

Quartet Statement

New York, 9 May 2006

Representatives of the Quartet -- U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Austrian Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, High Representative for European Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, and European Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner -- met today in New York to discuss the situation in the Middle East. The Quartet also met with Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Jordanian Foreign Minister Abdelelah al-Khatib, and Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal to exchange views on regional issues.

The Quartet expressed its appreciation for the service of James Wolfensohn as Quartet Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement, and noted his central role in the conclusion of the Agreement on Movement and Access and the promulgation of an agenda for Palestinian economic recovery.

The Quartet underscored its continued commitment to the principles of partnership and negotiation leading to a two-state solution, as embodied in the Roadmap. A lack of action by the parties in certain key areas has stalled progress on the Roadmap. The Quartet underscored the need for both parties to avoid actions which could prejudge final status issues or undermine progress toward this goal.

The Quartet reiterated its grave concern that the Palestinian Authority government has so far failed to commit itself to the principles of nonviolence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the Roadmap. The Quartet noted the absence of a commitment to these principles has inevitably impacted direct assistance to that government and expressed its deep concern about the consequences for the Palestinian people. The donor members noted their willingness to work toward the restoration of international assistance to the Palestinian Authority government once it has committed to these principles.

The Quartet discussed the current situation in Israel and the West Bank, and Gaza. It condemned the Palestinian Authority government's failure to take action against terrorism and the justification of the April 17 suicide bombing in Tel Aviv. The Quartet urged it to act decisively against terrorism and bring an end to violence. The Quartet noted that President Abbas condemned the April 17 attack as he has consistently condemned all acts of terrorism in the past.

The Quartet expressed its concern over Israeli military operations that result in the loss of innocent life. The Quartet calls for restraint and asks Israel to bear in mind the potential consequences of its actions for the population. The Quartet expressed its concern about settlement expansion. It continues to note with concern the route of the barrier, particularly as it results in the confiscation of Palestinian land and cuts off the movement

of people and goods. The Quartet reiterated the importance of both parties avoiding unilateral measures which prejudice final status issues.

The Quartet discussed the humanitarian situation in the West Bank and Gaza. It expressed serious concern about deteriorating conditions, particularly in Gaza. The Quartet expressed concern about delivery of humanitarian assistance, economic life, social cohesion, and Palestinian institutions. The Quartet reiterated its support for assistance directed to help meet the basic human needs of the Palestinian people and promotion of Palestinian democracy and civil society, and called upon the international community to respond urgently to assistance requests by international organizations, especially UN agencies, active in the West Bank and Gaza. The Quartet urged both parties to take concrete steps to implement their obligations under the Agreement on Movement and Access.

Recalling its commitment of January 30 that it is mindful of the needs of the Palestinian people, the Quartet expressed its willingness to endorse a temporary international mechanism that is limited in scope and duration, operates with full transparency and accountability, and ensures direct delivery of assistance to the Palestinian people. If these criteria can be met, the operation of the temporary international mechanism should begin as soon as possible and be reviewed after three months to determine whether it should continue. The Quartet welcomed the offer of the European Union to develop and propose such a mechanism. It invites other donors and international organizations to consider participation in such a mechanism. It urged Israel in parallel to take steps to improve the humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people. The Quartet reiterates that the Palestinian Authority government must fulfill its responsibilities with respect to basic human needs, including health services, as well as for proper fiscal management and provision of services.

The Quartet welcomed Prime Minister Olmert's call for negotiations with a Palestinian partner committed to the principles of the Roadmap, as the most stable and desired basis for the political process. The Quartet welcomed President Abbas' continued commitment to a platform of peace. The Quartet is encouraged by these statements of intent.

Finally, the Quartet reaffirmed its commitment to its previous statements and to a just, comprehensive, and lasting settlement to the conflict based upon UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, 1397 and 1515. The Quartet will remain seized of the matter.