
MEMORANDUM

TO: NEGOTIATIONS AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT
FROM: [REDACTED]
SUBJECT: BRIEFING NOTES FOR THE ABU MAZEN/SHARON SUMMIT
HELD ON JUNE 21 IN JERUSLAEM
DATE: JUNE 22, 2005

On the Palestinian Side: President Mahmoud Abbas, Prime Minister Ahmad Qreia', Chief of the Negotiations Affairs Department Dr. Saeb Erakat, Minister of Civil Affairs Mohammad Dahlan, and NSU adviser Lamia Matta.

On the Israeli Side: Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, Sharon Adviser and Spokesman Asaf Shariv, Sharon Aide Ilan Cohen, diplomatic adviser Shalom Turjeman, Sharon Aide Dov Weisglass, and IDF Chief of Staff Dan Halutz.

Summary

The summit was held at Sharon's residence in Jerusalem. It began at 4:15 pm and ended at 6:15 pm. There was no joint statement following the summit, nor was there any one-on-one meeting between Sharon and President Abbas.

Each side held a separate press conference after the summit. On the Palestinian side, the press conference was held in the Muqata'a at 7:15 pm and was attended by Abu Ala', Dr. Erakat, and Minister Dahlan.

The summit proved frustrating and resulted in little movement. In the end, the only deliverable Abu Mazen could report was an agreement to issue more permits. Other than that, the summit consisted of a recycling of the Sharm el Sheikh arrangements and concessions on issues on which the technical committees working on Gaza coordination had managed to reach agreement. There was no agreement on prisoners, no progress on the airport, nothing on easing movement in the West Bank, and nothing on the internal closures.

The following were the "concessions" made by Sharon.

- **Transfer of security responsibilities over Palestinian areas:** Israel will continue the gradual transfer of security responsibilities over Palestinian cities and their surrounding areas, as agreed during the Sharm el Sheikh summit. Bethlehem and its surrounding areas will be handed over two weeks after the conclusion of this summit, followed by Qalqilya and Ramallah

- **Deportees from the Nativity Church in Bethlehem:** may return to PA areas and will be included within the fugitives' arrangement.
- **Improving the Humanitarian Conditions for the Palestinians population:**
 - 26,000 work permits to be issued for Palestinian workers to work in Israel
 - 13,400 permits to be issued for businessmen
 - 2,100 permits to be issued for persons employed by international organizations
 - Karni operating hours to be extended from 8 am to 11pm
 - A gradual issuing of identity cards to the 54,000 persons who are in the country illegally and are therefore unable to move freely, beginning with 2,000 for now.
 - Family reunification and registration of children will be discussed after disengagement
- **Crossing points:** Israel will improve the situation at the crossing points by upgrading technology. In Erez, Israel is constructing a new terminal and in Tarkumiya Israel intends to improve the technology. Finally, Israel intends to facilitate the system currently in use (i.e., back-to-back), and it examine ways to create a more door-to-door system.
- **Prisoners:** Israel has received the PA's list of prisoner release requests which has been forwarded to Minister of Justice Tzipi Livni. She will give a response to the list by the end of Wednesday.
- **Seaport:** Palestinians can begin construction as soon as they wish.
- **Airport:** Construction may only begin after the disengagement.
- **Revive ministerial committees** including the Joint Anti-Incitement Committee.

Sharon's opening remarks:

Sharon spent the first ten or fifteen minutes of the meeting calling on Abu Mazen to take strong measures against terrorism. He said that while Abu Mazen had committed to "dismantling the terrorist infrastructure" in Sharm el Sheikh, he had failed to live up to that promise. He cited recent incidents at the Erez checkpoint and in the northern West Bank ("northern Samaria") as troubling evidence of continued threats.

