

MADRID+15

MADRID FIFTEEN YEARS LATER

Towards Peace in the Middle East:
Addressing Concerns and Expectations

10 - 12 JANUARY 2007



MADRID: FIFTEEN YEARS LATER

Towards Peace in the Middle East: Addressing Concerns and Expectations

A special report on the proceedings and conclusions of the conference “Madrid +15”.

The conference was organized by the Madrid + 15 team, comprised of the Toledo International Center for Peace (CITpax), Search for Common Ground, Fundación Tres Culturas del Mediterráneo, Fafo-AIS and International Crisis Group (ICG).

Madrid + 15 took place at the Intercontinental Hotel in Madrid (Spain) from 10-12 January 2007. It was made possible by contributions from the Foreign Ministries of Spain, Norway, Denmark and Sweden.



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PROGRAMME

Wednesday, 10 January 2007

- 21:00 **Dinner at the Palacio de Santa Cruz**
Hosted by the Governments of Spain, Norway, Denmark and Sweden
- Welcoming address: **Miguel Ángel Moratinos**, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain
- Reply: **Jonas Gahr Støre**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway

Thursday, 11 January 2007

8:30-9:00 **Conference Registration**

9:00-10:15 **OPENING REMARKS**

Moderator: **Felipe González**, former President of the Government, Spain

- Russia: message from Mikhail Gorbachev delivered by Andrei Gratchev, spokesperson at Madrid 1991
- USA: message from Bill Clinton, delivered by Robert Malley, Director, Middle East, ICG
- USA: message from James Baker III, delivered by Dan Kurtzer, former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs
- Norway: Jonas Gahr Støre, Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Denmark: Per Stig Møller, Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Sweden: Carl Bildt, Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Spain: Bernardino León, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs
- Arab League: Amre Moussa, Secretary General
- Qatar – GCC: Abdul Rahman bin Hamad al-Attiyah, Secretary General
- UN: Álvaro de Soto, UN Special Coordinator to the Middle East Peace Process
- EU Commission: Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighborhood Policy

10:15-10:45 **Coffee Break**

10:45-12:00 **PLENARY SESSION**

Speakers:

- Saudi Arabia: H.E. Prince Saud bin Naif bin Abdul Aziz al-Saud, Ambassador to Spain
- Egypt: Osama al-Baz, former First Vice Foreign Minister and Political Advisor to President Hosni Mubarak
- Israel: Shlomo Ben-Ami, former Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Jordan: Abdel Salam Majali, former Prime Minister
- Lebanon: Amine Gemayel, former President
- Palestine: Hanan Ashrawi, Chair of the MIFTAH
- Syria: Riad Daoudi, Legal Advisor to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

12:00-12:30 **Coffee Break**

Thursday, 11 January 2007

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|-------------|--|--|
| 12:30-14:30 | MIDDLE EAST PLENARY SESSION Lebanon-Israel Issues Moderator: Hubert Védrine Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, France | CIVIL SOCIETY SESSION: “How to Influence Policy” Civil Society Network and other guests Moderators: – Emilio Cassinello , Director General, Toledo International Centre for Peace (CITpax) – Susan Collin Marks , Senior Vice- President, Search for Common Ground (SFCG) – Enrique Ojeda , Director, Fundación Tres Culturas del Mediterráneo |
| 14:30-15:30 | Working Lunch | |
| 15:30-17:30 | MIDDLE EAST PLENARY SESSION Palestine-Israel Issues Moderator: Thorbjørn Jagland Speaker of the Parliament, former Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Norway | |
| 19:00-20:30 | Audience with His Majesty The King of Spain, Juan Carlos I, at the Palacio de El Pardo Address by Antonio Garrigues , President, Toledo International Centre for Peace | |
| 21:30 | Dinner at the Intercontinental Hotel Hosted by the Regional Government of Castilla-La Mancha Welcome remarks: Fernando Lamata , First Vice-President of Castilla-La Mancha Keynote Speech: Benita Ferrero-Waldner , EU Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighborhood Policy Introduced by Bernardino León , Spanish Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs | |

Friday, 12 January 2007

9:00-11:00 **MIDDLE EAST PLENARY SESSION**

Syria-Israel Issues

Moderator: **Josep Piqué**

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Spain

11:15-13:30 **MIDDLE EAST PLENARY SESSION**

A Regional Approach

Moderator: **Marc Otte**, EU Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process

Speakers:

- André Azoulay, Counselor to His Majesty the King of Morocco
- Gaspar Zarrías, Regional Minister of the government of Andalucía
- Terje Roed-Larsen, President, International Academy for Peace and former UN Special Coordinator to the Middle East Peace Process
- Hans Blix, former Foreign Minister of Sweden and Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
- Nassif Hitti, League of Arab States, Ambassador to France
- Ambassador Samuel Lewis, former Director of the US Department of State Policy Planning Staff, former senior member of the White House National Security Council
- Gareth Evans, President of the International Crisis Group, former Minister of Foreign Relations, Australia

“Towards a New Approach for the Middle East”

- Gabrielle Rifkind, President, Oxford Research Group
- Sundeep Waslekar, President, Strategic Foresight Group

13:30-14:30 **CLOSING PLENARY SESSION**

- Felipe González, former President of the Government, Spain
- Javier Solana, EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy
- Miguel Ángel Moratinos, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Spain

14:30 **Press Conference**

PROCEEDINGS

Wednesday, 10 January 2007

**DINNER AT THE PALACIO DE SANTA CRUZ HOSTED BY THE
GOVERNMENTS OF SPAIN, NORWAY, DENMARK AND SWEDEN**

Welcome address by **Miguel Ángel Moratinos**, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Spain

Miguel Ángel Moratinos opened with remarks about the hopes and frustrations inherent in efforts to bring peace and prosperity to the Middle East. He extended gratitude to former Spanish President Felipe González, Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs Francisco Fernandez Ordóñez, and the former Presidents Bush and Gorbachev for making the first Madrid Conference possible, and he thanked the organizers of this renewed effort towards peace. He said that Madrid +15 was intended as both a commemoration of the 1991 Madrid Conference, as well as a means to reflect on the current situation in order to move forward. The first Madrid Conference was convened by the United States and the former USSR, and hosted by Spain with the approval of the United Nations, in the context of the end of the Cold War and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Moratinos claimed that “Madrid was a brilliant exercise of diplomatic engineering,” and asserted that the conference coalesced the multilateral and bilateral dimensions of the Arab-Israeli conflict. He maintained that combining bilateral negotiations between Israel and its neighbors with multilateral conversations about regional issues, such as refugees, arms control and economic cooperation, had led to the hope that a solution to the conflict would be found relatively quickly.

Moratinos noted that this hope did not bear immediate action, but that Madrid did pave the way for the Oslo Accords, which were endorsed by the same governments that helped sponsor this non-official initiative: Norway, Sweden and Denmark. He expressed the general belief that Oslo was putting in gear an “irreversible process” towards peace, and admitted that the “optimism was excessive”. Nonetheless, he recognized a “double merit” to this process, that it profoundly identified all the factors of the conflict and the terms for a possible solution, and that it led to the creation of the Quartet (EU/ US/ UN/ Russia) and thereby the Roadmap in 2003. However, Moratinos admitted that in recent years the situation in the Middle East has deteriorated extraordinarily. He referred to Kofi Annan’s words at the UN Security Council (12 December 2006) as appropriate in describing the situation as, “more complex, more fragile and more dangerous”. Moratinos highlighted that in the twenty-first century, the international community is now confronted with regional conflicts, terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, decomposing states and organized delinquency. He stated that terrorism is a leading threat felt on both sides of the Atlantic, and reiterated a condemnation of terrorism wherever it may strike, including Israel.

