



The Middle East

Excerpts from recent speeches by Governor Bill Clinton

In the Middle East, the administration deserves credit for bringing Israel and its Arab antagonists to the negotiating table. Yet I believe the President is wrong to use public pressure tactics against Israel. In the process, he has raised Arab expectations that he'll deliver Israeli concessions and fed Israeli fears that its interests will be sacrificed to an American-imposed solution.

We must remember that even if the Arab-Israeli dispute were resolved tomorrow, there would still be ample causes of conflict in the Middle East: ancient tribal, ethnic and religious hatreds; control of oil and water; the bitterness of the have-nots toward those who have; the lack of democratic institutions to hold leaders accountable to their people and restrain their actions abroad; and the territorial ambitions of Iraq and Syria. We have paid a terrible price for the administration's earlier policies of deference to Saddam Hussein. Today, we must deal with Hafez Assad in Syria but we must not overlook his tyrannical rule and domination of Lebanon.

We need a broader policy toward the Middle East that seeks to limit the flow of arms into the region, as well as the materials needed to develop and deliver weapons of mass destruction; promotes democracy and human rights; and preserves our strategic relationship with the one democracy in the region: Israel.