

PALESTINIANS DESERVE BETTER
LEADERS

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 22, 2002

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, today, Israel is engaged in a struggle against violence and terror. Suicide bombings promoted and abetted by Yasser Arafat and his Palestinian Authority have ravaged Israeli cities and towns killing scores of innocent Israeli men, women and children. Arafat's refusal to denounce—persistently, convincingly and in Arabic—these atrocious suicide bombings is indicative of a man who has no interest in a cease-fire, much less a lasting peace settlement. Palestinians are sadly ill-served by irresponsible leaders who advocate violence and homicide instead of peace.

I would like to call to your attention an article that appeared in the Wall Street Journal on April 11, 2002 by Tarek E. Masoud, a graduate student at Yale University. His points are accurate and relevant to the current crisis.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to read Tarek E. Masoud's thought-provoking article, and I ask that the text be placed in the RECORD.

[From the Wall Street Journal, Apr. 11, 2001]

PALESTINIANS DESERVE BETTER LEADERS

(By Tarek E. Masoud)

Those of us who watched Palestinian kids throw stones at Israeli soldiers and tanks during the intifada of the late 1980s find it hard to reconcile those images of bravery and daring with the current wave of atrocities carried out in the name of Palestine. The stone-throwing youths of the first intifada made it easy for reasonable people (who always saw Yasser Arafat for the terrorist that he was) to get behind the Palestinian cause. Today, when Palestine has become synonymous with the murder of innocents, supporting the cause is not so easy. One constantly has to separate the justness of the cause from the injustice of the acts carried out in its name. It is a near impossible feat of mental acrobatics.

What disturbs me is the degree to which many supporters of Palestinian statehood do not even attempt it. They issue pro forma denunciations of suicide bombing, and then go on to offer justifications. The Palestinians, they tell us, are frustrated by their lack of freedom, by the erosion of the dignity by an Israel that places settlers on their land and soldiers outside their homes. They are a people with their backs against the wall. After 50 years of occupation, we are told, the Palestinians have thrown their hands in the air and declared, quite literally, Give me liberty or give me death.

But of course, as Thomas Friedman and others have pointed out, the choice before the Palestinians is not between liberty and death. Israel's leaders long ago accepted the logic of a Palestinian state; they put forward proposals for what that state would look like, and they haggled with the Palestinians over these proposals. Whatever one wants to say about the quality of Israeli proposals or the personal commitment of Ariel Sharon to a Palestinian state—and I happen to think both were fairly low—surely the Palestinians were not in a hopeless situation, the kind of situation which, we are told, causes sane men and women to fall into murder and suicide?

And, even if the situation were hopeless, if all the options were exhausted, is there ever

a justification for the murder of innocent civilians? The philosopher Michael Walzer recently argued that those who claim to have tried everything before resorting to terror are lying to us and to themselves. He asks, "What exactly did they try when they were trying everything?" There's always something else you can do short of killing.

But many of the most vocal supporters of the Palestinian cause would rather not address these moral issues. Instead they want only to criticize Ariel Sharon. Even if you cringe, as I do, at reports of mass arrests and the bulldozing of Palestinian homes, Mr. Sharon is right about one thing: There is no difference between the murder-suicides perpetrated in the name of Palestinian statehood and Osama bin Laden's attacks on American civilians. You cannot, as many pro Palestinian groups in this country have done, denounce the latter and justify the former. Those who do invite us to question either the sincerity of their denunciations of Sept. 11 or their capacity for moral consistency.

I'm not sure where any of this leaves us. Even if the supporters of the Palestinian cause denounced suicide bombing just as vehemently as they do Mr. Sharon, we might be satisfied, but this would not stop the steady stream of volunteers for the grim work of Hamas and the al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade.

This is why I think President Bush has the right idea when he demands that Arafat condemn suicide bombing, and in Arabic. There may be little the isolated Palestinian strongman can do now to control the groups that carry out acts of terrorism. But he can tell his people that the path of murder is the path of doom, that it has only brought shame to the people of Palestine and done nothing to further their cause. Of course, we may be indulging in some wishful thinking. "General Yasser Arafat," as he called himself recently on CNN, is not likely to become a moral force. If he had any inclination to do the right thing, he would have reined in the terrorists long before Mr. Sharon was even elected.

It is by now the received wisdom that Palestinians deserve better leaders. We are offered an example of the kind of leadership they need by the esteemed British historian Martin Gilbert. In 1948, the U.N. mediator in Palestine, Count Folke Bernadotte, was assassinated by members of the Stern Gang, a Jewish militant group that included a future prime minister of Israel named Yitzhak Shamir. In the half century since then, Arabs have often pointed to the episode to justify their own acts of terror.

But what Arabs seem to forget—and what Palestinians would do well to remember—is how David Ben-Gurion, the father of modern Israel, responded to that murder carried out in the name of the Jewish state. According to Mr. Gilbert, when Ben-Gurion learned of the assassination of Count Bernadotte, he thundered: "Arrest all Stern gang leaders. Surround all Stern bases. Confiscate all arms. Kill any who resist." Yes, the Palestinians deserve better leaders. What they deserve is a David Ben-Gurion.

131ST ANNIVERSARY OF BETHEL
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL
CHURCH IN POTTSTOWN, PENN-
SYLVANIA

HON. JOSEPH M. HOFFEL

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 22, 2002

Mr. HOFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of the 131st anniversary of the

Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Pottstown, Pennsylvania. As the oldest African American congregation in the Pottstown community, the church has had a long commitment to serving the spiritual needs of the community.

The Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church was formally established in 1871. Over the course of its long history, the church has grown and expanded as the number of members increased.

