized settlement outposts

should be removed, and 57% of settlers see the sometimes violent “hilltop youth” as extremist and dangerous.

In other words, should the time come when Israel has to make some tough decisions on settlements, the vast majority of settlers will not necessarily stand in the way.

#### CONCLUSION

Let me conclude by reemphasizing how much I, as an Israeli, and Peace Now, as a Zionist organization, appreciate the support that Congress provides Israel year after year. Without your efforts, we would be in a much more difficult security and economic situation than we are today. Please continue to help us combat terrorism and other regional threats.

I also want to stress that Israel’s failure to meet its obligations regarding settlements in no way excuses the Palestinian Authority’s failure to meet its obligations to combat terrorism and undertake numerous reform efforts. As the Road Map indicates, both sides are supposed to take steps in parallel to make this particular peace plan succeed.

At the same time, I would suggest to you that—whether or not the Road Map is implemented—indulging the current Israeli government’s refusal to deal with settlements and its drive to build a security barrier through the West Bank in order to complicate any Israeli departure from the occupied territories is not in Israel’s best interests. And here, too, we need your help.

Allowing Israel to deepen our occupation of the West Bank and Gaza through settlements and the fence is the same as condemning us to surrender our future as a Jewish, democratic state.

The continuation of settlement growth will spell an end to the Zionist dream, regardless of whether terrorism is crushed today or not for years to come.

This is the most serious threat that we face today. Please help us with your words and deeds to meet this challenge.

One way that you could help is to consider a proposal made by Americans for Peace Now earlier this year about what to do with money that may be deducted from the loan guarantees package that Congress has generously and wisely provided to Israel, money that is to be deducted because of Israeli spending on settlements. Instead of having Israel lose these guarantees, Americans for Peace Now has suggested that this portion of the guarantees be placed in a set aside account to help fund housing construction inside the Green Line for settlers who want to return to Israel. No account like this exists today. Helping establish one would send a constructive message about settlements and demonstrate compassion for settlers who do not have the money to move back home.

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to testify before this distinguished panel, and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have about settlements.

Thank you.

Senator CHAFEE. Thank you very much for your testimony.

We will go to Dr. Boaz Ganor, who has also made the long trip from Israel. Welcome, Dr. Ganor.

#### **STATEMENT OF MR. BOAZ GANOR, PH.D., EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL POLICY INSTITUTE ON COUNTER-TERRORISM, HERZLIA, ISRAEL**

Dr. GANOR. Thank you, Senator. I am not going to make any political or ideological statements; I came as a counterterrorism expert to share with you my views about the obstacles facing any peace plan in our region.

Since October 2000 Israel is facing a war of attrition. This war of attrition combines terrorist and guerrilla attacks, more than 2000 attacks in 3 years. Over 800 Israelis have died, and more than 4,000 were wounded. There have been over 100 suicide attacks. As a matter of fact, we had more casualties in Israel from terrorism in the last 3 years than from the establishment of Israel in 1948.

I choose to share with you this data in my opening statement because I do believe that the cessation of terrorism is the crucial element of any peace plan in our region. The whole rationale of the Oslo process from the Israeli perspective was aimed just to achieve one goal: security. This is living a reasonable life in our region.

But the Israeli public feels that we were double-crossed by Yasser Arafat. Yasser Arafat used a double policy; while he was condemning in English the terrorist attacks he was personally preserving the capability to launch terrorist attacks whenever convenient and whenever he believes that it serves the national interest of the Palestinians.

In order to understand how this policy works, let me go back to the equation of terrorism. Terrorism in my view is a combination of two factors: motivation and operational capability. Only when a group of people have both motivation to attack and operational capability, then a terrorist attack or a terrorist campaign occurs.

From this we can conclude what counterterrorism is all about. Counterterrorism aims to either lower the motivation or lower down the operational capability; the best thing, of course, is to lower both factors at the same time. Unfortunately, in many cases the two are mutually contradictory. When you deal offensively with the operational capability of the terrorist organization, thus lowering it, you immediately raise the motivation to retaliate.

I would like to argue that since 1994, the beginning of the Oslo Accords, when Arafat wanted to stop terrorist attacks—and there were some times that he wanted to do so—he dealt only with the motivation, not with the operational capability of the terrorist organizations. I call this the “threat and persuasion policy” of Yasser Arafat.

This policy was based on two issues on which Arafat and Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad saw eye to eye. The first issue is what I call the short-term Palestinian national interests. What are these interests? To reduce Israel to the 1967 borders, creation of a Palestinian state with a capital in Jerusalem, and what they call the right of return for the Palestinian refugees to live in Israel in the 1967 borders. On this short-term Palestinian national interest, Hamas and Arafat saw eye to eye.

The other issue on which Hamas saw eye to eye with Arafat was that in any case, the worst case scenario from their point of view is the deterioration of the situation in the Palestinian arena into a “fitana”—a civil war. Whatever happens, let there not be a civil war.

Having these goals and these beliefs, Arafat never dealt with the operational capability of Hamas or Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Occasionally, for a photo opportunity he would attack an explosives laboratory or arrested some people in a revolving door policy. When he was criticized for doing no more than this, he took the position of the underdog, saying: I am investing 100 percent of efforts; I cannot guarantee 100 percent success.” Well, of course nobody can measure effort and therefore there was no accountability for what he was doing.

The American policy in the last 3 years, in my view was based on the recommendations of the Mitchell committee. The Mitchell committee understood the problem, understood the need to change

the equation of terrorism, and the double policy of Yasser Arafat. Therefore, they suggested progress in the peace process in stages, with a prior condition being first of all the cessation of terrorism activity and then dismantling Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

The Road Map, coming from the initiative of the European Quartet, had another view. They thought that the progress should be reciprocal steps from both sides with no preconditions. The amendments that the Americans insisted be put in, which is again the cessation of terrorism and dismantling Hamas, complicated things for Arafat.

But he had a solution—a solution that he used time and again in the past. This is the hudna or temporary cease-fire, which frees him from the need to deal with operational capabilities. Thus he need only deal with the motivation of the terrorists for a temporary time.