He asked what Abu Mazen intended to do to end the terrorist operations and whether he was willing to arrest members of Hamas and Islamic Jihad who had violated the cease fire agreement. He noted that Abu Mazen had made significant gains in closing off the tunnels, but added that the weapons smuggling had to be controlled and that attempted suicide operations must stop. Sharon said that he knew that Abu Mazen was determined to stop the operations, and he offered assistance in the way of security and information.

Despite Israeli goodwill, however, Sharon insisted that Abu Mazen was unwilling to act. He said that Israeli intelligence persons had asked Abu Mazen to arrest Hassan Madhoub and had given the PA security apparatus numerous tips and yet nothing had been done. In addition, Sharon added that Abu Mazen had asked Sharon to give Rashid Abu Shbak an opportunity to succeed in Gaza but Abu Shbak has done nothing and Sharon now has a request from the military to disarm Abu Shbak.

As for the “Gaza Disengagement,” he said that Israel required that the situation in Gaza be calm during the operation. Coordination between Israel and the PA would make this much more likely, and if the PA is willing to coordinate, Israel will be able to take further steps in the future. If there are “terror” attacks, however, the disengagement will be put on hold. Sharon said he is already feeling pressure to delay and that a law had proposed in the Knesset that very day to delay the disengagement.

President Abbas’s Remarks:

Abu Mazen expressed regret that the summit had been delayed and said he was happy to be meeting with Sharon. He said he was pleased that Sharon had spoken with honesty and added that he too would like to speak with honesty. He also noted with pleasure that the fact that Sharon considered him a friend, and the fact that he too considered Sharon a friend, would serve them both in the days ahead.

Abu Mazen said that Palestinians want peace, and hence, every bullet that is aimed in the direction of Israel is a bullet aimed at the Palestinians as well. It is neither in the Palestinian interest, nor in the Israeli interest, to persist with violence.

Abu Mazen reviewed the indicators of his administration’s successes and said that he recognized that there are people who wish to destroy the peace process. However, he noted, if we pursue and kill these people, it goes against the interest of our own people and the peace process. He urged Sharon to recognize the difficulties faced by his administration and said that he needed Sharon’s to keep and steady course and move things forward.

Abu Mazen then told Sharon that in the five months, twelve days and two hours that he had been president, he believed that Sharon had done nothing to help him. Accordingly, he said he wanted to take the opportunity to tell Sharon how he could help the PA so that both he and Sharon could achieve their respective goals.

Cease Fire: During the Sharm el Sheikh summit the parties agreed to a cease fire, to which Israel has only partially adhered. Abu Mazen urged Israel to cease its attacks and incursions.

City withdrawals and fugitives: Sharon agreed to city withdrawals during Sharm el Sheikh but these have not been carried out in full. He urged Israel to withdraw from these cities and their surrounding areas and to leave the responsibility to the PA. Such withdrawals, he added, will also help both sides resolve the problems of the deportees and the fugitives.

Security: the PA needs arms. How can it control violence, Abu Mazen asked, if it does not have the tools to do so?

Release of Prisoners: Abu Mazen said that during the Sharm el Sheikh Summit, Israel agreed to the release of an initial number of prisoners, to be followed by additional releases. Only the initial agreement was implemented and there has been no movement since then to release additional persons.

Gaza Withdrawal: The withdrawal raises many issues, Abu Mazen noted, including Rafah, the crossing points, and the airport. On the airport, the PA wishes to begin reconstruction immediately, as it will take at least six months to complete the work. On the seaport, international funders are ready to help and Israel must facilitate the PA's efforts to begin construction. Of course, Abu Mazen continued, there is also the Safe Passage, the customs union on the Rafah border, and the needed economic coordination.

Humanitarian conditions: Abu Mazen explained that the PA had met with Israeli Minister of Defense Shaul Mofaz and agreed that Israel would facilitate humanitarian conditions in the following ways:

- There are 54,000 Palestinians in the OPT without permits, Abu Mazen explained, and it would cost Israel absolutely nothing to issue identity cards for these people, while it would help the PA enormously to be able to say that such an agreement had been reached.
- Family reunifications
- Labor permits: every time Israel increases the number of permits it issues to Palestinian workers, people stop working against Israel and begin working on improving their own conditions.

