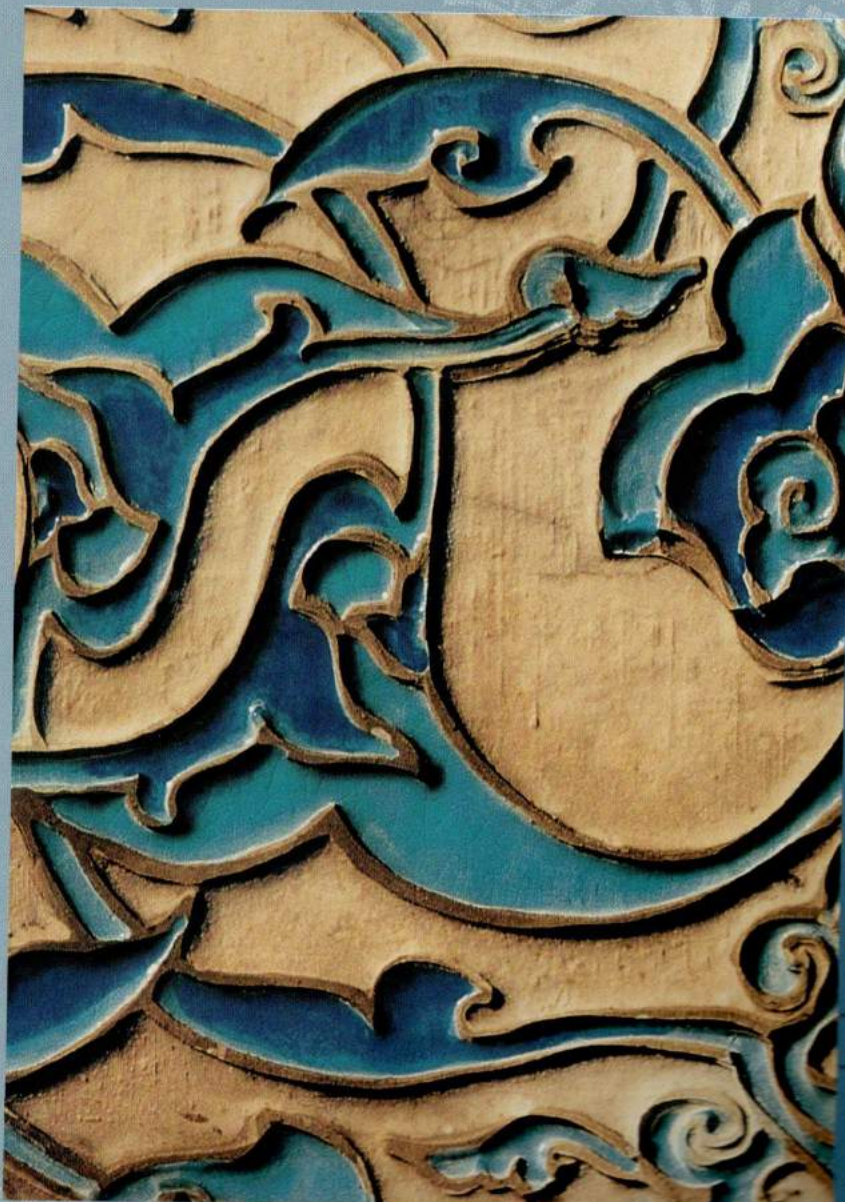


AMERICA'S FOREIGN POLICY CHALLENGES IN THE
EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN IN THE WAKE OF THIS
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON, Senator

