

roaming the streets; Arafat has presided over meetings with the leaders of these organizations that seek nothing short of Israel's destruction; and he refuses international calls to put these criminals back in prison. Palestinian textbooks continue to preach intolerance to Palestinian schoolchildren. I have supported American assistance to the Palestinians in the past and believe there is an important role for such assistance in building democratic institutions and improving the welfare of an impoverished population. But such assistance becomes more difficult to justify as the peace process it had been designed to uphold flounders, often with direct collusion from elements of the Palestinian Authority itself.

The Oslo peace process was premised on the notion that Israel and the Palestinians could live together. After the bitter failures of the last eight years, a new realism has infused Israeli policy towards the Palestinians. The terrorist attacks on America have fortified global opinion against terrorism in all its forms. No longer can Arafat and others in his circle wink at terrorism against innocent civilians as a means of pressuring Israel to make political concessions.

This grim reality may present a way forward for the parties, if pragmatism and enforceable security guarantees replace visionary and intemperate ambitions. Palestinian aspirations cannot trump Israel's legitimate security concerns, and Yasser Arafat must deal in this new reality or see the dream of a Palestinian state foreclosed during his lifetime. The September 11th attacks and the global response they have engendered have changed the context of the Middle East conflict; perhaps their sobering consequences can help propel a long-term settlement.

There is a critical role for American leadership in urging the two parties to make pragmatic, cooperative progress towards a lasting peace. I remain convinced that continued American support for Israel, and continued American leadership in the region, provide the best means of fighting terror, promoting peace, and deterring war.

I appreciate your conviction about the Middle East peace process and hope that you will continue to contact me with your