

April 17, 2004

His Excellency Secretary General Kofi Anan
United Nations

Dear Mr. Secretary General:

I am writing regarding the emergency Quartet meeting slated to take place in the near future. We welcome this meeting as an opportunity for the Quartet to clarify its positions on the peace process following the assurances given by President George W. Bush to Israeli Prime Minister Sharon on April 14.

As you are aware, we are deeply concerned with what appears to be an attempt by the Bush Administration to preemptively adopt Israeli positions on matters that go to the heart of a permanent status agreement. The Palestinian people reject the assurances and will firmly oppose them. The Palestinian people are the ones who must decide the future implementation of their rights in agreement with the Israeli side.

At this critical juncture, we believe it is necessary for the Quartet to reaffirm its commitment to a peace process between Israel and the PLO based upon international principles, which are the only way to create a real and durable peace between the parties. Accordingly, we request that the Quartet clarify its current stance with respect to the following during its upcoming meeting:

- A final peace agreement between the parties should be grounded in United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and the principle of land for peace.
- Acquisition of land by force is illegal. Settlement activity and the Wall inside Occupied Palestinian Territory remain an obstacle to peace.
- A final peace agreement should include a just, agreed-upon resolution for the refugees in accordance with United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194.
- All final status issues, including settlements, borders, refugees and Jerusalem, are issues to be decided through direct negotiations between the parties. Until that time the parties should take no unilateral actions that seek to predetermine permanent status matters.
- The future of the Road Map and the role of the Quartet in ensuring and monitoring its implementation.

In addition, we welcome clarification from the Quartet on exactly how Israel's plan -to remove settlements from the Gaza Strip while maintaining a military presence and control over its airspace, territorial waters and land passages- constitutes a real opportunity for moving the process forward. For instance, how does the evacuation fit into the Road Map if it is within these parameters?

The Palestinians are interested in reaching a true end to the conflict through a final status agreement. It would be a lost opportunity if the parties now enter into another long term arrangement through the unilateral disengagement plan and specifically the Gaza evacuation. We are interested in preserving the possibility and content of a peace agreement that is final and viable.

We are thankful for the United Nations' longstanding dedication to Palestinian rights and its role in facilitating the Peace Process, particularly its participation in the Quartet. Your continued and strong involvement is more crucial than ever to realize the collective goal of peace and security for Israel, Palestine and the Middle East region.

We look forward to your response,

Sincerely,

Dr. Saeb Erekat
Head,
PLO Negotiations Affairs Department