November 10, 2004



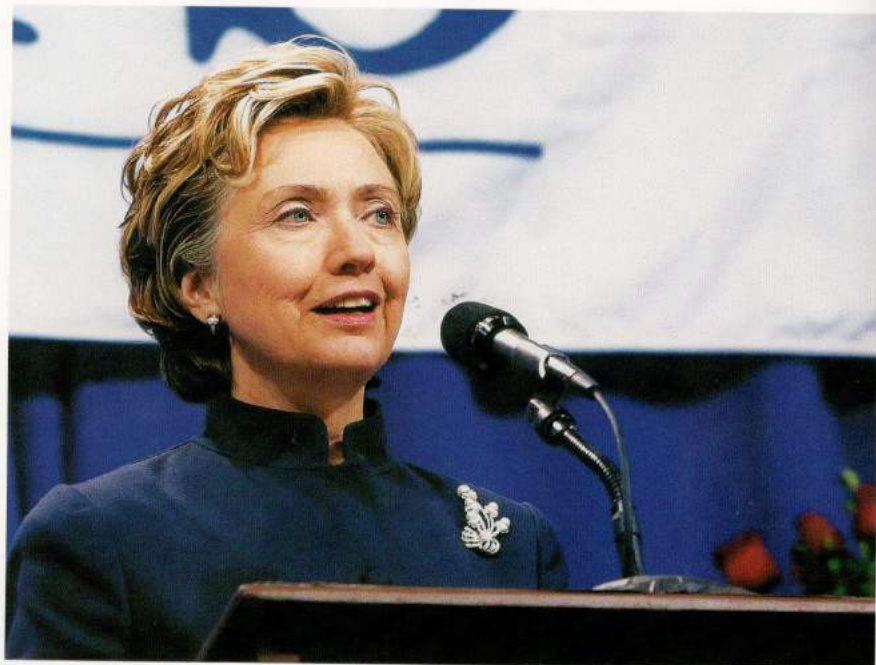
The 2004 Issam M. Fares Lecture

The Honorable
Hillary Rodham
Clinton

November 10, 2004



TUFTS



HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

Hillary Rodham Clinton was elected United States Senator from New York on November 7, 2000. She is the only First Lady ever elected to the United States Senate. Senator Clinton serves on the Senate Committees on Environment and Public Works and Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions and is the first New York senator to serve on the Senate Armed Services Committee. During the 108th Congress, Senator Clinton made homeland security, economic security, and national security her top priorities.

Born in Chicago, Illinois, in 1947, Senator Clinton grew up in Park Ridge, Illinois. She is a graduate of Wellesley College and Yale Law School. Senator Clinton is married to former President William J. Clinton, and they have one daughter, Chelsea.

Senator Clinton's latest book, «Living History,» was released in June 2003, selling more than one million copies in the first months following publication. She is also the author of «*It Takes a Village*» and «*Other Lessons Children Teach Us*», «*An Invitation to the White House*», and «*Dear Socks, Dear Buddy: Kid's Letters to the First Pets.*»



Issam Fares

It is with deep pleasure that I share the podium with a person of exceptional qualities, of personal courage, and of dedication to public service - Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton. After years in the White House as First Lady, she blazed a trail on her own, and now she serves as the United States Senator from New York. As she stood by her husband, President Bill Clinton, he now stands by her, in her new career. Rarely has America witnessed a political pair of such passion and distinction as the Clintons.


As I look at Dr. Lawrence Bacow by me on the podium, I thank the good Lord for his full recovery, and wish the best for him, his family, and this great university which he heads. Dr. Bacow came with a vision to ensure academic excellence at Tufts and to expand its international impact. He has succeeded in both, and for that he has earned our respect and admiration.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge Dr. Leila Fawaz for her leadership in making this Lecture Series the foremost forum on the Middle East. She has conducted programs, organized conferences, and published papers with the view of furthering understanding between the United States and our part of the world and particularly between Lebanon and the United States. Dr. Fawaz has certainly contributed to Tufts' international standing.

Wherever I go, I encounter graduates of Tufts, and always in high positions. The current American Ambassador to Lebanon, Jefferey Feltman, is a case in point. Not only he is a Tufts graduate, he is also a Tufts ambassador.

It is fitting, a week after a heated Presidential campaign, to congratulate President George W. Bush for his re-election and wish him a successful second term. The second term is an opportunity to reconsider the Middle East and to give it top priority. In the past four years Arab-American relations have worsened. The Palestine Problem has festered and gone out of control. Iraq too became a major problem. Ties that once were strong between the United States and some Arab countries are now very much in doubt.

It is our duty therefore in this Forum to sound the alarm, to urge action, and to emphasize the approach which we think is in the highest interests of the United States and of the Arab World. We want to do what is right, not what is convenient. The Middle East is a very special region. It is special for three reasons. First, it is the birthplace of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Second, it is the only region where two wars are raging at the same time in an uncontrollable manner. Third, it is the world's largest depository of oil. Properly understood and wisely handled, these three issues should bring about distinctive relations between the United States and the Arab World.



