

## Winning the War Against Terror

Benjamin Netanyahu

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*This is an unedited version of the transcript.*

[TRANSCRIPT PREPARED FROM A TAPE RECORDING.]

### P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. WEINSTEIN: --I'm Kenneth Weinstein, vice president of Hudson Institute and director of its Washington Office.

We, at Hudson, are delighted to join with our colleagues at the American Enterprise Institute to co-host this very important event. America and Israel have been violently attacked by people who wish to destroy both nations. This elemental fact connects our fates more closely than at any time in the past because America's war on terrorism and Israel's ongoing war for its very survival are now joined.

At this critical juncture, as much as we need effective counterterrorist forces and tactics, the thing we need most is clarity--clarity about the predicament we face and about how best to address it, and that is why today's presentation and discussion are essential.

Now I have the pleasure of turning the microphone over to Christopher DeMuth, president of AEI, who will introduce former Prime Minister Netanyahu.

[Applause.]

MR. DeMUTH: Thank you, Ken.

War is said to be characterized by fog but it can also have the effect of clarifying things. In September and in January it would have been difficult to foresee that the new campaign against terrorism would divert to the same-old same-old—the cul-de-sac of dialoguing with states and organizations for whom negotiation is not an avenue to peace but, forthrightly and emphatically, an instrument of war: a tactical complement to terrorism itself in the campaign to annihilate Israel. It must be said that we have reached this pass not just out of confusion but out of clarity: because the progress of arms has now revealed the consensus of leading nations that Israel, alone among them, must not be permitted the elementary right to defend herself when confronted with mortal aggression—an astounding proposition now on the record in various clever formulations from government ministries and international councils around the globe.

In these dire circumstances Benjamin Netanyahu, the former prime minister of Israel, has come to Washington for urgent consultations with American officials and legislators. He is a sometime and perhaps future political rival of the current Israeli prime minister, but he is in Washington this week at the request of his prime minister. We are delighted that he should be returning to the American Enterprise Institute at this

moment and are delighted to be joining with the Hudson Institute in hosting him this afternoon. Please give a warm welcome to Benjamin Netanyahu.

[Applause.]

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: Thank you very much. Thank you all, and thank you, Chris DeMuth and Kenneth Weinstein, for jointly sponsoring this meeting, thereby, showing that think tank organizations can achieve peace in our time.

[Laughter.]

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: Yet I have to start with a correction, something I always hate to do, and that is I am not here as an official spokesman of the government. I am here because the prime minister asked me to go and make the case for Israel, as I understand it. So that is what I am doing. I am making the case for Israel, as I understand it, but I happen to think and to know, based on every conceivable indication of public opinion, that the vast majority of Israelis subscribe to a vast majority of the things that I am about to say.

The first thing that I want to say is that I have encountered here over the last 24 hours a tremendous receptivity and support of the American people, as best as I can judge it, and America's representatives, its congressmen, its senators, even, to my chagrin, the news media--

[Applause.]

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: --have been actually very supportive and fairly steadfast about recognizing that Israel has that natural right of self-defense that Chris DeMuth talked about; that when you are faced with deadly terror, you have the right to take action against that terrorism, that the kind of action that we are taking is actually modest in comparison to the kind of action taken by the United States. Israel, as you no doubt know, has not used its overwhelming air power to root out Palestinian terrorists, and in fact it has used ground forces, risking those ground forces, losing soldiers because we are painstakingly trying to root out terrorists, thereby avoiding civilian casualties or at least reducing them.

I found quite a bit of receptivity here which, of course, contrasts with the kind of treatment that we have had, we have been receiving in the European press and in other parts of the world, Europe in particular, European governments have joined to condemn Israel. They are threatening us with sanctions. The U.N., of course, is always waiting in the wings with new fresh resolutions to condemn us. The secretary general of the U.N., Kofi Annan said, "Can it be that the entire world is wrong?"

And the answer is, "You bet. Yes, it can be."

[Applause.]

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: It has been the case, we have to make an exemption because, A, I don't think the American people are wrong, and by three to one, four to one, or five to one, depending which polls you see, they support Israel rather resoundingly. These are good polls, by the way, very good ones. I think, on the whole, the American government, with whom we have disagreements now about tactics and timing, we do not have a fundamental disagreement about the course of policy, the nature of policy, the need to uproot terror, but we do need to answer, first, some of the questions that are leveled at us.

I have to say that the need to act against terror right now is paramount, and to act on all fronts is paramount because if you do not consistently apply the principles that were put forward by President Bush seven months ago in an historic speech before the American people and also in subsequent action, if you lose that map and that conquest, if it becomes wet by soggy rain or it is shredded to pieces, you will lose direction. If you lose direction, you lose the war. You won't complete the war.

And the most important thing or the two most important things that President Bush said about terror is that all terror is illegitimate and that the way to fight terror is to fight the regimes that stand behind terror. In

President Bush's words, we draw no distinction between the terrorists and the regimes that harbor them. Now this is crucial.

It is perhaps thought by some that the way you fight terrorism is by fighting the terrorists, but that is simply not true. That is not the first thing you do. It's the second or third or maybe the last thing you do. The first thing you do in fighting terrorism is going after the regimes. "It's the regimes, Stupid." I couldn't resist this. You have to go against the regimes. You don't go after the needle in the haystack, you go after the haystack. How's that for an analogy?

All right. Here's another one. You don't go after the suicide kamikaze pilots who are coming at you because you can shoot one and then another one will come, you go after the carrier. In going after the carrier, you have only two options; that is, you have only one option, you must go after the carrier, but in going after the carrier, you basically have two options. The first is to strike at the carrier and make it change course. That is called deterrence. The second is to sink the carrier if deterrence doesn't work. These are the two options.