Well, the hudna had no chance. It had no chance because there were four actors that were engaged in this hudna directly or indirectly and all of them had different views and different goals in reaching this hudna. Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad wanted the hudna only in order not to be regarded by the Palestinian public as the ones who prevent Palestinian national interests from being fulfilled. The other thing that Hamas did not want to see is a deterioration of the situation into a fitana—a civil war.

The Palestinian Authority defined the hudna as a great opportunity again to prevent a fitana, but more than everything else to show the rest of the world that they are fulfilling their obligation to stop terrorist activity by dismantling the terrorist organizations without doing that, of course.

Israel indirectly and unofficially accepted the hudna, because Israel thought that this would give a window of time for Abu Mazen, the new Prime Minister, to deal with the infrastructure of Hamas.

The United States indirectly accepted the hudna for the same reason that Israel did. But if you ask me, I think that at the end of this hudna, the American policy started to shift toward the point of view of the Palestinians—that dismantling Hamas is very important, but that this can be delayed to a later time.

Well, the hudna did not give us what we expected to achieve from it because the terrorist organizations did not fulfill their obligations. During the hudna—almost 2 months of “temporary cease-fire,” we had 178 attacks. We had four people killed in these attacks and 16 wounded, and this does not include the August 19 attack on the bus in Jerusalem that killed 20 people and injured 112.

The Road Map did not have a chance. It did not have a chance because the Palestinians did not have any intention of fulfilling their obligation to dismantle Hamas. Abu Mazen was appointed for his mission for only one reason: To pave the way for Yasser Arafat to return to center stage in our region. Abu Mazen had no sovereignty of his own—no power of his own. If he had any sovereignty or power, it came from the sovereignty and power that he gained from his patron, Yasser Arafat.

Even if he really wanted to dismantle Hamas—and I believe that maybe he personally did want this—he would never have been al-

lowed to do so by Yasser Arafat. If Arafat were to give him the power to do this, he would immediately show the rest of the world that he had deceived them for more than a decade in saying that he could not do it, whereas Abu Mazen could do it in no time.

What are the conclusions from this? As long as Arafat plays a key role in our region, no peace plan is going to be fulfilled. There will never evolve a new Palestinian leadership as long as Arafat rules, because this new, moderate leadership, would face two fronts at the same time: Hamas on one hand and Arafat on the other hand. No leadership will be ready and willing to fulfill the precondition of dismantling Hamas and risking a civil war as long as Arafat is there.

It seems to me that there are no shortcuts. A society that would like to achieve a homeland, to end a revolution, must fight extremists. It is what we had to do before the creation of Israel. Now it is the Palestinians' obligation to do so. And why is it necessary to do so? Because Hamas will never recognize the right of Israel to exist; because Hamas will never stop fighting Israel; and because Hamas will never voluntarily and willingly dismantle itself.

The Palestinian's have to choose between two choices: hudna or fitana. Hudna means to go on dealing with only the motivation and deceiving the world. Fitana may bring us a chance for another peace plan in our region.

To summarize, I would say that no peace plan can succeed without the cessation of terrorism. This would be impossible without dismantling the terrorist organization. This would be impossible without a fitana, civil war, and a fitana would be impossible as long as Arafat plays a key role in our region.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Ganor follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MR. BOAZ GANOR, PH.D., EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
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At the end of the Camp David discussions, Yasser Arafat, who was offered a Palestinian state alongside—but not instead of—Israel, declared the Oslo Peace Process a dead end. Israel soon found itself in a position where it faced terror attacks unprecedented in scope and character. Within three years, there were thousands of terror and guerrilla attacks, more than a hundred suicide attacks and many more terror attacks that were foiled. The annual number of casualties caused by terror attacks hit the highest point since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. This terror offensive has forced Israel unwillingly to move from “conflict resolution” to “conflict management” using all the counter-terrorism means at its disposal.

Israel has identified the Palestinian Authority and its Chairman, Yasser Arafat, as being responsible for this terror activity, by instigating, financing, inciting, assisting and even actively perpetrating terror attacks (as opposed to terror attacks carried out during 1994-2000, when the perpetrators were mainly Hamas and Islamic Jihad activists and Arafat was “only” accused of turning a blind eye). Since September 2000, over 50% of the most serious terror attacks have been carried out by members of Arafat's own organization, Fatah).

Some experts tend to analyze and evaluate the prospects of peace initiatives in the middle-east without recognizing terrorism as a crucial factor.

This was also the official policy of late Rabin's government in 1994-1995 using the slogan—“we will pursue peace as if there is no terrorism and fight terrorism as if there is no peace process”. This Israeli strategy offered no incentive to the Palestinians to refrain from terrorist attacks and the Palestinian Authority to pressure these organizations to hold their fire. As a consequence it became evident to the Palestinians that terrorist activity does serve their interests or at the very least doesn't endanger them. This false conviction that “terrorism pays” stood in full contradiction to any peace initiative in the Middle East. Moreover, after three years of an

on going war of attrition against Israel, the Israeli public, like the American public does after 9/11 attacks, believes in zero tolerance attitude towards terrorism.

Anyone who cares for peace in the Middle East has to acknowledge the importance of a complete secession of terrorism as a crucial prerequisite to any future effort to reach a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

What is the phenomenon of terrorism? Terrorism is a combination of two factors—motivation and operational capability—the motivation of a terrorist organization to perpetrate attacks, and it's operational capability of doing so at a given time. Based on the terrorism equation one may conclude the Counter-Terrorism counter equation—either lower the motivation to use terrorism as a tool for achieving political goals or diminish the terrorists' operational capabilities to do so. (It is better of course to try and accomplish both simultaneously but unfortunately they are often contradicting as the offensive designated to limit operational capabilities usually feed motivation to retaliate).

Since the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1994, Yasser Arafat has adopted a policy whereby he refrains from disrupting the military infrastructure of the Palestinian radical groups— Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) in the areas under his control. Thus, he was free to preserve the constant threat of terrorism as a bargaining chip to be used against Israel, acting to prevent attacks when it served what he saw as the Palestinian national interest. But whenever such prevention was necessary it was always accomplished through a policy of “persuasion and threats”—never through direct military action.