Poorly understood, and poorly handled, they are likely to explode in a most dangerous and devastating manner and on world scale.

First: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam originate from the same background. They believe in one God; they attribute a moral goal to history; they uphold pretty much similar ethical principles. Yet, in the context of Middle East politics, the three religions have gone separate and dangerous ways. They were taken over by extremists – Why this happened deserves special attention.

Second: The raging wars in the Middle East are inseparable from the religious dimension. Indeed, nothing in the Middle East can be understood apart from the religious element. This is certainly true of Palestine and of Iraq. In both cases religious passions have added fuel to the fire, and have engendered a suicidal spirit now spreading fear and terror in the region and in the world. Throughout the Presidential debates the argument on how to protect America from terrorism centered mostly on sending troops. This attitude after 9/11 is understandable, but insufficient and incomplete. You do not protect America by sending more troops, or by allowing the strong to suppress the weak, you protect America best by applying the principles that America itself holds as its best. Let's, after half a century of evasion, and off-and-on tactics resolve to settle the Middle East problem. The problem could be solved. President Clinton almost succeeded at Camp David at the end of his Administration. Our Speaker knows that. The elements of success are there for all objective parties to see. They were clearly and daringly spelled out in the Arab Summit held in Beirut under the chairmanship of President Emile Lahoud in March 2002. Then, the Arabs took a brave and strategic decision offering to normalize relations with Israel in return for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, for the withdrawal of Israel from Arab territories occupied in and after 1967, and for the return of Palestinian refugees in compliance with UN resolutions. The decision was unanimous. It got timid response from the West and indirect rejection from Prime Minister Sharon.

As for Iraq, there is no choice now but to empower the Iraqi people, to strengthen their institutions, and to give them all the help they need. The United Nations, Europe and the Arab countries, must join the United States in a massive building effort. The effort should be as much political and psychological as it is material. The challenge will ultimately be for the Iraqi people to unite their efforts, and to agree on the fundamentals of the Iraq they want. Only when they help themselves will the external powers be able to help them.



Third: Oil, like political goals and religious beliefs is part of the formula of conflict between Arabs and Americans. Oil wealth is both a blessing and a curse. As blessing it brings in huge capital. As curse, it brings in external competition, it invites external interventions; it arouses appetites; it leads to corruption; it creates a huge difference between rich and poor.

The more hopeless the masses are, the more alienated they become and the more they turn to popular religions, and to highly politicized religious leaders. The challenge here is to direct oil wealth for the good of the people. Arab regimes on their own cannot do that. They have a different agenda emerging from the conflicts in the region. Only a just and comprehensive peace, and a new coalition between the United States and the Arab states to develop the region, will make a difference in this regard. And only in a deeper spirit of understanding between Arabs and Americans will just and enduring solutions in the region take place.

Lebanon is committed to working for good relations between the United States and the Arabs. It is Lebanon's mission to conciliate conflicts, and to bridge the widening gap between the United States and the Arab World. I am pleased to address these issues in the spirit that Lebanon ordains, and I am grateful to Tufts for providing this Forum for world leaders to share their perspectives with us. It certainly is a privilege for us to have Senator Clinton address Middle Eastern issues from her exceptional experience in both the executive and the legislative branches. I thank her for her participation, and I thank all of you for sharing in this major event and contributing to it.



Hillary Clinton

Tufts and the Fares family

«I particularly appreciate His Excellency's understanding of the need to have a place on a great American University campus such as this one, where students and faculty, experts and specialists, as well as lay people in the general public and decision makers, and - not only in politics but business and so much else - can come together to discuss these very important matters.»

I am delighted to be here and somewhat overwhelmed by the turnout for this lecture, which has become something of a family tradition. As you've already heard, my husband was here two years ago and I'm honored to follow him and the other distinguished speakers who have preceded me. And I especially thank you for this opportunity to speak briefly with you about America's foreign policy challenges in the Eastern Mediterranean in the wake of this presidential election. Now, I have to confess at the outset that I wish I were here speaking to you about the prospects for President Kerry's involvement in the Eastern Mediterranean. But, of course, that is not how the election turned out. And therefore we have something of a track record to look back on with the current Administration and a hope that there will be changes in direction and emphasis and engagement in the coming four years.

