

## **Joint Statement by the Quartet**

**December 20, 2002**

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, Danish Foreign Minister Per Stig Moeller, High Representative for European Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, and European Commissioner for External Affairs Chris Patten met today in Washington with President Bush and Secretary of State Powell. In his meeting, President Bush expressed strong support for the efforts of the Quartet and his firm commitment to the Quartet's roadmap, which would realize his vision of two states -- Israel and Palestine -- living side-by-side in peace and security.

Reaffirming their previous statements, the Quartet members reviewed developments since their last meeting, on September 17, 2002. They condemned the brutal terror attacks carried out by Palestinian extremist organizations since the last meeting, which aim to diminish the prospects for peace, and only harm legitimate Palestinian aspirations for statehood. The Quartet deplores the killing of innocent Palestinian civilians and UN employees in IDF security operations, and calls on the Government of Israel to review its rules of engagement and disciplinary procedures to avoid such civilian casualties.

The Quartet took stock of the results of the ongoing consultations with the parties on the elements of a three-phase performance-based and goal-driven roadmap to realize the vision expressed in President Bush's June 24 speech of two states -- Israel and an independent, viable, sovereign, and democratic Palestine -- living side-by-side in peace and security. The Quartet commended the constructive spirit that characterized its discussions with all parties. The Quartet, based upon a common understanding on the content and goals of this process, made substantial progress toward finalizing a roadmap for presentation to the parties in the near future. The Quartet agreed to further intensive work to develop a credible and effective monitoring mechanism. In the meantime, the Quartet calls on the parties to carry out as rapidly as possible their responsibilities to restore calm, pursue reforms, and improve the humanitarian situation -- steps that will lead to a political process culminating in Palestinian statehood.

Specifically, the Quartet calls for an immediate, comprehensive, cease-fire. All Palestinian individuals and groups must end all acts of terror against Israelis, in any location. In this regard, the Quartet welcomes the initiative of Egypt to work with Palestinians to achieve this end. Such a cease-fire should be accompanied by supportive measures undertaken by the Government of Israel. As calm is established, Israeli forces should withdraw from Palestinian areas and the pre-Intifada status quo on the ground should be restored. The Quartet calls on the Palestinian leadership to work with the U.S. and others to restructure and reform the Palestinian security services.

Recognizing the importance of well-prepared Palestinian elections to the process of building strong, democratic, institutions in preparation for statehood, the Quartet supports the accelerated work of the Constitutional Committee to draft a Palestinian constitution. The Quartet notes the progress made in the reform process under difficult circumstances and calls for increased efforts by the Palestinian Authority to move forward in a comprehensive and sustained manner, in cooperation with the Task Force on Palestinian Reform, on institutional reforms. In this context, the Quartet welcomes the initiative of the United Kingdom and Prime Minister Blair to convene a meeting early next year to encourage and accelerate the reform process.

The Quartet expresses concern at the deepening humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the West Bank. It calls for increased effort by the Government of Israel to ease the humanitarian situation in the West Bank and Gaza. It also calls on Israel and the Palestinians to implement fully the recommendations of the Bertini report. The Quartet welcomes the recent transfer by Israel of VAT and other revenues due to the Palestinian Authority, and calls on Israel to continue these monthly transfers, including arrears. The Quartet reiterates the importance of immediate Israeli measures, consistent with legitimate security concerns, to improve the lives of Palestinians, including allowing the resumption of normal economic

activity, facilitating the movement of goods, people, and essential services and lifting curfew and closures. The Quartet calls on Israel to avoid actions that undermine trust and create further hardship for innocent Palestinian civilians, including demolition of houses and civil infrastructure.

The Quartet welcomes efforts to re-organize and update donor coordination mechanisms in order to simplify and strengthen an already unified international effort so as to revive and support peace efforts.

The Quartet reiterates the critical importance of sustaining hope on the part of Israelis and Palestinians for the vision articulated by President Bush, and supported by the Quartet in its previous statements and ongoing engagement with the parties and in the region, of a future in which both peoples can live -- in their own states -- in genuine peace and security. Consistent with this goal, the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 will be ended through a settlement negotiated between the parties and based on resolutions 242 and 338, with Israeli withdrawal to secure and recognized borders. For this goal to be achieved, violence and terror must come to an end. Israeli settlement activity must stop, consistent with the recommendations of the Mitchell report.

The Quartet will continue to encourage all parties in the region to seek a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict based on the foundations of the Madrid Conference, the principle of land for peace, UNSCRs 242, 338 and 1397, agreements previously reached by the parties, and the initiative of Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah -- endorsed by the Beirut Arab League Summit -- for acceptance of Israel as a neighbor living in peace and security, in the context of a comprehensive settlement. This initiative is a vital element of international efforts to promote a comprehensive peace on all tracks, including the Syrian-Israeli and Lebanese-Israeli tracks.

The Quartet looks forward to continuing consultations on achieving the above goals, and a further meeting of the Quartet principals in the near future to adopt the roadmap and present it to the parties.

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