On May 20, 2001, the Reverend Vernon Ross, Jr. was officially appointed pastor of the church. Under his leadership, the church has continued to strengthen spiritually and financially. The church membership and Sunday School have continued to grow and an after school tutorial program has been initiated.

Throughout its history, Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church has served the needs of many members. It has been successful in bringing many people together in Christian brotherhood. As one of the oldest churches in Montgomery County, it stands as a pillar of strength and prosperity in the Pottstown community. It is a privilege to recognize Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church on their 131st anniversary.

BUSH ADMINISTRATION FAILS TO
PREVENT ERGONOMIC INJURIES

HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 22, 2002

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, the Bush Administration's failure to promulgate rules to protect America's working men and women from the leading cause of workplace injury—musculoskeletal disorders—is disgraceful. The Congress last year unwisely repealed the ergonomics safety standard developed by the Clinton Administration after years of study by the leading medical researchers in the country. At that time, Labor Secretary Chao pledged to develop a scientifically sound standard expeditiously.

Now, more than a year later, with the findings of three major studies confirming the need for an ergonomics standard, the Bush Administration has proposed a replacement ergonomics policy that provides for no rule, but asks for voluntary compliance instead and, so far, targets only a single industry.

As a result of the Administration's dilatory and simplistic approach, millions of workers will suffer preventable injuries and disabilities, and costly lawsuits will be used to resolve individual cases of injury.

The Bush Administration's serious failure to protect our neighbors and friends who live with the pain of preventable ergonomic injuries has been the subject of extensive and justified criticism. I want to share the views of the Contra Costa Times (April 12, 2002) on the need for a sound ergonomics standard, and the failure of the Bush Administration to address the hazards that injure nearly 2 million Americans every year. (Excerpts from the editorial follow:)

SAFE JOB NOT A LOT TO ASK

The Bush Administration has let the working person down by allowing workplace rules, such as those regarding ergonomics, to become voluntary. It would be going too far for the government to mandate the brand of

pens, the type of chairs, the make of computer a company must provide. That's not what safe-workplace laws are about. However, enforceable rules that protect employees and make the working environment safer are not too much to ask, and that should be law, not choice.

And that's what the administration pulled back from last week. For 10 years the nation's been improving regulations to help prevent muscular and skeletal disorders brought on or intensified by working conditions. In fact, attention to such matters as ergonomics can actually prevent much more serious injuries and maladies that can cause substantial absenteeism.

So why stop now? Why reverse a positive and still-necessary thing? The government estimates 1.8 million U.S. workers per year suffer ergonomic injuries; yet that's an improvement.

The Labor Department will develop new guidelines for safe and healthy work environments. Companies will be able to use or ignore these and the present regulations at their discretion.

It is, of course, in companies' best interests to make the job a place where the workers can work comfortably. It's expensive when employees have to draw on their health benefits, disability and workers' compensation. In the long run it is more costly to have employees suffering from carpal tunnel syndrome, repetitive strain injury, herniated discs and other work-related illnesses than to create a worker-friendly environment.

But many companies, especially those in highly competitive industries, will choose to watch today's bottom line rather than worry about long-term expense. Those people running publicly traded companies may well feel additional pressure to cut ergonomic costs so as to offer short-term profits to the stockholders.

IN HONOR OF THE GIRL SCOUTS OF THE USA

HON. GEORGE W. GEKAS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

April 22, 2002

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to recognize and congratulate the Girl Scouts of the USA. Today, they celebrate Girl Scouts National Leaders Day—an important day for Girl Scouts in which they honor their role models and volunteers who so selflessly devote themselves to educating and mentoring the young girls of America.

On March 12, the Girl Scouts celebrated another important day—the 90th anniversary of the Girl Scouts. For ninety years, the Girl Scouts of the USA has been dedicated to building character and developing real-world skills for girls in America. Few other organizations are as committed to the strong values and social conscience held by the Girl Scouts.

In 1912, Juliette Gordon Low formed the first Girl Scout Troop in Savannah, Georgia with just 18 girls. By 1915 the organization was incorporated and holding national conventions. One of the Girl Scouts' best-known campaigns to the public started in 1937 when Girl Scout Cookies were first sold. In 1950, the United States Congress officially chartered the Girl Scouts of the USA.

Today, there are over 3.5 million Girl Scouts in America and 10 million Girl Scouts in 140 countries around the world. Juliette Gordon Low's vision of an organization that would bring girls out of their homes and serve their communities has developed into the single largest organization for girls worldwide.

Through Juliette Gordon Low's strong influence and enthusiasm for the Girl Scout movement, Girl Scouting has given many talented and educated girls and women the opportunity to develop physically, mentally, and spiritually to their fullest potential. They learn about science, technology, finance, sports, health, the arts, current events, community service, and much more. It is an organization of which we can truly be proud.

I am especially proud of Hemlock Girl Scout Council, the Council contained within my Congressional District. Hemlock Girl Scout Council was formed in 1963 with the merger of ten independent Central Pennsylvania councils. However, Girl Scouts have had active troops in Central Pennsylvania since 1917.

Hemlock Girl Scout Council is a very successful council boasting 14,000 Girl Scouts in 1,200 troops. This number represents one in six girls between the ages of five and seventeen in Central Pennsylvania. The council owns and operates four separate program centers throughout Central Pennsylvania. These centers provide a wide range of educational, athletic, and community activities and programs exclusively for Girl Scouts year-round.

Again, I'd like to offer my sincere congratulations to the Girl Scouts of the USA—and particularly to all the current and former Girl Scouts and leaders in the Hemlock Council—on their 90th anniversary. This remarkable organization has made a lasting contribution to millions of girls and has produced generation after generation of strong and capable women. They deserve our genuine thanks.