Jonas Gahr Støre, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Norway

Jonas Gahr Støre thanked his Spanish counterpart and welcomed all guests to the dinner and to the conference. He stressed that “Madrid+15” was a common Spanish/Norwegian initiative and he highly appreciated the support received by his Scandinavian colleagues. Støre welcomed representatives of key parties in the region and outside, emphasizing that broad participation is vital, especially in creating confidence, contacts and trust. He also thanked the organizers and made a special reference to FAFO’s role. Støre underlined the importance of civil society’s involvement, claiming that “we need your engagement as basis for process between governments”.

Støre continued by recalling the existing link between Madrid (1991) and Oslo (1993) – without Madrid there would have been no Oslo accords. He was pleased to stress the close Spanish-Norwegian-Scandinavian cooperation on Middle East issues. He asserted that commemorating Madrid fifteen years later is important, and that it is even more important to look forward. Støre pointed out that the current situation is very difficult; that engagement and constructive involvement of all parties and players is needed more than ever; and that it is also of utmost importance for the international community to show strong commitment. “Norway’s engagement will continue”, Støre stressed, and concluded: “Peace in the region is important also for Europe”.

Thursday, 11 January 2007

OPENING REMARKS

Moderator:

Felipe González, former President of the Government of Spain

Felipe González opened the conference by stating that the aim of this civil society initiative was to construct a joint reflection about how to achieve peace in the Middle East. He recalled the historical context of the 1991 Madrid Conference as a tumultuous period, in which the Gulf War over the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait had just ended and the USSR was about to dissolve following the resignation of Mikhail Gorbachev. The new horizon that appeared with the end of the Cold War, and of the bipolar balance of power, offered hope to many. The Madrid Conference had been a sign of this hope. President George W. H. Bush stated that the time had come to receive dividends of peace. Nevertheless, those dividends have not yet arrived.

González noted that substantial changes have occurred in the Middle East since 1991, and asserted that after fifteen years the situation was not any better than previously. He asked what conditions would be necessary to construct positive dialogue and a new international order, considering the technological revolution and the globalized economy currently defining the world. He also stressed that the problems in the Middle East – the 2006 summer crisis in Lebanon, the continually difficult Israeli-Palestinian relations, the war and post-war scenarios in Iraq, and the regional emergence and influence of Iran – are inter-related and inter-connected, and emphasized the importance of finding the appropriate and valid conditions for regional stability in the Middle East.

Following González's opening remarks, messages from three previous participants at the 1991 Madrid Conference were presented, followed by remarks by each of the four hosting Ministries of Foreign Affairs.

Andrei Gratchev, Spokesperson for President Gorbachev at the 1991 Madrid Middle East Peace Conference

Message from former Russian President Mikhail Gorbachev

Moscow, 10 January 2007

I wish to greet cordially the participants of the International Conference "Madrid: 15 years later." I regret that unfortunate circumstances prevented me from accepting the invitation of the organizers.

I fully support your idea to return to the experience of the Madrid Conference of 1991 now, when the situation in the Middle East has dramatically aggravated and at the time when we observe that attempts of different sides to find solutions of its serious problems on the unilateral basis, relying mostly on military force or terrorist violence, lead clearly into the stalemates and threaten to explode the international stability.

I share your design not only because I was one of the initiators of the Madrid Conference and co-chaired it with the then US President George Bush. It's also since I'm convinced that even 15 years later the conception of the Madrid Conference and its experience would serve modern political leaders in a very different international setup.

It's true that at the first glance the situation in the Middle East may give reasons to think that we've almost returned to the past, condemned in turn in a vicious circle of mutual mistrust and violence. In 1991 having lived through the experience of the first War in the Gulf we too had to look for the management of its consequences and broader political solutions.

Yet at that time the principal differences from the present situation resided in the fact that the previous war succeeded in uniting an impressive international coalition on the basis of the UN mandate issued to stop the brutal violation of the international law represented by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. In those days and as a direct consequence of the end of the Cold War, the United Nations may be for the first time since its creation in 1945 and finally liberated from the status of hostage of the world's division into ideological and strategic blocs, managed to fulfill the role for which it was designed: serve as an impartial guarantee for the maintenance of international peace and security.

As you remember, the participants of that coalition were the USA, the majority of the countries of Europe, the Soviet Union and an important number of states of the Muslim world. Such character of the coalition has determined not only its impressive military success but above all quite promising political perspective. Yet already in that situation it became obvious that even a most successful military campaign shall not assure a long term and stable peace settlement in this sensitive area of the world without the observation of at least two basic conditions. First – the just resolution of the key problem of the region: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Second: the efficient and coordinated involvement of the international community and of its most authoritative members in the elaboration and the application of a durable formula of peace. From this common understanding and conclusion grew the project and the historic hope of the Madrid 1991.

Unfortunately we all failed to use the chances offered at that time. 15 years later we face the same unresolved and even dramatically aggravated problems. The new war in Iraq has produced tragic consequences for the civil population and introduced the uncertainty for the future of this state. It has also provoked a sharp political division in the international community. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict after the hopes raised in Oslo and Madrid turned away into the road of deception, mutual provocations and confrontation seems to be heading towards the dead end.

As a result of the recent events new conflicts were added to the former unresolved problems. Because of this the whole design risks to turn into the battleground for civil, interethnic and religious wars. Destructive, extremist and even fanatical elements and forces tend to replace the moderate and responsible politicians who were present fifteen years ago in each of the opposed camps and were sincerely searching for solutions on the basis of reasonable compromises.

Yet precisely this dismal picture from my point of view stresses the importance and urgency to bring back the evolution of the situation to the rational course. The drama of the Middle East fraught with the gravest consequences and capable of turning into a global political and humanitarian catastrophe should serve as a stimulus for the world community urging it to mobilize its resources of solidarity, responsibility and intellectual courage in order to prevent the disastrous degradation of situation.

In this context the experience of Madrid 1991 could be precious. It could inspire us not to seek to enter for the second time the same river, which is naturally impossible. But to try to rebuild the community concerns, to restore the threads of mutual understanding and trust that were uniting in those years politicians representing the major social and political currents of this region with the international community.

I sincerely wish you success in this hard but necessary effort.

Mikhail Gorbachev

Robert Malley, Director, Middle East, International Crisis Group

Message from the office of former US President Bill Clinton

I am pleased to extend my warmest greetings and best wishes to the Madrid+15 participants.