Whenever the PA came out to prevent terror attacks against Israel it has maneuvered to limit the terrorist organization's motivation to do so at a given time frame but systematically refrained from dismantling their operational capabilities—preserving them for later use when it better suited PA's political agenda.

What made Arafat's threat and persuasion policy effective was the fact that the Palestinian authority and the fundamentalist terror organizations— Hamas and PIJ, shared from day one of establishing the P.A. what was agreed upon as “the short term Palestinian national interests”. These interests were the removal of Israeli forces from the West bank and Gaza strip, the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as it's capital, and the ostensible “right of return” of 1948 Palestinian refugees to live in Israel within its 1967 borders.

Both sides also shared an understanding that “civil war” among themselves (“Fitana” in Arabic) is to be avoided at all costs as it would only serve Israel's interest.

When Arafat wanted to temporarily stop terrorist attacks against Israel, or “lower the flames”, he managed to convince the leadership of the terror organizations that attacks at that specific point in time would be counterproductive and harm the Palestinian national interests. He usually added a warning that if these organizations would disregard his request, he would be obligated to act thereby risking civil war.

At such times, Arafat, who controlled the Palestinian media, would work to ensure that the popular environment was not conducive to terrorist activity. However, during the seven years that the Palestinian Authority has existed, Arafat never lifted a finger to curtail the ability of the terrorist organizations to carry out attacks. He never took real steps to disrupt the militants' command centers, shut down their bomb factories, or prosecute the leaders of the organizations' military wings. What actions he did take were always carried out “for the cameras,” and were rescinded or overturned as soon as the eyes of the world were elsewhere. Nor did Arafat ever do anything about gathering up the thousands of illegal weapons in the hands of militants, including those of his own Fatah organization—contrary to the terms of numerous agreements signed with Israel. Nor was anything done to prevent radical organizations from engaging in fund-raising or recruitment activities. On the contrary, the terrorist organizations have been allowed by Arafat to take root and grow in the soil of the Palestinian Authority. The PA turned a blind eye to the activity of Hamas, the Islamic Jihad and other groups in the autonomous zone, allowing them to act freely, to organize for terror attacks, and to possess many and varied weapons.

Not only has Arafat, and the PA under his control not fought to control those who oppose the agreements, but they have actively encouraged such militancy. This is clear from the incitement in PA text books, in the television commercials (on the official PA channels) encouraging Palestinian children to die as martyrs; it is clear in the attempts—both open and clandestine—to smuggle into Palestinian territories weapons against all their obligations in the treaties with Israel. And it is clear from Arafat's undermining of the authority of any Palestinian leader who attempts to rein in Hamas and the Islamic Jihad, much less Fatah's own Martyrs of al-Aqsa Brigades.



Whenever Aaraft's policy was criticized he immediately assumed the "underdog" position, claiming he was doing whatever was possible but was "too weak to guarantee success".

After every terror attack involving massive Israeli casualties, Arafat would reiterate that he was doing everything in his power to prevent the attacks, in his words—"100% effort", but that no one can guarantee 100% success in thwarting terrorism.

He would usually back his statement with a one time exposure of an explosive laboratory or a casual arrest of a terrorist, orchestrated to get maximum international media coverage and create a PR spin.

The lack of any qualitative criteria for measuring it's efforts at combating terror absolved the Palestinian Authority of all responsibility for terrorist attacks, allowing the PA to fall back on impotence.

Eventually, when Israel made it clear that this deceiving policy cannot last, a new excuse was invented. According to this new argument, Arafat should be held responsible only for terrorist attacks carried out from areas under Palestinian control (Area A) and not for those launched from areas under Israeli security control (Areas B and C). Immediately Arafat issued orders to the Palestinian radical groups not to "embarrass the Palestinian Authority," by ensuring that the perpetrators of every attack set out on their mission from outside of the Autonomy. All of this, of course, completely ignores the fact that everything that went into the attack—the planning, the bomb making, the intelligence gathering the recruiting and training—all this took place inside Palestinian autonomous areas.

The old underdog position assumed by Arafat time and again is still being used by the PA to excuse their permanent unwillingness and impotence in dealing with the terrorist infrastructures in Gaza and the West Bank. This Palestinian policy was never a matter of weakness on the part of the PA—it was not that they feared a confrontation with the fundamentalists. Rather, it was part of a calculated policy, whereby the threat of violence was held in check, to be used to put pressure on Israel at the appropriate time during the negotiations.

Some experts still mistakably hold that Arafat is not in control of the Palestinian masses, and is thus not in a position to stop the Intifada. But Arafat was in the past and is still today in full control of the main apparatuses that can dismantle terrorism.

#### CONTROL OF INTELLIGENCE

The first and the most important pillar of counter-terrorism is intelligence. The gathering of intelligence plays a key role in the ongoing war on terror. Intelligence is meant to provide essential data on the terror organization: it's hierarchy, leaders and main activists, exposing their infrastructure, locating the terror cells, learning about their terror attacks planning etc. The Palestinian intelligence agencies had and still have the best intelligence—better than any Israeli, American or other intelligence agency—on the ongoing activity of the Palestinian terrorist organizations in Gaza, the West Bank and abroad. This gives the Palestinian Authority a huge advantage in any counter-terrorism activity.

Before the Oslo agreements, (1994), control of the West Bank and Gaza Strip gave the Israeli intelligence agencies uninhibited access to the "street" and made possible the gathering of vital information for the war on terror and the frustration of attacks before the killers even ventured from their nest. Needless to say, the withdrawal of the IDF from these areas did not encourage the residents to continue turning over information to Israeli intelligence authorities. The bitter end of those suspected of collaboration with Israel brutally illustrated the fate that awaits collaborators—or whoever is suspected as such—once the IDF departed and Arafat and his people took over. This gap in intelligence was supposed to have been bridged by intelligence cooperation with the PA. But even at the pick of cooperation between the PA and Israel, the Palestinians were reluctant to give Israel any information that was gathered by their own sources in order to prevent terror attacks.

