

WHAT STEPS SHOULD THE US NOW TAKE TO HELP ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS PUT AN END TO THE BLOODSHED AND TERROR AND REVIVE PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI PEACE EFFORTS?

AMERICANS FOR PEACE NOW PERSPECTIVES
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The key lies with President Bush, who needs to send a message to the enemies of the U.S. and Israel that he has staying power, as well as fire power. To demonstrate commitment to his policies, he must invest the political capital that has been lacking from his efforts with Israel and the Palestinians so far. A serious American diplomatic team needs to be established that can eliminate the ambiguities of what the two sides need to do, monitor what happens on the ground, and be able to privately and publicly declare who is or is not meeting their responsibilities.

As central as reining in terrorism is to the creation of a negotiating environment, the hallmark of the Road Map is that it consists of actions to be taken in parallel – mutual obligations that lay the groundwork for further steps by both sides. Israeli actions to restore hope and improve the lives of Palestinians are vital to the success of Palestinian actions on the security front, just as Palestinian actions on the security front are a sine qua non for sustained changes in Israeli policies.

The President needs to continuously remind the new Palestinian prime minister that no Palestinian leader is going to succeed in establishing an independent Palestinian state without launching a credible, sustained crackdown on the terrorist threat to Israel. And the President must weigh in strongly with Sharon and send a clear message that half-hearted gestures towards compliance will no longer suffice. There must be compliance on the ground to make life easier for the Palestinians and to refrain from all steps that will further aggravate the situation. The settlements, including the illegal outposts, are an important symbolic and substantive roadblock to the progress of any peace initiative. Israel's obligations to dismantle outposts and freeze settlement activity, as required under Phase I of the Road Map, must be implemented, not only for the sake of the diplomatic process but also in the interests of Israeli security. If the President works all three of these leverage points vigorously and simultaneously, then perhaps the Palestinian people will begin to see positive results from the peace process and popular support for Arafat—not to mention Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the Al-Aqsa Martyr Brigades—will begin to erode. Rebuilding the political strength of Palestinian moderates is the best way to head off more bloodshed.

Excerpts from Mark Rosenblum, "Murder on the Middle East Express," Sept. 15, 2003, and APN Issue Brief, Re-Committing to the Serious Pursuit of Peace, September 3, 2003 at <http://www.peacenow.org/nia/briefs/recommitting.html>