Madrid was the culmination of an energetic diplomatic mission, and the beginning of an inspiring political mission: to reach a comprehensive, just, and viable solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. It was the first time that Israelis and Arabs met together at a conference table rather than on battlefield, the first time they could directly and candidly express their positions and confront views. You are all familiar with what followed that historic moment: the Oslo accords and the signing ceremony on the White House lawn: the Israeli-Jordanian peace agreement; the onset of Israeli-Syrian negotiations; the Wye River Agreement; and the ambitious attempt to put an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. You also know well the disappointments and setbacks of my last years in office and those which the Israeli, Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese people experience to this day. By being here together, despite your differences, you send a strong message that peace still can and must be achieved. At the end of the Camp David summit, Shlomo Ben-Ami, one of the organizers of this event, told me that we had finally broken the genetic code of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He was right. In December 2000, I presented a proposal that reflected my best understanding of a just and lasting peace. Since then, every effort by Israeli and Palestinian citizens to reach an agreement has reflected those principles. The same is true of the Israeli-Syrian track, where we came close to an accord and where, again, a solution is plain for all to see. Virtually all experts agree that nothing would have more dramatic, positive impact on the Middle East than solving the Arab-Israeli conflict. Broadly speaking, we all know what that solution looks like. According to polls, the peoples most directly affected are willing to endorse this approach, yet an agreement remains elusive. Achieving it requires assertive leadership in the region, and from Europe and the United States. For too many years, the people of the Middle East have been denied normal lives. Every passing day without peace threatens to further radicalize the region and engulf it in another deadly conflagration. Every passing day endangers the very possibility of a two state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. Now is

the time to energize regional and international efforts for a comprehensive settlement. This gathering is an important step towards that goal.

May you inspire others to follow.

Daniel Kurtzer, former US Ambassador to Egypt and Israel

Message from former US Secretary of State, James A. Baker III

4 January 2007

To the Organizers and Participants of the Madrid+15 Conference,

The convening of the conference “Madrid Fifteen Years Later” could not be more timely and I wish you the best success in your deliberations.

The 15th anniversary of the Madrid Middle East peace conference of 1991 – a meeting that brought together all the key parties for the first time and led to face to face, direct negotiations between Israel and all its immediate Arab neighbors – offers an opportunity to assess the possibilities of moving forward toward Arab-Israeli conflict resolution.

In my book “The Politics of Diplomacy” I wrote that the Madrid Conference’s “enduring legacy was simply that it happened at all. After forty-three years of bloody conflict, the ancient taboo of Arabs talking with Israelis had in the space of one carefully choreographed hour been dramatically consigned to the back benches of history. Like the walls of Jericho, the psychological barriers of half a century came tumbling down with resounding finality that clear fall morning. None of us swept up in the satisfaction of the moment harbored any illusions about the travails ahead.” We knew at the time that the road ahead would be difficult and even perilous. Nevertheless, the path toward a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace settlement on all fronts had been delineated.

I also wrote that “I’m hopeful that in my lifetime we’ll see a splendid sprint toward a lasting peace.” Let us work toward that ultimate goal.

Sincerely,

James A. Baker III

Jonas Gahr Støre, Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Chairman, colleagues and friends,

The Madrid conference 15 years ago did not create peace. But it gave hope. And it led towards peace. Against a background of a Gulf war it brought key regional parties together. What started in Madrid had lasting effects on the political map of the Middle East.

As we look at the region today, the picture is even gloomier than the one we were facing 15 years ago. To meet these challenges we need to set a regional agenda. We need to repeat the method of Madrid.

This is why I was happy to initiate the preparations for this conference with my Spanish colleague Miguel Ángel Moratinos and this is why the Norwegian Government supports the organization of the Madrid + 15 conference together with Spain, Denmark and Sweden.

We all share the belief that we need a new engagement. I would also like to commend our dedicated research institutions for putting so much effort into preparing for this event.

For various reasons some parties to the wider Middle Eastern conflicts are absent from our gathering. I believe we should recall that a prerequisite for peace is that we make all parties stakeholders, that we seek to engage countries as well as key groups.

Key to the Madrid method is engagement.

We should recall that engagement does not mean tolerating obstructionism and extremism. We reject violence and terrorism. We expect countries and groups of the region to live up to their international obligations and to abide by international law. We object to occupation and illegal settlements.

Engagement means exploring opportunities for a new path towards peace and security for the people in the Middle East.

As always, there will be those who fear change and moderation, those who seek to bring engagement to an end. The history of the Middle East is full of such examples. The challenge will be to deny them the right of veto when peaceful and constructive approaches become a viable possibility.

Mr. Chairman,

The important legacy of Madrid 15 years ago was not a comprehensive peace accord. It was rather the creation of an enabling environment. The rest of the 1990s saw progress and breakthrough. A spirit of negotiations. The Oslo Accords. Peace between Israel and Jordan. Close to peace between Israel and Syria. And despite dire set backs, real steps forward between Israelis and Palestinians.

Then the atmosphere changed around 2000 – and today, as we enter 2007, and despite the Road Map and different plans, we can hardly speak of a viable peace process.

15 years later another war is waging in Iraq. We can only hope to see an end to the violence and a gradual resumption of a sustainable political process. We need to acknowledge that the

solution must be political – inside Iraq – supported by its neighbors and the international community.

One after another, separate conflicts in an extended Middle Eastern region are increasingly linked together – from the Horn of Africa all the way to Afghanistan. Each conflict needs to be addressed in its own merits.

But in addition we need to take a regional approach. We should hold open the scenario of a new formal regional conference, supported by the international community. We need to take account of new dimensions such as increased religious influence, Iran's role and ambitions, the fight against terrorism and the issue of nuclear proliferation.

Time does not allow me to comment on each conflict. Here in Madrid we will have ample time to do so.

I still believe that the Israeli Palestinian conflict continues to be a key challenge to achieving peace throughout the Middle East. We need to break the cycle of violence. Here too, there is no military solution. It can only be political. It is crucial that the parties engage in dialogue. Dialogue is not a sign of weakness. Dialogue is the difficult and brave choice, as Prime Minister Rabin and Chairman Arafat demonstrated after Oslo on the lawn of the White House.

It was a brave act of President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert to come together last month. But to preserve this potential new start the people they represent must see the benefit in terms of commitment to concrete follow-up of results.

Here in Madrid we are pledging to lend our support. In the present context, the countries in the region are the main stakeholders. But so are also the Quartet and other international actors. The true role of the Quartet should be to weigh in and provide a real effort to support and even initiate a process. We wish to see them play that role. And as we speak I believe it is fair to say that now is the time for the Quartet to demonstrate leadership. And if the Quartet is unable to do that as a group, then each part should not refrain from engaging. That challenge goes in particular to the European Union.

Today the situation in Palestine is dramatic. And it may pass from bad to worse. I hear Palestinian friends say that the international community should lift the siege. Let me be clear; speaking for Norway, we have no desire to see Palestine under siege. We stand by the vision of a viable Palestinian state, and we pledge our support to assist you in getting there. We wish to see success in the Palestinian attempt to agree on a political platform that would open the road to greater internal unity and real negotiations for peace. We stand ready to respond.

But if there is to be any such process, let us be realistic: The United States has to engage and promote a new dialogue and a new way forward. And Israel has to do its part to lift restrictions on the Palestinians and deliver tangible outcomes of political talks and pledges. Israel has the obvious right to safeguard its security. But Israel's peace and security is directly linked to the prospects of Palestinian peace and security.

Mr. Chairman,

The method of Madrid is about engagement. There must be a diplomatic process with rights and obligations for every conflict.

To halt violent extremism, we must engage all parties, including non state actors in dialogue and responsible engagement. Failing to do so would leave the initiative to extremists and to

those who refuse compromise. Groups cannot be eradicated by military force or eliminated by decree.

