

Talking Points for President Abbas's Meeting with Prime Minister Olmert (15 April 2007)

Arab Peace Initiative

- Israel should accept the Arab Peace Initiative, which represents the best opportunity in six years to move towards peace between Palestinians and Israelis, and to satisfy Israeli concerns regarding security and normalization on all fronts. Israel should understand that the road to Arab capitals goes through me (Abu Mazen).
- Israel should support our efforts to create a mechanism for operationalizing the Initiative, which may consist of: (1) assembling a ministerial level committee under the chairmanship of Saudi Arabia and comprised of key Arab states and the Quartet; and (2) convening an international peace conference to include Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon and Israel, along with the Arab League S.G. and the Quartet.

Security

- Our experiences over the past several years have taught us that the only way forward is to build a professional security force under the control of one authority. We are willing to assume our security responsibilities fully, first and foremost for the benefit of the Palestinian people, but are simply unable to do so while Israel continues to suffocate the Palestinian economy, restrict internal movement and carry out raids, assassinations and mass arrests.
- It is unreasonable for Israel to expect the Palestinian leadership to shoulder the responsibilities of a government without allowing it to exercise the powers of one. The best way to ensure security for both Palestinians and Israelis is by providing impoverished, disaffected and disillusioned segments of Palestinian society with a genuine political horizon that leads directly to the creation of a territorially contiguous and viable state.
- While we all agree that the future Palestinian state will not be militarized, the goal of our present efforts, with the active help and participation of 3rd parties, is to establish a strong policing force capable of maintaining law and order and answerable to democratic political authority. We are committed to this objective as a key element of building our state.

Economics

- It is clear that the future of Palestine and Israel will be intertwined, particularly with respect to economic relations. The future trade relations between the state of Palestine and the State of Israel should be based on a Free Trade Area Agreement. This agreement should allow for free trade in both Industrial and Agricultural goods, liberalize trade in Services and Investments, allow for free access of Palestinian labor to the Israeli market (according to agreed lists and quotas) and guarantee free transit of Palestinian goods through Israeli air and sea ports. A stable, free and flourishing economy is the best way to establish and maintain a stable state, and a stable region.

- Such an agreement will assist sustaining a viable Palestinian economy through allowing it to benefit from the dominant Israeli market and, at the same time, assure independence in designing Palestine's Import and Export policies toward the rest of the world according to its special needs.