



U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

Remarks With United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, High Representative for European Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, European Union Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Portuguese Foreign Minister Luis Amado, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, and Quartet Representative Tony Blair

Secretary Condoleezza Rice

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(6:25 p.m. EDT)

SECRETARY GENERAL BAN: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen of the media. We had a very good constructive Quartet meeting this afternoon and I'm going to read out the joint statement. And I'd like to inform you that after this press conference, we are going to have another meeting with the Arab partners over dinner, Iftaar dinner. The joint statement reads as follows.

The Quartet principals met today together with the Quartet Representative Tony Blair. The Quartet recognized the present opportunity for progress and the robust regional and international desire for peace in the Middle East. The Quartet expressed its strong support for the ongoing bilateral talks between Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas and welcomed the formation of Israeli and Palestinian teams to discuss the core issues that are essential to progress towards their shared goal of a negotiated two-state solution and the establishment of a viable Palestinian state living side by side with a secure Israel.

The Quartet welcomed parallel steps taken by the parties to build confidence and improve conditions on the ground. The Quartet underscored the need for immediate additional steps to meet previous commitments, including those under the Roadmap and the Agreement on Movement and Access, so as to create a positive atmosphere conducive to progress towards a two-state solution.

The Quartet expressed support for the international meeting on Israeli-Palestinian peace called for by President Bush in his July 16th statement. Principals discussed the meeting and agreed that it should be substantive and serious, providing support to the parties in their bilateral discussions and negotiations in order to move forward urgently on a successful path to a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza that will unite all Palestinians. The goal of this meeting is to bring together key members of the international community in support of efforts between Israelis and Palestinians to end their conflict and help bring a final peace in the Middle East.

The Quartet expects the meeting to affirm its support for the two-state solution based on a rejection of violence and its support for progress by the parties in their bilateral discussions. The meeting should also review progress that has been made toward building Palestinian institutions and discuss innovative and effective ways to support further Palestinian reform. The Quartet will work for a successful international meeting and for the implementation of its conclusions.

The Quartet Representative Tony Blair briefed the Quartet on his meetings and discussions in the region and discussed the way forward on the development of a functioning Palestinian economy and the institutions of governance that will form the foundation of a Palestinian state. The Quartet agreed that Mr. Blair should work closely with the Palestinian Authority government in developing a multi-year agenda for institutional and economic development and looked forward to strong technical and financial support from the international community in support of these efforts, beginning with the September 24th Ad Hoc Liaison Committee meeting.

In that context, the Quartet called upon all countries that are able to contribute to urgently provide financial support to the Palestinian Authority. The Quartet endorsed an extension of the Temporary International Mechanism, TIM, until December 31st, 2007 and expressed its hope that during this period, a mechanism would be established to facilitate the transition to direct international assistance to this Palestinian Authority government.

The Quartet expressed concern over conditions in Gaza. It agreed on the importance of continued emergency and humanitarian assistance without obstruction. The Quartet called for the continued provision of essential services. It expressed its urgent concern over the continued closure of major crossing points given the impact on the Palestinian economy and daily life. The Quartet further noted its grave concern over the continued rocket fire from Gaza into Israel and recent efforts by Hamas to stifle freedom of speech and the press.

The Quartet discussed its forthcoming meeting with members of the Arab League Follow-up Committee to consult on next steps of the Arab Peace Initiative and regional support for bilateral talks between the parties. The Quartet reaffirmed its commitment to a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East based on UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338.

Thank you very much.

MODERATOR: The first question goes to the President of the United Nations Correspondents Association, Tuyet Nguyen, dpa.

QUESTION: I don't see any light – okay. Mr. Secretary General and distinguished members of the Quartet, I would like to welcome you all on behalf of the UN Correspondent Associations and a particular welcome to Mr. Blair, who is making his first appearance in the United Nations since you assumed your duties.

In the statement, you express only concern over the conditions in Gaza in sharp contrast to what's really happening on the ground here. And relief organization like (inaudible) International say unless you solve the humanitarian conditions there, especially starvation, the peace process has no chance to proceed. I wonder if you have any comment in light of the short meeting you had today and whether you'll meet – waiting for the meeting in Washington happening soon organized by the White House in order to seek real solutions for Gaza Strip.

