

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Erekat – Sneh / Dangot**  
**8:30PM June 19 2006**  
**West Jerusalem (Inbal Hotel)**

Attendance:

Palestinians:           Dr. Saeb Erekat (SE)  
                              COL Hazem Atallah (HA)  
                              Nazmi Muhannah (NM)<sup>1</sup>  
                              Rami Dajani (RD)

Israelis:                 BG Ephraim Sneh (ES)  
                              BG Eitan Dangot (ED)

SE introduced the Palestinian side [general discussion of political issues]. SE said the Karni plan was a work in progress with Dayton's team. He asked RD to present an overview of the plan. [See PPT presentation and text of the plan].

Several interjections were made during the presentation of the Karni Security Plan:

**Training of new force:**

- SE said that LTG Dayton spoke to the King of Jordan, and he is willing to facilitate the matter.
- ES expressed concern that the training would take place too far into the future. He estimated it would take up to 5 months before a force of 300 would be ready to deploy. The immediate future is important. It is better to have someone loyal now rather than someone well-trained but not loyal 5 months from now.
- NM said it would take 5 weeks to set up the training course in order to have an operational and loyal team at Karni. The plan is a quick one. You teach them one by one.
- ED asked about the nature of the training in Jordan.
- NM said there were 9 elements in the training program: dealing with people, vehicles, drivers, palettes, arms, roads, walls etc.

**Vetting process:**

- ES asked about vetting processes: How does it work? Who does it? He said he knew very well the Israeli security clearance system and it is extensive. He wanted to know what the Palestinians had in mind.

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<sup>1</sup> NM spoke mostly in Hebrew. The notes of his remarks are therefore incomplete.

- HA replied with a summary of the planned process through a high level ‘designated party’ directly in the president office that would conduct multiple checks. RD explained how the process fit into the overall plan.

**Funding:**

- SE said that Jim Beaver (USAID) has confirmed that USD \$20 Million remains available for border crossings. USD \$5 Million is available right away. Now that the President’s jurisdiction over border crossings is clear there are no problems regarding releasing the funds through the President.

**Private land within KCP:**

- [In Hebrew] NM explained that the land must be bought from the private owners, which may be done right away. He mentioned the figure of \$400,000 having been made as an offer in the past, and discussed the price per dunum (45 dunums total area). He said that if he had the necessary funding (the figure of \$3 million was mentioned) for the land and other needs he would guarantee a fully functional and secure crossing point in 6 months time.
- He described the idea of placing a 120cm elevation 20-30 metres away from the conveyors. Palettes would then be loaded off trucks onto forklifts to get to the conveyors. This arrangement would prevent any vehicle or unauthorised person from access the area beyond the elevation.

**Time for implementation:**

- ES and ED asked about estimates for implementation time.
- RD explained that the plan was based on three time frames: immediate, medium-term, and long term. HA estimated that 2-3 months was sufficient from the security perspective. RD said that the US team had estimated the same thing.

**Presidential Guard:**

- ES: how many loyal men do you have now in the PG? How many in Gaza? How many have sufficient equipment? He asked for a numerical breakdown: at RCP; protection force for Abu Mazen in Gaza.
- HA said there are 120-150 PGs at the RCP now. The president requires about 300 PGs for his protection.
- ES: 450 PG out of a total force of how many?
- ED said he was aware there are 2300 in Gaza and 1500 in the WB.
- ES asked about their weapons.
- HA said that about 2/3 of the PG are not well-equipped. The shortage is both in number of guns as well as ammunition and magazines. There are therefore only about 2 batallions that are adequately equipped.
- ES said that this issue is extremely important, particularly given future plans to deploy in Northern Gaza. He made calculations and concluded that the need is equipment for 800 people (guns, magazines, ammunition). ES acknowledged the importance of all equipment and said that when he was in military service he used to carry at least 7 magazines.

- ED asked about the recent transfer of guns from Jordan. HA replied that 200 guns were transferred to Ramallah and 465 to Gaza. He said that a number of the guns are not fit for use (some are very old – 1950s). He said he needed at least functional Kalashnikovs. He concluded that this transfer is insufficient. His preliminary assessment was that 60 out of the 200 guns in Ramallah are simply not useable.
- ES continued the calculation: There are roughly 1500 people who are not in RCP, or dealing with president's security.

#### **ED assessment of the plan:**

- The ideas presented were modern and promising.
- They should be presented to the people with direct responsibility over Karni.
- We can create a small team to work together and study the details. At the higher level we can coordinate with Dayton. He has already presented his ideas to the MoD.
- As you know, security over Karni is responsibility of IDF.
- Minister of Defence has adopted the policy that Karni should be open as much as possible. After solving financing and money issues, you have to work very fast. The idea is to implement before the end of this year.
- HA pointed out that we can act even faster than that. ED said there are always surprises. There are parties on your side that are interested in having a bad situation.
- ED discussed potential role of Dahlan, and said he may have to deal with Salem Thabet on these issues (this discussion was unclear).
- NM said that Abu Salim knows him. They are all Fatah.
- SE said that if the US is on board, no one will mess with the plan.

#### **Setting up teams:**

- SE said the Palestinian team will consist of NM, HA, LTC Jamal Abu Fahm (commander of PG at Karni), and the NSU (RD and NF). NM added an engineer to the team: Jamal Baghdadi.
- ED said his side will form a counterpart by end of next week.

