

On November 19, Secretary of State Colin Powell reiterated the Administration's support for Palestinian statehood, but only if it is not a haven for terrorists. Secretary Powell also properly stressed Israel's right to security, without which there can be no peace, and condemned anti-Israel incitement in Palestinian media and schools. Additionally, President Bush appointed retired General Anthony Zinni as his special envoy to the Middle East.

But absent a serious and comprehensive crackdown on Palestinian terrorism by the Palestinian Authority, no peace agreement will be possible. It is incumbent upon all Palestinians, especially Yasser Arafat and other leaders, to move in the direction of peace by ending Palestinian terrorism and incitement once and for all. I agree with Vice President Cheney who recently said that there are "serious questions whether Mr. Arafat is in fact really interested in moving forward with the peace process." The Vice President made his comments shortly after the seizure of a huge naval shipment of arms - fifty tons of sniper rifles, mortars, anti-tank rockets, and other weapons that were apparently headed for the Palestinian Authority courtesy of their benefactors in Iran.

As you know, in 1993, when Yasser Arafat and the late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin shook hands on the White House lawn, there was, in that unique historical moment, the possibility of permanent peace between Israel and the Palestinians. Nine years later, and after hundreds of hours of personal, hands-on involvement by the President of the United States, the dream has transformed into the nightmare of terrorist attacks against Israel's civilians, the increased radicalization of the Palestinian population, and the destruction of any illusions about how to end this grievous conflict in the near term.

In July 2000, then-Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, with President Clinton's support, offered Arafat an extremely generous proposal for permanent peace that met every one of Arafat's demands: a Palestinian state comprising 95 percent of the West Bank and all of Gaza, a capital in Jerusalem, sovereignty over the Temple Mount, and Palestinian refugees' right of return to their own state. Regretfully, Arafat rejected this olive branch. Instead, he renewed the 'intifada' to strengthen his hand at the negotiating table.

Terrorists jailed by Arafat in better times are freely