SECRETARY GENERAL BAN: Well, thank you very much. The humanitarian – United Nations has broad humanitarian responsibilities all around the world wherever they need our assistance. It is much more so in Gaza Strip, Palestinian state. I have expressed my concern on several occasions already by this closure of the crossings and all these difficulties. Palestinian people are suffering. There are 1.4 million people. Among them, over – more than 80 percent depending upon the humanitarian assistance from the United Nations agencies led by UNRWA and other agencies. Therefore, it is crucially important that United Nations continue, without any hindrance, this humanitarian assistance.

At the same time, just providing daily humanitarian assistance will not help much in revitalizing their economy. Therefore, there should be free movement and opening of the crossings. This is a very important aspect. At the same time, this peace process should continue. It is encouraging that the Palestinian and Israeli leaders have been meeting regularly. Our Quartet Representative Mr. Tony Blair has been actively engaged together with Secretary Rice and many other – our Quartet principals.

These diplomatic activities will continue and will have to continue and we sincerely hope that the international meeting called for by President Bush in the fall, in November, will also address this issue over a comprehensive agreement.

MODERATOR: Would anyone else like to respond? No. The next – CNN –

QUESTION: (Inaudible) of the *Washington Post*.

QUESTION: Thank you. Madame Secretary, one of your aides said that the Follow-up – that the Follow-up Committee of the Arab League will be invited to the conference this fall. Based on your discussions here, how confident are you that Saudi Arabia and Syria will attend the peace conference? And do these invitations mean that this conference is evolving into an effort to push for a full-scale comprehensive peace in the Middle East beyond the bilateral track that's been discussed previously.

SECRETARY RICE: Well, I think that the contours of the meeting have been described as a meeting to encourage and support the bilateral track that the Israelis and the Palestinians have established and on which I think there is a good deal of momentum. The meeting, of course, will obviously take note of the fact that ultimately there has to be a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. That is why its framework is Resolution 242, 338, why the roadmap and the Arab Peace Initiative, all of which contemplate a comprehensive peace, will form the framework, the basis for the meeting. But we have an opportunity on the Israeli-Palestinian track to move that forward because of the maturing of the bilateral discussions between Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas, and we should not miss the opportunity to support and push forward on that track.

I should note that the meeting will, I believe, take note not only of the importance of that bilateral political track and will clearly need to have serious and substantive discussions about the core issues that are being discussed in that track, but it will also be very important to have this meeting take note of the importance of the capacity-building efforts that Prime Minister Blair is involved in. It will have to take note of the importance of pushing forward the improvements on the situation in the ground.

We have a series of meetings and activities coming up. We've had the Quartet meeting here. We'll have the Iftar with the Arab League Follow-up Committee after this press conference. We have a meeting of the AHLC tomorrow which will lay the groundwork for a donors conference in December. And of course, we have the international meeting. So I think that there is a sense of momentum in support of the Palestinians and the Israelis in their efforts to end the conflict.

Now, there is a lot of work to do, a lot of hard work ahead of us. And so, as is always the case with the Middle East, one should recognize that the road ahead is one that is very difficult. But given that it has been a number of years since the Israelis and the Palestinians have expressed their interest in discussing the core interests between – the core issues between them, it is very important that the regional players of the international community mobilize to support them.

Now, as to the invitations, we haven't issued invitations as such. But it's only natural that we would hope that the participants would include the members of the Arab Follow-up Committee because that is the committee that has been charged by the Arab League with following up with the international community on the Arab Peace Initiative, which we would hope would be one part of the discussions or one of the primary means for discussing these issues at the international meeting. And we have a lot of work to do before we get to the question of who will accept and who will come, but it will be an only natural outcome of all that has happened that the members of the Follow-up Committee would hopefully be there.

MODERATOR: Mr. Segal, Channel 2, Israel.

QUESTION: A question, please, for Madame Secretary and Foreign Minister Lavrov. After reports of Syria going on a nuclear efforts, can you explain how the international community missed that fact? And do you think that Syria should be part of the international community?