The intelligence cooperation channel was mainly used for passing Israeli intelligence data, which naturally is gathered from classified sources, to the PA security forces for the purpose of interdicting attacks.

In many cases the Palestinians chose to ignore the information and did not use it to prevent terror attacks. In other cases they opted to warn the terrorists instead. Sometimes they would put up a show arrest apprehending the terrorists and let them go free after a short while through the infamous "revolving door" policy.

Whatever the case their only genuine effort was immediately directed at exposing and eliminating the Israeli intelligence sources who provided the information. In effect, an extremely dangerous paradox was formed. Intelligence data from classified

sources was passed to the PA security forces for the purpose of interdicting attacks. Yet at the same time, the PA was doing its best to eliminate Israeli intelligence sources defined by them as “collaborators”. Of course, anyone suspected of cooperating with Israel has his fate determined well before seeing a judge.

#### CONTROL OF THE MEDIA

By controlling the media, Arafat controls the standards of popularity. From the outset it was the official messages disseminated through the radio, television and the official PA preachers, that set the standards for popularity in the Palestinian street.

At the heart of Arafat’s dilemma is the need to continue to mobilize his society in an atmosphere in which no real achievements can be presented. The ultimate victims of Palestinian terrorist attacks have been the Palestinians themselves. The Palestinian Authority never implemented plans to develop a self-sufficient economy. The income of most Palestinians has always been based on the employment of Palestinians in Israel. Since the outbreak of hostilities, Israel, fearful of terrorist attacks has now virtually closed its borders to Palestinian laborers. At the same time, tourism, a mainstay of both the Palestinian and the Israeli economies, has dropped to a trickle.

Thus, Arafat is forced to continue to justify a war that, while saving him the need to address domestic concerns, has brought the Palestinians nothing but grief.

#### CONTROL OVER TERRORIST GROUPS

Arafat also has considerable influence, even over the “opposition” Islamist groups. These organizations, while not directly controlled by Arafat, were still dependent on his keeping their military capabilities intact. Had he chosen to disarm and outlaw the PIJ and Hamas, the Islamists would have been largely marginalized.

Arafat’s own terrorist groups compete with the Islamic groups in number of attacks against Israeli targets. The Fatah groups enjoy the overwhelming support of Arafat’s constituency, and he has invested a great deal in keeping them armed and active, even when his civilian infrastructure languishes for lack of funds.

Over the past three years, since the outbreak of Palestinian hostilities, Arafat consistently preached “Jihad” (Holy war) against Israel. However, at first it was mostly the Islamist groups, Hamas and PIJ that carried out the mass-casualty attacks inside Israel. The Fatah-Tanzim, which lacked the resources for carrying out the kind of “professional” bombings typical of Hamas, confined itself to shooting attacks on Israelis on the roads in the disputed territories.

All of this began to change towards the end of 2000, when Arafat ordered his security services to release the majority of the imprisoned Hamas and Islamic Jihad militants—many of them convicted terrorists who had been jailed under the terms of the Oslo agreements with Israel. Hamas was invited to join the Palestinian Authority’s governing body, and while the invitation was not accepted, a new level of cooperation between Fatah and Hamas began to take shape. The first joint attacks against Israeli civilians were not long in coming.

To date, the Fatah-Tanzim and the Martyrs of al-Aqsa—yet another Fatah offshoot—have taken responsibility for more than 300 terror attacks in which Israeli civilians were killed.

Since September 2000 the Arafat’s Fatah-linked groups have carried out more than 1,500 attacks and attempted attacks, including car bombings, shootings, kidnappings, and knifings.

As Arafat could have—and still can—prevent the terror attacks against Israel, so he can, put a stop to the current round of violence in the Territories. After all, he has at his disposal all the means necessary to do so. Among these is the complete control of the Palestinian media, which, right up until the time these lines were written, continues to broadcast blatant incitement against Israel. And then there is the security and intelligence apparatus, deeply rooted in Palestinian society, the heads of which miss no opportunity to express their loyalty to Arafat, and whose personnel receive their monthly salary from Arafat’s Palestinian Authority. Add to this a vast law enforcement force, numbering in the tens of thousands, and one has ample means to control the violence in the Palestinian street.

The violence and terrorist activity known as the “al-Aqsa Intifada” was a direct result of Arafat’s evaluation that violence and terrorism pay—that in the end, “the Palestinian national interests” will be better served by violence than by negotiations. By instigating a war of terrorist attrition as an extension of his overall political effort, Arafat meant to force Israel into further concessions—more than what was offered to him at Camp-David (The creation of a Palestinian state on 95% of the West Bank and Gaza strip including the control on the strategic territory of Jor-

dan valley. In exchange for the highly Jewish populated territory in the West Bank that Israel wanted to keep, Israel was ready to swap Israeli territory bordering Gaza Strip. Israel was also willing to divide its capital—Jerusalem to accommodate a parallel capital for the Palestinians).

To the other parties utter disbelief those far reaching concessions of historic magnitude were suddenly deemed insufficient and Arafat, apparently sensing blood, have decided to push for more assuming that an additional dose of terror and orchestrated violence will do the trick.

He was probably right as the pattern worked time and again. Few weeks after Arafat provoked the resumption of violent activity, Israeli negotiators (in the Taba Talks) expressed sudden flexibility on the Israeli sacred Casus Beli issue of Palestinian claim of return of the 1948 Palestinian refugees into Israel proper—a horrifying gamble on Israel's sheer existence, later rectified by the Israeli electorate through a democratic process.

It's difficult to unlearn the lessons of years all at once, and Israel is now paying dearly for past mistakes. The Israeli government and most of the Israeli public are not willing nor able to adopt a policy of turning a blind eye to the Palestinian terrorist activity by promoting peace "as if there is no terrorism". This is probably also clear to Arafat. Therefore his strategy in promoting the current terrorist activity is not anymore to obtain further voluntary concessions from Israel, but to try to manipulate the international community to force a solution probably assuming that such a compromise, will hold more for the Palestinians than what was offered at the negotiating table.