They too need to be engaged and held responsible.

Norway is committed to working hard together with its partners in and outside the region to make peace in the Middle East a reality. We maintain a dialogue with all countries and key groups that need to be engaged in regional efforts to reduce conflict and violence. The road to renewed political efforts towards peace and security for all can only be found through strong commitment to engagement in dialogue. The brave and difficult choice.

I wish you all a successful conference. Thank you.

Per Stig Møller, Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs

Ministers, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Some 15 years ago, the eyes of the world were directed towards this renowned city, hoping that progress could be made in solving what many then perceived – and still do – as the core source of continuing instability in the Middle East.

But despite several sincere efforts the Israeli-Arab conflict continues to fester. Our presence here today is however a clear and unequivocal expression of our collective conviction that progress towards a just and lasting solution involving not only the Israeli-Palestinian conflict but also the Lebanese and Syrian tracks is possible and indeed realistic.

What we need – not least in this region – is not antagonizing foes – but cooperating partners. What we need is not animosity – but generosity.

Since 1991 substantial progress has been achieved. Most importantly, there is universal agreement among all responsible parties that the goal is a two-state solution – Israel and Palestine – living side by side in peace and security. The Arab League's 2002 Beirut Initiative builds on this fundamental principle. Furthermore, a Roadmap for Peace has been formulated, endorsed by the UN Security Council, and accepted by the primary parties as the basis for how to reach that elusive, but desirable goal of two viable and sustainable states. In other words, we all know more or less what the solution will look like – the problem is how to get there.

Even if we have a Roadmap that could show the way, the movement towards the goal has hardly begun! Too many has sought to block progress of the peace process. But we must never leave the initiative and the decisions in the hands of those forces that feed off continued conflict and confrontation.

Outside pressure and intervention is vital, but it cannot replace the responsibility of the primary concerned parties themselves to seek a way forward.

The strategic choice of peace and cooperation also means avoiding actions that contradict or counter the goal. Actions that undermine the future perspective of two sustainable states are not in the long-term interest of either party. While security concerns and self-defense are legitimate interests, they must respect the boundaries long established in international law. New Israeli settlements on the West Bank and disproportionate use of force run counter to this, as does the Hamas-led Palestinian government's repeated refusals to recognize Israel's right to exist. Hamas may have won an election almost exactly one year ago, but it is not working in the interest of the Palestinian people when it rejects the three Quartet principles.

Still, we have some good reason to have some hope for the future. The recent meeting between Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas testifies to a shared understanding of the need to keep channels of communication open despite the circumstances. A fragile cease-fire in Gaza seems to hold, despite repeated attempts by radical elements to provoke its collapse.

It is encouraging to see how more and more moderate Arab states now openly counter the obstructive agenda of both state and non-state actors whose goals differ fundamentally with those of peace, reconciliation and justice. This aspect was quite clear from the deliberations in the UN Security Council last September, which gave rise to renewed hope for the peace process.

Before I leave the floor to my friend and colleague from Sweden, allow me to highlight one more issue that is of paramount importance. Peace will not be sustainable if it is not supplemented by a robust economic development that can provide social stability and economic freedom to growing populations in the Middle East.

But the absence of peace in the Middle East severely limits the economic and human potential inherent in the rich and diverse cultures of this region. The resulting unemployment, not least among the young people, in turn underpins those forces seeking confrontation and conflict, not only in the Middle East, but also within the West.

It is a vicious circle that we must break and I hope and trust that this conference will contribute towards supporting those for whom a strategic choice of peace and cooperation is more than simply words. To support them is why we are here today.

Thank you.

Carl Bildt, Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

15 years ago here in Madrid a light of hope was lit for the world and the Middle East. Momentous changes, and deliberate diplomacy, brought the prospect of peace to the ancient lands of Abraham. The years since then have certainly been difficult. The light of hope has often been seen as fading - sometimes as faltering altogether. When we gather here it is to discuss the lessons learnt from these 15 years - but to do so in order to be able to start moving forward again.

It is not difficult to see the problems we are facing in the region. They are certainly not restricted to the absence of peace - or to the absence of a peace process - between Israel and the Palestinians. The Iranian issue can be neglected by no one. And we all have a profound interest in the stability and political progress of an Iraq trying to build a fully fledged and stable democracy. Economic, political and social issues are pressing across the region. But there is little doubt that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is of particular importance. Peace here would facilitate progress throughout the region and across its entire agenda of major challenges.

In broad terms, we all know what the solution one day will have to be: two states living side by side in peace and security within internationally recognized borders. Indeed, there is now a universal commitment to the principle of a two-state solution.

I am convinced that the longer we delay starting to move decisively forward, the greater are the risks that the challenges one day may seem insurmountable. There was once perhaps a belief that time was working in favor of peace. That is far less certain today. There might be forces building up across the region that one day could challenge the very foundations upon which peace will have to rest.

Indeed, Kofi Annan recently cautioned that tensions are "near the breaking point". A report from the EU Institute for Security Studies - looking at the prospect for the decades ahead, even warned of what it called the risks of "a systematic breakdown" of the entire region. Time, then, is of essence. To wait and do nothing might well be just waiting for things to get even worse.

The long-term security of Israel will be a function not only of the reconciliation between it and the Arab world but also of the viability of the future Palestinian state. There is no way in which Israel can be secure if surrounded by areas under occupation, with populations living in anger and despair sometimes opting for extremism.

The first imperative for moving forward is to avoid going backwards. Palestine must not renege neither on agreements and understandings reached in the past, nor on its own commitment to building a state based on democracy and the rule of the law. The renunciation of all forms of terrorism, as well as the use of violence to settle internal disputes, is fundamental. Israel must truly honor in deeds, not only in words its commitment to stop new settlements on occupied lands and to abolish those established in violation of international law. This applies throughout Palestinian territories, not excluding East Jerusalem. The end of occupation is a necessity for Israel itself - and policies must be conducted accordingly.

The second imperative is to start moving forward. The cease-fire in Gaza must be extended to the West Bank. The freedom of movement on the occupied territories must be dramatically improved. Prisoners must be released. Economic relations must be normalized. Security cooperation must be strengthened. The political dialogue must be deepened. Nothing of this should be impossible. All of this is urgent.

The third imperative must be to move through these urgent steps towards peace. Not only towards a peace process – time might simply not be there given the forces that might be building up - but towards peace itself.

The essence of that peace will be the building of a Palestinian state with internationally recognized borders, contiguous territory and a viable economy. Nothing else will bring peace to the region. We are talking about a territory that - Gaza aside - will soon have a population density higher than Bangladesh. The 1967 borders constitute the basis for any agreement that must be concluded. And Israel must understand that no other nation in the world – except Palestine itself – has a more fundamental interest in the viability and stability and democracy of that state of Palestine than Israel has. Peace must come primarily from the region. We know that the basic outlines of the peace to come already today have broad public support in all the lands between the Jordan and the Mediterranean.

But we in the international community must and can help and assist. A revitalized Quartet is of the greatest importance in order to provide political leadership. And we in the European Union are ready to play a significantly more important role. We Europeans face mounting strategic challenges in our near abroad. From Kabul to Khartoum we feel the tremors of rising tensions. Clouds are gathering also on our immediate Eastern horizon. Signs of escalating fracture in Africa are increasing.