I would like to begin by thanking President Bacow and the University for their commitment to internationalism, to the education of all students including significant numbers of international students, and particularly for your willingness to take on what can be controversial on any campus: an honest dialogue, a learning experience about the very difficult issues that confront the people of the Middle East as well as our own country. I also want to acknowledge and thank Professor Fawaz for her leadership. It is not an easy position to fill, and she's doing it with great grace and accomplishment. But, particularly, I wish to thank his Excellency, because without the support of the Fares family and, in particular His Excellency, the Deputy Prime Minister of Lebanon, this would not have occurred. The commitment to Tufts is extraordinary. There are few families anywhere in our country who have matched this level of commitment to an American University. And certainly your family's involvement in Tufts has been beneficial to the university in so many ways. But I particularly appreciate His Excellency's understanding of the need to have a place on a great American University campus such as this one, where students and faculty, experts and specialists, as well as lay people in the general public and decision makers, and - not only in politics but business and so much else - can come together to discuss these very important matters.

Now, we may be at a unique historical moment in the Middle East and as with every moment before, America's relationship to the governments and people of the Middle East, to their aspirations, to the challenges they confront, will be critical not only to the future there but to the future here as well. Now, more than ever, we need top-quality research and analysis as well as



The importance of the Middle East to the US and the world

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clear-minded strategic thinking.

There was a time not so long ago when the complicated politics of the Middle East was the sole domain of experts, diplomats, academics and intelligence analysts. But in our time, most Americans, together with so many people around the world, have seen that what happens in the Middle East has profound and direct implications for global peace and security. What was once seen primarily as the cradle of the great monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam is now seen also as a crucible of great conflicts of our time, including the terror which has spread across the world. Simply put, none of us is a bystander to the historical forces sweeping the landscape of the Eastern Mediterranean. We are all, willingly or not, participants; and we all have a stake in the outcome of the great conflicts occurring.

In fact, the United States, because of our position in the world, has more at stake than many other places, and more capacity to help shape the outcome. And what we have to understand better, and work to build consensus around, are ways of thinking first about these challenges, and then acting on that thinking to try to maximize the interest of the people of the region and those of us here in this country. I think it is fair to say that our fates are inextricably bound together.

Now, in a short lecture like this there is no way I could cover all the ground that the experts who met here for several days have covered, or the many others, some in this audience, who have literally devoted their professional lives to seeking common ground, to looking for solutions, as well as those who call this region their home and have lived with the consequences of decisions made years and generations before. But let me at least try to outline some broad general principles that I believe both should govern American foreign policy in the Middle East and which I hope will serve as a little free unsolicited advice to the current Administration.

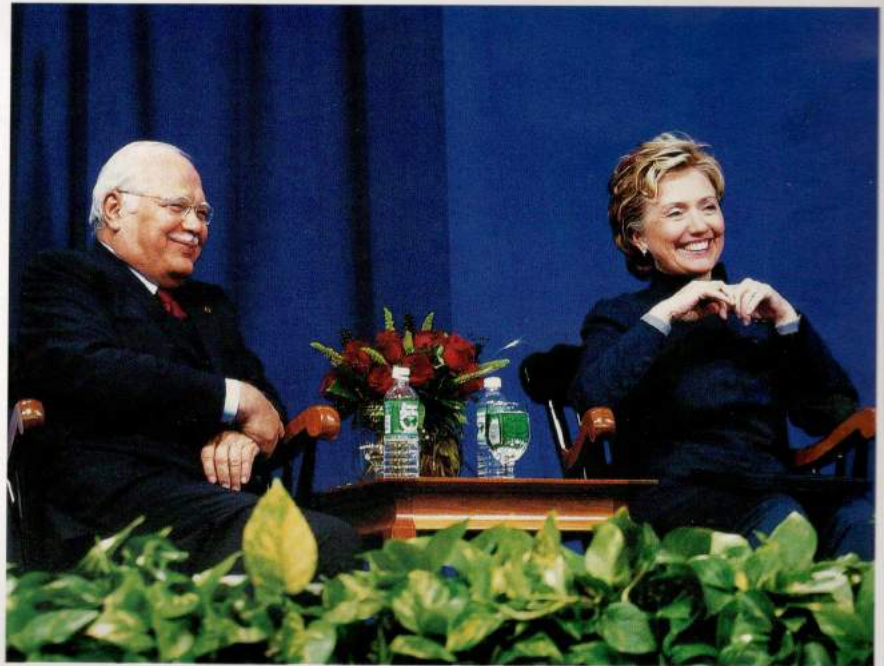
First, I think it's imperative that we recognize at the very beginning that, for American foreign policy, no matter who is President, the security and freedom of Israel will continue to be decisive, determinative in the development of any American approach to the Middle East.