Example, the United States right now is using exactly this policy in fighting terrorism. It is either deterring some regimes, like Somalia or Syria, whatever, and it is destroying other regimes, like the Taliban soon, Saddam Hussein, and perhaps others as well. There is no other way. You can do mop-up operations. After you get the Taliban down, you mop up al Qaeda, but essentially the job of destroying the terrorist infrastructure is fairly easy. It requires about half a dozen regimes and about two dozen terror organizations. If you knock out the regimes, either by deterrence or by dismantling them, you get rid of terror for now. That can be done, must be done, and was put forward with great clarity and great determination by President Bush and the United States proceeded on this course.

Now there seems to be some question about it because these principles universally applied now are selectively applied. It is said, at least by some, that Israel, faced with its own quintessential terror regimes, the terror regime of Yasser Arafat that is producing factories of human bombs that are directed against us, but soon will be directed against you if we don't shut down these factories.

It is said that we shouldn't take action against it because, in so doing, we are jeopardizing the general thrust of the war. That is very peculiar. That is like saying, "Well, you shouldn't take down, you know, you shouldn't take down the allies of the Nazi regime because that might jeopardize the main thrust going after Berlin. It's got nothing to do with it. In fact, the opposite is true. If you start hedging, and if you start equivocating, and if you start suggesting that there are moral differences between the nature of the terrorism, the savagery that is meted out to us, and the savagery that is meted out to you, and therefore that there are differences in the way that we can respond to these savageries, then you will blunt the whole course of the American action.

In fact, there are differences. Nothing compares, nothing compares and probably nothing will compare for quite some time with the scale of the atrocity committed against the American people and the savage attack of September 11th. That, too, is a day that will live in infamy, in my opinion, longer than the other one, but there is nothing equally to compare with the accumulation of terrorist attacks that has been directed against Israel and now amount to about six or seven times the number of casualties that were sustained in the World Trade Center. So Israel, on a per-capita basis, has suffered about seven times the number of casualties. It's the equivalent of 22,000 Americans in pro-rated terms.

Of course no nation can suffer that. It must take action. It must take action against the regime. The regime is a terrorist regime par excellence. It is headed by a man who not only has put forward the doctrine of pocide, the destruction of a state, but also is now promoting the system, the method of suicide to achieve that goal, and it is an implacable foe and an unreformable one.

Today, in the Senate, I had a prop. I wish I had it here. The prop was the current website now--I hope they don't change it, by the way because I'd like you to see it. It's the website, the official website, of the Palestinian authority, and it shows a map of Palestine. Do we have this map here?

Well, it has two instructive features to it. The first is that it has been actually trimmed down, so Palestine, according to the Palestinian Authority, to Yasser Arafat, for the moment does not include Jordan. Normally, it does, but for the sake of inter-Arab solidarity, that has been excised.

But, of course, you ask, "Where is Israel?" And that's the whole point. There is no Israel there. Palestine includes, of course, not only the territories of the West Bank and Gaza, it includes all of Israel, and that is the whole point.

The conflict, to the extent we have a conflict, is based on the enduring desire of Arafat and those he represents or those who share his ideology, not to create a state, but to destroy one. And this was the genesis of the PLO in '64, three years before the Six-Day War, and this was brought again less than two years ago when an Israeli prime minister offered him a West Bank state with half of Jerusalem as its capital. He turned it down because he doesn't want a state next to Israel, he wants this greater Palestine, so graphically, I must say, presented in red instead of Israel.

And this is the source of this particular conflict. In other words, it is an insoluble conflict because the grievance is impossible to satisfy. The only way we can satisfy the grievance is to disappear, and since we are not about to do that, that grievance or that conflicts continues, unless Arafat is removed. Israel is not going to be removed, and as long as Arafat is there, he is going to press on for the destruction of Israel. It is only when we remove such a regime that we have a chance of resolving the conflict.

I think that the doctrine of picide is one-half of the problem that we face with Arafat. It is also that even if he wanted lesser goals, and he doesn't, the fact that he promotes terrorist suicide and terrorism in general, makes him illegitimate from that score as well. So you have here two things which simply cannot be acceptable. You have both an illegitimate goal pursued by illegitimate means by a terrorist dictator whose only advantage over Mullah Omar or bin Laden is that he has a con job operation in the West.

He has con artists who appear in the Western media, and speak in acceptable, moderate-sounding language. They actually appear like any one of us, but they are basically fronting for their master, and their master is a very bloody dictator, and this con job has to be stopped. So every time I hear now Palestinian spokesmen, I am saying that is a con artist, and you should not dignify this grotesque violence to the truth by any serious questions. You should only ask them what is being said in Arabic to their own people, and that has to be repeated ad nauseam until these people are simply driven from the screens because they are an insult to a free press, and to free inquiry and to free debate. They are not free. They represent not a word of truth. The truth is what I said--picide backed by suicide.

So what do you do with such a leader? Well, it was hoped, it was hoped that Arafat had mended his ways, that he had undergone a process of reformation, that this leopard had changed its spots, that they now compared Arafat to an animal. You are not laughing. This is a Biblical illusion. What's happening to modern education? Where is Bloom, for God's sakes?

[Laughter.]

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: It was hoped by many in the States and it was hoped by many in Israel, right? And the two things that he promised to do was to get rid of picide and get rid of suicide, get rid of terror. Of course, as soon as he got into the territories, he proceeded to continue to promote both with increased zeal and vigor, and of course today people recognize that he is not a Palestinian King Hussein, but he is a Palestinian Saddam Hussein. What do you do with a Palestinian Saddam Hussein? You kick him out, that is, you either deter him or you dismantle his regime.

I must say that in my three years as prime minister, I was able to deter him, that is, the total amount of terror attacks that we had in the three years is equal to about one morning's attacks or two morning's attacks in present terms. Now why is that? It is not because Arafat suddenly turned into a Zionist, a raving Zionist in the three years that I was prime minister, it is not because the HAMAS because philo-semetic or philo-Jewish. They draw the fact always that they are semites too. Okay, they are not lovers of Zion either, right? And it's not because of my blue eyes, because I do not, as I often say, have blue eyes.

It is because we simply made it clear to Arafat, through a series of rapid actions and through a very soft-spoken Jerusalem lawyer by the name of Isaac Mohol [ph] who spoke through his intermediary that we would bring him down. If he continues the terrorism that claimed the lives of 150 Israelis before, under Rabin in Paris, we'd bring him down.

It was told to him that Netanyahu doesn't care about Clinton, he doesn't care about the U.S. We'll bring you down, and that had a way of concentrating his attention. He stopped. So, for two years after--more than two years--we had a handful of fatalities, each one of them tragic, a person stabbed here, a person shot there, but none of this terror system.

It is my view that in the aftermath of the great concessions that we're offering, the hasty flight from Lebanon and so on, Arafat now is in a state of fantasy. Here he is promoting the most extraordinary campaign of terror, the Europeans are supporting him, they're even putting embargoes on Israel. These Europeans on whose soil six million Jews were massacred 60 years ago, and they are siding with a mass killer now when the Jews rise to protect themselves. It is shameful.

Somebody asked me what should the Europeans do, and I said be ashamed. They should be ashamed of themselves.

[Applause.]

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: The governments or most of the governments, not the people, because I am sure there are many decent people in Europe, millions of them, who would understand what I'm saying right now. He sees that, he sees the U.N. support, he sees the attempt to stop Israel from acting in self-defense, and he believes that we can be pushed.

I mean, if having done all of this, he gets all of that, he is not deterrable, and since he is not deterrable, that regime has to go. I said it from day one. I believe it has to be done now as well. That is the first thing. He has to go, literally be expelled from the area. That regime has to go.

I think that the second thing is to complete our action, to complete it. It won't take us seven months, as it has taken America, it won't even take us seven weeks, but we can't finish it in seven days.

And the third thing is to effect a physical line of separation, separating the main Palestinian-populated areas and the West Bank and Judea-Samaria, from Israel's towns and villages. We have that separation around Gaza, in the form of a fence. We don't have it on the other side. And from Gaza, by the way, we have not had suicide bombers for many, many months. They just can't get through.

It is the combination of all three things that will achieve the curtailment of terror or its reduction to negligible proportions. Any one of them is like a third of antibiotics, a third of a dose that doesn't do the job. Together they can do the job.

I believe that we can garner the support, as I said in the beginning of my remarks, because instinctively America, which is a fair and decent country, understands that, and it doesn't suffer double standards. By the way, in the case of Israel, we are asked to suffer a triple standard. There is one standard for the democracies or for the dictatorships of the world, another for the democracies, still a third for Israel. America doesn't suffer double standards or triple standards, and at the end of the day it is what the American people, what public opinion, what their representatives in Washington decide is proper for America to do that America does. I think that many in the administration, from the president down, understands that this is intrinsically true and should be pursued.

If we do this, and we should, regardless of all pressures, we should do these three things. By the way, if we don't, we will leave a malignancy right in the heart of the Middle East. We will leave a cancerous malignancy that would come back with greater venom and greater virulence and with greater devastating effect, as some cancers do.

So suppose we just leave, suppose we stop, under pressure we stop, okay, we don't complete it. There are thousands of operatives that are still there, thousands of weapons. Just in Jenin, by the way, we collected 1,400 Kalashnikov rifles and uncovered a dozen, a dozen, terrorist laboratories, laboratories to make explosives and about 400 front-line terrorist operatives, just one town.

Suppose we don't finish it, and we leave half of this infrastructure in place, and Arafat is in place, and he comes out of the bunker with V signs, it'll all come back. It'll all come back. It not only will come back against

us, it'll come back against you. Arafat pioneered the art of airline hijackings, and it was first directed us, our airliners. Very soon it spread to the entire world, primarily to American airliners.

It took 20 years to put that demon back in the box. Arafat is now pioneering the art of human bombs, individual bombs, not airline suicide bombs, individual bombs, and it's just a question of time if these terror factories are not shut down that you will see these human bombs right here in Washington in your coffee shops, in your restaurants, in your theaters, in your buses, and it's just a question of a little more time before they have the suitcase devices of mass death.

We have to shut it down now. We have to shut it down now just as Israel shut it down in the case of another threat 21 years ago, when we took out the Iraqi reactor. We had no international support. We had international condemnation, but we did the right thing.

We cannot today protect against mass death alone. We can shut down this part of it, and the United States has to shut down that part of it. It has to shut down that part of it because after Iraq, we don't have one plant. It's disaggregated. They are laundry-machine-size centrifugal devices that are hidden around and under Saddam's 50 palaces and elsewhere.

So it's only by defeating Saddam that you can do this, and this is correctly understood by the president and his action, but there is an equal danger right next to us. We have to finish the job. You have to finish yours, we have to finish ours. The last thing you do is go to the Europeans or to the Saudis for approval of what you are doing. The Europeans are not even siding with you. Some are condemning you for taking out Saddam that is threatening Europe. The missiles can't reach America, yet they can reach Europe, and if tipped with nuclear weapons, they could actually fall in Europe. And the Europeans aren't supporting America there, so I wouldn't wait.

I don't want to sound like a Nike commercial, but just do it. Just do it. It has to be done. We did it 21 years ago. We were condemned. We had no coalitions, we just did it. We don't have a lot of time. It has to be done, it has to be done uniformly, and it has to be done consistently, with principle and clarity.