We need far more of a concerted strategic debate on the challenges ahead. And we need more of a clear policy to help in addressing them. But nowhere is this more important than when it comes to the conflict we will be discussing here in Madrid, today and in the days to come.

Let us bring back the lights of hope.

Thank you!

Bernardino León, Spanish Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs

Bernardino León opened his speech by recalling the 1991 Madrid Conference, which he claimed for the past fifteen years has inspired, and continues to inspire, many Spanish diplomatic efforts. Spain always has been active in the region, and is now even more so, as the Foreign Minister is a former envoy to the peace process. Secretary León thanked those who made Madrid 1991 conference possible, as well as the organizers of the Madrid +15 conference.

León continued by talking about the EU's role in the region. He said the EU has a solid legitimacy that enables it to play a key role regarding military, political and economic contributions. He cited that it is in the interest of the EU to achieve stability in the Middle East, especially so as to ensure security for its international troops. León stated the need to foster a process of multilateral negotiation that resolves all the different fronts of the conflict together. There are indicators that it must be spear-headed by the EU and that the international community as a whole must take steps forward to re-ignite the dynamics of negotiations, considering that:

- The results of unilateralism have demonstrated that it is not a viable solution
- It has been made evident that a military solution is not viable for the conflict
- The different issues of the conflict are tightly interconnected
- Given the geographical expansion of the conflict, it is necessary to engage all stakeholders in order to have an effective peace process

Secretary León agreed with Minister Moratinos that it is time for the EU to reactivate the Quartet and to move forward towards an international conference. Such a conference would develop areas of cooperation, and would start a peace process with realistic prospects of ending the conflict. "The Madrid +15 conference will indeed help to move forward towards the goals I have just mentioned", said Secretary of State León.

H. E. Mr. Amre Moussa, Secretary General of the League of Arab States

Mr. Chairman,

Dear Colleagues,

I remember well the day the Madrid Conference was inaugurated. It was a crispy autumn day; Madrid was, as ever, the beautiful and hospitable city. King of Spain Juan Carlos was as usual exuding optimism and enthusiasm. President González was a leading force in the consultations which took place in and around Palacio de Oriente.

Moreover, it was indeed the dawn of a new world. The cold war was over and with it the bipolar order. The nuclear arms race came to a halt and was expected to roll back in a steady process of nuclear disarmament. Ensuring respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms was to occupy the central stage on the international agenda. The invasion of Saddam Hussein against Kuwait was repelled. A new world order was in the offing.

The Madrid Conference was therefore, convened at a hopeful moment which enabled it to accomplish requisite elements necessary for the take off of a meaningful and productive peace process.

First: Madrid highlighted the unanimous determination of the post cold war world, to launch a new dynamism for talks between the Middle East parties, under the main auspices of the new single super power, helped by a supportive international community.

Indeed Madrid offered a credible promise.

Second: It adopted a comprehensive approach aiming at reshaping regional relations, and paved the way for a process of direct negotiations that started immediately after the adjournment of the conference. It was the first time a Syrian delegation sat across the table from an Israeli delegation to formally discuss a peace agreement. So was the case with the Jordanian and the Lebanese. Deeper still, the Madrid conference opened debates of hope that Palestinians and Israelis would negotiate, directly and on equal footing their future relations as two distinct neighboring nations that would live as separate entities/ states, who can coexist side by side in peace, security and cooperation. It proved the point that, as the Jewish people formed Israel, the Palestinian people have the same right to establish the state of Palestine and that the moment has come to realize that very goal and to make it the result of understanding and even joint planning for a future of peace, coexistence and prosperity.

Third: The Madrid conference highlighted a basic principle that helped define the basis for the Middle East peace process and the ultimate end goal of it namely the principle of land for peace.

Fourth: It formed the basis for the successful negotiations between Jordan and Israel that produced the peace agreement between them.

Fifth: It created a new role of an “honest broker”. Here let me pay tribute to President George H. W. Bush and his Secretary of State Jim Baker for the leadership they have shown in proposing, preparing, convening and ensuring the success of the Madrid conference and their sincere desire and honest determination to go ahead with a credible peace process based on direct negotiations and the principle of land for peace.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Having highlighted the successes of Madrid let me dwell very briefly on its few shortcomings.

The first was the exclusion of the United Nations, which constituted, in my opinion, one of the major deficiencies of the Madrid process. We, the Arab side paid dearly for that exclusion. My recommendation is not to repeat this mistake again. The United Nations should be present in all current and future endeavors of peace.

The honest broker role did not really work. It became evident that a fully engaged and active peace process should always have an objective point of reference with a higher potential for neutrality and capability of upholding international legality and lawfulness. This would only come within the framework of the United Nations. Regardless of the weaknesses or shortcomings we do witness today in the performance of the Security Council and the general Assembly, they remain together with the International Court of Justice, the primary source that carries the weight of international legitimacy.

The second shortcoming was the lack of a follow up mechanism that would intervene to redirect the process, if and when it stalls, diverts or fails. A mechanism which would strongly prevail, even behind closed doors over the party that shows signs of playing foul with this worthwhile peace endeavour. I recall here what Prime Minister Shamir said in Madrid about his intention to delay the negotiations for ten years or more. This should not have been allowed. Today, we are at the fifteenth and not the tenth anniversary of the Madrid conference, a peace has not been achieved and with no peace process.

The third, shortcoming was a concealed motive, be lately discovered, that is to move at the earliest possible opportunity to a policy of conflict management rather than conflict resolution.

Distinguished colleagues and friends,

Having said that let me reaffirm my conviction that the Madrid conference was a landmark event, a corner stone in our peace making quest. The spirit of Madrid is still hovering on us. Land for peace constitutes a *sine qua non* rule for a lasting peace agreement. The question, however, is what should we do now?

Certainly, we should be aware of the changing international context and the imposed change in priorities on the international agenda. Terrorism, the so-called clash of civilizations, the protracted and uneven debate on nuclear issues, the deteriorating situation in Iraq and the recreation of the sectarian and ethnic bloody confrontations have come to the forefront of issues affecting international and regional stability. I concur with the seriousness of these problems. But I also submit that the Palestinian question and the denial of their rights, the source of the all ills of the region. I firmly believe that the comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict will produce a much better regional environment conducive to cope more successfully with crisis and tensions. In this respect, I underline here the pertinent and inspiring recommendations of the Baker-Hamilton report.

The peace process should no longer be considered a secondary to the war against terrorism. For, the opposite is true. The success of the peace process is one of the pre-requisites for winning the fight against terrorism. And the process has to focus on reaching a genuine and just peace. For this, a viable Palestinian State enjoying full sovereignty is a must and the removal of the settlements and the wall is an equal must. So is the return of the Golan Heights to Syria and the Shebaa farms to Lebanon. Halting all military nuclear capacities and

the threats they pose to the region is also a must to create a wider regional security scheme. Current security arrangements could be worked out, but they – like all other issues – should be negotiated in good faith. Security, in essence, is meant to consolidate peace. We should never allow security to become a pretext to pre-empt the inherent right for a just peace, or to justify bloodshed and confrontation.