This has been a hallmark of American foreign policy for more than 50 years. And there is no, there is absolutely no possibility that any American government or the American people will waver from that commitment. As President Harry Truman first recognized, this commitment was forged by the horrors of the Holocaust. But it has endured because of the shared values

Democracy, freedom and human rights

«We, as Americans, must always stand on the side of democracy and freedom.»

Women's rights



that the American and Israeli people have experienced.

Secondly, the dream of democracy and human rights is one that belongs to all people in the Middle East. Everyone who suffers under an oppressive regime, everyone whose future is stunted by ideology or religious fanaticism, every single man, woman, and child, deserves our support and our conviction that they can have a future of freedom and prosperity. Now on this issue, President Bush and I actually see eye to eye. There is no racial, religious, cultural or other barrier that prevents people from having the right to seek and aspire to freedom, to live up to their God-given potential. It is condescending and just plain wrong to suggest that certain people are not ready to be free or cannot adjust to a democratic way of life. So therefore, we, as Americans, must always stand on the side of democracy and freedom.

We have not always done that. In fact, our relationships with this region have often been marred by our willingness to stand with the oppressor rather than the oppressed, and to turn a blind eye to the consequences of authoritarianism. As His Excellency pointed out, the extraordinary natural wealth of this region, because of oil, has been a blessing and a curse. It is time that it be, on the balance of history, more of a blessing, and that all the people of the region have an opportunity to share in the wealth that is generated.

Thirdly, women's rights are human rights and that was the essence of the speech I was privileged to make in Beijing as First Lady, way back in the 20th century. But it remains true today, throughout the world, especially in a region that has yet to recognize the full participation of women and girls. When my husband was in Saudi Arabia earlier this year and he was asked to speak at a conference sponsored by a business group, he said that he would not attend unless it was an audience of both men and women, a position that I certainly heartily encouraged. So women were invited but, of course, they were segregated.

And when my husband spoke candidly about the importance to the future of Saudi Arabia of having women obtain and exercise more rights, he was greeted with a burst of applause from the women's side of the room. The fact that he was able to say what he said so directly and to have it covered in the local press the next day was an encouraging sign. But the fact that he had to say it at all demonstrates how far we still have to go.

Finally, when we look at the political-economic strategic situation of the Middle East today, it is hard to imagine that progress can be either made or



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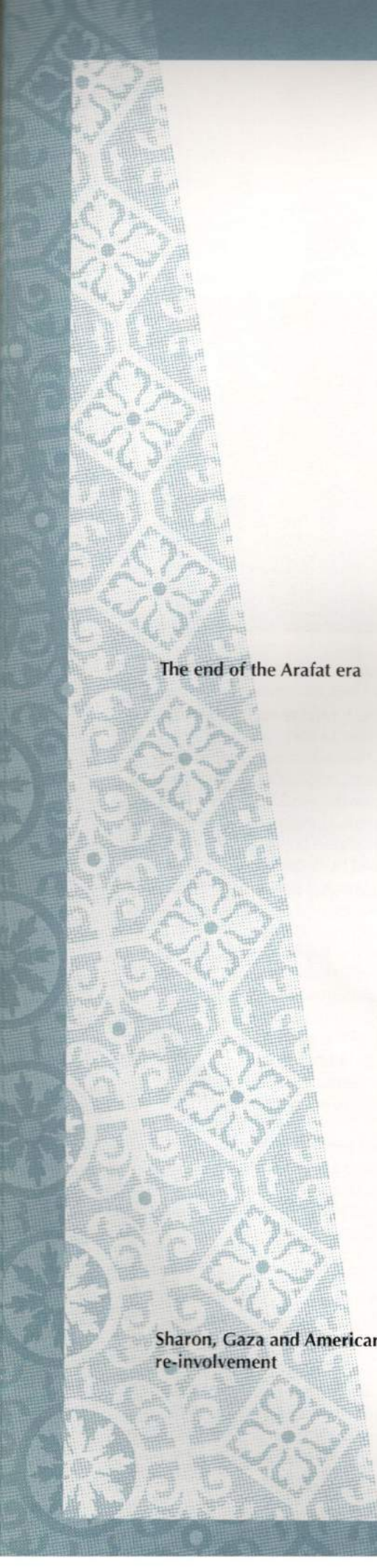
sustained if there is an unwillingness and resistance to including half the population in the future of these countries.

