

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

HEARING
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST
AND SOUTH ASIA
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2001

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 2:05 p.m. in Room 2172 House Office Building, Hon. Benjamin A. Gilman [Chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Mr. GILMAN. The Committee will come to order. I regret the delay. We had a Russian delegation who may be joining us later on that we had to meet with, and it is appropriate that the Ambassador just returned from Moscow.

All of us are shocked and saddened by the loss of Rehevam Ze'evi, Israel's Minister of Tourism, whose murder yesterday was perpetrated by a radical Palestinian group, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which operates in the West Bank. We extend our condolences to his family and friends on behalf of the Committee.

The United States' recognition of the Palestinian leadership as a partner for peace has always been predicated on an absolute and unconditional cessation of the use of violence by the Palestinians as a means to resolve their conflict with the State of Israel. Once again, in the wake of the murder of Rehavam Ze'evi, we must reiterate the primary American condition for a real dialogue with the Palestinians: an end to violence, no violence today and no violence tomorrow, no violence in Israel, and no violence in the West Bank and Gaza, and no ties to terrorists operating anywhere in the world.

I again strongly urge the Palestinian Authority to expend a 100 percent effort to implement a true cease-fire and to extend their control over radical elements within their midst, to allow for a resumption of progress toward a peaceful settlement. A cessation of the violence is the only way that a negotiated settlement can be achieved, and continuing the violence will not bring the peace and stability that both the Israelis and Palestinians desire. Violence only breeds more violence.

I would like to welcome today's witness, Assistant Secretary of State for the Near East William Burns. He just returned from a visit to Moscow. Since assuming his post earlier this year, Assistant Secretary Burns has been dealing with one crisis after another, including the ongoing violence between Israel and the Palestinians,

and, since September 11, helping build our antiterrorism coalition. Of course, none of those tasks are easy.

I appreciate the willingness of Secretary Burns, who, as I just indicated, returned from a demanding trip to Moscow and, this morning, a meeting with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee—and I hope they treated you well—to meet with us and to answer as many questions as possible in public. We believe it is necessary that the Administration explain its positions to the Congress and, through them, to the American people on a periodic basis. Your cooperation, Mr. Ambassador, in this endeavor is important and welcome.

I keep saying Ambassador. It is Mr. Secretary. Mr. Secretary, we do not expect you to discuss any issues that are overly sensitive or are classified. Obviously you cannot speak to any military operations or any sensitive agreements, and I will ask our Members to understand and respect those limitations.

The September 11 events should cause us and the key actors in the Middle East to rethink many of our assumptions about that region. We should not forget that many members of the al-Qaeda terrorist network, including Osama bin Laden himself and his top lieutenant, Ayman al-Zawahiri, are opposition figures in the societies they come from—Saudi Arabia and Egypt respectively. The lack of democracy in Saudi Arabia and Egypt and other countries in the Middle East seems to have created fertile ground for the development of terrorist movements in these countries.

In addition, as noted by a *Washington Post* editorial on October 11, countries in the region encourage state-controlled clerics and media to promote the anti-western, anti-modern, and anti-Jewish propaganda of the Islamic extremists. The editorial goes on, the *Washington Post* editorial goes on to state the policies of these governments, “serve their purposes of deflecting popular frustration with the lack of political freedom or economic development.”

Our Nation has generally not pressed the issue of democratization over the past 5 years or so. It seems to me that the considerations that led our Nation to curtail its democratization efforts should be rethought. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and other nations in the region say in response that our Nation should change its policy, meaning that it should back away from our strong support for Israel. It seems me that this is an attempt by those governments to deflect attention from their own internal political and economic problems as factors facilitating the rise of radical Islamic terrorist attacks. If the United States starts changing the Middle East policy because of terrorism, then I would think that the terrorists would be encouraged to continue their evil deeds on the ground that doing so will result in policies more to the terrorists’ liking.

For the past year Palestinian Authority President, Yasser Arafat, has assumed that he could unleash radical Islamic groups, including Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, as a vehicle, a means of pressuring Israel to make concessions to the Palestinians using terrorism to his benefit. A pro-bin Laden demonstration on the West Bank in early October in which Palestinian police clashed with the demonstrators should show Mr. Arafat that radical Islamic activities are no friends of his. Ignoring their terrorism does really not further his objectives and, in fact, they represent a threat to the

Palestinian administration. We hope that Arafat will now finally move to arrest the Islamic activists that he has allowed to roam free for more than a year.

Administration assumptions about Iran over the past 4 years have also been brought into question. We in the Congress have been told that Iran is moderating and that its view of the United States was softening to the point in which Iran might enter into a political dialogue with the United States. Even though the United States is taking down the Taliban regime that Iran nearly clashed with militarily 3 years ago, Iran has become the most vocal critic to our response to the September 11 events. Iran's leadership has equated U.S. military action against Afghanistan with the terrorism of September 11. Why is this happening?

Only our assumptions about Iraq have appeared to be borne out by the September 11 attacks. Even before September 11 we knew that Saddam Hussein was seeking revenge against our Nation. Whether or not Iraq was directly involved in September 11, it is clear from Iraq's statements that Baghdad is quite pleased and supportive of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Iraq has sided with the terrorists, not with the civilized community of nations that oppose terrorism. One wonders why our allies in the fight against terrorism, including some of our European allies, can square their soft policies on Iraq with Iraq's record.

Secretary Burns, I assume you are familiar with the testimony in last week's Full Committee hearing, our Committee, on public diplomacy and our war on terror and the gaps that have been revealed in our ability to reach people throughout the Islamic world. This is a critical lapse, and I wonder what you are now proposing that we do in our public diplomacy program to try to close those gaps.

For example, we would like to know if the American Embassy in Saudi Arabia can take out informational ads expressing its point of view in the Saudi press, just as the Saudi Embassy in Washington expresses its point of view in many ways here in our own Nation.

But it is not just a simple public affairs effort. We need the help of governments in the region to reinforce our message. American diplomats should press our Arab friends on why they have been so unwilling to speak out for us in a public way before their own people. Frankly, I think I know the answer, that they are afraid of their own problems in their own countries, amongst their own constituents. Why is that?

In an effort to retain power, the leaders have focused the attention of their people on America and Israel rather than responding more fully to their needs. This lack of political space prevent governments from making required policy adjustments. This leads to more unrest, and that unrest can only be dealt with by more and harsher rhetoric and government repression. And, of course, when we ask for their support, the Arab governments claim that they can't do so because of public opinion, the very same public opinion that they have helped to create. We need to help those governments break that cycle of anti-Americanism.

Mr. Secretary, I am afraid that our diplomats do not seem ready to take an in-your-face attitude toward anti-Americanism and to-

ward promoting our values, even if it makes them unpopular with their host governments. A senior American official in an Arab country told a member of our staff before September 11 that, and I quote, “mainly we talk to host country people about things we can agree on,” closed quote.

I don’t think that is good enough, certainly not today, and certainly not a proper attitude by our diplomats. We need to engage Arab people in all levels about things we and they will be uncomfortable talking about if we are really going to make progress. So, Mr. Secretary, we look forward to hearing your views.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Gilman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE BENJAMIN A. GILMAN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK, AND CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA

The Committee will come to order.

All of us are shocked and saddened by the loss of Rehavam Ze’evi, Israel’s Minister of Tourism, whose murder yesterday was perpetrated by a radical Palestinian group, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which operates in the West Bank. I extend my condolences to his family and friends.

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I again strongly urge the Palestinian Authority to expend a one hundred per cent effort to implement a true ceasefire, and extend their control over radical elements within their midst, to allow for a resumption of progress towards a peaceful settlement. A cessation of the violence is the only way that a negotiated settlement can be achieved, and continuing the violence will not bring the peace and stability that both the Israelis and Palestinians desire.

I’d like to welcome our witness today, Assistant Secretary of State for the Near East William Burns. Since assuming his post earlier this year, Asst. Secretary Burns has been dealing with one crisis after another, including the ongoing violence between Israel and the Palestinians, and, since September 11, helping build our anti-terrorism coalition. None of these tasks has been easy.

I appreciate the willingness of Secretary Burns, who has just returned from a demanding trip to Moscow and, this morning, a meeting with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, to meet with us and to answer as many questions as possible in public. We believe it is necessary that the Administration explain its positions to the Congress and through them to the American people on a periodic basis and your cooperation in this endeavor is important and welcome. Mr. Secretary, we do not expect you to discuss any issues that are overly sensitive or are classified. Obviously, you cannot speak to military operations and sensitive agreements, and I will ask the Members to understand and respect the limitations you operate under.

The September 11 events should cause us, and the key actors in the Middle East, to rethink many of our assumptions about the region. We should not forget that many members of the Al Qaida terrorist network, including bin Ladin himself and his top lieutenant, Ayman al-Zawahiri are opposition figures in the societies they come from—Saudi Arabia and Egypt, respectively. The lack of democracy in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and other countries in the Middle East seems to have created fertile ground for the development of terrorist movements in these countries.

In addition, as noted by a Washington Post editorial of October 11, countries in the region “encourage state controlled clerics and media to promote the anti-Western, anti-modern, and anti-Jewish propaganda of the Islamic extremists.” The editorial goes on to say that the policies of these governments “serve their purposes by deflecting popular frustration with the lack of political freedom or economic development . . .”

The United States has generally not pressed the issue of democratization over the past five years or so, and it seems to me that the considerations that led the United States to curtail its democratization efforts should be rethought.

Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and other countries in the region say, in response, that the United States should change its policy, meaning that it should back away from staunch support for Israel. It seems to me that this is an attempt by these governments to deflect attention from their own internal political and economic problems as factors facilitating the rise of radical Islamic terrorist networks. If the United States starts changing its Middle East policy because of terrorism, then I would think that the terrorists would be encouraged to continue their evil deeds on the grounds that doing so will result in policies more to the terrorists' liking.

For the past year, Palestinian Authority president Yasir Arafat has assumed that he could unleash radical Islamic groups, including Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, as a means of pressuring Israel to make concessions to the Palestinians. A pro-bin Ladin demonstration on the West Bank in early October, in which Palestinian police clashed with the demonstrators, should show Mr. Arafat that radical Islamic activists are no friends of his. Ignoring their terrorism does really not further his objectives and, in fact, they represent a threat to his Palestinian administration. I hope that Arafat will now, finally, move to arrest the Islamic activists that he has allowed to roam free for more than one year.

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Secretary Burns, I assume you are familiar with the testimony in last week's Full Committee hearing on public diplomacy in war on terror and the gaps that have been revealed in our ability to reach people in the Islamic world. This is a critical lapse, and I wonder what you are now proposing that we do in our public diplomacy program to close those gaps. For example, I would like to know if the American Embassy in Saudi Arabia can take out ads expressing its point of view in the Saudi press, just as the Saudi Embassy in Washington can express its point of view in many ways here in the United States.

But it is not just public affairs. We need the help of governments in the region to reinforce our message. American diplomats press our Arab friends on the question of why have they been so unwilling to speak out for us in a public way before their own publics.

Frankly, I think I know the answer: they are afraid of their own publics. Why is that? In an effort to retain power, the leaders have focused the attention of their people on America and Israel, rather than responding to their needs. This lack of political space prevents governments from making required policy adjustments. This leads to more unrest, and that unrest can only be dealt with by more and harsher rhetoric and government repression. And, of course, when we ask for their support, the Arab governments claim that they can't do so because of public opinion—the very same public opinion they created. We need to help these governments break this cycle of anti-Americanism.

Mr. Secretary, I am afraid that our diplomats do not seem ready to take an "in your face" attitude toward anti-Americanism and toward promoting our values even if it makes them unpopular with host governments. A senior American official in an Arab country told a member of our staff—before September 11—that "mainly we talk to host country people about things we can agree on." That isn't good enough, certainly not today. We need to engage Arab publics at all levels about things we and they will be uncomfortable talking about, if we are to get anywhere.

We look forward to hearing your views, Mr. Secretary, but first I will turn to the ranking Member of our Subcommittee, Mr. Ackerman, for a statement.

Mr. GILMAN. And before I call on our Ranking Minority Member, Mr. Ackerman, let me welcome to our hearing a distinguished delegation from Russia who are here to welcome you back from Russia,

and leading them is Chairman Dmitry Rogozon, Chairman of the State Duma Committee on International Affairs and a member of Peoples Deputy Function, and he is accompanied by our good former Ambassador Ule Larnzov who is now a part of the Russian-American Business Council, and—I hope I am going to be pronouncing these names right—Gleb Prolovski, the General Director for the Center for Effective Policy and the key advisor of the Presidential administration; Aleksei Pushkov, a Senate TV anchor and commentator; and Alexander Chabinov, the Chairman of the State Duma Commission on Geopolitics and a member of the communist faction; and Mikhail Zadornov, Deputy Chairman of the State Duma Committee on the Budget and Taxes, former Minister of Finance. I welcome the delegation.

Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Welcome to our guests and colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for convening what I know will be another excellent hearing, and I want to express my thanks as well to Secretary Burns for returning to our witness table. Apparently our previous meetings haven't had the usual effect that they do on some of our witnesses. So thank you, Mr. Secretary, for coming back.

Mr. Chairman, we are all aware that our Nation is working its way through a crisis. Every day we receive new word about threats to our Nation, our people, and our system of government.

But today with Secretary Burns, I would like to focus on what I believe is a developing crisis in our commitment to wage a real war on terrorism because there are already signs that some in the Administration would like to artificially circumscribe this conflict or even pull the plug on it before we have achieved our aims, those aims that President Bush set out so clearly in his address to the Congress and the Nation.

As we heard the President say, our war on terror begins with al-Qaeda but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated, said the President. The President got this exactly right. I know all of us are prepared to do everything we can to help them achieve that objective.

Naturally I am very pleased that Secretary Burns is here, and I am hoping that he will be able to resolve a number of particular concerns of mine. First, I am curious about the exclusion of Palestinian terrorist groups from the tool lists of groups and individuals whose assets have been or will be seized. Surely these groups threaten American foreign policy interests in this time of crisis, and yet they appear to have been deliberately overlooked.

Is there some foreign policy objective that we are trying to achieve by not openly and explicitly targeting Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which just hours ago killed a government official, albeit not an official of our government? Why are we protecting them against seizure of their assets in foreign branches of American banks?

And on the subject of the Hezbollah, which the State Department has classified as a foreign terrorist organization for several years, what are we doing to make clear to Damascus and to Tehran that

their continued support for this group will have serious consequences?

We all understand that there is a need to concentrate our efforts on the immediate task at hand in Afghanistan and al-Qaeda, but don't we also need to put down some markers when it comes to other terrorist threats to American foreign policy interests?

Moreover, I have heard from others that the Secretary of State has personally asked some Senators not to support legislation that I drafted with Chairman Gilman and the Ranking Member of the Full Committee, Mr. Lantos, to impose sanctions on the Palestinians for participating in or allowing acts of terror against Israel. I have to admit I have great difficulty seeing how this request squares with the President's very clear statements about the absolute unacceptability of terrorism and our insistence that, as the President said in his own words, every nation in every region now has a decision to make.

Does the Palestinian Authority as a proto-government get special dispensation from the President's charge? Is terrorism against Israel punished with a wink and a nod? Why is it wrong or, in State Department terms, counterproductive for Israel to target the terrorists who blew up the Sbarro Pizzeria in Jerusalem and the Dolphinarium Discotheque in Tel Aviv, but right for us to target the terrorists who attacked the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Virginia? Why is that? Is it hypocrisy or just inconsistency?

I am also concerned about reports that the Administration is preparing some sort of momentous announcement concerning the resolution of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict. Indeed I think it was concern created by these reports that prompted Israeli Prime Minister Sharon's warning that Israel would not play the role of Czechoslovakia in 1938. Certainly the Prime Minister's remarks were excessive and a bit shrill, but the speed and intensity of the Administration's response to them made some of us wonder if they hadn't struck a nerve.

Is the Administration looking to give away a piece of Jerusalem in a futile attempt to buy someone's affection? Haven't we learned that the people we go to bed with don't always love us in the morning? Nothing could further energize extremists, terrorists, and fanatics than proof that a massive attack on the United States can force a change in U.S. Policy regarding the Arab/Israeli conflict or stimulate some sort of new initiative. So I am hoping that Secretary Burns will be able to refute suggestions that the Administration is considering some bold new stroke in the peace process as a component of our coalition-building efforts.

Finally, let me say that I remain concerned about some of the smaller Arab states that face the threat of Islamic extremism on a daily basis. While the media has been focusing on trouble in Pakistan, I am wondering what we are doing to help Jordan beyond the enactment of the Jordan Free Trade Agreement. Shouldn't we be looking at Lebanon and the possibility of ending serious military occupation of that country and isolating Hezbollah? What are we doing to strengthen relations with Qatar which has been forthcoming in response to our requests for assistance?

Our Nation's war on terrorism is at a critical juncture, and we need to be clear and specific and consistent about what our policy and objectives are. The President has asked our Nation to join him in a great quest to rid ourselves and all Nations—and all Nations—of the threat and horror of international terrorism. I fully support this mission, and I am prepared, as I know my colleagues are, to assist in this to the fullest extent of our abilities. But from the outset, we must ensure that our policy in this campaign will be wholly consistent with our rhetoric. We can and we must prevail in this war on terrorism, but we will only be able to do so if every Nation and every group around the world knows that there will be no exceptions, no special cases, no secret codicils, and no carve-outs.

We must be absolutely clear, after September 11, we all live in the same neighborhood and there is no space anywhere in this neighborhood for terrorism, period. Again I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for convening this hearing and I look forward to our exchange with Secretary Burns.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. Cantor.

Mr. CANTOR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I applaud you for holding this hearing and I would like to welcome Secretary Burns as well, and I am glad you are able to be here with us.

In light of the assassination of Israeli Tourism Minister, Rehevam Ze'evi, the United States now more than ever must stand by our only reliable democratic ally in the Middle East, Israel. I applaud President Bush and Secretary Powell for their statements that Israel's security will not be compromised by any U.S.-led antiterrorism coalition and that Israel has no better friend than the United States of America.

Make no mistake, we must protect and support our friend. In that vein I too share the concern and am troubled by recent leaks out of the State Department regarding the creation of a Palestinian state under Yasser Arafat.

Many in the United States and Israel question whether Arafat is really a true partner in peace. He has a long history of going back on freely made agreements. In 1993, in an exchange of letters with then-Israeli Prime Minister Rabin, Arafat committed to the recognition of Israel's right to exist in peace and security. But his actions since then have done everything to undermine that commitment. Over and over again, elements of Arafat's personal leadership actively participate in terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, and Hamas. In fact, members of Arafat's own bodyguard troop, Force 17 and Tanzim, have taken part in terrorist activity perpetrated against innocent Israeli civilians.