And Mr. Lavrov, can you tell us if the fact that your country is supplying weapon to Syria, and from there to Hezbollah, is something that helps with general peace process?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, the United States has made no secret of its concerns about proliferation in general. I'm not going to comment on any specific issues, but I've seen press reports. I won't comment on anything specific. But we obviously are very concerned about dangerous activities in a region that is already very dangerous. We have spoken repeatedly about the need of the Syrian regime to change behavior that is, frankly, very harmful to the region; to accept the international community's insistence that Lebanon be able to carry out its constitutional processes without intimidation; that Lebanese sovereignty should be respected. We have been very clear that we have grave concerns about the terrorists that are being allowed to cross the border into Iraq and are putting at danger innocent Iraqis as well as coalition forces. And of course, there's the question of support for those who would reject a two-state solution. And so this is – obviously, the position of the United States is very clear about the need for change in the behavior of the Syrian regime.

The process on which we are about -- the process on which we (inaudible) launched is try and support the nascent, very fragile work that Palestinians and Israelis are doing together should have the support of the entire international community and it should especially have the support of the regional neighbors. And in a sense, we would hope that those who choose to come to this meeting are indeed signaling that they support the two-state solution, that they support the renunciation of violence and that they support the many agreements that Palestinians have – Palestinian leaders have signed on behalf of their people that would lay the framework for a two-state solution.

FOREIGN MINISTER LAVROV: (Via interpreter) We are selling weapons to Syria, as we do to many other countries; accordingly, we are doing the same as many other producers of arms. Everything that we sell is fully transparently meets our international obligations and our export legislation, export control legislation, one of the toughest in the world. And when the (inaudible) of our deliveries is determined for Syria in that we do not allow any deliveries that would disrupt the balance of power in the region, particularly in the Middle East region. Deliveries to Syria are for defensive arms and in no way can that balance be disrupted. Moreover, given the particular delicacy of questions related to deliveries of arms to this region, we, in our contracts, we always prohibit the transfer of weapons to anyone apart from the direct receiver of such weapons. And with regard to Syria, we have mechanisms and inspections. We can see where the arms that we have delivered – where they are, to whomever (inaudible). There are facts – if there are facts that the obligations are not being fulfilled, if those obligations have been violated, we always investigate such instances. But in this instance, we haven't received any facts. We have spoken about this to our Israeli colleague and they are worried about this.

And the last point I want to make that in principle, in order to attain the goals mentioned by the – by Secretary Rice that this meeting that is planned to be held in Washington this autumn, to make it effective, make it really to mean – move to practical steps that ultimately would not only to an Israeli-Palestinian settlement but to a Middle East settlement on all tracks, definitely the countries of the region have to be involved. We shouldn't try to isolate them. And I'm convinced that through this policy of involvement and not exclusion or isolation we will achieve much more than simply what we would achieve through talks about who is guilty. First, you need the facts and then you need honest cooperation involving everyone in the process of settlement. We shouldn't leave anyone out of that.

Thank you.

MODERATOR: To Khaled Dawoud, Al Jazeera.

QUESTION: Yes, thank you, Michele.

Secretary Rice, just can we have a clear answer on whether Syria will be invited or not? I mean, yes or no? And also, at the same time, obviously you've dealt with the situation in Gaza. Can you kindly tell us how do you think the situation there will be solved? Obviously, it can't go on forever.

And I'd like also to hear what Mr. Lavrov said about that because you've had your own talks with Hamas there. Thank you.

SECRETARY RICE: First of all, all of the members of the Arab Follow-up Committee, we believe, would be natural invitees for this meeting. It is extremely important, though, to note that the purpose of this meeting in supporting the Israelis and the Palestinians has to be a commitment to actually supporting a two-state solution. And so since we believe that the Arab Initiative, in effect, is intended to do that, it makes sense that the members of the Follow-up Committee would be natural participants.

As to Gaza, the position of the United States on Gaza is very clear: first of all, that the West Bank and Gaza are both constituent parts of the Palestinian territories and when there is a Palestinian state would be constituent parts of a Palestinian state; secondly, that Prime Minister Fayyad and President Abbas are the legitimate authorities, the legitimate representatives of all the Palestinian people wherever they live. And in that regard, what happened in Gaza with the undermining – in effect, the overthrow -- of legitimate Palestinian institutions does not mean that the legitimate Palestinian authority is not still the – should not still be the recognized authority for Gaza.

Third, and most importantly, the United States will never abandon the people of Gaza simply because they live in Gaza. We will continue our humanitarian efforts. We have intensified those efforts over the last year and a half, increasing substantially our humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people. And we do agree that that humanitarian assistance needs to be delivered to the people of Gaza

without obstruction. We have talked with our – I have talked with the Israelis about the importance of maintaining a focus on the humanitarian plight of the people of Gaza. There are innocent people there who should not have to suffer because of the political coup d'état that took place as a result of what Hamas did several – a couple of months ago.