It is always bewildering and somewhat heartrending for me to read economic studies of this region. When we know about the history of intellectual contributions that have flowed from there over the millennium, when we know of the individual success stories that are legend, and yet the factors that are taken into account to determine economic growth, productivity and the like, are nowhere near what the potential represents. There are a number of reasons for that, and some have been recently articulated convincingly – and a number of studies from both within the region and by outside experts, – but surely one of them is the refusal to admit women into full participation.

I was one of the early American voices speaking out against the mistreatment of women by the Taliban in Afghanistan in the 1990s and now, just such a short period of time later, there was a woman on the ballot running for the presidency in the recent Afghanistan election – a remarkable feat considering the history, especially the recent past, in that country. And one, I might add, that puts Afghanistan's women ahead of America's women. One of the keys, therefore, to moving people in the Middle East in the direction of greater freedom, democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, involves the very simple but profound recognition of the humanity and dignity and capacity of girls and women, which means, of course, educating them to the fullest of their abilities as well.

Now, embedded in the region are not only general problems that have to be dealt with primarily through internal actions, through governments changing, through business leaders recognizing that there is a great opportunity by combining commerce and political change to chart a new destiny. There are also very difficult headline-grabbing problems that we ignore at our own peril.

As we speak, we don't yet know the fate of Yasser Arafat but it is clear that we are approaching the end of the Arafat era. That will mean a period of transition for the Palestinian people and we hope and pray that it is a peaceful, non-violent transition. And yet, it is also a great opportunity to transfer power from Mr. Arafat to new leaders. It represents a rare historic opportunity to change the dynamic, not just between the Israelis and the Palestinians, but in the region as well. As we discovered through the experience of the 1990s, Yasser Arafat could not make the transition from guerilla leader to national leader. The Israeli government was right to test his intentions through the Oslo process and the American government was right to support that.



The end of the Arafat era

But, at the end of the day, Mr. Arafat was unwilling or unable to take that leap of faith necessary to concluding any peace agreement.

People do not negotiate with their friends and their allies. You sit across a negotiating table, whether it is in Central America, the end of the conflict there of the 1980s, or Northern Ireland, or anywhere in the world, you sit across a table from people with whom you think you have nothing in common, including your common humanity. You sit across from people who you believe were complicit in violence that maybe took the lives of those who were close and dear to you. But there is no other process. And the Oslo process was one that for eight years diminished the violence, created incentives for economic investment in the Palestinian areas, kept both Palestinian and Israeli children alive. At the end of the day, Yasser Arafat could not lead his people into a new and more hopeful future. But now, the Palestinian people have a chance to do that for themselves, to recognize just how damaging the Intifada has been, not only for Israelis but for themselves, to show that they are capable of breaking the cycle of violence, removing the power of the terrorists in their midst, cracking down on the suicide bombers and engaging in a meaningful dialogue with Israel.

On the Israeli side, Prime Minister Sharon, with the support of the Knesset, has gone forward with the decision to proceed with the withdrawal from Gaza and we should support him in that effort. And we should do everything we can to support the Palestinians as they take control of Gaza, to set up institutions, to create a rule of law, to plan for elections in order to demonstrate that they are ready and willing to take full responsibility for their own future. In order for that to happen, America must be engaged.