Israel has also found cells of Osama bin Laden working freely in the West Bank in close cooperation with Hamas. As we know, these organizations have historically operated within the international terrorist network with the active support of states such as Iran, Iraq, and Syria, all of whom the State Department lists as terrorist nations. These nations have been directly linked and responsible for the 1983 suicide truck bombing in the Marine barracks in Beirut, killing hundreds of U.S. Marines, the bombings of the Khobar Towers and the USS Cole—all of whom were identified as being linked with Iran.

Terrorists are glamorized in these countries. Portraits of suicide bombers line the streets of Beirut in places where such portraits are usually reserved for visiting dignitaries. Children are taught to strive to be suicide bombers at an early age. Israeli and American flags are used as doormats.

At Camp David, Israel demonstrated its willingness to work for a lasting peace, and the Palestinian response was outright rejection and violence to further their agenda. Stopping the violence must be in conjunction with an end to the inciteful climate fostered by Yasser Arafat. Only then will the opportunity of a lasting peace be possible.

Once again thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I welcome Mr. Secretary.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you, Mr. Cantor.

Mr. Berman.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Chairman, I don't have an opening statement. I look forward to listening to the Secretary's statement. He has had a great deal of experience in the Middle East and I may have some questions after his testimony.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you Mr. Berman. Mr. Lantos.

Mr. LANTOS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have a formal opening statement, but I would like to raise a few issues and ask our distinguished guest to respond to them. I want to welcome him to this hearing. The first—

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Lantos, if you could hold the questions until after the Secretary—

Mr. LANTOS. I would prefer, Mr. Chairman, to use my time that you were kind enough to grant me, to use it as I see fit.

Mr. GILMAN. Please proceed.

Mr. LANTOS. Thank you. I would be intrigued to get your reaction, Mr. Secretary, to the concept of targeted assassination. It seems to me that if an American pilot with our very smart weapons would succeed through targeted assassination to kill Osama bin Laden, he would get the Congressional Medal of Honor and a ticker tape parade down Fifth Avenue. And I am wondering what degree of hypocrisy prompts a State Department spokesman to criticize an Israeli sharpshooter for successfully putting an end to the life of a man who planned, organized, and directed the assassination of 22 Israeli teenagers. I have rarely seen a more hypocritical, uncertain trumpet emanating from the State Department offices, and I would be grateful if you could explain to us the difference.

Secondly, I would be grateful if you would deal with the issue of what constitutes a terrorist organization of global reach. I find myself in full agreement with President Bush, who stated,

“Our war on terror begins with al-Qaeda but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated.”

Hezbollah, as has been made very clear by the Department of State over 20 years, has been involved in terrorism in the Western Hemisphere and in the Middle East for some 20 years and is responsible for the death of American civilians and soldiers ranging from the U.S. Embassy in Beirut in 1983 to the more recent bombing of Khobar Towers. So some of us have difficulty understanding

why a terrorist organization of global reach, as Hezbollah so palpably is, does not appear on the State Department list which was just recently prepared. And several of us have already objected to this at various hearings, open and closed.

My final question relates to the relationship between Hamas and al-Qaeda. The recent Time Magazine states as follows. I quote: "the top of al-Qaeda is a rigid hierarchy. Lower down the organization becomes murkier. Cells of terrorists belonging to groups like Islamic Jihad or Hamas train in bin Laden's camps, then carry out operations."

I am wondering whether this statement reflects the views of the State Department.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you, Mr. Lantos. We now proceed with Secretary Burns' testimony. Please proceed. You may put your full statement in the record and summarize what you deem may be appropriate.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE WILLIAM J. BURNS, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. BURNS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you and the Members of the Committee for the opportunity to appear once again before you to review the Administration's policies in the Middle East. The focus of our attention clearly has been sharpened as a result of the events of September 11, and my remarks this afternoon will center on what we have done in the region in the campaign against terrorism and on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.

Let me emphasize at the outset that the attacks of September 11 on the United States have not altered our fundamental policy objectives in the region: achieving a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace between Israelis and Palestinians and indeed with all Arabs; ensuring Israel's security and qualitative military edge; maintaining strong and constructive relations with our Arab partners; and securing peace and stability in the region.

Our efforts to pursue these goals have deep roots in American interests and American values over many years. They began long before the 11th of September, and we must not be deterred or diverted by anyone in pursuing them.

In our campaign against terrorism, we have been able to count on very effective cooperation and support in words and deeds, some of which are not well publicized. As Secretary Powell has stated, Arab states have been very responsive to our requests. We are getting law enforcement cooperation and good information-sharing in the investigation of those we believe are part of the al-Qaeda network, and support for blocking financial flows to terrorists. Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council have been especially supportive. Important steps were taken by the governments of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in severing ties to the Taliban.

We have advised all of these countries that we will need to continue this level of cooperation. The President and the Secretary have repeatedly emphasized that this is not a battle against Islam or against Arabs; rather, it is a broad international campaign

against terrorists who seek to destroy peace, foment instability, and sow hatred. In doing so, these terrorists are prepared to target anyone and everyone not on their side. We and our friends and allies in the region are in full agreement that we cannot permit this to happen.

Israel is very much our partner in this fight against terrorism. As President Bush has made clear, Israel has no better friend than the United States. Our commitment to Israel's security is unshakeable. Nothing about the events of September 11 has changed our position. As Secretary Powell said publicly last week, Israelis should have no concern that the U.S. would trade away Israel's security. This Administration continues to work intensively to bring an end to the violence between Israelis and Palestinians and to move toward implementation of the Mitchell Committee recommendations as a bridge back to political negotiations.

I want to offer our deepest condolences to the government and people of Israel over the assassination of minister Ze'evi today. We condemn this act of terror in the strongest possible terms.

The Palestinian Authority has spoken out against this attack and to bring those responsible to justice, but words are not enough. There must be strong action against all terrorism and violence. This is essential if Palestinians and Israelis are to continue the positive steps they recently embarked upon to improve the situation and begin to restore some measure of cooperation. They must not allow the terrorists to shape their agenda or declare victory. They must both seize the moment to put an end to violence, implement the Tenet and Mitchell plans, and resume direct political dialogue. And as they do so, the United States will be engaged for as long as it takes to bring about a just, lasting, and comprehensive settlement to the Arab/Israeli dispute.

Before concluding, I want to comment on the extraordinary work of our missions abroad at this critical and difficult time. The American and Foreign Service nationals who staff our embassies, your embassies, are carrying out their duties to build a coalition, stop terrorism, encourage movement on the peace process, enhance our bilateral relationships, and pursue all the other U.S. objectives with which I know you are very familiar.

We have had to strengthen security, close operations to the public at times, stagger work hours, and enhance security awareness of American citizens in these countries. But I want you to know that they are continuing the work that you, the President, and the Nation want them to do. They and we will need your continuing support to get the job done.

Mr. Chairman, as I have stated in my previous appearances before the Committee, we have our work cut out for us in the Middle East. That work, of course, took on added significance on September 11. We will look for the continued counsel and cooperation of the Congress as we pursue our vitally important interest in the region. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Burns follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE WILLIAM J. BURNS, ASSISTANT
SECRETARY, BUREAU OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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tration's policies in the Middle East region. The focus of our attention clearly has been sharpened as a result of the events of September 11, and my remarks this afternoon will center on what we have done in the region in the campaign against terrorism and on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Let me emphasize at the outset that the attacks of September 11 on the United States have not altered our fundamental policy objectives in the region: achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace between Israelis and Palestinians, and indeed with all Arabs; ensuring Israel's security and qualitative military edge; maintaining strong and constructive relations with our Arab partners; and, securing peace and stability in the region. Our efforts to pursue these goals have deep roots in American interests and values, over many years; they began long before September 11, and we must not be deterred or diverted by anyone in pursuing them.

In our campaign against terrorism, we have been able to count on very effective cooperation and support—in words and deeds, some of which are not well publicized. As Secretary Powell has stated, Arab states have been “very responsive” to our requests. Many countries have provided overflight, landing and bed-down facilities to our forces. We're getting law enforcement cooperation and good information sharing in the investigation of those we believe are part of the Al-Qa'ida network, and support for blocking financial flows to terrorists. Governments in the region are also looking to improve their financial monitoring capabilities in order to help dry up the terrorists' financial resources.

Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have been especially supportive. The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) has issued repeated statements, offering condolences, condemning terrorism and repudiating any conceivable connection between acts of terrorism and the teachings of Islam. Important steps were taken by the governments of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in severing ties to the Taliban. We have advised all of these countries that we will need to continue this level of cooperation.

We understand that political sensitivities exist in some of these countries, and the U.S. must take this into account. But bin Laden's extremism also threatens them, and they are well aware of the need to confront this challenge firmly and jointly. The President and the Secretary have repeatedly emphasized that this is not a battle against Islam or against Arabs; rather, it is a broad international campaign against terrorists who seek to destroy peace, foment instability and sow hatred. In doing so, these terrorists are prepared to target anyone and everyone not on their side. We and all of our friends and allies in the region are in full agreement that we cannot permit this to happen.

Israel is very much our partner in this fight against terrorism. As President Bush has made clear, Israel has no better friend than the U.S. Our commitment to Israel's security is unshakable. Nothing about the events of September 11 has changed our position. As Secretary Powell said publicly last week, Israelis should have no concern that the U.S. would trade away Israel's security.

