

## Middle East debate

Tuesday, 25 June 2002

Ms Oona King (Bethnal Green and Bow) : Does the Foreign Secretary share my concern about the double standards employed in this debate?

I speak as someone from a Jewish family. Is it not strange that Ariel Sharon and others have said that Yasser Arafat is not fit to be leader because he cannot control terrorist groups, whereas Ariel Sharon served under a Jewish Prime Minister who did not merely control a terrorist group, but set up the terrorist group that blew up the King David hotel in Jerusalem, killing 91 people? Does not that show us that the Jews and the Arabs are the same&mdash;that if they are exposed to ethnic cleansing and have no other escape, they will resort to unacceptable violence? Please can we have a reduction in the double standards and get the peace process back on track?

Mr. Straw: The United Kingdom Government and, I believe, the international community, have to have one view of terrorism, which is that we are against it and we want the full implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1373. I have to deal for now and for the future, rather than for the history. The simple fact is that the suicide bombings that have taken place and are

25 Jun 2002 : Column 745 continuing are organised by the most terribly evil people in those terrorist groups, and they are designed as much to deny the Palestinians any effective say over their future as to deny the Israelis any sort of life for themselves. That is why it is imperative that firm action is taken against the suicide bombers by the Palestinian Authority as well as by the Israeli Government. Meanwhile, and alongside

25 Jun 2002 : Column 746 that effective security action, we have a political process which, thank God, might now have started following President Bush's speech yesterday.

Several hon. Members rose&mdash;

Mr. Speaker: Order.

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