So we hope that ultimately the prospect, the beginnings of -- the emergence of concrete idea of the Palestinian state, will be a unifying factor for all Palestinians. But I just think it's extremely important that we recognize that Gazans are a part of the Palestinian people, and Abu Mazen – President Abbas – and Salam Fayyad represent the Palestinian people.

FOREIGN MINISTER LAVROV: (Via interpreter) I'll speak Russian.

As I already said, we will attach particular importance to the upcoming U.S. meeting, the meeting that was proposed by President Bush. And we supported that initiative and all members of the Quartet said they were ready, they had interest in participating in the preparation for it to make it a success. And today, we agreed how specifically to work in this area.

If everything comes off, then if the – that could lay the beginning for the first time – I don't know for how many years now – but it could set the beginning for practical progress, moving towards a settlement not just between the Palestinians and the Israelis but on the whole in the Middle East, on all tracks, and will open the way to an international conference on Middle East. And this was mentioned by President Putin repeatedly and in favor of this has – the members of the League of Arab States has said they were in favor of this, and in the Quartet meeting we said that we would definitely have this prospect in mind and we will plan further steps to that.

So a comprehensive settlement, as I said. It is clear that it is impossible unless – if one part is left in isolation, if part of that people – one people is left on the roadside. As Secretary Rice has said, the Palestinians of Gaza are an intrinsic part of the Palestinian people, so we gave special attention to that during our discussions to the fact that we should prevent a situation which has just – this nascent process that is getting underway, where any part of the Palestinian people would be isolated. That would only increase this fracture that has occurred now. And I am sure that the restoration of the unity of the Palestinians, I think that is a priority. And in parallel with the preparation for steps in the Palestinian-Israeli track we need to see to it that the Palestinian part of the equation be united and would also strengthen their negotiation position.

Of course, there's a separate question about the humanitarian situation in Gaza. Of course, I think many of you know the draft report of the World Bank. It contains a very grim picture. Very grim prospects are given in that report. So therefore in our statement that was read out by the Secretary General we particularly highlight the need for unimpeded – and I stress that – unimpeded access to humanitarian assistance and as well as emergency assistance to Gaza. Russia is interested in this because the assistance – well, three weeks ago we sent assistance, the food, medicines. So far, it can't get to Gaza.

Thank you.

QUESTION: Secretary Rice, you saw the Saudi Foreign Minister today. Do you have any reason to believe that he would attend the November conference?

Also, can you and Prime Minister Blair shed some more light on the substance of the meeting? Do you expect actual agreements on the outlines of how to solve the core issue of borders, refugees, Jerusalem, even final status?

And Mr. Blair, you had a request on economic development summit from Israeli businessmen at the same time as the November summit. Is that going to be part of it?

SECRETARY RICE: Thank you, and then I'll turn it over to Tony Blair.

First of all, let me just go back for one moment to the Gaza question because we are very concerned about the people of Gaza. I think it bears noting that we also have to be concerned about the security situation. We have to be concerned about rockets being fired from Gaza into Israel and we have to be concerned about the security situation for Palestinians. And so let's remember how we got to where we are. And the Quartet statement also notes that it's extremely important that the steps be taken or that the security situation in Gaza be addressed and that the rocket fire stops. So I want to make that very clear.

As to attendance at the meeting, as I said, we will be working on this issue and we are very clear in our discussions with our colleagues that this meeting is going to be serious and substantive, that of course it has to address the core issues. It would make really no sense for the United States to invite members of the international community, regional actors, the parties themselves, to have a meeting that was not serious and substantive and didn't address the core issues. We have many things to do, and so I am sure we could find something better to do than to have a meeting that did not address those issues.

And so we also recognize that in coming to the meeting we hope that those who come are really committed to helping the Israelis and the Palestinians find a way through. And that means renouncing violence. It means working for a peaceful solution. It means working on the basis of all of the many documents that to now have formed the framework for an eventual peace. And so coming to this meeting also brings with it certain responsibilities and we hope that there will be full participation of those who want to see a Palestinian state established, as the United States and as the members of the Quartet most certainly want to see.