This Administration continues to work intensively to bring an end to the violence between Israelis and Palestinians and to move into implementation of the Mitchell Committee recommendations, as a bridge back to political negotiations. And in this regard, I want to offer our sincere condolences to the Government and people of Israel over the assassination of Minister Zeevi today. We strongly condemn this act of terror.

The Palestinian Authority has also spoken out against this attack and pledged to bring those responsible to justice. Words are not enough; there must be strong action against all terrorism and violence. This is essential if Palestinians and Israelis are to continue the positive steps they have recently embarked upon to improve the situation and begin to restore some measure of cooperation. They must not allow the terrorists to shape their agenda or declare victory. They must both seize the moment to put an end to violence, implement the Tenet and Mitchell plans, and resume direct political dialogue. And as they do so the U.S. will be engaged for as long as it takes to bring about a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement to the Arab-Israeli dispute. As you know, Secretary Powell is in virtually daily contact with Prime Minister Sharon, Chairman Arafat, and Foreign Minister Peres in support of their efforts to end violence, rebuild trust and resume a political process.

Before concluding, I want to comment on the extraordinary work of our missions abroad at this critical and difficult time. The Americans and Foreign Service nationals who staff our Embassies—your Embassies—are carrying out their duties to build the coalition, stop terrorism, encourage movement on the peace process, enhance our bilateral relationships, and pursue all the other U.S. objectives with which I know you are familiar. However, in many cases, they are doing so having to hunker down against threats of terrorist attacks. We have had to strengthen security, close oper-

ations to the public at times, stagger work hours, and enhance security awareness of American citizens in these countries. But I want you to know that they are continuing the work that you, the President and the nation want them to do. They and we will need your continuing support to get the job done.

As I stated in my previous appearance before the Committee, Mr. Chairman, we have our work cut out for us in the Middle East. That work, of course, took on added significance on September 11. We will look for the continued counsel and cooperation of the Congress as we pursue our vitally important interests in this region.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I join you in your salute to the Foreign Service staff, both here and abroad, and would add our thanks to your own colleagues in Washington who are working so diligently and trying to find some answers to all of the problems we are confronted with.

Mr. Secretary, what is the current state of the Administration's thinking with respect to a possible major speech on the Middle East—following President Bush's comments on October 2, that the idea of a Palestinian state has always been part of a vision so long as the right to Israel exists and is respected?

Mr. BURNS. Well, Mr. Chairman, as the President made clear, a long-term vision for an enduring peace between Palestinians and Israelis includes the emergence of a Palestinian state through a process of negotiations. It must include, of course, acceptance of Israel's right to exist as a legitimate state in full security in the region as well. Those are elements of a long-term vision.

Prime Minister Sharon himself last month addressed the issue of a Palestinian state as well. But in order to get from here to a serious negotiating process, which is the only way in which any parts of that vision can be realized, what is essential first and foremost is to stop the violence, and that is why we have devoted the full measure our efforts, long before the 11th of September, to ensuring a Palestinian recommitment and a maximum effort—as you said, a 100 percent effort to stop violence and terrorism. That, as a way of beginning, first, the painstaking process of rebuilding some level of trust between the parties after the violence of the last year, and that means that the tools for doing that, I think, are already available to us.

The Tenet security work plan provides a way to restore security cooperation. The Mitchell Committee recommendations provide a basis for moving beyond security cooperation to rebuilding confidence. They can serve if they are implemented fully as a bridge back to a serious negotiating process. But there is no magic formula, no shortcuts around those steps. And first and foremost what that means is stopping violence. In terms of publicly articulating that kind of approach, there are not any decisions on a particular speech right now. As I said long before September 11, this Administration, as you know, sir, has been working very hard to begin that painstaking process of making possible real negotiations between the parties, and that can only start with a serious effort, with a 100 percent effort, to stop violence.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Secretary, there are many who question whether Mr. Arafat has the ability to stop violence. What are your thoughts about that?

Mr. BURNS. I think there has been demonstrated, especially in recent weeks, an ability to exercise a significant degree of control.

Some of the steps that have been taken by the Palestinian Authority in the last couple of weeks, which President Bush has publicly welcomed I think, are a step in the right direction. The arrests of certain members of Palestinian extremist organizations; steps, difficult steps taken by Palestinian security services against extremist Palestinian forces are very important. They are a step in the right direction, but much more needs to be done to exercise that measure of control.

Mr. GILMAN. The recent assassination of one of the cabinet members will not help that situation one iota.

What is your assessment of that *Washington Post* editorial that I commented on, that said moderate Arab states are deflecting public attention from their own problems by focusing on our policy in the Middle East?

Mr. BURNS. I think, Mr. Chairman, first I think it is obvious that the Middle East is a region that faces an enormous number of pressures right now, whether it is Arab regimes or peoples, and those pressures include unresolved conflicts like the Palestinian/Israeli conflict, but they also include a variety of economic pressures, pressures for greater political participation, and a whole range of issues which those governments and peoples are going to have to wrestle with. And I think we also have to be forthright in acknowledging and doing everything we can to support our friends and the peoples of the area as they come to grips with those challenges.

So I think we have to understand as the starting point for sensible policy, the complexities in the region and the reality of all of those challenges and the way that they can fuel frustration and anxiety and anger in the region, and steps are going to have to be taken to address all of them.

The second comment I would make, sir, is that with regard to some of our friends in the region, I think it is also important to acknowledge the importance of those partnerships demonstrated, I think in the current effort against terrorism, through the steps that the Government of Egypt has taken in terms of security cooperation, access, overflights, public statements that President Mubarak has made after the beginnings of military action in Afghanistan in support of the President, and steps that others of our friends in the region have taken, not as a favor to us, but in their own self-interest as well; because as you rightly said, the terrorists who not only carried out the horrible events of September 11, but who exist in other parts of the region, threaten not only our interests but, more importantly, the interests of governments, friendly governments and peoples in the region. And it is important for us to stand together in that fight and also to demonstrate not just what we stand against, which is violent extremism and terror, but also what we stand for in helping to resolve regional conflicts and helping to address some of those economic and political pressures that you mentioned before.

Mr. GILMAN. What about our goals in the area? Shouldn't that include democratization of some of the Arab nations?

Mr. BURNS. I think the goal of helping governments and peoples to expand political participation, to deepen respect for the rule of law and for individual dignity, is something which is very deeply rooted not just in American interests but also in American values.

I don't think there is any kind of cookie-cutter approach for applying that in any part of the world, but I think that has to be an important part of our approach to a region which, as I said, is undergoing an enormous number of challenges right now.

Mr. GILMAN. What did you hear from your counterparts in the Russian Government about Russian willingness to sign an agreement on a targeted sanctions plan for Iraq?

Mr. BURNS. We had a good—the discussions I had with my Russian counterparts were part of a regular set of consultations, and so we talked about a range of Middle East issues. On Arab/Israeli issues, I think we coordinated and cooperated in a quite effective fashion with the Russian Government in recent months, and I am confident that we will continue to do that. We do continue to have some differences over the issue of moving, as the British have proposed and the Security Council, away from civilian sanctions and the burden that they impose on the people of Iraq, and toward a system which strengthens an arms control regime and focuses very clearly on the obligations of the Iraqi regime and also on the behavior of the Iraqi regime, and we are trying to sort through those differences and questions.

Mr. GILMAN. How about Iran? What about the recent agreement with Iran to sell that country new, advanced conventional weaponry?

Mr. BURNS. We have made very clear our concern about those reports and that aspect of the relationship, and I am sure we will continue to in the upcoming meetings over the next few days.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In my opening remarks I raised several issues, as did Mr. Lantos, who among others shares those very strong concerns. And I would like you to respond at this time to just three of them on my time, if you would.

First with regard to—and you addressed this in your statement. You said that there is no concern that this Administration will trade away Israel's security. The timing to many of us was very curious, that after having so many Presidents since the State of Israel was formed, American Presidents, nobody publicly, none of them publicly stated that there was going to be a Palestinian state, but left that up to the parties.

The timing of this seems to be at the same time that we were under attack, and the Administration is looking for Arab allies, and it seems to many at least curious that you are carving away a piece of Jerusalem, a piece of Israel, in order to complete that alliance. Despite the rhetoric, the timing stinks. And maybe you could address that.

The second one was on the various groups that are not on the list, the Hamas, the Palestinian—the Islamic Jihad, PFLP, Hezbollah. I asked you that question last time, and the answer was they were on other lists, but so was al-Qaeda. The lists we are talking about are the new lists that everybody is looking at, which means the seizing of assets of individuals and entities. These groups are not on that list. Why the special carve-out for those groups who consistently kill Israelis? Is there a difference between killing Israelis and killing other people of other nationalities?

And the third question I would like you to address is that of targeted assassinations. When the Israelis have targeted assassinations and they go after the miserable SOBs who blew up those little girls going to a dance, or the grandmothers and little kids going out to eat pizza, and they have every bit as much evidence as we have as to who did the terrorist attacks in Virginia and New York, why suddenly—and I have heard everybody talking about this, including the State Department, we are going after specific people. I mean, there is a specific cleric we are going to kill over there if we can bomb where he is; and the head of the group, we are going to kill him. Forget about collateral damage, because we are doing a lot more than they did.

The question I raised was, is it hypocritical or is it inconsistent? And if you turn the question around on me, I would say it is both. It is rather hypocritical and it is rather inconsistent, and I don't understand why this special carve-out. And maybe you could address those three issues.

