

**Quartet Envoys Statement
London, February 20, 2003**

Representatives of the Middle East Quartet -- the United States, the Russian Federation, the European Union, and the United Nations -- met at the Envoys level in London February 19 to review the current situation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and prospects for giving new impetus to peace efforts. They expressed very serious concern at the continuing acts of violence and terror planned and directed against Israelis, and at Israeli military operations over the past several days in the West Bank and Gaza which led to Palestinian civilian fatalities. The Envoys discussed the next steps toward the adoption and implementation of the Quartet's Road Map, as it is the means for progress toward the vision described by President Bush on June 24, 2002: two democratic states living side by side in peace. They reaffirmed that the Road Map should be formally adopted and presented to the parties as soon as possible.

The Quartet envoys reaffirmed the call of the Quartet principals in Washington on December 20 for an immediate, comprehensive cease-fire. All Palestinian individuals and groups must end all acts of terror against Israelis, in any location.

The Envoys reiterated their call for the Palestinians to build credible institutions to prepare for statehood and welcomed the Palestinians' decision to appoint a Prime Minister as a significant step. The Envoys underscored the importance of appointing a credible and fully empowered Prime Minister. They urged the immediate convening of the relevant legislative and executive Palestinian bodies to exercise their authority in this regard, and called on the Government of Israel to facilitate these meetings. The Quartet also encouraged the Palestinians to continue the process of preparing a constitution that would form the basis for a strong parliamentary democracy.

Noting Israel's important role in facilitating the Palestinian reform process, they recognized the positive effect of the resumption of monthly revenue transfers and return of outstanding arrears. Likewise, the Quartet Envoys emphasized Israel's obligation, consistent with legitimate security concerns, to do more to ease the dire humanitarian and socio-economic situation in the West Bank and Gaza, including facilitating freedom of movement and access, alleviating the daily burdens of life under occupation, and respecting the dignity of Palestinian civilians. They welcomed the opportunity for direct discussions between the donor community and Israelis and Palestinians to address this critical issue