MR. BLAIR: First of all, I think it's important just to understand what the big picture is, if you like, arising out of the meetings that have been

happening out in the region and the Quartet meeting today. The most important thing is that things are moving again. There is momentum back in this process. That doesn't mean to say that we are foolishly optimistic after all the difficulties of the past. But things are moving again.

And there are three parts to that. The first is that there is a reinvigoration of the political process. That is the importance of the meeting that the Americans are calling. That political process, of course, is not going to be able to resolve all the outstanding issues straightaway, of course not. But it will give a political horizon that puts credibility back into the process. That is the aim, that's what people want to see, and that is something that President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert will negotiate together.

The second thing is that there is going to be then the publication of the Palestinian national agenda for action, which is about creating the institutions of a Palestinian state, because a state without proper functioning institutions is not a state. A state is not just about territory; it's about capacity, capability, about governance.

And then the third aspect of this is that there have got to be things happening on the ground that give hope to people in Israeli and on the Palestinian side that their lives are going to improve, that things are going to change, that people – the prospect of an improvement in their living standards and their ability to live normal lives. And that is where, for example, the proposals put by Israeli businessmen, by Palestinian businessmen, by others in the international community, are also important.

So these three things move together the whole time: the reinvigoration of the political process; the Palestinians building the institutions of a serious, well-functioning state; and things improving on the ground.

And the important thing I think also to realize is that over these next few months there will be two very important meetings, not just one by two, actually. The first will, of course, be the meeting that Secretary Rice has referred to, but the second will also be an opportunity for the international community as supporters and donors to the Palestinian Authority to come behind the Palestinian agenda for action and support it.

So our aim, if you like, is to get to the end of this year, the end of the period of the next few months with real hope back in the political process with a sense of what this Palestinian state could look like in terms of capability and governance, and with things improving on the ground. And that is – those are in one sense quite ambitious objectives for the next few months, but I think they are achievable if the right will and the right focus is there. And certainly, it's important that it is.

MODERATOR: We'll take two more questions. I go to Raghida Dergham, Al Hayat. I understand that at the meeting, the follow-on meeting (inaudible) that two members, two directly involved parties in the conflict of the Middle East are not invited, Palestine and Lebanon. I can't understand the logic why would you exclude both Palestine and Lebanon from the next meeting coming up. If I am wrong, I stand corrected, please.

And Madame Rice, why is it you think that you are -- despite your goodwill, there is lack of confidence in what you are trying to do to bring about this important conference?

And why is it that, for example, Mr. Lavrov, if you care to tell us, how much do you care that (inaudible) comprehensive, how much do you care that the Lebanon issue is very much on the table, for example, to safeguard the constitutional process so that there will be an elected president and that the country will (inaudible) together at least to get to the table there?

SECRETARY GENERAL BAN: For the first part of your question, we have invited exactly same countries who participated in Arab partners meeting in Sharm el-Sheikh in May.

SECRETARY RICE: This was a meeting also with the Arab Follow-up – she thinks that you invited the people who participated (off mike). We'll get you a complete guest list, but our understanding is that it is the Follow-up Committee that the Arab League produced or named to follow up on the Arab Initiative. But that is the purpose of the meeting. But the Secretary General will comment further on that later.

QUESTION: The other question?

SECRETARY RICE: Yeah, sure. The question about confidence in what we're doing? Look, there have been many, many disappointments over many decades about moving this forward. And I understand that. And I understand that perhaps there's skepticism as to whether or not we can succeed this time. As Tony Blair said, anyone who has dealt with issues in the Middle East knows to be cautious in your optimism about whether we can achieve what we're trying to achieve. But I would just note that we have come a long way since the end of the Camp David process in 2000. We've been through a lot of ups and downs. President Bush enunciated in 2002 the desire to see two states living side by side, one Israel, one Palestine, in peace and freedom. He was the first American President to make that statement as a matter of policy. Even this year we have been through a lot of ups and downs to get to where we are now. I would remind that I think when I was in Jerusalem and we held the trilateral in February, frankly, conditions were not very good and the atmosphere was not very good.