Mr. BURNS. I would be glad to, Mr. Ackerman. On the first question, just to reemphasize—

Mr. ACKERMAN. I don't mean to be mad at you, Mr. Secretary, I am just frustrated.

Mr. BURNS. I understand, sir. With regard to a Palestinian state, I think what President Bush made clear is that as part of a long-term vision which can only be reached through negotiations of what an enduring settlement might look like, that we envisage the emergence again through negotiations of a Palestinian state. Before President Bush made that comment on the 24th of September, Prime Minister Sharon had acknowledged the same issue. But the important point to stress I think, sir, is that this can only emerge in the context of a negotiated settlement worked out between Israelis and Palestinians with our active support.

Mr. ACKERMAN. There is no connection with the timing of this in trying to find Arab allies for our coalition?

Mr. BURNS. Sir, our policy hasn't changed with regard to the peace process as a result of September 11.

Mr. ACKERMAN. But the President never said that before. He said it now.

Mr. BURNS. President Clinton had made reference to this—

Mr. ACKERMAN. If an employee asks for a raise and you don't say anything, and 2 days later he puts a gun to your head and you say, by the way, I am giving you a raise, there is no cause and effect to that. Let us be honest.

Mr. BURNS. Sir, I think the point is as part of a long-term vision, I think as Prime Minister Sharon has acknowledged, so long as Israel's right to exist and its security is ensured, it is reasonable to envisage the emergence of a Palestinian state, but that—

Mr. ACKERMAN. We have all said that except for the President of the United States. Everybody said that. I will say it. There will be a Palestinian state at the right and proper time. The President said it under specific circumstances, and that is what is upsetting and unnerving to a lot of people.

Mr. BURNS. I understand, sir, but all I can do is emphasize again that there is nothing that has changed about American policy, and again the point is that the only way in which you can ever come

close to realizing that kind of a vision is through a process which starts with ending violence, and that is something on which we have worked very hard over the course of this Administration and the prior Administration, especially in recent months, and that is something to which we continue to be entirely committed to doing. There is no other pathway to realize any of that vision or to even begin a serious process of negotiations, and that is something we have made very clear.

Mr. ACKERMAN. I understand. Let us deal with the other two.

Mr. BURNS. With regard to the organizations on the Executive order, financial controls, as you know, Hamas as well as Palestinian Islamic Jihad have been listed on a 1995 Executive order which imposed a number of financial constraints. The Executive order, which was—

Mr. ACKERMAN. And al-Qaeda was on that list, too, was it not?

Mr. BURNS. No, sir. It was connected to the peace process. This was something which singled out those groups because of the threat they posed to the peace process at that time. So in a sense, they were singled out for that kind of concentrated attention at that time. But the more recent Executive orders focused on al-Qaeda and their network.

As the President and Secretary Powell have made clear, we are continuing to look at additions to those lists. This is by no means the end of the process, and we will continue to look at a whole range of foreign terrorist organizations who could be added to those Executive orders over time and who deserve that kind of focus in terms of rolling up their financial assets, including overseas.

The third issue, sir, that you raised on targeted killings. As I said, the starting point here is to try to find a way to end violence, to ensure the security of the Israeli people as well as ordinary Palestinians. That can only come about as the result of a 100 percent Palestinian effort by the Palestinian Authority to bring that about. That is the starting point. At the same time—

Mr. ACKERMAN. I don't understand. Why aren't we asking for 100 percent cooperation of the Afghani authorities to bring this to order without bombing them and trying to kill people over there? I don't disagree with that policy, by the way. What I disagree with and fail to understand, except if it is hypocritical or inconsistent, that the Israelis aren't allowed to do the same thing to the SOBs who are killing their people as we are allowed to do to the SOBs that are killing our people. Why are we handcuffing them? Why are we having this inconsistency?

Mr. BURNS. Mr. Ackerman, it is not a question of handcuffing anyone or standing in the way of anyone's right of self defense. The challenge as we see it, and we have worked very closely with the Israeli Government on this, is to try to bring about a situation in which violence is ended and the situation is calmed, and what we have called upon—

Mr. ACKERMAN. Are we calling upon ourselves to do that? I am trying to set up a parallel situation here, and I think I am not wrong in saying they are rather parallel. You have got terrorists that are killing innocent civilians and governments that are going after those terrorists, and we are telling them that it is not an opportune time for them to be doing that, that they should be peace-

ful and negotiate and talk common sense to these people, and everybody should hug and kiss each other and that would be wonderful.

Why are we doing that? Why do we suddenly have this great understanding of how we as a civilized society can respond and they are not allowed to do it; in our view it is wrong, unhelpful? It is our policy, I heard the Secretary say on International TV the other day, that we are against, still against these targeted assassinations for someone else to defend their family when we can defend our family in this way.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. Ackerman, there is no excuse for the acts of violence and terrorism we have seen.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you.

Mr. GILMAN. The gentleman's time has expired. Mrs. Davis.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you,

Mr. Secretary, for being here. You stated in your opening statement that the President and the Secretary of State have repeatedly emphasized that it is not a battle against Islam or Arabs, but rather a broad international campaign against terrorists who seek to destroy peace. We understand that on October 3 you met in London with Mousa Khousa, the Chief of Libya's Foreign Intelligence Service.

Does this mean that we take Libya off the hook on the Lockerbie bombing or the Berlin disco and off the terrorism list? And if yes, what are we getting in return? Is there any change with their weapons of mass destruction, ballistic missiles programs, and so forth?

Mr. BURNS. Mrs. Davis, "absolutely not" is the answer to the question of whether we are letting anyone off the hook. The purpose of the meetings which we and the British had with the Libyan delegation in London recently was part of a series of meetings which we have had over the course of the year, and the purpose was very clear, and that was to make clear that there were no shortcuts around Libya's meeting the obligations of the existing U.S. Security Council resolutions, especially the imperative of accepting responsibility for what happened, and also for paying appropriate compensation. And the purpose of our discussion, as the purpose of previous discussions over the course of the last year, was to make that crystal clear, and that was the only purpose of the discussion. There is no question of letting anyone off the hook on those issues.

Mrs. DAVIS. We are not bringing them on as allies in this war against terrorism?

Mr. BURNS. The point we stressed is what they need to do with regard to their Security Council obligations on the Pan Am 103 tragedy, and that is what we will hold to them.

Mrs. DAVIS. Recently, the Emir of Qatar visited with several of us here in Washington, and I along with others questioned them about the role of the al-Jazeera television station in running videos of Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda. Is the Administration doing anything to prevent the al-Jazeera from becoming a bin Laden mouthpiece or platform?

Mr. BURNS. We have had conversations about the importance of ensuring a balance in the way in which issues are presented, and

it is certainly not in anybody's interest to serve as a mouthpiece for extremists or those who would encourage violence against Americans. Al-Jazeera, I think, has become a very important outlet in the region. I appeared on al-Jazeera myself several days ago, and I think it is important, given the significance of al-Jazeera in the region, to try to get America's point of view across, and that is what we will continue to do in the interests of ensuring that peoples in the region get a balanced picture and at least hear the perspective of the United States.

Mrs. DAVIS. So the answer is we are not doing anything to try to take him off of al-Jazeera?

Mr. BURNS. It is a very complicated situation in the sense that the United States has always stood for free speech. What we don't stand for is hate speech and creating opportunities for people to spread malevolence or to encourage acts of violence. And it is very important to ensure that issues are presented in a balanced way, and again that is why I have appeared on al-Jazeera, Dr. Rice appeared a couple of days ago, and we will do everything we can to make sure we are active in public diplomacy in the region and in the Arab and Islamic worlds.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. GILMAN. Thank you, Mrs. Davis.

Mr. Berman.

Mr. BERMAN. Just first to pursue a specific question that Mr. Lantos raised in his opening statement, I think sometime late last week there was a targeted assassination which the Israelis took responsibility for against a Hamas leader who they claimed was responsible for the planning and the implementation of the suicide bombing at the discotheque in Tel Aviv; is that right?

Mr. BURNS. That incident did occur; yes, sir.

Mr. BERMAN. Is there a reason to believe that the Israelis were wrong in implicating this individual in that?

Mr. BURNS. I don't know all the details of that particular issue of the evidence that is involved but—

Mr. BERMAN. You don't? I mean, didn't the Israelis ask the Palestinian Authority to arrest him? Let us put it this way: to your best information, do you have reason to believe there is a connection between that individual and the bombing at the discotheque?

Mr. BURNS. I don't know about that particular individual. I am not—I just don't.

Mr. BERMAN. And do you know about our criticism of Israel for undertaking that act?

Mr. BURNS. Sir, I do know that what we have done consistently is tried to call first for an end to violence, which means first the Palestinian Authority has to do much more than it has done to clamp down on violence. We have begun to see some steps in that direction but more needs to be done. We have also called, not in any way to impinge on the right of self-defense of Israel, but just as a matter of trying to create a set of circumstances in which we can sustain a serious effort to reduce violence and return to political dialogue, to try to avoid acts which make it harder to do that. And that is something that we have said as a general proposition consistently for some time.

Mr. BERMAN. Can you understand why some think there is an inconsistency between that position and the position we are taking about Osama bin Laden dead or alive?

Mr. BURNS. I do understand the argument, sir, but we continue to approach the situation between Israelis and Palestinians first and foremost in an effort to do everything we can to bring about an end to violence, and that is the context in which we have made the statements that we have consistently tried to make, for no other purpose than that.