In other words, from Arafat's viewpoint, terrorism and violence will once more pay off, regardless of how many Palestinian or Israeli lives are lost along the way. In fact, the higher the casualties, the greater the urgency of an imposed solution.

Based on the American administration policy in the Middle East, the Mitchell committee understood the need to break the deadly patterns of the PA policy, and demanded full cessation of Palestinian terror activity, and total dismantling of the terrorist organization operational capabilities and infrastructures to be considered an overriding pre condition to any further diplomatic and political discussions concerning future arrangements and solutions of the conflict.

In contradiction to the Mitchell committee recommendations, The Road-Map that was structured by the European "Quartet" and inspired by a Saudi initiative, was based on a simultaneous, reciprocal steps by Israel and the Palestinians, with no preliminary demand from the Palestinians to dismantle the terrorist organizations. This was Arafat's victory and therefore he embraced the Road-Map plan.

The amendment that has been later introduced by the American administration demanding the cessation of Palestinian terrorist activity and dismantling Hamas as preliminary steps, complicated Arafat's vision.

Nevertheless he hoped that the American policy will be changed after he will reach a temporary cease-fire ("Hudna") with the Palestinian Islamic-radical terrorist organizations. This was not the first time that such Hudna was discussed between Palestinian factions in order to promote Palestinian national interests.

But there was no real expectancy to this Hudna since the four players—the PA, Hamas and PIJ, Israel and the USA adopted this Hudna directly or indirectly for different reasons and with different expectations.

Hamas understood that the PA and maybe the Palestinian public will regard terrorist activity at this specific timing as endangering Palestinian national interests and they wanted to prevent deterioration to a possible civil war.

The PA for its part adopted the Hudna in an attempt to diminish the motivation of the Islamists to execute terrorist attacks and so to avoid failing to meet its obligations to dismantle the terrorist organization. They argue that in any case they do not have sufficient military capabilities to dismantle Hamas and PIJ right now so it should be postponed for later times. Meanwhile Israel should be forced to fulfill its obligations by the Road-Map.

Israel adopted the Hudna indirectly in order to buy time for Abu-Mazen's new administration to reorganize and start fulfilling their obligation to dismantle the Palestinian terrorist organizations.

The USA was indirectly accepting the Hudna having the same point of view as Israel but as the time passed, some statements of the American administration implied that there is a beginning of a shift in the American position towards the Palestinians by softening the demand for immediate dismantling of the terror organizations.

As expected the Hudna did not last long. The terrorist organizations did not keep their obligation to abstain from terrorist attacks. The volume of the attacks did drop at first but there was no cessation of terrorism and definitely no pressure on its infrastructure.

A few days after the Hudna agreement was concluded, Israel suffered from cold weapon terrorist attacks, then a kidnap of a taxi driver, up to suicide attacks that culminated in the horrific suicide attack on a Jerusalem bus on August 19th and the killing of more than 20 Israelis and wounding 112 others.

There was no hope for the Road-Map plan or any other peace initiative in the Middle East since the PA headed by Arafat did not have the slightest intention to fulfill their obligation to dismantle the terrorist organizations infrastructures.

The new Abu-Mazen's government that was created as he pointed out, to pave the way for Arafat's return to the international arena, had no chance to fulfill its obligations even if they wanted to. Abu Mazen did not have any sovereignty or power of its own in the Palestinian constituency. Any capabilities he had were those relayed to him courtesy of Arafat.

Under such circumstances even if a surrogate nominee for PM will be genuinely motivated to dismantle Hamas and PIJ, Arafat would never empower him to do so and will withhold the authority and support needed for this assignment.

Arafat cannot afford anyone to dismantle the terrorist organizations, as by so doing he would publicly admit a decade long deception of the entire international community.

As long as Arafat is present in the West Bank and Gaza strip, no other Palestinian leader will emerge that is capable of simultaneously withstanding two fronts—the Islamic radical terrorist organizations and Arafat himself.

Even pragmatic Palestinian leaders who understand that tackling the Islamic radical organizations is in their own best interest, would not dare to declare Fitna (Civil War) against the terrorist organizations.

Since Hamas and PIJ will never recognize the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish state, will spare no effort to bring about its destruction and will never volunteer to dismantle themselves, there is no real prospect for a viable peace initiative in the Middle East as long as the Palestinians will choose Hudna over Fitna and as long as Arafat is in control there.

Senator CHAFEE. Thank you, Dr. Ganor, very much, and let me thank the entire panel for their insightful testimony.

I think we will go to about 7 minutes each because I know my colleagues also have questions. I will direct my questions to the entire panel, so please be considerate so that everybody is able to get a shot in within the 7 minutes. It might be a difficult question, because I am making the assumptions that you know the difference between the legislative branch and the executive branch.

I will start with Ambassador Ross because you probably know more about our American system: What can we do in Congress? Do you have any advice for us here as Members of Congress as we look at the challenges ahead?

Mr. ROSS. I would say that the most important thing is to recognize that what Boaz was just saying is absolutely right. This is not an ideological argument about violence. The fact of the matter is we have history now that shows that terror will undo any peace process. As soon as the Israelis would withdraw to any extent, if there is terror they are going to go right back. So there has to be on the Palestinian side an understanding that there is going to be a moment of truth.

I think from the congressional standpoint it ought to be clear that you are prepared to support those on the Palestinian Authority or those Palestinian groups that are prepared to create grassroots movements, that are prepared to make it clear that they will discredit the very idea of terror; you will support those Palestinians that are prepared to live in peace with Israel.

In fact, there are some who are for the first time creating a kind of grassroots approach. Sari Nusseibeh and Ami Ayalon—Sari Nusseibeh is the president of al-Quds University, Ami Ayalon is the former head of Shin Bet in Israel—they have agreed on six

principles for what should constitute peace between the two sides, representing important concessions that each would make.

I think embracing these kinds of groups, even if not embracing the precise outcomes they suggest is important, especially because the idea that Palestinians will reject the concept of terror has to be supported in Congress, not only in terms of your rhetoric, but also the groups you are prepared to support.