And so we've come a long way in a relatively short period of time. We believe that the international meeting has the potential to galvanize people on the political front and to give the international community, the regional states, and most importantly the parties something to shoot for, something to look forward to. And that is, frankly, all that we can do, and then to work as hard as possible so that the meeting has the kind of substantive, serious core that we all want it to have. But I'm not surprised that people wonder if we're going to succeed. If this conflict had been easy to solve, it would have been solved long ago. But the commitment of this President of the United States, myself

personally, of the United States Government, and I sense of the international community, to trying to make progress here is very firm. And all that you can do is to put in your best effort. I think there is a lot of goodwill, there is a lot of commitment, and hopefully this time we'll succeed.

FOREIGN MINISTER LAVROV: (Via interpreter) I didn't quite get the point of your question. You asked about Lebanon or what my attitude is to the constitutional process in Lebanon? Well, my attitude is one of respect for the constitutional process in any country and I'm convinced that if no one impedes the Lebanese, then they will be able to agree on how to overcome the current crisis. We know that many eminent politicians in Lebanon are thinking about how to prevent another slippage in the situation leading to a profound crisis and (inaudible) initiatives. And I repeat the main thing is not to get in the way of the Lebanese, then I think everything will be fine.

MODERATOR: One question for media – Raghida, we have three – you had three questions. We go to Philip Gélief of Le Figaro.

QUESTION: There seems to be a new emphasis and even a new urgency in pushing the proclamation of Palestinian state, which was supposed to be at the end of the roadmap. So is the roadmap dead? And if it is not, how do you reconcile this new process that you are trying to push with the roadmap? And also, what are the concrete conditions on the ground for a Palestinian state to be acceptable in your view? Thank you.

SECRETARY RICE: Well, I'm very glad that you asked the question because I think the roadmap – the roadmap is still a reliable guide that is supported by the entire international community on how a Palestinian state gets established. And if you look at the phase one commitments, it is very hard to imagine the establishment of a Palestinian state in which the phase one commitments have not been realized or have not been carried through. And so absolutely those phase one commitments have to be met.

What is very clear is that after some experience over the last several years is that the political horizon for the Palestinian people and indeed for the Israeli people is an important ingredient of the momentum and the commitment and the sense of a real outcome in order for people to have the capability and the energy, if you will, to meet those phase one commitments.

I don't think it was ever envisioned in the roadmap that it wouldn't be possible to even discuss or talk about or potentially even negotiate the outlines, the contents of a Palestinian state. But it is absolutely the case that you are not going to be able to establish a Palestinian state if you don't have a commitment to end terror, if you don't have a commitment to end settlement activity, if you don't have a commitment to nonviolence. All of those things have to be achieved. The Palestinians will have to have capacity. They will have to have security forces that can provide security for – against terrorism but can also provide security for the Palestinian people.

All of these things are integral and essential for the establishment of a Palestinian state. So the roadmap remains in place. The roadmap remains a reliable guide. It also remains a document to which the international community is committed through a Security Council resolution. It is going to be critical that the roadmap obligations be met if the Palestinian state is going to be established, and it's one reason that the work that Tony Blair is doing, and by the way, the work that General Keith Dayton is doing on the establishment of reliable, integrated Palestinian forces that truly report to the Palestinian Authority.

MR. BLAIR: If I might just add to that very briefly. The roadmap remains, and as Secretary Rice has just said, all the issues that matter, the valid issues, will have to be addressed if you're ever going to get a solution. The important thing I think, however, to understand about what has been happening recently is, first of all, that for people to make advances they need to have some sense of where the process is heading politically. And the question that people were asking a few months back, or a few weeks back, were all about the meeting that President Bush had called for – was it going to be substantial or was it not going to be substantial? I think the importance of today's communiqué is there's an answer to that: It is going to be substantial. We want it to be a substantive, serious discussion with an outcome that allows us to see how we then move the process forward. So that's on the political horizon which is taken forward, as I say, by Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas.

But the second point about the Palestinian capability, let me just make this very clear. In the end, for a Palestinian state to be created, there are questions about the nature of that state – has it got a proper security infrastructure, are its public services properly functioning, does it have the infrastructure that it needs, are the systems of governance in place – that are a vital part of the questions you would ask about any state. And the important thing I think to keep in your mind the whole time is that these things shouldn't be divorced from each other. They actually go together. But a political horizon so that people know what they're aiming for and know what they're trying to achieve, and the practical steps necessary to make a reality of that. And I think it's both of those things going together, plus the immediate changes that we need on the ground to give people some sense things are really happening, that is the work of the next few months.

MODERATOR: Thank you very much.

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