

Quartet Press Release

New York, 22 September 2004

The Quartet met in New York today and strongly reaffirmed its 4 May Statement. The situation on the ground for both Palestinians and Israelis remains extremely difficult and no significant progress has been achieved on the Roadmap.

The Quartet notes with deep concern that genuine action is still needed so that an empowered Prime Minister and cabinet can fulfill the Palestinian Authority's obligations under the Roadmap, including an unequivocal end to violence and terrorism, and the dismantlement of terrorist capabilities and infrastructure. The Quartet noted in this regard the need for the Palestinian Authority to prepare for assumption of control over Gaza, in particular by reforming its security forces and re-establishing the rule of law.

The Quartet underscores its continued readiness to engage with an accountable and reformed Palestinian leadership, and strongly urges the Palestinian Authority to take steps now that contribute to constructive meetings to be held this fall of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee and Task Force on Palestinian Reform. The Quartet welcomes steps toward well-prepared, free and fair, Palestinian municipal elections, and urges Israel and the Palestinian Authority to cooperate toward this goal.

The Quartet urges the Government of Israel to implement its obligations under the Roadmap, including dismantling of settlement outposts erected since March 2001, and to impose a settlement freeze, as called for by President Bush and in the Roadmap. The lack of action in this regard is a cause for concern. They also call on the Government of Israel to take all possible steps now, consistent with Israel's legitimate security needs, to ease the humanitarian and economic plight of the Palestinian people.

The Quartet reaffirms the concerns expressed in its Statement of May 4 with respect to the actual routing of the Israeli separation barrier and takes note of the ICJ advisory opinion on this subject. The Quartet urges positive action by the Government of Israel with respect to the route of the barrier and reiterates its view that no party should undertake unilateral actions that could prejudge issues that can only be resolved through negotiations and agreement between the parties.

The Quartet reaffirms its encouragement for Prime Minister Sharon's intention to withdraw from all Gaza settlements and parts of the West Bank and reiterates that withdrawal from Gaza should be full and complete and be undertaken in a manner consistent with the Roadmap, as a step toward an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 through direct negotiations between the sides leading to the goal of two states, Israel and a sovereign, independent, viable, democratic and territorially contiguous Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. The Quartet urges both Israel and the Palestinian Authority to coordinate closely preparation and implementation of the withdrawal initiative.

The Quartet expresses its deep appreciation and support for Egypt's efforts to help reform and rebuild Palestinian security services, to reach a comprehensive and lasting end to all violence, and to advance the goal of security, stability and prosperity in Gaza as withdrawal is implemented.

The Quartet calls upon all concerned parties, including Israel, the Palestinian Authority, the donor community and the World Bank, to engage constructively on economic aspects of Gaza and West Bank withdrawal. In this respect, the Quartet members reiterate their support for the World Bank Trust Fund and call on all donors to contribute to it.

The Quartet reaffirms its commitment to a just, comprehensive, and lasting settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict based upon Resolution 242 and 338, and will remain engaged with all parties to help ensure that progress toward this goal is achieved.