Home demolitions: Abu Mazen called on Sharon to cease house demolitions in Silwan and Sur Baher and noted that it is impossible for the PA to convince people that peace is in sight when Israel unveils plans to demolish entire neighborhoods.

Saadat, Shobaki, and Tirawi: Abu Mazen noted that he had approved the incarceration of these individuals and that subsequently, the high court found that their arrest and trial were illegal. Israel now insists that they must not be released, even though Abu Mazen has been willing to cooperate with Israel, by proposing, for example, that they be released only within the Jericho city limits for the first six months.

Legal Status of Areas Evacuated in the Northern West Bank: Abu Mazen urged Sharon to change the status of the areas to Area A, so that the PA could take full responsibility for the area.

Sharon's rebuttal:

Sharon thanked Abu Mazen for his comments. He insisted that it was incumbent on Abu Mazen to take control of the arms in the Palestinian street. He noted that in Abu Mazen's negotiations with Hamas, Abu Mazen had promised not to disarm any of the armed factions, and while Abu Mazen insisted that he has no choice but to pursue that course, Sharon argued that Abu Mazen has more strength and control than he is willing to admit.

Sharon said that while Israel had promised not to take military measures, it would do so if the violence continued.

Sharon then moved on to the areas in which he believed he could help Abu Mazen:

Transfer of security responsibilities over Palestinian areas: Sharon said that Israel will continue the gradual transfer of security responsibilities over Palestinian cities and their surrounding areas, as agreed during the Sharm el Sheikh Summit. Bethlehem and its surrounding areas will be handed over two weeks after the conclusion of this Summit, followed by Qalqilya and Ramallah

Deportees from the Nativity Church in Bethlehem: the issue will be resolved in two weeks, once the IDF has withdrawn from Bethlehem. All details will be worked out in technical committees.

Improving the Humanitarian Conditions for the Palestinians population: Sharon offered the following concessions:

- 26,000 work permits to be issued for Palestinian workers to work in Israel
- 13,400 permits to be issued for businessmen
- 2,100 permits to be issued for persons employed by international organizations
- Facilitation for VIP persons and significant businessmen
- Karni operating hours to be extended from 8 am to 11pm
- A gradual issuing of identity cards to the 54,000 persons who are in the country illegally and who are therefore unable to move freely, beginning with 2,000 identity papers for now.
- Family reunification and registration of children will be discussed after disengagement

Crossing points: Sharon said that Israel will improve the situation at the crossing points by upgrading technology. In Erez, he said, Israel is constructing a new terminal and in Tarkumiya, Sharon added, Israel intends to improve the technology. Finally, Sharon explained that Israel intends to facilitate the system currently in use (i.e., back-to-back), and it is willing to examine ways to create a door-to-door system in the future.

Prisoners: Sharon said that he understood the PA's difficult situation with regard to prisoners, but that the PA had to understand Israel's. As long as qassams are falling on Israeli towns and suicide operations are being planned, Sharon is unable to help. Israel has received the PA's list of prisoner release requests which has been forwarded to Minister of Justice Tzipi Livni. Sharon said that he believes that Israel can release some of the people on that list and that Livni will give a response to the list by the end of Wednesday.

Seaport: Palestinians can begin construction as soon as they wish.

Airport: Construction may only begin after the disengagement.

Link between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip: Sharon said he understood the importance of movement between the GS and the WB, and he proposed that technical committees meet to find solutions to the problem. He is committed, he said, to finding actual solutions in the short-term. Implementation of those solutions, however, would only happen after the disengagement.

Settlement Houses: Sharon said that the Israeli position and that of the United States is that the houses should be demolished by the Israelis and that the Palestinians should clean up the rubble and dispose of it, although not at their own cost.