I would also say that, if it comes time for supporting the costs of the fence, that the fence should reflect certain criteria. I do not agree, as I said, that the fence should be built along the Green Line except where demographics dictate it, and there are places where it does. The fence should be built in a way that ensures Israeli security, topography makes sense to cut back on infiltration, but it has to take into account demographics.

The point about Israel remaining a Jewish state, a democratic state, is right. You cannot build a fence on the eastern side of the West Bank. You build it on the western side.

I would view deductions on loan guarantees being related to settlements, which is what originally it was designed to do, not related to the fence. The fence is about security, but then again make clear to the Israelis that building a fence that creates an encirclement of Palestinians is not a pathway toward Israeli security or creating a possibility for the future.

Senator CHAFEE. Thank you, Ambassador.

Rabbi Melchior, I know you would like to advocate for more support for the Alexandria Group, but I will let you speak for yourself.

Rabbi MELCHIOR. That, it speaks for itself. I would like really to say that to create the coalition of civilizations has to be essential to our purpose, I would say not only for our part of the Middle East; I think this is something which is true for world peace in general. We have to fight terror, I totally agree also with Boaz on that. I said in my opening statement, we cannot go ahead, we cannot get anywhere. Every time we get one step ahead, we are blown back two steps by a new terror act.

It has to be a demand so clearly on the Palestinian Authority. I just want to remind you that actually Abu Mazen put forward a 100-day program where he actually said how he could dismantle. The Hamas and Jihad are not that big organizations when it comes to their terrorist infrastructure that it cannot be done if there is the will to do it. It is difficult. It is very, very difficult. It is necessary. We did it when the state of Israel was created. We had somewhat similar problems.

But at the same time, if we do not build, if we do not empower, not only by funds, but empower the coalition of civilizations and all the things which have to—you cannot have that measure of hatred inside your room every day from 120 television stations, so much hatred, so much anti-Semitism. It cannot come—when we were on our way to Camp David, I remember I was sitting with Barak on the plane, it is a long plane trip, discussing the prospects. I said: How is Arafat going to go back and say that he made eternal peace with the devil, because that is how we are described.

We need to deal in both societies with creating this coalition of civilizations so that we do not turn into something which can never be solved. I think that is the best answer to the terrorists, together

with what has to be done. We have to understand that the prospect of having a Palestinian state as soon as possible is a necessity for Israel.

Senator CHAFEE. Thank you, Rabbi.

Mr. Etkes.

Mr. ETKES. I think that supporting President Bush's initiative based on his June 24 speech, a vision which involved two independent viable states living one next to the other, accepting the Green Line as the international border between them, which happens to be also the demographic line between the two groups, this is the main thing which the Senate can contribute in helping us to more stability.

Contribution—or support of this vision as far as I understand it contains three main factors: first of all, support of President Bush's objection to the route of the fence. The fence which is constructed right now around Ariel is 25, 26 kilometers deep in the West Bank. It will include hundreds of thousands of Palestinians within the boundaries of the fence.

Second is, as I suggested before, to support a constructive message being sent to the Israeli people: Yes, we are on your side, we want to help Israel to go through this very hard time, and we are doing it by allocating money to constructive objectives.

I think the third thing which could be done is tightening the inspection over two parties' actual deeds on the ground in terms of what are the Palestinians doing dealing with the infrastructure of terror, the capabilities of terror organizations to carry out actions against Israel, and, for the other hand, dealing with the Israeli settlements which their construction continuously sends a very, very destructive, negative message to the Palestinians that Israel is not willing by any circumstances to leave the West Bank.

Senator CHAFEE. Thank you once again.

We have got a few seconds left, I believe. Dr. Ganor.

Dr. GANOR. Thank you. First of all, I think that the Congress can support the example that we, and the whole world, get from the Americans that there is no appeasement of terrorism. That is the first thing to do.

The second thing, I believe that there is a real need to deal with the motivation of the terrorists. As I said, counterterrorism must deal with both the motivation and the operational capabilities. But dealing with the motivation definitely does not mean appeasing the terrorists or giving them concessions that they seek. Rather, I am talking about humanitarian effort, education, and so on and so forth.

In that regard, I definitely support Rabbi Melchior's idea of bridging gaps between civilizations, between religions. Just to give you an impression of how everything comes from the same arena of Islamic radicalism. The suicide attacker that committed the attack in Tel Aviv about half a year ago had the traditional last picture made of himself. Usually the suicide attacker takes a last picture before committing an attack. I was amazed to see the background that he chose for this picture, because in most cases they take Islamic symbols—Koran, al-Aqsa Mosque, or something like that. He chose the view of Mount Hebron. This in my view shows

that they come from the same state of mind, the state of mind of Islamic radicalism.

I agree with Melchior in saying that this is not a clash of civilizations. Thank God, it is not Islam against the rest of the world. It is Islamic radicalism against the rest of the world, including moderate Islam. And I do believe there is a need for Christians, Jews, and moderate Moslems to join hands in fighting the phenomenon of Islamic radicalism.

Senator CHAFEE. Thank you, sir.

Senator Boxer.

Senator BOXER. Thanks. First let me just say, Mr. Chairman, I think this panel has been extraordinary. I thank all of you. I know it was hard for you to get here. I think this has been an extremely intelligent discussion and with various views being heard. I think it is healthy, I think it is good.

I just, as someone who is a total optimist in my life—that is why I do what I do—I am getting to a point here where I see these vicious circles and I am very worried about it. When I heard Dennis Ross put out as one of his ideas a fence, I know how hard that is to get to that place. But I have to say as I look out at this circumstance, in most tough negotiations you have a lot of grey areas. For example, one grey area, which settlements should be inside, which settlements could be outside, and people could discuss it and have arguments about it.

But I go to where Dr. Ganor comes from, which is I do not think you make a move until you solve the terrorism issue. I do not see how you can. I mean, I think to myself, what if I went home to my constituents—and I just get the chills saying this because this particular article has stuck with me and a vision of the people involved stuck with me. How could I go home to a community—and Jon Corzine had to do this after 9–11. How do I go home to a community and face a family who lost their father and the daughter? They were sitting at a cafe talking about his advice to her before her wedding day. How do I go home and explain that I am going to go back to a peace table in a situation like that?