In fulfilling the spirit of Madrid, the Arab League at its 2002 Summit in Beirut, extended to Israel the hand of peace based on full recognition and normalization on the basis of mutual and parallel implementation of the obligations ascribed to them by the international community through Security Council resolutions and the Madrid principle of Land for peace. We, on the Arab side, have yet to see any peace initiative by the other side.

I seize the opportunity of this meeting to invite Israel not to be afraid of peace and to extend the hand of peace as we have done. Israel should work to be a full member of the Middle Eastern Society of nations. Israel, I trust, knows what should be done to achieve such beneficial status. In the absence of such a proposition, the international community should assume its appropriate role. And therefore, I invite the meeting to call for the urgent convening of an international peace conference under the auspices of the UN to re-launch the process of peace. But this time it should not be open ended in time or goals. It must have a defined time frame with an end game oriented approach. We do not have enough time. We should not celebrate the sixteenth anniversary of Madrid without definite progress towards peace. The Year 2007 should witness the offering of a comprehensive peace agreement that would end the Arab-Israeli conflict. I hope this would come true.

Abdul Rahman bin Hamad al-Attiyah, Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

Abdul Rahman bin Hamad al-Attiyah opened with thanks to the organizers and hosts of the conference and said that Spain served as a model example by being a country that acts as a bridge for the alliance and integration of civilizations. He recalled that during the first Madrid Conference, which was inaugurated on 30 October 1991, the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation also participated and witnessed the different discourses which led to subsequent bilateral and multilateral negotiations. In retrospect, after fifteen years, he claimed that there had been exaggerated optimism, which was highlighted by Israel's plans to invade and attack the Palestinians, to occupy Arab territory and by the difficulties these presented to the peace process.

Al-Attiyah said that the Oslo Accords (1993) were not only fragile, but that Israel did not commit to the content or to the implementation of the stages outlined in it; on the contrary, Israel invaded Palestinian territory more than once, which created a Palestinian existence dominated by threats and insecurity. He asserted that the Roadmap has fared no better since Israel has erected a wall which effectively expropriates additional Palestinian territory. He stated that the Roadmap therefore appears more like a plan for calm, than for peace. Al-Attiyah said that each international document was prepared on the basis of the respect for human rights, but that Israel has not respected relevant international law, which implies a clear provocation to violence. He emphasized the seeming contradiction, that the Jewish people who have suffered so much for so many generations were now implementing an occupation.

Al-Attiyah claimed that force and the negligence to abide by international law would not bring peace, and that the solution resides in two separate states. He repeated that there is no military solution, as exemplified by the summer 2006 war in Lebanon, because violence only arouses hatred and other impediments to peace. He stated that the region suffered from the misleading phenomenon of calling for peace. A peace proposal is not a zero-sum game, but rather a proposal in which all sides win. Al-Attiyah opined that the Arab-Israeli conflict does not need new initiatives, but rather new mechanisms by which to implement the content of legitimate international resolutions within a clear timeframe and under the mandate of the UN Security Council.

Al-Attiyah stated that the main axis with which to end the Arab-Israeli conflict is the Saudi Initiative from the Arab League Summit in Beirut 2002: an inclusive initiative which depicted a new position taken by the Arab world towards Israel. He called on Israel to consider anew its politics, beginning with destruction of the wall between Israel and its neighbors, and to formulate a new vision for its relations with the region. He stressed that this could be an opportunity to force the international community to end the occupation of Arab territory and to reinvoke the spirit of Madrid fifteen years ago, thus ending the suffering of all peoples in the Middle East.

Álvaro de Soto, UN Special Coordinator to the Middle East Peace Process

Álvaro de Soto agreed with Felipe González that remarks were personal reflections and that there was a need to situate oneself within the context of the Madrid Conference fifteen years ago. He said that the creation of the Quartet and the elaboration of the Roadmap were attempts to rectify some of the defects that perhaps ensued from the 1991 Madrid Conference. He asserted that these were diplomatic attempts to harmonize the policies of various leading players. He also claimed that the Roadmap tried to detain the erosion process inherent in the Oslo process, and in a certain sense tried to save the process by creating a non-sequential parallel policy for those involved in achieving peace.

De Soto affirmed that what followed was an inability on the Palestinian side to ensure internal security and to control violence and the use of terror against Israel. He said that Israel also did not reduce its policy of settlement expansion, quite the contrary. Hamas' assumption of political leadership of the Palestinian Authority, de Soto claimed, was a result of the delay in reaching a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; this delay has created a fertile space in which to profoundly question the paradigm of a two-state solution, to which everyone is used to referring.

De Soto continued, that recently, the Palestinians have surprised the UN. The 12,000 UN workers in the Territories are witness to the growing abyss, and yet they are consoled that the Palestinians have not fallen into that abyss. De Soto interpreted this as an effort to reach an internal Palestinian political consensus, which could lead again to the two-state solution. In reference to the repeated claim that there is no military solution between Israel and its neighbors, he added that nor is there a military solution to the difficult internal confrontation between Palestinians. Dialogue is the only solution and this is why the UN has encouraged President Abbas' efforts to create a national coalition government, he claimed.

The Israeli preoccupation, not only with security, but also with identity, cannot be ignored and must be part of the equation, de Soto affirmed. He considered that there is a positive Israeli tendency to distance itself from future unilateral actions. He said that these are issues which must be resolved by negotiation only, and that no one can substitute the Arab and Israeli parties of the conflict. He cited parallel inadequacies on the part of both parties complying with compromises. If the international community acts in a unified manner, they could help the parties to come to the table, and to develop more self-criticism. De Soto noted that the Quartet has not insisted enough in assuring compliance on both sides. He said there was no joint Quartet mechanism to monitor and ensure compliance, and urged for better Quartet cohesiveness.

De Soto considered that more clarity is needed to define in which direction the parties are headed, and what parameters are acceptable to the international community. He concluded that the primary objective is to achieve peace between Israel and all of its neighbors, which the summer 2006 events demonstrated are inseparable.

Benita Ferrero-Waldner, EU Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighborhood Policy (ENP)

Benita Ferrero-Waldner congratulated the organizers for launching this initiative and thanked the Spanish government for its hospitality. She noted the importance of taking stock of where the parties stand and where they would go from there. She reinforced the need to emphasize the regional vision of peace and thus to not abandon the hope for a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East. Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner claimed that over the last fifteen years the Middle East peace process has acquired more diplomatic energy, and has gained precedence over all other issues in international affairs.

During the last fifteen years, the European Union has been working consistently within the framework of the Madrid declaration, and more recently the Roadmap, which Ferrero-Waldner said was still a viable guide toward peace, even if progress and results have been lacking. She suggested going back to the original text of the Roadmap that called for a permanent status solution to be reached by 2005. She asserted the need to readdress the steps demanded and to delineate parameters for dealing with permanent status issues. She reiterated that the solution would be found via consensus and dialogue, and not through violence. The first priority is therefore to stop the violence, and therefore maintaining the truce in Gaza is essential. She said the Palestinians must work towards resolving their own internal differences, with possibility for the emergence of a coalition government.

Ferrero-Waldner supported the comprehensive regional approach of the conference and cited it as the only way towards a sustainable solution for the Middle East. She stressed the need to address all the components of all the conflicts in the region, noting that in a globalized world it is impossible to disentangle one conflict from another. She concluded that a comprehensive peace should not be limited to Israel and Palestine, but must also include Lebanon and Syria.