We withdrew from engagement at the beginning of the Bush Administration. It is now time for the President to become engaged and the probable passing of Mr. Arafat provides that opportunity to do so.

As we learned during the 1990s, when people were talking, there is some measure of hope that the outcome can be better and fewer people die. Now, I would hope that our President and his Administration will put the Israeli-Palestinian issue on the front burner of American foreign policy again. We learned so much in the 1990s. And now it is time to build on those lessons and create the space for meaningful negotiations to proceed. It is also clear, though, that in order for there to be successful negotiations, neighbors in the area, in the region, have to be brought to the table as well. An effort to move toward a comprehensive resolution about standing issues goes hand in hand

Sharon, Gaza and American re-involvement



America's role is complicated in Iraq

with attempting to resolve the very difficult problems posed by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

America's role is somewhat complicated by what is currently going on in Iraq. Iraq remains the most immediate challenge for our nation, especially given the tragic reality that everyday we continue to lose our brave young men and women as they die or are grievously injured in the line of duty. I visited our troops in Afghanistan and Iraq last year. I visited them in Walter Reed Hospital at Fort Drum in upstate New York and other sites, and they are an extraordinary, exemplary group of young Americans. We owe it to them, and we owe it to the people of Iraq, to pursue a policy that will be successful. I've had my criticisms with the current Administration's approach to Iraq and I still believe that it is important to bring in more support from around the world, and particularly from the region, in order to reduce the risks to our own military and increase the odds of success for the Iraqi people.

As we meet today, the battle for Falluja rages on and obviously our thoughts and prayers are with our soldiers and our marines as well with the Iraqi soldiers. And we all hope that this battle can be decisive and convince the insurgents they have no future, that they should lay down their arms, join the political process. But somehow, I am not as confident as I wish I were that that would be the outcome. We're in for a long haul and we need to do everything possible to create enough security for elections to occur in January, genuine elections that put into place an Iraqi government that will have legitimacy, that in turn can help to create long-term stability.

It is also important to try to create some fresh start with respect to Iraq. Many of us who supported Senator Kerry believed that his victory would do just that. Rather than looking at the glass as being half empty, I think we could look at it as half full and encourage the President to seek a fresh start with our allies and other nations in attempting to summon the support we need to be successful in Iraq. He has an opportunity now to do just that. If he approaches that opportunity with a magnanimous spirit of cooperation and respect for our allies, he will have virtually united support from Democrats and Republicans, from all Americans. Because in reality, we know we have to succeed in Iraq. No matter what the debate is about how we got there and how it was executed, we know we cannot afford to fail. No nation is safe if Iraq descends into chaos, if it becomes an ungovernable amalgam of terrorists' safe havens. So what is past is past. We have a second-term President with - in his words - a lot of political capital, and I would hope he would use it both at home and abroad.

A nuclear Iran and global security



Similarly, with respect to Iran, we have to accept the fact that Iran resembles the place that many in the Administration believed Iraq was. A nation ruled by a regime that partners with terrorists and a land in active pursuit of nuclear weapons. And this time the weapons of mass destruction and the threat they pose are very real.

A nuclear-armed Iran would shake the foundations of global security like a 7.0 earthquake. No country in the region would feel more secure because of it. Obviously, Israel would be most immediately and profoundly threatened by such a development, but they would not be alone in feeling insecure. Knowing of Iran's historic ties to terrorist networks, we, here, in the United States, as well as our friends in the region and even in Europe, would have to be deeply concerned by the ability of the Iranians to produce nuclear weapons at will. With so much at stake, we should be more actively supportive of the European dialogue with Iran. There is no substitute for active engagement when the stakes are so high. I have yet to understand the Administration's attitude toward regimes with which we have such serious and profound differences as North Korea or Iran. They seem to believe that by ignoring, by refusing to even discuss any potential moves that would take us out of the impasses that have been developed, that they would fail to keep faith with some fundamental principles. Throughout the Cold War we met regularly with the Soviet Union; they had leaders who said they were going to bury us. They had nuclear weapons pointed at all of our cities; every President engaged with the leadership in the Kremlin.

