

7 October, 2003

Re: Policy toward Israel

Dear Mr President,

I was extremely disturbed that you failed to deliver immediate and unequivocal condemnation of two recent Israeli actions: the threat to deport, even assassinate, Yassir Arafat and the weekend bombing of Syria. Your muted criticism of the “security fence” built outside Israel’s internationally recognized borders wasn’t enough either.

Terrorism does not happen in a vacuum. The Palestinians have very legitimate grievances that Israel refuses to address. By following such blatantly pro-Israel policies, your administration supports a land grab and brutal military occupation. You cannot be unaware that the Israeli “Defence” Force kills **three times** as many Palestinians as suicide bombers and gunmen kill Israelis. You are fanning the flames of hatred of America that brought us September 11, 2001.

There will be no peace in the Middle East until Israel dismantles all the settlements, withdraws the military back inside Israel and provides compensation to the refugees that fled in 1948 in lieu of allowing them to return. To believe otherwise is delusional. To attempt to crush opposition by military force only invites the retaliation that we see all too often—the girl that blew herself up in Haifa last week witnessed the Israeli army kill her brother and cousin and then she became homeless after they demolished her family’s house. Israel’s brutal actions may be good for Ariel Sharon’s poll ratings at home but they only increase the violence.

For all his many faults, Yassir Arafat is the **not** problem as your administration and the Israeli government routinely claim. The problem is the Israeli occupation, the continued expansion of “settlements” and therefore, the dispossession of the Palestinians. When Palestinians elected him by democratic means, they wanted a resistance leader. If he or his Prime Minister can’t get justice through negotiations, they turn in desperation to Hamas and Islamic Jihad. What you and your predecessors appear to want is a compliant puppet that will sign away Palestinian rights; you would call him a “partner for peace” but Palestinians would view him as a traitor. Despite all the fine words by Mr Negraponte, the US is on record as blocking a Security Council resolution and voting against a General Assembly resolution that was acceptable to the rest of the civilized world.

Your administration often criticizes Syria claiming it is seeking WMD and supports terrorism. There already is a country in the Middle East that has WMD and human rights groups constantly criticize its actions. Not Syria, but Israel! It is an open secret that Israel has atomic weapons and if Israel has WMD, why shouldn’t the Syrians feel threatened? Let’s remember that Israel has been occupying Syrian territory since 1967 and that Israel invaded neighboring Lebanon in 1978 and 1982. During the latter invasion, a thousand Palestinians were massacred in the Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps – an action that Israel’s own government held the Defense Minister responsible for, none other than current Prime Minister Ariel Sharon! If our aid to Israel doesn’t constitute supporting terrorism, I don’t know what is.

Israel does have the right to defend itself and can build a “security fence” if it feels that is necessary but **it must be on their side of the border!!!** How would Americans feel if Mexico built a security fence that enclosed many American cities with substantial Mexican populations? Israel’s security fence prevents thousands of Palestinian farmers getting to their fields, school children from getting to classes and workers getting to their jobs. It will only lead to more anger, more violence.

It is time for you to show some real leadership. You have raised a staggering amount of money for next year's election so you can afford not to grovel to the pro-Israel lobby like everyone else up there in Washington. It is time to speak out against oppression wherever it is, even by one of our friends. **Tell the Israelis that the occupation must end and the settlements must go.** For the sake of the Palestinians, the Israelis and ultimately for our own safety, it has to stop.

yours sincerely

Peter

I’m disgusted that my taxes help dispossess another people. Supporting Israel means we are supporting what you see here:

