

Remarks on the Terrorist Attack in Israel and an Exchange With Reporters March 3, 1996

The President. The suicide bombing in the Middle East last night shows once again how determined the enemies of peace are. In just a few moments, I will be calling Prime Minister Peres to express our condolences, our solidarity, and our outrage. We must spare no effort here in the United States to support Israel and the other supporters of peace in defeating the forces of terrorism. I will also be in touch with Chairman Arafat and others in the region to ask for their support.

It is clear that there are forces at work in the Middle East who don't want peace and who exist based on the continuing misery and division of the people there. And we have got to do everything we can to defeat them and to stand with those in the Middle East, beginning with our friends in Israel, who are determined to defeat them.

This is a troubling moment, but I am determined to see that it does not defeat the peace process, and I am determined to do everything I can on behalf of the United States to support those who are standing against terrorism and standing for peace.

Thank you very much.

Q. What can the Palestinian leadership do to prevent these kinds of attack?

The President. Well, I'm going to encourage them to do more, to do everything that they can do, and we'll be working with them over the next few days. And I'm sure we'll be in touch, and we'll be answering more of your questions over the next few days. But we're going to work very hard on it.

I do believe that Chairman Arafat has made efforts, and I think he will make more. We have to build the capacity of all the forces in the Middle East, including the Palestinian authorities, to promote law and order and to stand against terrorism. It's going to be a long battle, and we knew that when we started, but I believe we can prevail.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, on his return from Camp David, MD. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Shimon Peres of Israel and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority.

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Once again, Americans join with the nation of Israel in their grief. On their behalf, I extend to Prime Minister Peres and to all his people our heartfelt condolence. We share your anguish and anger at this terrorist crime.

Those responsible again have shown the world that they are determined to stop the cause of peace through the brutal murder of Israeli citizens. But there must be no misunderstanding: The Palestinian people and their leaders, as well

as the promise of peace itself, will be the true victims if those responsible are not stopped.

It is imperative that everything possible be done to help ensure that these tragic scenes are not repeated. Peacemakers must be as resolute as are the destroyers of peace in taking action now to confront this terror. To Prime Minister Peres and Chairman Arafat, I pledge that the United States will stand with you and with all those—Israelis and Palestinians—who support peace as you take up this challenge.