It is time for this Administration to be more actively engaged in a dialogue with the Iranians. We need to impress upon the Iranians the strongly adverse consequences for them if they continue along the path of nuclear proliferation. Obviously, if they become engaged and we can move toward some understanding about what their legitimate energy needs might be - as hard as it is to quite understand that - and if they were to be willing to renounce any further development of nuclear weapons, there would be prospects for a more positive future. We must be mindful that discussions don't become a diplomatic cover for continued Iranian efforts to obtain nuclear weapons. There have to be checks and balances in the process, but I see no realistic short-term alternative other than to work collaboratively with our allies to try to persuade the Iranians to change course.

In another area, where the Europeans are particularly important, we should encourage the Europeans to invite, at some point in the future, Turkey, to be part of discussions concerning entry into the European Union. In our country,

«Although the United States has no direct role in that decision, I would hope that European governments and peoples will see the application of Turkey as an opportunity rather than a problem.»

Turkey is not mentioned nearly as much as I believe it should be, given its strategic role in the region. Turkey is at the front lines in the battle against Islamic extremism and its future is closely linked to our own. The fact that Turkey is applying for membership in the European Union while currently being led by an Islamic party is an extraordinary development. If Turkey were to be rejected, that could be seen as an insult to Muslims everywhere, and it would be just one more excuse that Islamic extremists might use in their global recruitment drive. Now I recognize that including Turkey in the EU is a long-term process that requires homogenizing economic rules and immigration policies. It is by no means a slam-dunk, but it shouldn't be a slammed door either. And although the United States has no direct role in that decision, I would hope that European governments and peoples will see the application of Turkey as an opportunity rather than a problem. And I hope that our country will work closely with the people and government of Turkey in order to bolster the forces of democracy, religious freedom, and tolerance so that Turkey can become an even stronger example of what can be achieved through peaceful means.

Lebanon

I also would like to just make a few comments about Lebanon, which has made such great strides in recent years, particularly in the development of its economy. Last year, the International Monetary Fund commended Lebanon's effort on fiscal reform and debt restructuring, and Lebanon's famous cultural life has rebounded as well.

Beirut is becoming a magnet for tourists once again. But it is still located in a region where its fate is dependent on what happens to its neighbors. Borders may separate the lands of the Middle East but their futures are intertwined. So Lebanon has a stake on the outcome of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in what happens in Iraq, in what happens in Iran, what happens in Turkey. And of course, it would be profoundly affected if Israel and Syria were to resolve their differences as well. So, we hope for Lebanon what we hope for all people in this part of the world: a safe, democratic, pluralistic, independent, free, and prosperous future.

That should be our hope, and that should be the goal of American foreign policy in the Eastern Mediterranean. And with the help of institutions like the Fares Center, we can contribute to making that dream real. We are at a crossroads. And although the United States cannot ordain an outcome to the conflicts and the very dangerous problems that strike the Middle East, we cannot, we must not turn our backs. We must become reengaged. And we must become once again a voice for the peaceful resolution of these problems in the interest of the long-term security and prosperity of the region and of our own nation. So, therefore, I hope our nation will use its power and

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**America in the Eastern
Mediterranean**

influence wisely at this critical juncture. The benefits can be tremendous. Or there can be horrible consequences. The power of our elections over the last two years, was viewed from around the world. And yet, I wonder whether many observers and other countries could really follow some of the debate and discussion. We spent an awful lot of time talking about the Vietnam War. We spent a lot of time talking about the specifics of the conflict in Iraq. We didn't spend nearly enough time discussing in a serious manner the long-term challenges we face and what we need to do as a nation to become less dependent, for example, on energy from the Middle East. And so, I hope now that the election has concluded we can get back to a serious conversation. And I also hope that in this area, as well as in so many others, the Administration will be guided by reality and evidence, not ideology and partisanship. We will not help ourselves, and we will certainly not help the region, if we ignore the reality and attempt to impose some parallel version that suits our own rhetoric. A second term is a wonderful opportunity. I know a little bit about that from observing the second term of the Clinton Administration. Yes, there is a certain inevitability to the end of one's time in office, but that can be quiet freeing. And it is my hope as an American, going far beyond Democrat, Republican, Red State, Blue State, but as Americans, that we have a policy that will further the interest of our own nation, as well as move the region that matters so much to our future in a direction of hope. I think it can be done and now may be the moment for us to try again.