She then asked rhetorically what the EU's role is and replied that the solution cannot be imposed externally, but rather must come from the parties. The role of the European Union is to be an instigator and a facilitator, she continued, and emphasized the need to reinvigorate the Quartet and its relations with the Arab League. The EU can also offer political, technical and financial support for actions related to facilitation and engagement, such as were initiated at Rafah with the movement of goods and people, which she recognized the Palestinians did not consider sufficient. She also mentioned the EuroMed Partnership, initiated by the 1995 Barcelona Process, and the need to further implement the agreements on all sides of the Mediterranean, which correspond with the efforts of the European Neighborhood Policy towards mutual cooperation and development.

OPENING PLENARY SESSION

H. E. Prince Saud bin Naif bin Abdul Aziz al-Saud, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Spain

Your Excellencies,

The Middle East is witnessing extreme tension as a result of the internal crises within three of its Arab countries, as well as due to the increasing escalation, augmenting the tension and the deteriorating the situation; all of which threatens to lead the region into irrevocable results.

The situation in Palestine, Lebanon and Iraq has been the topic of extensive political negotiations that Saudi Arabia has undertaken and continues to undertake on the bilateral, regional and international levels, with the aim of containing the crisis and preventing the eruption of what King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz has described as the powder keg that is bound to explode at any moment. The Arabs have opted for peace as a strategic option and have done everything within their power to reach a just and comprehensive settlement to the Israeli-Arab conflict.

Saudi Arabia has participated in a number of conferences and meetings related to the Palestinian cause, and has supported the march for peace in the Middle East since its launching in Madrid 15 years ago in 1991, up until the Roadmap and the Arab peace initiative presented by King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz, and adopted by the Arab States as a united Arab project at the Beirut Summit held in 2002. This peace initiative provides for a sustainable and just solution to the Arab Israeli conflict, and guarantees security and stability for all the countries of the region and their peoples.

Therefore, we consider that this conference constitutes a unique opportunity to reassert the principles and basis for peace as defined at the first Madrid conference in 1991, and that are based in the UN resolutions especially Resolutions No. 242 and 338, and the principle of Land for Peace.

It would be useful that this conference address an invitation to the parties of the conflict in the Middle East to work on reviving the peace process and reinitiating the negotiations based on the first Madrid Conference and the initiatives that have been suggested and are waiting to be taken into account.

This may require that all the parties involved be invited to an international conference on the Arab Israeli conflict **THAT MAY ALLOW FOR THE PEACE INITIATIVES AND** the UN Resolutions to be transformed into immediate and efficient steps.

Thank you.

Egypt: Osama al-Baz, Political Advisor to President Mubarak

Osama al-Baz referred to the geographic proximity of Europe as a point of departure. He said that the EU is qualified to undertake an important and pivotal role in the Middle East, and emphasized that Europe shared interests with the Arab world. He also asked how to approach a more productive EU role, and confirmed that notwithstanding, both Israelis and Palestinians seemed to be willing to have third party broker or monitor intervene. He affirmed that Hamas had recently made statements suggesting that the Islamist group is willing to deal with Israel as an accepted entity; and proposed that the EU help both Israeli and Palestinians start negotiations from the initial points of agreement, such as the Gaza Strip.

Al-Baz said that Egypt had a “moral commitment” to intervene between Israelis and Palestinians to act as mediator in negotiations, particularly with reference to the Gaza Strip. He stressed the need to “induce Israel to talk with Syria” and stated that “it is not in the interest of Syria to block the path to peace” or to obstruct Hamas and Fatah from reaching an internal Palestinian accord. Involving Syria and listening to the changing discourse of Hamas would be positive steps taken by Israel towards coexistence and cooperation with its neighbors, al-Baz said and concluded that since the United States had other concerns in Iraq and Iran that the EU could now help facilitate such openings.

Shlomo Ben-Ami, former Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Chairman,

As the launching of the Arab-Israeli peace process in the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference has shown, the prospects of peace in the Middle East always waited for a concerted international effort to exploit windows of opportunity. Wars in the Middle East, especially those that did not end in conclusive results, have almost invariably created the conditions for major political breakthroughs, for they taught us all the limits of what power can achieve. Lurched into one of its most dangerous crises in recent times, and immersed in a momentous struggle between the forces of peaceful change and those committed to doomsday politics the Middle East calls once again for a major international effort at peacemaking.

Fifteen years after we first met in Madrid we still did not reach the promised land (of an Arab-Israeli peace). But we are certainly wiser as to what is inevitable if this tortuous process is to usher in a peace settlement. Fifteen years ago we convened on a platform of “land for peace”. But the Israelis never believed they will have to give back all the land, while not everybody on the Arab side thought they might have to offer “all the peace.” Now, everyone knows what we mean by “land”, and everyone knows what we mean by “peace”.

Alas, the Middle East is a cemetery of promising peace plans. Today, the forces that might still derail the chances of peace have anything but laid down their arms. As an Israeli negotiator marked by the sorrow of having touched with the tip of his fingers the possibility of an Israeli-Palestinian peace without reaching it, I can understand the frustration and the rage affecting us all.

Exposed to indiscriminate waves of suicide terrorism, the Israelis lost any hope of a negotiated settlement and in their despair succumbed to a new self-defeating political religion, that of unilateral disengagement. Humiliated by Israeli retribution, with the backbone of their society broken in the bloodiest Israeli-Palestinian war since 1948, and in response to the sad vicissitudes of deficient governance, the Palestinians embraced the Hamas option. Yet, Hamas’ victory notwithstanding, a most fundamental achievement of the peace process has survived the ordeal. The two-state solution is still definitely on the table, but the peacemakers need to be advised that this is not for too long, and time is running out.

There is no chance that any of us can build a future on the denial of the other’s fundamental rights. Jewish statehood is a genuine reality, a powerful conviction, a historic necessity. The legitimate rights of the Palestinians in all their aspects, a formula endorsed by Menachem Begin at Camp David, can only mean one thing: Palestinian statehood is not only a vital component of a stable regional order, it is also a moral imperative.

Our record at peacekeeping might not have been especially edifying. But, we need to persist, for the task of diplomacy is precisely that of testing hope against experience. Yet, this Gordian knot cannot be untied; it needs to be cut. The concept of interim agreements has now become utterly obsolete. We stand, then, at the end of the peace process as we have known it to date. From now on, our options will be between a violent and unilateral separation or disengagement, such as the one that ushered in the current war in Gaza, and a comprehensive peace plan that will be annexed to the Quartet’s road map and will lead to its endorsement by the parties. Only a reverse engineering starting at the end and working backward, might still save this process from irreversible ruin.

Any reformed peace process is doomed to failure if it is guided by a road map on whose parameters for solving the core issues the parties have diametrically opposed views. We do not need to invent the wheel though, for the solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict lies in an outline that is embodied in the main peace plans that are on the table: the Roadmap, the Clinton peace parameters, and the all-Arab peace initiative. Our was a process of trial and error at the course of which we nonetheless defined, as no one before us was capable to do, the outline of a future peace by pointing at the microscopic gaps that still separate us. This is a land too poor in geography and with too heavy a burden of history. Peace is too frequently stymied by the narcissism of minor differences, not by the big issues. Which is why constructive ambiguity might have been necessary at the beginning of the process, but at this late stage, what is called for is precision and concreteness.

