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## MEETING MINUTES

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**Attendees:** Karel De Gucht, Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs (KDG)  
10 or so other Belgian officials  
Dr. Saeb Erekat (SE)  
Hala Rashed

**Subject:** Belgian Foreign Minister's visit

**Date:** 23 March 2007 11am

**Location:** NAD

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SE:

- Siege is composed of (1) bank restrictions and (2) tax revenues.
- “Bear-hugging”: International community pays lip service to AM.
- Saudis promised \$80M for Pals, but we never saw it.
- [Saeb gave him the Israeli cabinet decision regarding the NUG].
- AM needs to do three things: (1) one gun, (2) Fatah reform, (3) political horizon.
- We won't allow what happened to Arafat to happen to AM.
- We can reverse the course. All we need is 3-4 months to conclude an agreement.
- We will not give up refugees before PSN.
- Israel has three options: (1) two-state solution, (2) control from Med to the Jordan River, but give us our rights, (3) status quo.
- I don't want Al-Qaeda's evil to use my just cause.
- Anyone who says that Pals are not ready for democracy is a racist.
- I can't stand Hamas or their social program.

KDG: Why haven't you reformed Fatah? You've had 14 months.

SE: No good reason. AM wants reform to happen, but he's being blocked. Reform needs money, and you need to help Fatah more.

KDG: For PSN, you need a strong Israeli government, need Fatah reform. You need to be more than just president in title.

SE: We'll take the agreement to referendum. We're experimenting with the third party role now: EU BAM, Japanese, TIPH.

KDG: What about the diaspora?

SE: I never said the diaspora will vote. It's not going to happen. The referendum will be for Pals in Gaza, the WB and EJ. Can't do it in Lebanon. Can't do it in Jordan.

KDG: I don't think it will go to referendum. I think the only way you can do it is to pass it through Parliament.

SE: I told Sharon before disengagement to do it bilaterally. He said no. I said Hamas will claim victory, like they did in Lebanon. And that's exactly what's happened.

SE: AM is not a politician. He's the most decent man. He'll never call early PLC elections without also calling presidential elections.

KDG: That may be his weakness.

SE: He's also tough and smart.

KDG: Will Shalit be released?

SE: I met with 5 parties in Gaza who acted like 5 governments. I said give Shalit to Egypt. Stop firing Qassams. Merge your security forces with ours. I'm not sure they'll do it. Olmert accepted the idea that Shalit be handed to Egypt. When I saw Suleiman, he said that they'd made progress. I asked what criteria they were discussing. He said that they hadn't discussed any criteria, so I shut up. It's not the number that's important, it's the criteria.

KDG: Will settlements be evacuated?

SE: Israel offered me 136 settlements. In the end, I want xxxx square kilometres [referring to size of OPT]. We are close to an agreement.