Mr. BERMAN. I am curious, moving to another subject, the coalition of the willing. The Saudis are part of this coalition?

Mr. BURNS. The Saudis have made a number of contributions which are helpful in that effort, yes, sir.

Mr. BERMAN. Have the Saudis refused to do things that we have asked, or things that have been helpful to our effort?

Mr. BURNS. The Saudis in general have provided a good deal of cooperation across a range of issues, whether it is overflights, they are beginning to make an effort with regard to financial assets. So, yes, I think in general we are satisfied with the effort. Is there more that needs to be done and that we will continue to work with not just the Saudis but with others to do? Yes, of course.

Mr. BERMAN. Is it fair to say you don't want to speak publicly—and I can understand why—as to the issues where you find the Saudis yet at this point not fully cooperative with our requests?

Mr. BURNS. What I would say is I think we are satisfied in general with the level of cooperation. If you want to talk about some specific issues, especially on the security side, I would be glad to do that, but I can't do it in public.

Mr. BERMAN. Is it fair for me to draw the conclusion that pretty much on a bipartisan basis, Reagan, Bush, certainly Carter, Clinton, and President Bush now, that the promotion of democracy, pluralism, free press, free elections, is a fundamental part of our foreign policy?

Mr. BURNS. Yes, sir.

Mr. BERMAN. Is it fair for me to conclude that we have been more public in promoting those policies in our dealings back in the eighties with authoritarian or military regimes in South America, in the nineties with the former republics of the Soviet Union in central Asia, in areas in the Far East, than we have been with the Arab countries? Is that an unfair conclusion to draw; that whatever we have done, the public imploring and pushing on elections, on free press, on ending censorship, on allowing opposition parties to have a free role, is less public in the Arab world in terms of our diplomatic efforts than in these other areas of the world?

Mr. BURNS. I think there have been other places where we have been more vocal and clear, but I do think it is an important part and it needs to be an important part, as I said, of our approach in the region.

Mr. BERMAN. Is there some communique, some statement that has been made public, which raises these issues, that demonstrates that American diplomats have raised these issues with leaders of Arab governments?

Mr. BURNS. I know from my own experience that I have in countries in which I have served, and also more recently in the job that

I am in, in the sense that when you talk about the rule of law, human rights, the importance of pluralism and opening up avenues for political participation, I think as I said before, those are issues which are not just rooted in American values but also in our interests in the region and in the interests of the peoples of the region. There is no doubt about that.

Mr. BERMAN. I am no expert, but I have followed this stuff over the years. I see the complications of that part of our policy in these areas and perhaps the extent to which it conflicts with other interests, but to me it is a deafening silence. That may have happened, but not in a context which publicly has pierced my thick skull, as opposed to the very active and forceful public role we played in many other parts of the world in promoting this, and I am just wondering if that policy should be reexamined.

Mr. GILMAN. The gentleman's time has expired. I regret I am being called to the White House for a meeting, and I am going to ask the Vice Chairman of our Committee, Mr. Chabot, to continue with the hearing, and I want to thank Ambassador Burns for being with us once again. Mr. Chabot.

Mr. CHABOT. [Presiding.] Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here today. Just a couple of questions. First, what specifically are you planning to do now to move Arab public opinion to understand and perhaps to come around to the American point of view on our policy in the Middle East?

Mr. BURNS. Well, I think, sir, as I started to try to explain before, I think the Middle East and the Arab world in particular is a region which faces an enormous number of challenges. As Mr. Berman was saying, some of those are pressures for greater political participation. Some are economic. This is a region which in many ways has fallen further and further behind the global economy, and some is connected with unresolved regional conflicts, particularly the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. And I think it is very important to make clear just as we emphasize what we stand against in the campaign against terrorism, a campaign in which I think we share an important interest with many peoples in the Middle East and in the Arab world and with many governments in that area, it is also important to make clear what we stand for, and that is efforts which open up economic opportunities for the peoples of the region which begin to reduce over time the gap between the haves and the have nots, which address issues like corruption, efforts which as I said open up greater avenues for political participation and deepen respect for the rule of law. And at the same time, it is very important for us to continue, as previous Administrations have tried to do, to make a very serious effort to support a negotiated resolution of the Arab/Israeli conflict.

So I think in all of those areas, we share interests with many peoples in the region, both Israeli and Arab, and it is something that we have to continue to stress and work very hard on.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you. I think Chairman Hyde has said recently, the country that can sell to the world McDonalds and Coca-Cola ought to be able to sell ourselves a little bit better, and I think I agree with Chairman Hyde in that respect.

My next question, the Emir of Qatar recently visited Washington and met with some of the Members, and what are they specifically

contributing to the antiterrorism campaign? Many Members raised with the Emir the issue of al-Jazeera, and their running videos of bin Laden and al-Qaeda. What is the Administration doing to prevent al-Jazeera from becoming a bin Laden mouthpiece? And I have seen some of the call-in shows that they have on there and some of the public opinions relative to who is actually responsible for September 11 and the wild allegations that go unchallenged and seem to be accepted by many in that region of the world, almost incomprehensible that it would be, but it does seem to go unchallenged and maybe even encouraged by some of the folks that are on there. Could you comment on that?

Mr. BURNS. I think it is very responsible, as I said, for there to be a greater sense of balance, whether it is on al-Jazeera or on any media outlet in that part of the world, and we have tried very hard to get our point of view across. As recently as a few days ago, I appeared on al-Jazeera, and we are going to continue to do that because that is the best way to make sure that our policy and our convictions and our approach gets across clearly.

It is also important for moderates in the region to also speak out, whether it is with regard to the fact that the acts of terror that have been committed are antithetical to Islam or whether it is in response to some of the wilder allegations that are made, and I believe that is the responsibility of the majority of the region who I think are moderate in their views, to make sure they get across.

Mr. CHABOT. Would you agree that governments in that region, particularly moderate governments, need to do a better job to get that point of view across and perhaps to the extent they ought to?

Mr. BURNS. I think it is in the self-interest of our friends in the region to make sure that those viewpoints are expressed, not as a favor to us, but in the interests of the peoples of the region, because I think that the agenda of people who carried out the horrible acts of the 11th of September is a purely destructive one and it is important for moderate governments, for moderates in the region in general, to speak out about what a constructive agenda might include and to use media outlets to do that.

Mr. CHABOT. I think the Administration has a real challenge of getting our point of view out to the rest of the world. It is somewhat surprising we keep our own people on our side. For example, in the coverage yesterday, I saw over and over again the picture of the smoking building of the Red Cross facility that had some food there, and apparently one person was injured. I don't think it has been confirmed that we were—it was one of ours. But if it was, that seemed to get a tremendous amount of coverage. And certainly I think it would be nice if the media perhaps would have a little balance, and I think in that they went overboard.

What is your overall assessment of Iran's position on the U.S. War on the Taliban and bin Laden?

Mr. BURNS. Well, sir, as you know very well, we have a very complicated relationship with Iran. The truth is there is nothing inherent about tension between the people of Iran and the people of the United States. Iran is an important country. It occupies an important place in a part of the world in which we have important interests. But the truth also is we have serious differences and have had for some time with the government of Iran over issues

like support for terrorism, over the pursuit of programs of weapons of mass destruction.

At the same time, with regard to Afghanistan, it has also been clear that there may be some common interests or interests that intersect there. It is also true that the Iranians before September 11th have taken some positive actions with regard to counter-narcotics, with regard to support for Afghan refugees along the Iranian border. But at the same time I think we have to keep in perspective the broader range of differences that we continue to have with Iran. It is a very complicated relationship.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much, Mr. Ambassador.

My time has expired. The gentleman from California, Mr. Lantos, is recognized.

Mr. LANTOS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, allow me a personal word. Because you are at a very early stage of your tenure; and, as you know, I think very highly of your abilities and knowledge and understanding. But let me offer a word of caution.

I have been sitting on this Committee for 21 years, and some of the assistant secretaries of state who appeared before us earned our respect and admiration because of their candor and because of their willingness to treat the Members of the Committee with a degree of intellectual respect that I think Members are entitled to. Larry Eagleberger comes to mind, who ended up his career as Secretary of State, fully deserved.

Other assistant secretaries of state just danced around the issues. They never responded to questions but tried to slip away and, sooner or later, people failed to attend the meetings with those secretaries.

I can only express my earnest and very genuine hope that you will take your model from the Eagleberger formula where you understand that we are your intellectual equals. When we ask questions, we know what we ask. We know you know the answers to what we ask, and we ask you to give us the respect of answering the questions and not dancing around the questions.

Let me in this spirit raise some additional issues.

Secretary of State Powell said, and I quote, you don't get to pick your terrorists. But the State Department spokesperson the other day tried to differentiate between terrorists and terrorists. Do you subscribe to the notion that you don't get to pick your terrorists, that the terrorists in Afghanistan are sent by Osama bin Laden, are terrorists no less than Hamas and Hezbollah terrorists are terrorists and that the President of the United States declared global war on international terrorism? Can we expect that the Department recognizes that terrorists are terrorists?

Mr. BURNS. Yes. There is no such thing as good terrorists or bad terrorists. That is absolutely true.

Mr. LANTOS. Now, Mayor Giuliani rejected a sickening \$10 million offer by a Saudi potentate who, to everybody except the blind, made a connection between our policy vis-a-vis the Middle East and his \$10 million check to the suffering people of New York. Do you agree with Mayor Giuliani's rejection of this sickening bribe?