Now, that is an excruciating thing for anyone to do who is first and foremost entrusted with the responsibility to make life safe for people, so they can go to a supermarket, so they can ride on a bus, so they can travel somewhere.

So I really start where Dr. Ganor starts from, and frankly it is not an impossible place to start because it is black and white. I do not know anyone, Yasser Arafat included, who ever said: Oh, terrorism, that is something we support. At least that is what they say. Let us start there. We have got to have progress in this, and I think it starts with newspaper reports that talk about resistance as opposed to terrorism. Killing innocent people is terrorism. That is how I feel. And I think we need to use our words and choose our words carefully in all of this.

So I have two questions and I will stop. One is, we get so focused on the parties themselves, which we have to do because in the end that is where it is at. Nothing President Bush can do or President Clinton could do is going to bring the parties together. But the Arab countries, what is their story? Why do they not understand

that their future could be so much brighter if this conflict was resolved?

So I would like to ask whoever would like to answer: How do you feel about the fact that we know Syria, from everything we can see, is involved in supporting some of these organizations? And, as Dennis Ross has written in his article in *The National Interest*, that the Arab countries never even said to Arafat, you know, shape up here and help Abu Mazen.

So that is a piece of the puzzle, those are two pieces of the puzzle, that I think are key, Mr. Chairman, the Arab countries and what they are and are not doing and this terrorism piece.

So that is one question about the Arab countries and the second question is to Dennis. Without doing anything that would be inappropriate, because I do not want to say if you were there what would you say, because you are not there and you have to be careful, what are the options of the Bush administration in the way they would respond to the death of three Americans riding along that road that you rode on 200 times, a road that was known for taking the embassy officials? And by the way, one injured, so it was three killed and one injured. Those are my two questions.

Dr. Ganor.

Dr. GANOR. Thank you.

As I said, I see the problem as Islamic radicalism against the rest of the world, including moderate Islam. The problem is that the moderate Arab countries, and moderate Muslims, are reluctant to acknowledge their responsibility to deal with this phenomenon.

I was in the United States when the horrific attack of 9–11 occurred. On the same day I was interviewed on public radio and I was asked: “Who do you think is responsible for this attack?” I said: I think it is bin Laden. I said: bin Laden represents Islamic radicalism, but definitely not Islam as a culture, as a religion. One of the listeners called the studio and went on the air to say: “I am a Muslim, and I am an Arab, and I am an American citizen,” and he praised me for differing between Islam and Islamic radicalism. He said: “If it is true and these are Muslims that have done that, I think we should capture them, I think we should try them, I think we should hang them; I wish I could do it myself.”

My answer to him was: It is very important for you to say this on this horrific day, that the American people will know that there are Muslims and Arabs like you; but you know what, my friend, it is much more important for you to say it in Arabic on Al-Jazeera than in English.

Senator BOXER. OK, so just cutting through because my time is running out and I know Senator Corzine has been waiting, you are basically saying that within these Arab countries they have to—it is internal politics, they are fearful to speak out or they are reluctant to for internal political reasons.

Does anyone disagree with that assessment?

Mr. ROSS. No, but let me put it in a slightly different way. I do agree with that assessment. The fundamental problem in terms of the Arab leaders is that they are more fearful of condemning Hamas and Islamic Jihad and taking on their own radical Islamists because of their own lack of legitimacy than they are of the con-



sequences of a deteriorating Israeli-Palestinian war. When that equation changes, then they will do something.

Senator BOXER. Which leads to the last question: What are the options of the Bush administration, given this for the first time ever direct attack?

Mr. ROSS. The Bush administration I think basically has two options that they can employ at this point. They are both related to the diplomatic side. We do not have a military option. The Israelis have the military option, we do not there. One is to finally go to the Arab leaders and say, enough already; you can no longer glorify these attacks and portray them as acts of resistance; these are acts of terror, pure and simple. And as long as you portray them as resistance, you legitimize them. Enough already. 9-11 should have created that understanding. In Saudi Arabia, May 12 of this year should have created that understanding.

We should be much more public about this. We should make it very clear if our Arab friends want us to help transform the situation on the ground between Israelis and Palestinians then they have to step up to their responsibility. Absent that, we cannot succeed here and we cannot succeed in the war on terror either, because as long as these kinds of acts are not discredited for what they are you are still going to have many people who are prepared to engage in them.

The other option would be to try to broker something with Abu Ala and Sharon. That would be the other thing, but to do it more decisively. Right now our posture is, the Bush administration's posture, is we are not going to deal with Abu Ala until he proves that he can deliver. Now, that is also Sharon's position.

But as I said, if Abu Ala shows that he might be prepared to do something, he is also going to want to know what it is he is going to get when he does it. So I would say we have to at least consider that as a possibility.

Senator BOXER. Thank you. I think my time has expired.

Rabbi MELCHIOR. Just three very short comments on this. No. 1, I totally agree on the issue of defining terror as terror. You should just know that in these days there is a gathering of all the Islamic states in Malaysia, 57 states, which is not doing that, not defining terror as terror; and the opposite is true.

The necessity for pressuring now and using also this terrible tragedy for pressuring I think is a one-time—the Bush administration has to understand—I do not want to give too much advice. I come from another country. They have to either decide if they want to be really involved or not, and really involved is very, very difficult, but it is necessary. We will not get anywhere without it.

The third comment is just to your first comment, if I can say this. The true victory of terrorism is also a continuation of what is going on today and the status quo. There are a lot of things which—this vacuum here is playing into their hands. Therefore, if we do not come up with political solutions—now, it may be unilateral because of the mess. I think it was not only the fence that Dennis Ross was promoting, but unilateral withdrawal as part of the fence. That is a different thing. That is a unilateral, very important step that was the same as my conclusion if nothing else

could be done. Of course, it would be much, much better to do it with an understanding or even an agreement.

Senator CHAFEE. Thank you.

Senator Corzine.

Senator CORZINE. Thank you.