Now, having done that, we will have dismantled the terror network. It is easier than people think. It is also faster than people think, but it doesn't guarantee one thing. If we do it, we'll do what we have to do, you do what you have to do. Maybe you'll get one or two European countries to even support you, and maybe in their heart of hearts, one or two Arab regimes will even be delighted. What happens then? I ask that not in order to blunt action, but on the contrary, to supplement action.

Usually, they say, Well, what happens when you take out Arafat? What will happen? And that is meant to stay our hand, sheathe our sword. Well, I'm saying it quite the opposite, for the opposite goal. It's like what happens if you knock out Saddam Hussein? What will happen then? Is that a reason not to knock him out? No, and that is not why I'm raising it.

You could answer who cares, which is the answer I've been giving in Afghanistan, you know. What will happen in Afghanistan five years from now? I don't know. Do you think Karzai will be there? I don't know. Maybe he will, maybe he won't. I don't really care because I know whoever will be there will be sufficiently deterred from launching another terrorist attack because if they do, they will be bombed or expelled or killed or whatever. That's enough. And you know they won't do it. You know they won't authorize a single terrorist attack. So that's enough.

Deterrence works, sure, but it works until you have over five years, ten years, a decade, two decades, and the madness comes back. How do you prevent the madness from coming back? How do you prevent a future Saddam or a future, sometime, 20 years from now, from washing the brains of another generation for self-immolation and with devices of death that we can't even contemplate today? What is our protection? And the answer is we have no ultimate protection, except one thing that we must consider today because of the risks involved of not acting.

It is a fact that you don't have today Nazis in Germany. Nazism was defeated, but in its place you planted the seeds of freedom, of democracy. You do not have suicide kamikaze pilots from Japan. Imperial Japanese aggression was defeated militarily, and in its place you have a kind of democracy, it's not a perfect democracy. It's not a Western democracy. It doesn't have to be.

Now can we effect such a change in the Arab and Islamic world? No, not the same kind of change, but we can have something. We can create some kind of pluralism. We can introduce from some quarters the idea that people have intrinsic rights, for example, to live, that individual life has its own value, that the idea that there was some total goal, some totalitarian goal, racial, religious, ethnic, political that allows you to bomb people to smithereens and to forgo all of conventional morality or the restraining empathies of human impulse. You know we're not necessarily Rousseauian, but we're not necessarily Hobbesian. I mean, we're an amalgamation of the two. People care for their children, you know, and they sometimes care for other children. But the question is where you go depends on whether you have a system that inculcates madness in a culture of death.

In the two examples I gave, both in Nazi Germany and in Imperial Japan, you had a culture of death. You can take a society, turn it into a totalitarian machine and actually drum in this hatred, actually put it into the veins of a generation very quickly, and it takes years to detoxify, and it will take many years to detoxify here, but you have to start.

I am suggesting that winning the war against terrorism by dismantling the terror network is well within our means if we keep more clarity, if we keep our compass in front of us and the map dry and before us, and pinned to the north, by the way. That is always important. We can win it. It's not hard. It's easier than people think. And the challenge right now is not to lose the compass, but I am also saying that unless we couple the uprooting of terrorism with the planting of the seeds of freedom in Iraq or in the Palestinian regions or elsewhere, it will come back. And this mad militancy, if it comes back, will come back with the force, and the venom, and with weapons, and technologies that we will not be able to control.

So here is a novel idea. A modest proposal? No, a radical proposal. It is that the United States begin to introduce into the Arab and Islamic world the concepts of democracy--there, I said it--the concepts of individual rights, the concept of pluralism, the concept of debate and dissent that it is pursuing with unmatched vigor everywhere else across the globe. I'm not oblivious to the fact that all of the regimes in the Middle East will come back and argue the Islamist argument. They are right. It is there. But I am right, unless you start doing it, you are not going to get rid of this Islamism, and there is a way to do it. There is a way to do it for the Palestinians, there is a way to do it for the Iraqis, and there are a lot of people who want to push back Islamism as much as we do. Give them a chance, create a real structure for real elections. It is not enough. It is a necessary condition, not fake democratic elections that elected Arafat with 92 percent.

By the way, he is less representative than Saddam Hussein. He got 99 percent of the vote. He is more representative of the--every time they say the democratically-elected leader Yasser Arafat, you know, how he was democratically elected? With media that he controls 100 percent, not 92 percent. (I'd love to run an election like that. How about 1 percent control of the media?) And anybody who runs against him who is a serious contender is, at the very least, knee-capped if he's lucky, but much worse.

This is a bogus election. We're talking about having, not we/Israel, impose a new leadership, but actually having this radical new idea that the Palestinians, free of the gunmen and the goons, will actually choose leaders, maybe from the business community, maybe from the business community of Palestinian Americans. There have been examples of people who come back to countries that have had a history of tyranny, for example, to the Baltics or to Eastern Europe or Central Europe. They come back, and they begin to use their experience, too, for their own people. I'm not saying it will happen, I'm just saying there has to be this aeration. There has to be this ventilation. By the way, I think there has to be aeration and ventilation in this room, too, but I think that there has to be this new approach, not merely to win the war against terror. That is easy if consistently applied principles are perused.

It is also to secure the more distant future, and that is only by doing two things, to uproot terrorism and to plant the seeds of freedom, and there is my speech.

Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

MR. DeMUTH: Mr. Netanyahu will take questions, and I think we have a couple of roving microphones, if you would please introduce yourself quickly and make your question a question.

QUESTION: I'm Michael Ladeen at AEI.

You came close to talking about radical Islam a couple of times. Could you address the question of how important you think Islam is and the whole war of civilization's issue. I mean, you talk about planting freedom. There are a lot of people now suspect that it's not possible to plant seeds of freedom in the Islamic world or is it just a version of it, and how do you combat a thing like that?

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: It's an interesting theoretical question, but here is a practical application to explicate exactly what I'm talking about. There is an Islamic country called Turkey. Turkey could easily have been an Iran, it could have been an "Arafatisan" easily, but it's not. In this case, it had a visionary leader, I must say a ruthless visionary leader, who took it one way. You know, Pahlevi, the Shah's father, wanted to take Iran that way, but he failed. So Iran went that way, and Ataturk took Turkey that way.

But it has shown at least that if we are arguing with a genetic cultural argument--I think I just coined a phrase--but if we argue that one, then Turkey flies in the face of that. Sure, it has a third of a militant Islamic component, but it's sufficiently anchored and a different conception to thwart off that threat. So far it has done that for many, many decades. Is it a Western liberal democracy? No, it's not. Do we care all that much? Yes, we care, and we're happy that it's not that other type of regime.

So you can turn on the tube in Turkey, and you can find 12/13 stations, a cacophony of sounds. You have a fairly free market there. You have all sorts of other elements of what we would call the democratic society, but, you know, who controls that society at the end? At the very end, at the substrata of everything, the army runs Turkey. It's not a perfect Western model, but it's a hell of a lot better than Taliban Afghanistan.

I'm saying that it is possible to devise other methods, other conceptions, and that we should not give up merely because of the fact that the Islamic and Arab world, on the whole, with one or two notable exceptions, has not been challenged and not been asked to evolve from often the dark dictatorships that inhibit it.

QUESTION: Allan Gerson.

Could you address two issues. First, the issue of the fence that you talked about earlier, why there isn't a fence Gaza style, and obviously that has to do with the political issues regarding settlements. How easy is it, in these circumstances, at some point, to create a fence that is similar to the Gaza-style fence?

Secondly, could you comment in some way on the motivations that prompted Secretary of State Colin Powell to meet with Arafat and how one can respond to his decision?

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: On the first question, I didn't say that I'm necessarily advocating a fence for Judea-Samaria, for the West Bank. I said that there is such a fence around Gaza. The main point is the physical barrier. It is not meant to be a political boundary. It is meant to be a physical barrier simply to prevent people carrying explosives from reaching and penetrating our citizens. It's not very difficult to construct it. You can construct it either with a fence.

I would put a fence around Kalkilya and Tucarin [ph]. That's the only two places that I would actually touch on the '67 lines because that's where they are, two populated areas. But the other stuff can be done very quickly by using, for example, mobile forces with electronic means. You can have night vision, day vision, with fire power. So you take, I don't know what it is, 400 points, maybe 10,000 people, 10,000 men.

QUESTION: [Off microphone.] [Inaudible.]

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: You have it in order not to get killed. That's why you have it. But the way you have it is you can have line-of-sight connections. It can be done militarily. It's not very difficult. You can have it--oh, why do we not have it yet?

QUESTION: [Off microphone.] [Inaudible.]

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: Why hasn't Israel kicked out Arafat? You know, why, why, why? We can ask many questions. You don't really want me to get into that one, do you?

[Laughter.]

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: I would rather stay away from that, as I will from the question of Secretary Powell's motivations. Let me say, however, what I think the result will be, and the result will be that it would produce, unfortunately, no useful effect because Arafat, whether or not he signs a 13th cease-fire with us, and whether or not that cease-fire holds for a while, Arafat, there is no value to his words, there is no value to his signature.

He has violated every single line of every single item of every single provision of every single contract of every single agreement that he's made with us or with the Americans or with the Arab countries or with anyone else. He has ruled himself out by his practice, not only by his deceptions, but by the violence and the doctrines that he is relentlessly pursuing. So he has got to go. And whether or not people meet with him, eventually he'll have to go. He'll either go sooner or he'll go later, but the sooner he goes, the better for everyone, including the Palestinians.

QUESTION: Mr. Prime Minister, this is [?] with Turkey's [?] TV Television.

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: From Turkish Television?

QUESTION: Turkish Television, yes.

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: One of the 13 channels?

QUESTION: Actually, the best news television.

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: Of course.

[Laughter.]

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: Now there you have the spirit of competition shown in an Islamic society. It's wonderful.

[Applause.]

QUESTION: Well, basically, how would you qualify the future of Israel and Turkish ties? How would the so-called strategic partnership with Turkey be affected by the situation in your region, especially after the Turkish prime minister qualified Israeli action in the West Bank? He likened it to a genocide, and there has been major reaction in the United States at least. How do you see the relations with Turkey?

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: That was an unfortunate term to be used against Israel and to be used by a Turkish prime minister in particular. You don't want explication on the second part of what I said. You understand it.

I think that obviously there is pressure on Turkey from the Arab and Islamic world to say these things, but I think that my response would be this: The longer we wait, the more we respond to pressure, to restrain the kind of natural action of self-defense that we would take, the way the United States is taking it, that Britain has taken it, Turkey has taken it against terrorism directed against its own citizens, the longer we wait, the more explosive the Middle East becomes. The quicker we act, the faster we bring this to finality, the more we bring stability and order back into the Middle East.

This is I think something that is, for us, and Israel, merely a guideline, rather than for Turkey. Turkey has understood very well where its ultimate interests lie. I have no doubt that that is the case today, notwithstanding this rhetoric, and it is as threatened by the mad militant who sees to attack us as we are.

QUESTION: John Wohlstetter of Discovery Institute.

Based on your own military background, where do you come down in the debate on what it takes to take Saddam down? Is it going to require a force roughly half the size of Desert Storm, as some analysts have said, or do you think it could be done more along the lines of Afghanistan, with special forces as the primary ground tool?

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: I don't know, and I wouldn't want to second guess the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I think they've been doing, on the whole, a very admirable job, and I think they could do this as well.