After the formal conclusion of the presentation, the following issues were discussed:

#### **Northern Gaza / Qassam rockets**

- SE said that the Qassams hurt everyone, and that they will be the next stage. The President suggests having a joint team to coordinate plans for northern Gaza. He does not mind including the Americans.
- The plan must include dealing with the roads, access to launching sites, as well as with deployment of forces.
- We need your trust: 1000 guns, 3 million bullets.
- ED: for the PG? SE: Yes
- ED: Where? HA: We need to work together on the details.

- SE: The President is asking for a fair chance. Our strategy is: (a) build the PG; (b) strengthen presidential institution; (c) Revitalise the Fatah movement; (d) re-engage with Israel in political process and negotiations.
- SE affirmed that the President understands Peretz's concerns re: Sderot. The President has spoken with Mubarak regarding his meeting with Asad tomorrow. He asked him to ask Asad to pressure Hamas re stopping the rocket attacks.
- The "calming down" has to be mutual and parallel and complete.
- Hamas needs to get the message. If Haniye wants to act like a PM he needs to understand this. Otherwise he will be a PM from a bunker.

ED then raised the issue of the needs of Palestinian security forces once again. He asked HA to elaborate on military capacity:

- HA said that his personal assessment is that more people and more guns are needed to handle the situation.
- ED asked about number of people that Hamas has on the ground in Gaza.
- HA said the estimate is up to 5000.
- ED: our calculation is more or less the same.
- HA: Without similar capabilities we cannot deploy. We need more firepower. [Discussion on type of light weapons between ES and HA]

**Investigation of the Gaza beach bombing.** ED said the following:

- The minister ordered the military (?) committee to investigate. The investigation is published. We continue to investigate.
- There is proof that the explosion was not due to artillery fire. It came from the ground. "Perhaps they took something from the ground." Maybe it was an old shell, maybe Hamas intended the explosion.
- It is suspicious that immediately after the explosion Hamas cleared everything from the area.
- We have movies / photograph evidence from 16:57PM—17:10, the time the event took place (ambulances starting to come ...). At that time our artillery was stopped (for cleaning).
- He mentioned 100 rockets being launched (unclear).

SE responded as follows:

- Gaza is our jurisdiction, not yours.
- We have requested expert investigators, and are surprised by your negative response.
- [SE discussed the HRW assessment of the incident]
- What is wrong with having an international expert investigation team?

ES asked what this team would be. SE said the Americans can send a team, for example. A crime was committed and it is in everyone's interest to find out the truth. If Hamas is responsible, which is not substantiated, it would be in everyone's interest to expose it. It is up to you whether to cooperate with the investigation.

ES repeated the claim that the explosion was caused either by an old shell or by a charge placed there by Hamas. Both would be difficult to prove.

SE asked why: the investigation would not be in Tel Aviv. There is a crime scene which can be investigated. This situation cannot continue unresolved.

ES asked about mandate and exact role of the team and whether it will be coming into Gaza through Rafah.

SE said they can come in as VIPs or through Kerem Shalom.

ES asked if whole team would be foreigners. SE: Yes.

ES said he will consider and pass on idea.

### **Northern Gaza situation**

- ES said that coordination was not the major problem. He said he had made “thousands of calls” in the past to Nasr Yousef, Dahlan and to SE to stop clear attempts to launch rockets. You did nothing.
- If you want to take action now, you need a top-down strategy. Your soldiers have to believe in their mission.
- Contacts with our side are not the problem. Everyone knows the others. It is therefore a strategic decision, not a problem of coordination.
- You have to take an area in Northern Gaza. It has to be cleared and controlled. You can secure a 10km zone. You don’t need the Americans for that.
- ES pointed out differences between the Sderot situation and Ashkelon, referring to the former settlement area that is shelled by Israel.]
- ES asked how to insure soldiers are loyal and believe in their mission. He said they need to be aware that they are not “Lahad’s army” – they are not there to defend Israel. The soldiers have to believe they are protecting Palestinian interests. Deliver this spirit to them.
- The situation in Sderot is delicate and escalating. If one rocket hits a house with civilians the retaliation will be extreme. Today, however, we display restraint. The size of the demonstrations will not dictate our measures.
- If you deploy and fail it will ruin all confidence in the future. It is better not to do it than to do it and fail.
- We agree that weapons are needed in confrontation with Hamas, but you need to show some effectiveness. I will advocate Kalashnikovs and bullets. Again, you need to show results in Northern Gaza.

### **Discussion on Hamas and internal Palestinian dialogue**

- ES asked about reports that there may be an agreement with Hamas: If so, what will happen?
- SE said it will not happen. The issue is not about forming a joint government – rather it’s about the programme, and the Quartet conditions.
- ES: But if such a government is created ...

- SE: Haniye said publicly that with PLC majority for coming years he will control any government, so it won't happen. As for technocrat government, there is no such thing as technocrats in Palestine. That won't work.
- [NM talked about Hamas in Hebrew, explaining that the internal dynamic within the movement was not unitary. He said that the outside leadership does not coordinate with the government.]

**Summing up:** ES said:

- You presented a convincing plan that can be implemented by end of year. It looks workable.
- I will present it to the minister [copies of powerpoint slides were given to ED and ES].
- It is clear from the presentation who will be in charge.
- The Americans are on board and will endorse the plan. They are willing to pay (5/15 million).

SE said there should be a trilateral meeting with Peretz and Dayton. ES agreed. Both agreed that Dayton was an "excellent man."