Mr. BURNS. Yes. I think it was a very unfortunate statement that was made afterwards. I don't think there is any connection be-

tween those issues. I don't think you can explain, let alone justify, what happened on September 11th because of people's anger, frustration over other issues.

Mr. LANTOS. Thank you very much. I appreciate the answer.

Now, I would like to sort of draw a theme between Pakistan and Syria. Pakistan clearly is in large measure responsible for the emergence of the Taliban. Pakistan, the military, participated in building up the Taliban. Large numbers of Pakistani forces fought with the Taliban. They provided them with tremendous assistance, along the whole spectrum. But, the President of Pakistan made a decision, and he made the right decision. Yesterday, it was my privilege on the Democratic side to manage the bill lifting sanctions on Pakistan, and I will be supporting additional aid to Pakistan.

Now, Syria has a very tenuous position in, quote, unquote, the coalition, and you will have to explain to me what the word coalition means in this context. I have no objections, as I believe the President did, to draw a line and say, while we are not happy with previous actions of many governments, this is a new era and you now have to make a choice. You are either with us or against us.

And when you are with us, you are not with us only rhetorically—you are with us not only rhetorically but you take action. You close down the terrorist offices in your country. You stop supporting terrorist organizations like Hezbollah. You don't act as a conduit between Iranian military shipments and the terrorists in the south of Lebanon.

It is my impression that Syria has done none of these things so far, yet we are sort of nebulous as to whether they are part of the, quote, unquote, coalition or not. Do you believe, number one, that Syria, like Pakistan, has made a choice?

Mr. BURNS. I think what Syria has done is make a statement, as the President drew attention to, in which the Syrian leadership said that they not only condemn the acts of September 11th but pledged support for international efforts against terrorism. As you rightly said, Mr. Lantos, the President also made clear—and this isn't just with regard to Syria, it is with regard to any country—that we will judge by results, not just rhetoric, and that is what we will need to see.

Mr. LANTOS. Has Syria closed down the terrorist headquarters operating in Damascus?

Mr. BURNS. No, sir.

Mr. LANTOS. Has Syria closed on the flow of arms via Damascus to Hezbollah?

Mr. BURNS. No, we still have concerns about this.

Mr. LANTOS. What are we doing about this, Mr. Secretary? What do we tell the Syrians?

Mr. BURNS. We have continued just as we have for many years.

Mr. LANTOS. But I am talking about post September 11. The President of the United States with great wisdom drew a line, and he said, we know what you did in the past. You were a criminal. You were a host of terrorists. You supported terrorists. You supplied them. You were a handmaiden to terrorists. But now this is a new era. And if you choose to be with us, not with words, with actions, you can be part of the coalition. What has Syria done—not

what has Syria said, what has Syria done since September 11th to be accepted into the coalition?

Mr. BURNS. We are still watching for the results. We have heard the rhetoric. We are still watching for the results.

Mr. LANTOS. Am I correct in interpreting your statement to say they have done nothing? You were——

Mr. BURNS. We are still watching for the results, sir.

Mr. LANTOS. What have they done, Mr. Secretary?

Mr. BURNS. As I said, we have seen some statements that were made.

Mr. LANTOS. Apart from the statements.

Mr. BURNS. We are still waiting to see.

Mr. LANTOS. Final issue is one that I raised earlier on and that is the training of Hamas and Hezbollah cells by bin Laden's organization in Afghanistan. Are these news stories, such as the one that I quoted from Time Magazine, September 24 issue, accurate?

Mr. BURNS. Sir, to be honest I don't have all the information to answer that question fully, but I would glad to come back to you and talk to you outside of a public session about whatever information we do have on that.

Mr. LANTOS. My concluding remark relates to a time issue. I had this discussion with another member of your State Department staff with respect to the speed with which a congressionally originated item was responded to. It was excellent, 4 days. On October 12, the Republican Whip, Tom DeLay, and I wrote a letter to the Secretary of State. Have you seen that letter?

Mr. BURNS. I haven't, sir.

Mr. LANTOS. We will be happy to give you a copy.

One of the things that we say in this letter is, I quote,

"We urge you to maintain the most rigorous set of requirements for states such as Iran and Syria and entities such as the Palestinian Authority who may wish the political benefit of association with the international coalition. This should include at a minimum severing all the ties official and unofficial in the political, diplomatic, financial and military realms with all terrorist groups, closing down the facilities, training camps, political offices and information bureaus of all terrorist groups on their soil and in territory under their influence and cooperating with U.S. authorities on outstanding investigations of past terrorist attacks involving U.S. citizens.

"If states that have heretofore sponsored terrorism undertake these and related steps, it would reflect the change in behavior that merits a positive U.S. response, although other key goals such as nonproliferation must continue to be taken into account. Short of these moves, however, we caution against any premature reward for these problematic states. This is especially the case as you consider various waivers regarding legislative restrictions on commerce with assistance for an armed sales to a variety of sanctioned states. Only clear, verifiable actions, not mere rhetoric, merit reward."

I would be most grateful if the Republican Whip, Tom DeLay, and I could have the same courtesy that other Members of Congress have in getting a 4-day response to our request.

Mr. BURNS. I understand, sir.

Mr. LANTOS. If you could look into this.

Mr. CHABOT. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Engel, the gentleman from New York, is recognized.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I first want to associate myself with everything that Mr. Lantos just said, and I want to come back to some of the questions of Mr. Ackerman before.

I am absolutely furious that we seem to have a double standard, one for ourselves and one for the state of Israel, when it comes to combating terrorism. Does anyone doubt that if we today could take out Osama bin Laden and, as President Bush said, wanted dead or alive, and the only way we can get him is dead, do we have any doubt that we wouldn't make that choice?

Mr. BURNS. No.

Mr. ENGEL. Then why, when the Israelis find the person who masterminded the bombing in the disco that killed 14 children, why are they somehow doing something wrong when they take out that person?

Mr. BURNS. Mr. Engel, as I tried to say before, what we are trying to do between Israelis and Palestinians, and we have worked very hard at this and will continue to, is to try and create a situation in which violence is brought to an end in which we can move back to a political process. And that involves, first and foremost, the Palestinian Authority taking the steps that it must take to stop violence.

Mr. ENGEL. I am sorry, I don't mean to interrupt you. But you see, Mr. Secretary, that is the point. I don't disagree with what you just said, but when we admonish Israel for taking care of what it needs to take care of to protect the security of its citizens, we don't bring Yassar Arafat to the bargaining table. We send a very dangerous message to him that he is gaining by inciting violence. That is the message we send.

When President Bush calls for a Palestinian state, we send a very dangerous message in this context, in these difficult times, of terrorism and a year of the Intifada. We send a very dangerous message to Mr. Arafat that violence works. You know, we cannot go back to a time when Arafat walked away from Camp David from a very generous agreement and walked away and pretended nothing has happened in the year since then. So it seems to me that when we make these statements we are encouraging continued acts of violence because we all know that Arafat only reacts to pressure. And when he reacts to pressure that is when he clamps down on the terrorists. If he thinks he is gaining from it, as he obviously does, he stands back, he doesn't clamp down, and therefore he lets these things continue.

So by our statements from the State Department, from the Secretary of State, talking about Israel being unhelpful when they go after someone that they know planned the terrorist attack that killed the kids at the disco, we are, in my way of thinking, encouraging him to continue these terrorist activities, not being even-handed in terms of peace. That is my problem.

Mr. BURNS. Could I add one comment to that? We have made absolutely clear in the bluntest terms possible to Chairman Arafat,

to the Palestinian leadership that neither violence nor incitement are going to get anybody anyplace. They are not going to bring Palestinians any closer to the realization of their aspirations. We have to see a 100 percent effort to stop them. And we have begun to see in recent weeks the beginning, some steps in that direction. We have got to see more. That is the only pathway which is going to bring about anything productive for Palestinians.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Secretary, if the Israelis had Osama bin Laden and were able to take him out, would we say that was unhelpful or would we commend them for it?

Mr. BURNS. Mr. Engel, we will continue, as I said, to stress in the strongest possible terms to make clear, not just in our words but in our own actions, that violence is not going to bring about anything positive for anyone.

Mr. ENGEL. Are we committing violence by bombing Afghanistan?

Mr. BURNS. In the context of the situation between Israelis and Palestinians there is a possibility of putting together a political process. But there is only one way in which that can happen and that is going to be by ending violence.

Mr. ENGEL. Why aren't we attempting to put together a political process with the government of Afghanistan? Why are we not saying—which I support, I support the President 100 percent in what he is doing in Afghanistan, but why are we not saying to the Taliban, let's sit down. The President has said time and time again there is no negotiation. You are either with us or you are not. You either turn Osama bin Laden over to us or you don't. Why are we not sitting down with them and why do we expect the Israelis to do what we are not willing to do? Why do we deny them the right to protect their people that we demand for ourselves? It is totally inconsistent and totally unfair and, frankly, I am sick of it.

Now, I would like to continue along the line with Syria. Syria has just ascended to the Security Council. I and 37 of my colleagues wrote a letter to President Bush, colleagues on both sides of the aisle, urging our government to try to prevent that from happening. Once it got down to the U.N., it was a fait accompli. But when we wanted to block Sudan years ago we went to the regional grouping and we made sure that there was someone that we could put in instead of Sudan. We didn't do that this time. We let this happen.