I do think that it's eminently doable. I do not think it's difficult. I also think there will be a point of collapse a lot earlier than people think because it's a foregone conclusion. It is not going to be a great enigma, a great puzzle whether America will defeat Saddam. Now the minute you know that, and they all know it, now you have merely a test of what comes first; that is, how soon will the Republican Guards, for example, lay down their arms? I would tell them right from the start, when you land your first landing craft or your first armored column on Iraqi soil, I would say to them, "You will all die if you fight, and you will all live and go free if you don't."

Now they have a dilemma. Create that dilemma for them. I would create that dilemma for the battalion commander who mans the missile sites directed against us and you with those weapons and those warheads. You can die if you continue. You will die or you will live and go free. Make that public.

QUESTION: Thank you. Jonathan Rauch, National Journal.

Is the Israeli army being as careful about avoiding civilian casualties and damages as it should be, and is it being as careful as the Americans have been in Afghanistan?

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: No, it's being more careful. It is more careful because, as I said earlier, it is using ground forces and not wholesale air power that it has. And by the way, I'm not faulting the U.S. for having used air power in the wholesale manner that it did. It gave the Taliban and al Qaeda the opportunity to clear civilian areas. It gave the opportunity for civilians to clear civilian areas, and then proceeded to act after that warning was given, and that is justifiable. We have not done that. We have not used the rather formidable air power that we have. We have used tanks. When they show tanks and armored columns, it makes good television.

You know what the relationship between the power of a tank, the fire power of a tank is in, say, a typical modern bomber? I don't know what it is. I once flew in a bomber, and I once drove in a tank. Two different experiences. I would tell you that the ratio is substantial in favor of the bombers, so we don't use it, and we are absolutely going house to house, in many cases, and risking our soldiers and losing our soldiers.

I think that Israel should be commended, not condemned, for taking undue risk upon itself and upon its soldiers and officers in order to try to reduce civilian casualties on the other side. There is no other reason. Because if we just wanted to root out the terrorists and save our own soldiers, we'd use overwhelming fire power.

By the way, there is a relationship between the speed of an operation and fire power. If we say we have to do this action, we have to root it out, but we have to do it fast because we're pressed, the faster we do it, the more fire power we use, the slower we do it, the less fire power we use, and I think that is actually better for everyone concerned.

QUESTION: Mohammed Abu Dahab [ph] from the embassy of Egypt.

Do you accept the principle of a Palestinian state, and, if so, what is your vision of that state? Thank you.

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: I accept the idea of a Palestinian self-government. I always hold back on the question of a state for one reason, not because I want to govern the Palestinians. I don't want to govern a single Palestinian. Until recently, Israel wasn't even in the Palestinian-populated areas. It was governed by

Arafat. That was the deal made in Oslo. Arafat was given control of all of the Palestinians, not governed by Israel, not occupied by Israel. Simply not true.

But I have said, again and again, that if we have new partners who disavow the goal of destroying us and who disavow the use of terror, then we should negotiate an arrangement, which I think is equitable and secure, where the Palestinians enjoy complete self-government, but do not have those powers of sovereignty that can destroy my state.

There are very few powers that are excepted. They have nothing to do with self-government. They are to do, for example, with the ability to import weapons, Karine A's, Karine B's, Karine C's, all of these ships, Titanic-full of ships that it could bring into their ports. So, yes, I would keep that power in Israel's hands or the power to make military pacts with the likes of Iran or Libya or Syria and so on. They do not affect the individual or even collective freedom of the Palestinians, they just affect their ability to threaten the one and only Jewish state. That is an arrangement that I would do.

The reason I don't use the word "state" is not because I want to govern another people. I don't, definitely, it is because I don't want them to have the power to threaten my people. And when you use the word "state," what this incorporates usually are those powers, all powers of sovereignty, including the ones, the few that we don't want to give, and therefore I am always careful to say self-government, but not a state.

Those who think that the solution to the problem right now is to create an Arafat state have learned nothing from history, nothing, including very recent history. They will create the ultimate engine of terror in the heart of the Middle East, ultimate engine of terror.

And the idea that we have the--I know that there was a so-called Saudi peace plan. First of all, it's a Saudi plan. It's not a Saudi peace plan. It's a Saudi plan for two purposes. One is exculpation, and the other is extirpation-- Exculpation in order to divert attention from the fact that the Saudis have been using--

[Tape change: Side A to Side B.]

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: --a few decades to fund [inaudible] militant Islam from the Philippines to Los Angeles and sundry groups like the Taliban and al Qaeda. And what better way to exculpate than to put a title of peace and put forward a program that was resoundly rejected by the overwhelming majority of Israeli electorate in the elections between Barak and Sharon.

Here is the Saudi peace plan. That is the part of--we have dealt with exculpation, let's deal with the part of extirpation, extirpating Israel from the scene. Because what Israel is asked to do, under this so-called peace plan, is to reduce itself to a country 10 miles wide, put Arafat on the hills above Tel Aviv and on the walls of Jerusalem, shut our eyes and be prepared to accept a demand that is made possible by this plan of flooding the remainder of this rump[?] state with millions of Palestinians, thereby effectively bringing about an end to the Jewish state, and all of this with a whisper of a Saudi guarantee.

Now here is the rebuttal that you get from this. They're saying, but for the first time all of the Arab countries, all of the Arab regimes are saying that they are willing to have peace with Israel. That is right. Saddam is saying it, Qadhafi is saying it. Now that should cause you to pause and think.

[Laughter.]

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: And what they are saying is, okay, we're saying that we're giving you the right to exist, Israel, but we're going to ensure that you don't have the conditions to exist. This is not a peace plan. It is a plan for exculpation and extirpation. And if anyone is serious about putting it as a U.N. resolution, then it should be opposed, opposed before it gets to the U.N., and if it should make it there, opposed after it comes out of the U.N. It is not a plan for peace.