Saadat, Shobaki, and Tirawi: Sharon said he would consider these issues only if they were of high priority to Abu Mazen.

Abu Mazen: Abu Mazen, at this point, became exasperated and accused Sharon of giving him nothing. Minster Dahlan interjected and asked if the meeting was a joke.

Sharon: Sharon insisted that he and Abu Mazen were at an important juncture and that if there is calm, the situation will be much improved. He argued that he did not believe Abu Mazen was leaving with nothing, and he recounted again the concessions he believed he was making. He added that if Abu Mazen gave more on security, Israel would give more on the issues of importance to Abu Mazen.

Abu Mazen: Abu Mazen argued that he did not have the ability or the means to disarm those wishing to undermine the current cease fire. He said that Sharon's attitude was making it more difficult for him to satisfy Sharon's demands and he accused Sharon of making it appear as though the PA were encouraging violence when in fact, it was not in the interest of the PA to encourage it.

With exasperation, Abu Mazen told Sharon to take the responsibility on withdrawal, on the cities, on the fugitives, and on all other matters, because without the proper tools, the PA would be suicidal to take on such responsibility.

Sharon: Sharon argued that the problem is not that the PA supports terror but that it does nothing to work against it.

Abu Ala': Abu Ala' asked for the floor and said that the Palestinians are intent on achieving peace but that Israel has weakened the PA before the Palestinian people and before the international community. Moreover, he argued, Israel has empowered armed groups by not permitting the security services to arm themselves properly. Settlements, the wall, activities in Jerusalem, and the internal closure also weaken the PA from the perspective of the Palestinian people. He said that the PA had done all it could do in terms of coordination, even though Israel had made it clear that it intended to withdraw in a purely unilateral manner. The disengagement could strengthen the PA or it could weaken it completely and the outcome, Abu Ala' argued, was entirely in the hands of Israel.

Sharon: Sharon said that he believed that he had responded to most Palestinians requests and added that the more the PA does, the more it will get. Again, he insisted that it is hard to explain the release of prisoners when rockets and bullets are falling on Israelis.

Dr. Erakat: Dr. Erakat said that the preparation team had done what it could and that there were issues only he and the President could resolve. He focused on the 54,000 Palestinians without identity cards, the family reunifications, the airport, and the prisoners.

Sharon: After some discussion, Sharon agreed to the gradual issuing of identity cards for the 54,000 persons living here illegally, starting with the issuing 2,000 permits. Having conceded that much, he exploded and said “why should Israel make compromises while terror is going on?” He insisted that he himself was not weak, but that there were limits to the political risks that he could take.

Abu Mazen: Abu Mazen asked Sharon how he would compare the security situation in the past five months to what existed in the preceding four years. How much has the situation improved, he asked. Fifty percent, sixty percent? Sharon could not respond and said he did not have those particular statistics. Abu Mazen responded saying that indeed, Sharon could not respond because he knew that the situation had improved more than sixty or even seventy percent.

Sharon: Sharon then spoke for a long while of things with little substance, stopping at some point to advise Abu Mazen of military strategies that could be taken to control certain areas of the territory. In the end, he concluded that the biggest problem he could see was that “the Arab world refuses to accept the legitimate birthright of the Jewish people to create their homes in the cradle of their land and civilization.” Egypt and Jordan, he said, though they have signed peace agreements with Israel, still failed to recognize its existence on the maps in their classrooms.

Abu Mazen: Abu Mazen wondered what this had to do with him, and Sharon told him that he was pointing to a larger and more troubling problem.

Sharon: Sharon concluded that he wanted to move forward and that he did not want Abu Mazen to feel that the Summit had failed. Abu Mazen responded that he hoped all parties would not miss the opportunity before them.

Weisglass: Sharon’s aide closed by saying that he and his colleagues on the Israeli side are in contact with Dr. Erakat and that they intend to continue meeting and continue to talking.