The Security Council passed resolution 1373 which calls on all countries to take steps to get after terrorists, to round up terrorists, to do all those things. Syria has done none of that, and yet now they are sitting on this Security Council that—in violation of resolution 1373. Could you explain to me why we didn't take action to try to prevent them from going to the Security Council?

Mr. BURNS. Well, sir, with regard to the situation with regard to Sudan, that was a little bit different in the sense that, with regard to Syria, it had the unanimous backing of the regional grouping. And there has never been an instance in the history of the U.N. Where a unanimous candidate didn't get on the—

Mr. ENGEL. You don't think with our diplomacy behind the scene we couldn't have prevented that? I think we could have.

Mr. BURNS. In this case I think that is the reality that emerged.

But in response to the second part of your question, sir, that membership on the Security Council obviously puts a much brighter spotlight on a member's responsibilities. In this case, there is a higher standard of behavior that is going to be not just expected but also insisted upon.

Mr. ENGEL. Let's take Hezbollah, which couldn't exist without Syrian help. They bombed the U.S. Marine barracks in Lebanon. The U.S. Embassy annex was bombed, TWA flight 847, the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires, the Israeli Cultural Center in Buenos Aires. This is Syria. Again, Mr. Lantos pointed out quite aptly there has been a lot of talk, but there has been no real action.

I find it ludicrous that the President lists a bunch of terrorist groups, which I agree with, and freezes their assets and does all kinds of things; and Hezbollah, Hamas and Islamic jihad are not listed. I mean, again, it shows that there is a total inconsistency, that we think that protecting our people is more important than Israel protecting their people. And again I think that as long as we are going to have that moral inconsistency, as long as we are going to try to equate—have a moral equivalency of terror and self-defense I think we are being intellectually dishonest with ourselves and intellectually dishonest with the world.

Mr. BURNS. With regard to the Executive orders, the initial focus of the countries and organizations listed on them has been the al-Qaeda network. But we have made very clear that is not the end of the road. This is a process in which we are going to look at adding other foreign terrorist organizations over time in addition to the existing restrictions which already apply to those organizations.

Mr. CHABOT. The gentleman's time has expired. Does the gentleman have an additional question or so?

Mr. ENGEL. If I might. I have a couple of questions. I will try to speed it up.

You know, Prime Minister Sharon a few weeks ago made a remark saying, don't liken Israel to a 1938 Czechoslovakia. And he was rebuked for that. I happen to feel his remarks were right on target. Because I happen to believe that all the actions that we are showing by turning a blind eye when Syria doesn't clamp down on terrorists, by criticizing Israel when they try to protect their own people, we are in essence sending out a message that somehow violence or terrorism in Israel is somehow going to be tolerated for the greater good for building this coalition. That disturbs me greatly.

Because I do think that we ought to have the broadest based coalition we can to fight terrorism. We ought to make every effort to include as many Arab states as we can to fight terrorism. But when you take a country like Syria, which by the State Department's own words has been a country which has aided and abetted terrorism; or Iran, which has aided and abetted terrorism; or the Palestinians, which have aided and abetted terrorism and have done nothing to stop it as far as I am concerned, when we talk about those three entities those countries, being part of a coalition against terrorism to me it is like letting the fox into a chicken coop and makes a farce out of what we are trying to do. It is done because we want to placate certain Arab nations that may be a little bit uneasy. You know, I think it is time that some of these countries have some responsibility.

I would recommend you—if you haven't—to look at the *New York Times* editorial this past weekend where they talked about Saudi Arabia and how the Saudis have been literally getting away with murder, having it both ways. Maybe it is time in our policies that we look at morality and we say what it really is instead of turning a blind eye.

Ten years ago in the Persian Gulf War, when Scuds were raining down on Israel, we told Israel not to retaliate. It is the only time in their history that they did not retaliate. I was one of the Democrats that broke with my party and supported President Bush in the Gulf War and voted that way on the House floor.

But I want to tell you I think we have no right to tell the government of Israel to operate with both hands tied behind their backs. We ought not to sacrifice the government of Israel in protecting its citizens and fighting terrorism because we are trying to appease certain Arab states whose behavior has been reprehensible.

Mr. BURNS. First, we are not going to do anything, as the President and Secretary has made clear, that is going to undermine Israel's security. There has been no country in the world that has been more deeply committed to that that the United States.

Second, we are not going to turn a blind eye to anybody's support for terrorism. As I made clear before and as the President and Secretary have made clear, there is no such thing as good terrorists and bad terrorists. This is part of a long-term global campaign that we are absolutely determined, as you are, to pursue; and we are going to do that.

Thirdly, the United States has worked harder than anyone in support of the effort to end violence and end terrorism against Israelis and to end the violence that makes it impossible to restore any kind of political process between Palestinians and Israelis. We have been working very hard at that long before the 11th of September, and we are going to continue to work hard at that in the interests of the people of the region and in the interests of Israel and in our own interest.

Mr. ENGEL. I want to reiterate what I said before. Everyone who knows how Arafat operates knows that he only reacts under pressure. I think you take the pressure off him when you criticize Israel for everything they do. I think it proves to him that terrorism works or that violence works. I think it is absolutely wrong.

Mr. Chairman, I would like unanimous consent to put a copy of my letter with regard to Syria in the U.N. Security Council in the record.

Mr. CHABOT. Without objection.

[The information referred to follows:]

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 4, 2001

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Thank you for your strong and principled response to the terrorist attacks in New York and at the Pentagon. We stand with you and the American people in the effort to deal with the humanitarian disaster, rebuild affected communities, and bring justice to the terrorists and those who harbor them.

On September 29, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1373, with strong backing from the United States, which directs all countries to "refrain from providing any form of support, active or passive, to entities or persons involved in terrorist acts." In that vein, we are deeply concerned that Syria, a nation known to harbor and assist terrorists in clear violation of Resolution 1373, may take the next rotating Asian seat on the United Nations Security Council when the term of Bangladesh expires later this year.

Under Article 23 of the United Nations Charter, the ten non-permanent members of the Security Council are selected with "due regard being specially paid, in the first instance to the contribution of Members of the United Nations to the maintenance of international peace and security. . ." As a supporter of terrorism, Syria has acted consistently to undermine international peace and security and should not be permitted to join the Security Council.

As you know, Syria has for years been listed by the United States Department of

~~State as a terrorist entity. The United States Department of State has~~
~~consistently opposed Syria's bid for a seat on the Security Council.~~
~~As a result of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the United States~~
~~Department of State has taken additional steps to ensure that Syria does not~~
~~benefit from the international community's efforts to rebuild and restore~~
~~normalcy to the Middle East.~~

The President
October 4, 2001
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United Nations Security Council Resolutions 425 and 520 call for strict respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and political independence of Lebanon. With more than 25,000 troops and security personnel in Lebanon, Syria has permitted a variety of terrorist and extremist groups to operate in Lebanon, while denying to the Lebanese the right to govern themselves independent of foreign interference and control. It would be wrong for a U.N. Security Council seat to be awarded to a country that currently occupies another U.N. member state.

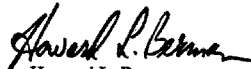
Likewise, Syria's hostility toward Israel has not ceased. It has not only rebuffed Israel's very generous peace offers, but it maintains a state of war with the Jewish state and a hostile array of forces on Israel's northern border. Indeed, under President Bashar Assad, the anti-Israeli rhetoric of the Syrian government has become only more vitriolic.

In light of the dastardly terror attacks on our country, we strongly support your effort to develop the broadest possible coalition of states willing to fight terror and agree with your statement that all nations must now reach a decision: "Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists." We believe, therefore, that Syria's inclusion in the Security Council would send precisely the wrong signal to the international community at this critical time and would be counter-productive to America's efforts to put a halt to global terror. We urge the United States to oppose vigorously Syria's bid for a Security Council seat and encourage our coalition allies to the same until Syria ceases its support for terrorism, no longer provides safe-haven for terrorists, and comes into compliance with all relevant Security Council resolutions.

Sincerely,



Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress



Howard L. Berman
Member of Congress



Tom Lantos
Member of Congress



Ilana Ros Lehtinen
Member of Congress



Eric Cantor
Member of Congress



Benjamin L. Gilman
Member of Congress

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Prita Lowery

Ed Markey

Henry Waxman

Roy Blount

Ben Cardin

Kit Bond

Chris Smith

Steve X. Hutchinson

John Dingell

Chris

Alfred Hastings

Di

Mike Dirakis

Tom Davis

Jim Ryan

Carroll

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Andrew B. Galloway

Michael C. McWhorter

Mark Sander

Brad Sherman

Robert Taylor

J. Stanton

Pat Finn

Frank Pallone Jr.

David Price

Robert L. Ginn, Jr.

Mr. CHABOT. The gentleman's time has expired.

Let me ask one final question if I can, Mr. Ambassador.

In your last appearance you said that the Administration is looking at ways to post on the State Department or other U.S. Government Web sites the reward for the capture of any terrorist involved in killing Americans in Israel. What has been done on this issue since your last appearance and do we post the Beirut Marine barracks truck bomb information in Arabic on our Web site?

Mr. BURNS. I have to check on the last point, sir. I just don't know.

On the first point, we have come up with a plan the way in which it would appear on the Web site. It should be appearing very shortly. I will double-check on that as soon as I get back.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you. We thank you for your appearance here this afternoon.

With that, the Committee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:45 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