QUESTION: Thank you. My name is Dr. Zinni from the Council on Diplomacy and International--

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: Did you say Dr. Zinni?

QUESTION: Yes, sir.

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: You're serious.

[Laughter.]

QUESTION: I commend Prime Minister Sharon for sending you here and the U.S. At an emotional level, I do agree that Bush is a very good friend of Israel, although I personally doubt if his policy against or his policy on the war against terror is applicable to what your government is currently experiencing.

Personally, with all of the evidence that your government has acquired, I no longer believe that Arafat is a pursuer of a peace, much more a Nobel Peace Prize winner.

What do you think are the specific actions--

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: You believe he is a pursuer of a peace or not a pursuer?

QUESTION: I don't. I feel like I can no longer accept the fiction that he is, indeed, a pursuer of peace.

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: See, they are threatening to take away the Peace Prize from Shimon Peres.

QUESTION: Correct.

[Laughter.]

QUESTION: But my question, sir, is what specific actions would you recommend to the Bush administration that will stand any chance of reversing this violence before it gets completely out of hand?

And to follow up, do you think it's a good idea for President Bush to send former President Clinton or Bush, Sr., to also become members of the peace negotiating team as well?

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: I think the problem is not emissaries, the problem is the substance in the field. And the substance in the field is this. You are not going to get anything with Arafat. You can negotiate with him from here to eternity. You'll get nothing. We did negotiate. We gave him everything. Well, we gave him a great deal and offered him everything, and nothing helped. We had cease-fire after cease-fire. We had promise after promise, worthless. It doesn't mean anything. He has got to go. That is a simple reality, and I don't want to sound like Cato, the old Cato, because I am not that old, but he is going to go. He will go, not kill, but go, and that will have to happen.

I think that that can happen, and will happen, and will end the violence or reduce it significantly, but there is a danger from another quarter, and I was very glad to see the president admonish Syria and Iran very forcefully, as he should, because that is the one place that might ignite because somebody is igniting it, and that is Iran. There is no Lebanon to speak of, in these terms, and Syria is passively or even actively supporting this Iranian provocation. It is important to tell these governments that they will pay a price, a heavy price, if they continue this provocation, and I think this is what America should do right now.

I think we should finish the job, America should finish the job of dismantling the terror empires, the terror network, and Israel should be left to finish its job. And it is not by accident that Iran is doing what it is doing, and with Syria, because they know that they are next. That's why they're doing it, just as Arafat knows. They are all linked to him. That is what they are doing.

They are playing this game, using, in the case of Arafat, some con artists here in the West. And forgive me for being so blunt. This is what you're dealing with. You do not have to grow up on the South side of Chicago to understand what I'm saying. You can have common sense. It helps if you've been in the Middle East a

little, but you just have to use your common sense, and a compass and a map put forward by President Bush.

MR. DeMUTH: We have time for just one or two more questions.

QUESTION: Ben Wattenberg at AEI.

In the event of the construction of an Israeli fence or buffer zone in the West Bank, what is to prevent Arab terrorists from firing mortars or something over it, as they do from Gaza?

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: Nothing. That is why I said that, in fact, that is not enough. It is not enough to have this fence, which, by the way, or this barrier, which I envision, by the way, is a one-way barrier. We can go in. They can't go into our place. It's just a physical barrier. It's not a political solution of any kind. It doesn't require the dismantling of settlements. They are there. They can go through. It's just to prevent people carrying satchels or explosives from reaching our cities. It's much simpler than people think. We don't have a political solution with Gaza. We just have a fence around Gaza, that's all.

So it's not that complicated, and we have settlements in Gaza. So what? It is not, when you talk about a fence or a physical separation, it could be used as a very clever device to get your political agenda across. It is agenda-neutral what I've just described. It's nothing, nothing more than a physical barrier, and that's the way I would deal with it.

You asked a second question, I'm sorry.

QUESTION: I didn't.

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: You didn't. That is it. Okay.

You can ask me as many questions as you want, but I have to leave in five minutes. Go ahead.

[Laughter.]

QUESTION: Zachary Constantino with American University.

Should Israel begin conducting an air offense against Hezbollah in Lebanon?

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: Well, I think it should make clear that it won't tolerate any more aggressive attacks against its territory and its people. Ultimately, you cannot make these things clear unless you take action. Words stop at a certain point and action begins. I think we are very close to that point.

QUESTION: My name is Ken Lewis, and I am from Portland, Oregon.

I would like to ask you another question about the Saudi plan.

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: I like the fact that you said the Saudi plan. I think that's--

QUESTION: In addition to the pulling back to certain borders and in addition to the right of return, one columnist wrote that the Israeli position in Lebanon was certified by the United Nations as having pulled back to where they wanted, and yet the Saudi plan is saying they have to get out of Lebanon. Could you comment on the--

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: Did the Saudis say we have to get out of Lebanon?

QUESTION: The Saudi plan says--

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: They must think that Lebanon extends into half the Galilee, and in fact I think Lebanon says that. So that is the only explanation that I can give.

QUESTION: It's those small little--

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: Oh, oh, the Shaba farms?

QUESTION: But the United Nations has certified that you've done what you've asked.

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: I take your point, but I think the more important point is what I've said is that it is a plan that ostensibly talks about peace, but effectively makes it difficult or impossible for Israel to live at all, not in peace or any other way. So I don't think it's viable.

MR. DeMUTH: I'm going to squeeze in two final quick questions. This gentleman here and this very patient gentleman in the back.

QUESTION: Bob Wards.

You are talking about advancing understanding of the nature of freedom in the Islamic world, what's your suggestion of how we advance the understanding of those same principles in Europe?

