

Minutes of the Culture of Peace Committee
*November 24, 2008 [10 AM-10:45 AM], King David Hotel, West
Jerusalem*

1 **Attendees:**

2 ***Palestinian***

- 3 • Dr. Saeb Erekat (SE)
- 4 • Dr. Sufian Abu Zeideh (SAZ)
- 5 • Zeinah Salahi
- 6 • Muzna Shihabi

7 ***Israeli***

- 8 • Udi Dekel (UD)
- 9 • Daniel Taub (DT)
- 10 • Tal Becker (TB)
- 11 • Adi S. [Israeli NSU] (AS)
- 12 • Kamil Abu Rukin (KAR)

13

14 **Meeting Minutes:**

15 DT: We progressed significantly in this committee. What remains is a paragraph on
16 the international fund mechanism, and looking ahead. The trip to Ireland was fruitful
17 and we found how making peace is such hard work because the most difficult task is
18 how to keep peace running after 10 years.

19 SE: I think that South Africa is the most striking experience.

20 UD: But they didn't have a two-state solution

21 SE: Neither did Northern Ireland!

22 UD: We can see other countries.

23 SE: I know you don't like to hear "South Africa".

24 DT: We don't rule things out.

1 SE: Ok, among other states, South Africa is important.

2 DT: So just to recap: we are waiting for a final paragraph and what should be our
3 focus next. We suggest meeting with people who work on this field today,
4 organizations such as Panorama Center; and we had another idea: how do we affect the
5 image of either side, i.e. we need to have public opinion surveys with a number of
6 questions and gather common data about the perceptions from each side on the other,
7 so that we understand where to focus efforts to change.

8 SAZ: A friend of mine is a teacher at Tel Aviv University, he has a survey ready and
9 he asked me to check with him what kind of questions fit our work. He is doing the
10 Israeli poll only.

11 DT: It might be better to organize the survey with some international experts.

12 SE: Can I say something? I really believe that making peace, reaching an agreement
13 is the easiest step but the day after is what really counts. You cannot have people to
14 people projects in a culture of war. So I fully agree with you that meetings should take
15 place to visualize the day after; meetings with people who have experience: Panorama,
16 Perez Centers, and Seeds of Peace. In Seeds of Peace, we managed to keep camps twice
17 every summer and even get kids from Gaza attend camps. We should seek the
18 experience of these people. I think we should pay a visit to Bosnia-Herzegovina (a
19 region of true bloodshed in the past) and with this package I want to add South Africa.
20 The point is reconciliation, the day after, not Apartheid Israel as you fear. I went there
21 with a high Israeli official; it struck me how these negotiators agreed on two principles:
22 1) to never interrupt negotiations, 2) help others. Palestinians learned this ten years
23 later. I believe South Africa should play a major role, along with Bosnia or other

1 suggestions to learn their reconciliation mechanisms the day after the agreement. I also
2 suggest Sufian to be the first Palestinian ambassador in Tel Aviv. (laughs)

3 UD: What about Kamil?

4 SE: He can be ambassador on both sides. As for the international fund, it's too early
5 to talk about it. Let's wait and see what's required first. I accept your suggestion of
6 meeting with organizations who work on this field. We need to learn from them. I think
7 I will give a lecture at Seeds of Peace one day. Let's forget about sensitivities (insisting
8 again on South Africa).

9 UD: I would like to ask something. You're afraid of dealing with current issues. We
10 need to create an environment of peace, we need to see the opinions of the people.

11 SE: Israel is not ready. I'm not afraid (gave examples of involvement in Seeds of
12 Peace).

13 UD: We need to change the environment.

14 SE: Not with the mentality of your army. The rules of engagement of your soldiers
15 will not change. Official Israel is not ready for that. Let's go to the Israelis who are
16 ready and let's hope you change, and stop your security pretexts. (SE gave example of
17 people not being able to cross checkpoints, including kids from Seeds of Peace.)

18 UD: I understand that. But you cannot switch in one day.

19 SE: I agree to have brainstorming sessions with organizations who work on people
20 to people but don't be involved in this now, you'll destroy it.

21 DT: It's an important point. Independent groups are better because sometimes
22 governments can kill such efforts, but there may also be ways we can help them in
23 areas they are having difficulties.

24 SE: I leave it to you and Sufian to see these groups.

1 DT: What about the joint survey?

2 SE: Yes and joint travels. If we don't guard the day after, we are ruined. You can't
3 guard agreements in such stupid mentalities.

4 UD: Try to take off.

5 SAZ: Let's plan next trips.

6 UD: Bosnia ok but we need to check for South Africa.

7 DT: [Notes that in order for a particular location to be sellable to his side politically,
8 they need concrete examples of what exactly can be learned from that place, **which**
9 **requires research**. For example a good model of joint education programs, an effective
10 fund, a good truth and reconciliation commission, etc. He noted it was not a holiday
11 and although he would love to go to the Bahamas, he didn't really think that a good
12 justification could be found on why that would be useful.] We need projects where you
13 learn on international funds for reconciliation.

14 SAZ: We need to do research.

15 DT: So let's fix a meeting in the next two weeks to discuss 1) possible destinations
16 and 2) surveys. [DT also notes that **research needed to be done** on independent non-
17 Palestinian and non-Israeli institutions that could conduct surveys. The idea is that a
18 third party surveyor would be less likely to appear as the polling is targeted to produce
19 a pre-determined outcome.]

20 SE: Check with Khalil Shikaki, the Hebrew University and JMCC (Ghassan
21 Khatib).

22 DT: Maybe we can invite people from Panorama and Perez Centers to parts of our
23 meeting.

24 END