

Key Messages on the Current Crisis

July 18, 2006

Key Words/Phrases:

- Israel may have “left” Gaza, **but it didn’t leave Gaza alone.**
- **True freedom** from foreign **occupation** and control = **true security for Israelis/Palestinians**
- Bulldozing **Jerusalem and the two-state solution**
- More violence doesn’t bring any of us closer to security; it pushes us further away.
- The only **secure peace in the Middle East** will be an **agreed peace.**
- The only **secure border is an agreed border.**
- **Christian and Muslim Palestinians**
- The **choices we take today** may determine whether **war or peace reigns** in the Middle East for decades to come.
- **Piecemeal steps don’t bring peace in the Middle East. Comprehensive solutions do.**

Key Messages:

1. Recent developments risk destroying any prospects of Middle East peace for generations to come. The **choices we take now** may determine whether **war or peace reigns** in the Middle East for the next few decades.
 - a. The only **secure peace in the Middle East will be an agreed peace.**
 - b. The only **secure border is an agreed border**, and history proves this point: Israel negotiated with Egypt and Jordan—where it has stable, functioning borders—but refused to negotiate with Lebanon or the Palestinians.
 - i. We can agree and we must. Negotiations are the only option—for us and for the region.
 - c. **A comprehensive solution exists: The Arab Peace Initiative of 2002.**
 - d. **Piecemeal steps don’t bring peace in the Middle East. Comprehensive solutions do.**
 - e. The Palestinian question is exploited to fuel extremism—whether Muslim, Christian, or Jewish—throughout the region. A just resolution to this conflict now is the only way out of the abyss.
 - f. Israel is using the pretext of Tehran and Damascus to bulldoze **Jerusalem and the two-state solution**—along with any prospects of Middle East peace for generations.
 - g. We simply seek freedom from **foreign occupation and control**. Yet Israel **fuels extremism** by taking more land and forcing Palestinians into **ever-shrinking prisons**.
2. **Despite its withdrawal of settlers, Israel still effectively controls the Gaza Strip.**
 - a. Israel may have left Gaza, but it didn’t just leave Gaza alone. It got up and took the keys, leaving an embattled and embittered population to fend for itself in the world’s largest prison.

- b. Israel ultimately controls every person, every good, and every drop of water to enter or leave the Gaza Strip.
 - c. Israel has pounded the Gaza Strip for weeks before the capture of the Israeli soldier, sending as many as 300 missiles a day (check figure) into one of the most densely populated areas on earth.
 - d. **We want to assume responsibility** over our lives and our future. We simply want the same basic rights that every population on earth deserves. Israel, however, won't let us live, work, eat, or sleep in peace.
 - e. **Gaza Disengagement was more about what Israel was taking in and around Jerusalem than what it was supposedly giving up in Gaza.**
 - i. Conflict and strife in Gaza distracts from Israel's plans elsewhere.
3. Attacks and abductions of civilians and civilian infrastructure are reprehensible. Yet more terror doesn't bring us closer to peace and stability; it pushes us further away.
 - a. Peace is possible and there is a solution to the conflict. The only solution however, is diplomatic, not violent.
 4. Regardless of who is to blame for recent events, nothing justifies the continued **illegal onslaught** on the occupied Christian and Muslim Palestinian population and their lands and livelihoods.
 5. We too have a right to defend ourselves, not just Israel. Whether justified or not, so-called "self-defense" here will only breed more conflict and instability throughout the region.
 6. When the fog of war lifts on this latest episode, the international community and Israel may be surprised to find that no solution to the Palestinian question exists that Israel would be willing to accept.
 7. When Israel left Gaza, we were hoping that we would get the beginnings of our freedom—freedom to build schools, hospitals, and make sure the next generation had jobs. Instead, we saw the gates of our prison shut ever tighter and Israel force even harsher poverty and bombardment upon us.
 8. We need a strong international community today so the international community won't be continually dragged into this crisis tomorrow.
 - a. Today Israel is destroying the two-state solution while waging a war of disproportionate force.
 - b. That means tomorrow we will still be dependent upon the international community for handouts to avoid humanitarian crises. That means the conflict will remain internationalized.
 - c. We **too believe that enforcing UN resolutions is a good thing.** We should not forget that if **Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 were fully implemented we would not be here today and there would be no Arab-Israeli conflict.**
 9. Over 9,000 Palestinian prisoners of war languish in Israeli jails. All are illegally held. Most were illegally abducted from their homes in stealth of night. Over 400 are women and children kidnapped from their families. Over 2,000 have still not been charged with any crime.
 - a. While 9,000 Israeli wrongs do not make a Palestinian right, these men, women, and children are wrongfully held and deserve to return to their homes and families now.