[Laughter.]

QUESTION: How do you explain the uniform support for Arafat and the complete different view of the situation there than what we see in our country?

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: Well, there are various ways. You can be nice about it or not. What do you want me to be?

[Chorus of "nots."]

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: Let me be nice about it because I was already not nice about it.

There is, I suppose, an explanation of why Europe is so twisted in the way that it sees our conflict. It's because the formative experience of just about every European nation in international affairs was colonialism. So each one of them had their overseas colonies, and that clearly is something that has passed by the way of the civilized world. I mean, Britain had colonies, and France had colonies, and Belgium had colonies, and Italy had colonies and so on, even Germany, everyone had colonies.

So, for the Europeans, they view the Zionist restoration, the return of the Jews in greater numbers to their ancestral homeland as a new colonial experience. This is not Judea. That's where the word "Jew" comes from that we're dealing with. This is Algeria or the Belgium Congo, I don't know, something like that. And, of course, they've bought lock, stock and barrel the complete reversal of history that the Arab propaganda has put forward.

I mean they don't read Mark Twain, they don't read Francois Lemouti [ph], they don't read the hundreds of visitors to the Holy Land in the 19th century who described this empty, barren country just yearning for the Jews to come back, which they did, like my grandfather, the only crazy Zionist, proto-Zionist, the only recorded case of somebody who came to the Holy Land in the 19th century and actually stayed. He came from America, by the way. I mean, the only one who came from America. He came to America from Lithuania, traded with the Indians, came to the Holy Land and stayed, unlike Mark Twain. He didn't leave. He actually stayed.

Well, none of that is recorded, nor is the influx of the vast numbers of Arabs to the Jewish-populated areas, once we build up the place, who now call themselves ancient Palestinians. There was an indigenous Arab population, to be sure. There was also an indigenous Jewish population, and Jerusalem had a majority of

Jews by 1850, but there is an undeniable record of a tremendous influx, tremendous influx of Arabs from Ejas[?], that is, from Egypt, from Syria, from Iraq and so on, into this land by people who still retain those names--[?], the Egyptian, [?], coming from Khajas [ph], Hallaby [ph], coming from Allyppo [ph], and so on. These are all notable family names of Palestinian families in Gaza, and the West Bank and so on.

So how do we know this? Well, because the census of the British mandate between the two shows this fivefold increase of Palestinian population next to the Jewish areas. How do we know this? Who can adduce to this? Well, how about Winston Churchill? Winston Churchill, who was minister of colonies, said, in the interim war years, because many Arabs were beating up on him, and he said the Arabs have no grievance whatsoever against the Jews because far from depriving them of their rights, the Jews built up the country and opened up its gates to enable the Arab population to come in and swell their numbers, so says Winston Churchill, and he was telling the truth.

And that truth has been completely obfuscated, thrown out, and substituted with a fake history that says that we came to this thriving Palestinian homeland, verdant--teaming with the Palestinian population.

This was the situation supposedly when we, according to Arafat's speech in the U.N., in 1880 when we made the invasion. You will be pleased to know that Mark Twain arrived at that same country 13 years before and described a wasteland. It must be then that in the 13 years between that date and Arafat's alleged date of our invasion to this teeming, verdant Palestinian homeland, something miraculous happened.

Alas, in 1880, another famous visitor, at least in the 19th century, famous, visited that country. His name was Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, and he too wrote a book. And he said, "I look in Judea," he used the word "Judea," by the way, nobody would think of the politicized term "West Bank" in those days. He said, "I look in Judea north, I look south, I don't see a single human being. When will the Jews come back?"

And none of these guys were Zionist propagandists. Israel didn't have Hezbollah, and it doesn't have it now.

[Laughter.]

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: They were just writing the truth, and the truth was that this was not a fully empty land, but a largely empty land brought back to life by the Zionist restoration, by my grandfather and many others who came, and as a result attracted a tremendous amount of Arab immigration.

I don't want the kick them out, but they want to kick me out and deprive me of any rights to my ancestral homeland, and they've been able to do that by going to places like Europe and saying that we are an alien intrusion in their ancient homeland. It is their land, not our land, it is they were there well before us. They made this into some independent state that we overtook and so on.

These distortions of history are very important because they fit into the European model of colonialism, and that is why I am giving you an absolution for Europe right now, but I will come back and take it away. That is very different from America. The formative experience of America has not been colonialism, it's been nation building. America is the new Promised Land. You know what the old Promised Land is. This is to be the new Jerusalem. You know what the original Jerusalem is.

And America has this new Promised Land of freedom, of democracy, of those values that are shared by both people. So, naturally, there is this affinity, which is reflected. That's the deepest stratum. Time and time again people look at the public opinion polls, as I saw on three separate networks yesterday, and they are absolutely shocked how strong American support is for Israel. I don't mean the support of the American Jews. I mean, the support of the American non-Jewish public. And the reason that is the case is because this affinity, this basic affinity that cannot be cluttered even by bad news coverage, this feeling that we share the same experience and the same values, and it is not, you cannot dislodge it by this bogus model of colonialism that doesn't apply.

So that I think is the explication of, in the deepest sense, of the difference between European perception of Israel and the American perception of Israel. But I told you that I would not absolve Europe of their responsibility, and with that I end. Because I think it is truly disgraceful, it is truly disgraceful that we who

were slaughtered, my people which were slaughtered on the soil of Europe, and they lifted not a finger, they did nothing, to come back 60 years later, when we're slaughtered by this tyrannical regime, and they side with the killers, and they deny us the right of self-defense.

I don't care what explanation you could give, even ones better than mine. That is inexcusable.

Thank you very much. Bye-bye.

[Applause.]

[Whereupon, the proceedings concluded.]