

TALKING POINTS
June 2007

Political Horizon / End Game

- Recent developments in Gaza are a direct result of:
 - The absence of a ‘political horizon’ that clearly spells out the end game;
 - Worsening economic and humanitarian conditions on the ground caused by Israel’s refusal to meet its obligations under international law and the AMA; and
 - Prolonged international sanctions against a democratically elected government.
- For two years, the international community failed to deliver on its promises regarding both Gaza and the long-awaited political horizon.
- Despite the dire situation on the ground, the Arab Peace Initiative (API) continues to offer a real and tangible opportunity to define a genuine ‘political horizon’ and, hence, a way out of the current crisis. The international community must seize the opportunity and move quickly and decisively to define the ‘end game’ (*e.g.*, through an agreed set of permanent status parameters) – even if implementation will take longer.
- We welcome recent calls for the appointment of an empowered Quartet Envoy to help the parties move quickly and decisively toward a meaningful ‘political horizon’, and urge the Quartet to do so as soon as possible.
- We call on all parties – Israelis, Arab States, the Quartet and the broader international community – to move quickly and decisively on the long-awaited ‘political horizon’ on the basis of the Arab Peace Initiative, including establishing a timetable for movement on the substantive terms of an agreement and/or the convening of a summit to begin formal negotiations.

Support for the PA Government

- Continuing to delay progress on the ‘end game’ will only further embolden the forces of extremism and weaken the fragile Palestinian government.
- Parallel to the political track, efforts to reform and rebuild the PA and its institutions must be increased and strengthened.
- The unanimous Arab endorsement of the API gives it the weight to rally and unite all people regardless of political beliefs under the banner of peace through negotiations.
- The international community should refrain from any actions or statements that reinforce the separation of Gaza and the West Bank, which will only strengthen the extremist forces in Gaza and the West Bank. Rather, it should reaffirm that Gaza and the West Bank are a single territorial and political unit, and that President Abbas and his government remain the president and government of *all* Palestinians.

- Continued aid and assistance should be provided to all Palestinians without geographic conditions on spending. International aid, particularly humanitarian aid, to Gaza must be sustained. Palestinians in Gaza must not be allowed to starve, die from thirst, or suffer more than they have already.
- Further isolating Gaza will only embolden extremists and weaken the current government. Thus, the international community should call on Israel to comply with its obligations as the occupier under International Humanitarian Law to continue providing essential services and supplies to the Gaza Strip (as well as the West Bank):
 - Israel must not be allowed to cut electricity, gas, water or any other essential services and supplies that it is legally bound to provide;
 - The United States and the international community should end their policy of punishing all Palestinians in Gaza, such as the US decision to cease construction of a desalination plant in Gaza.
- Ongoing Israeli settlement expansion, wall construction and ever-increasing internal closures in the West Bank are intensifying Palestinian territorial fragmentation and socioeconomic decline, thus setting the stage for the creation of several more “Gazas” there as well.
- It is time the international community got serious about enforcing *Israeli* obligations (and not just Palestinian ones), including and especially the need for an immediate settlement freeze and the lifting of West Bank closures.