Gentlemen, we have 140,000 troops on the ground in Iraq. We are about to vote on roughly \$90 billion of additional involvement. We claim we have some element of international support and seem to be building some initiatives on that score with regard to the United Nations. In this tragic—and it really is, both for the Palestinian people and certainly for the Israelis and some small involvement for the U.S. here now today. Why is there not more of, not just the Arab nations, although certainly an appropriate involvement, why has there not been a greater willingness to see the international community to take overt and strong actions?

I think I have spoken with some of you on other points in other times about monitors and NATO and other kinds of involvement that the international community has been willing to marshal to resolve the kind of issues that plague continually this arena. Why is that not one of these options, I ask Dennis or any of the other panelists, as opposed to fences, since this is in some way linked to the war on terrorism, some would argue more directly than others?

I do not understand why we are not able to marshal the same international sense of outrage. I certainly believe that we need to do that at a moral level. But it may take more than morality. I would love to hear your comments on it.

Senator CHAFEE. Why do we not start with Mr. Etkes this time.

Mr. ETKES. Thank you, Senator, for your question. I think that the key to understand the lack of involvement of other international bodies in this conflict is hiding in the same place where we have to look to seek for the answer why there is not strong opposition within the Palestinian and Israeli societies to what is going on, what actually is happening, what actually is being led to—despair. This word “despair,” this feeling, is an epidemic, something which people from abroad feel, and it is something which I as an Israeli person who is representing here the Israeli society, who cares first of all about my own people and my own country, feel very strongly that my government should do something against it.

When I am saying something against it, fighting terrorism is undoubtedly No. 1, the No. 1 objective which each one of us has to support. But fighting terrorism without offering something, without offering a political horizon, another option, to the hundreds of thousands, to the millions who support, passively or sometimes more actively, terrorism, this is where the despair hides.

This problem we have to try to overcome by offering—I am talking right now about my own government first of all—by offering another alternative. Offering another alternative is first of all accepting the right, that Palestinians have the right to establish their own state in the West Bank, and that there is no way that we as a Jewish democratic state can go on and rule those areas.

Thank you.

Rabbi MELCHIOR. Mr. Chairman, I will just say one sentence or comment. I think the main problem is that from different places in

the world they look different ways at the conflict. While our war against terror is seen in America as a war against terror, in Europe it is seen as a war against the Palestinian aspiration to their own freedom and self-determination and so on. It is a total different war which is described in Europe than what is described in the United States. That is one of the problems of doing something together in this.

Therefore, I think a hearing like this and going into the depths of what the source really is and how at the same time we need—it is difficult—first of all to lower our eyes a little about what the prospects are of where we can get to, to try to, first of all, to manage to defeat the terror, to manage the conflict, to put in necessary elements, like we said here, maybe unilateral elements, to do that first. If we do not reach those conclusions and we come again with these overall solutions, then we are not going to get anywhere, we do not get to the first station of a Road Map, because the terror continues.

Senator CHAFEE. Thank you.

Dr. GANOR. If you ask President Bush, he would say he is against terrorism. If you would ask Blair, he is against terrorism. Schroder is against terrorism; Chirac is against terrorism, you name it. If you ask President Assad, he is against terrorism. If you would ask bin Laden, I can guarantee that he is against terrorism as well.

The problem is of course defining terrorism. I will not get into this, as I've already written a lot about that. But the problem is also where the interest of counterterrorism is in the hierarchy of the overall interest of each particular state. When the French people say that they are against terrorism, I believe them. However, above all, to them it is important to guard their economical, political and diplomatic ties with states that sponsor terrorism, and so on and so forth.

The problem is that the rest of the world—not the Americans but the rest of the world—do not recognize how dangerous international Islamic radical terrorism today is. Because what we are facing now is different; we are moving from modern terrorism to, God forbid, post-modern terrorism, and I refer to bioterrorist attacks, chemical, nuclear, radiological terrorism, and so on and so forth. This is just around the corner. I cannot say if it will be months or years.

When it comes, the French, for example, will have to understand that they cannot appease the terrorists; they cannot cut a deal with the terrorists, because a bioterrorist attack in London in no time will come to Paris.

Senator CHAFEE. Ambassador Ross.

Mr. ROSS. Let me make a couple of comments. I want to pick up one thought on what Boaz said. It goes back to what I was saying before. You are not going to win the war on terror unless you also are competing in the area of ideas. Our military power is essential for confronting those who are going to use terror against us. No substitute for that; indispensable. But the power of our ideas and the power of our example is essential for creating an environment where you discredit terror on the one hand and you do not have a ready pool of people constantly being recruits to take the place

of those who you have killed in the war on terror on the other. These are two aspects of the same requirement.

On your specific question, Senator, I think if you look at the Europeans—I want to pick up on what Rabbi Melchior was saying, but I am going to put it slightly differently. Go back to basic assumptions, first principles. We in this country understand that the fundamental problem for Israel and the Arab world is the acceptance of Israel's right to be there, its moral legitimacy. The Europeans tend not to focus on the Arab or Palestinian acceptance of Israel. They tend to focus on the Palestinians as the victims and as the Israelis who are therefore in a position to do something about the victims.

So we start with very different premises. They are almost never concerned about Israeli security. I can tell you from all my experience they will say: Yes, yes, we have to deal with Israeli security, and then they want to dispense with anything that is related to it.

What we have to do is in a sense, if you want to get to the point where you could have monitors, you either have to have an agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians, there was such an agreement on having our forces on the ground, or the Palestinians have to be prepared to assume a responsibility.

I come back to this notion: There is a moment of truth that the Palestinians are going to have to face. It is inescapable. They will not have a state if they allow independent armies to exist within that state who can use that territory as a platform from which to go and kill Israelis. They have to face up to that and realize this is part of their salvation when they take it on.

The Arabs can create a climate that supports them as they do it. That is what they have not done. That is one thing we could be doing.

Senator CHAFEE. Thank you once again, gentlemen. If there are no further questions, Senator Corzine or Senator Boxer, I would like to thank you once again for traveling long distances. If any of you would like to submit full statements for the record, you are certainly welcome to do that, and safe travels.

Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 4:27 p.m., the subcommittee adjourned, to reconvene subject to the call of the Chair.]