The role of the international community as it is embodied in the Madrid Quartet and in the constructive involvement of key Arab states is crucial. That an exclusively bilateral approach might be inadequate was well understood by the initiators of the Arab peace initiative, recently commended by P.M. Olmert. For, the initiative is actually a call to regionalize the solution to the conflict after the bilateral approach has failed us. The loss of mutual trust between the parties and their total incapacity to take even the smallest step towards each other, let alone to observe their commitments without being nursed by third parties, make the creation of an international framework for peace the last and only way out of the dangerous impasse.

This is also true on the Syrian and Lebanese fronts where the parameters of peace are known only too well. The Israelis know what the territorial price is, and the Syrians will not be surprised to hear the conditions of Israel in matters of security, normalization, and an end to the flirtation with the enemies of regional stability. Not marginal at all are those voices in Israel that would like to see the Olmert government, as President Mubarak of Egypt has wisely advised, putting to test the sincerity of Syria's peace offensive by responding to its president's call for negotiations. Many of us believe that it would be unwise for Israel to depart from the pattern established by all Israeli governments after 1992 that negotiated with Syria in recognition of its regional role. As to Lebanon, we all match its struggle for democracy and independence with keen interest, even admiration. There is no problem between our two countries that is not susceptible to a diplomatic solution. For too long the playground of alien forces, Lebanon's prosperity and its effective control over its sovereign territory are vital Israeli interests. A word to President Gemayel, if I may, we are deeply touched by your grief at the tragic loss of your son, Mr. President. Permit us to extend to you our deepest condolences.

It is of course true that many of the ills of our region have very little to do with the Arab-Israeli conflict. Yet, many of us remain convinced that it is only after the core Arab-Israeli dispute has been resolved that the conditions might be created for an accommodation between Israel and the entire Arab and Muslim world, and a regional system of security can perhaps be made possible. Any attempt to develop such a regional system before the Arab-Israeli conflict has been solved is doomed to failure.

Arabs and Israelis tend to give great reverence to the past; they are both saturated with history. But, the past is frequently the enemy of the future, and there is very little in the images that the parties derived from their past that prepared them for the idea of peaceful coexistence or easy conciliation. Our collective challenge today, Israelis and Arabs, is to supersede our traditional tendency to take, or to avoid, decisions only on the basis of worst

case scenarios. Israel was always seen as too rigid and mistrustful in security matters. But, Anwar Sadat's initiative and Menachem Begin's response taught us that Israel's so-called siege mentality is not that impenetrable. The Israelis of today would pay the highest possible price for peace if convinced, as they were by Sadat's overture, that this is about finality, that this is about "no more war, no more bloodshed."

We bear a heavy responsibility to persist in conceiving bold and generous solutions. Itzhak Rabin gave his life as a soldier in the noblest battle of all, the battle for peace, thus bequeathing to us the legacy that the high ideals upon which our founding fathers conceived the Jewish state cannot be reconciled with the denial of the natural right of the Palestinian people to a life of freedom and dignity. Only when a free and independent Palestinian state will assume a vested interest in respecting the regional order and a civilized system of governance, can peace prevail.

Our neighbors have come a long way from the philosophy of utter rejection and denial towards accepting the legitimacy of a Jewish state within internationally recognized boundaries. It would be an unpardonable blunder if they now succumb to the forces in their midst and in the region beyond who preach a strategy of rejection. In this battle we stand together, but we will be defeated if we fail the test of peace between us.

It would be wrong and counterproductive to conduct diplomacy of finger wagging at Israel. No one in this conflict has the monopoly on suffering and martyrdom. In this tragic tribal dispute, both Jews and Arabs have committed acts of unpardonable violence. What is no less grave, they have both erred too frequently in opting for the wrong course, and in refusing to see the changing realities and adapt their policies accordingly. The time has finally arrived to assume that the total satisfaction of the parties' respective dreams or presumed rights will only lead them both to perdition. Peace is a delicate balance between the imperatives of justice and the quest for stability. Hence it is incumbent upon us to devise realistic ways that would heal without opening new wounds that would dignify our existence as free peoples without putting into jeopardy the security and the particular identity of the other. Those realistic ways do exist. Peace is durable. The problem does not lie in the lack of a magic formula for it lies in the ever present smaller life of political will and leadership.

Abdel Salam Majali, former Prime Minister of Jordan

Honorable Sponsors, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Jordanian peacemakers present here today, I would like to thank the four organizing institutions for the excellent preparations and above all for bringing us all together in this event. To the people who worked diligently to make this possible, we present our deep thanks and acknowledgement. We are also grateful for the people and government of this great country, Spain, and its grand capital, Madrid, the host of the historical Madrid Peace Conference fifteen years ago.

The first Madrid Conference became possible because of an innovative architecture designed by dedicated and creative people. Our main concern then was that a rare and valuable opportunity to transform swords into ploughshares would be missed. Yet the Madrid process succeeded in many respects. It ushered in a new era of peace and cooperation that only few months before had seemed unimagined. Many of the original peace pioneers are now deceased, but their legacy and heritage are still alive today.

It took three years after that conference to conclude two important peace agreements: the Jordan-Israel Treaty of Peace which had stood the test of time, and the Palestinian-Israeli interim agreements which still survive despite all the current challenges.

We must admit that the biggest failure of the peace process of the last fifteen years was the assumption that a gradual process of confidence building would usher the parties into making the necessary compromises on final status issues that would allow for a final and sustainable peace agreement. Despite its many successes, the Oslo process has exhausted all its possibilities. This gradual process did not work mainly because it gave too much time to the detractors of the peace process to operate. They were able to destroy peace as quickly as it was built. At the same time, the light at the end of the tunnel that was Oslo was dim, if not non-existent, for it did not specify what a final settlement should look like, and the two parties therefore found themselves often alone, and engaged in endless negotiations and negotiations over negotiations. The trust between the two parties is today at an all time low, and where the parameters of a final settlement are today known to all, the process to it has been destroyed by the extremists on both sides.

New crises in the region have also added to the problem. The present conflicts in Iraq, Lebanon, Sudan and Somalia have worked to radicalize the region further, with huge negative implications not only on the security and the prosperity of the region, but that of the world at large. While the West's regional involvement today might be absorbed with Iraq and Iran, the continuation of the Israeli occupation of Arab land remains at the center of the radar screen of the Arab World. No other issue, as important as the above issues are, has so far managed to dislodge that concern. To the contrary, containing the challenges that Iraq and Iran pose will be that much more difficult without a just, comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Indeed, without such a solution, the dangers that a radicalized region poses to the world have become clear to all.

To move forward, however, requires taking stock of all the positive developments that have occurred during the last fifteen years. First, the Palestinian and Israeli sides have mutually recognized each other as a result of the Oslo process. The international position has moved beyond UN Resolution 242 to acknowledge a Palestinian state through UN Resolution 1515.

The Arab World has adopted a historic Arab Peace Initiative, committing all Arab states to end the conflict with Israel, and the international community has adopted the Middle East Roadmap, creating a mechanism to achieve a peaceful end to the conflict and the establishment of a viable and independent Palestinian state. And the parties themselves have engaged in very serious negotiations to define the overall parameters for a final settlement. Today, thanks to such initiatives as the Clinton parameters, the Taba talks, and the Geneva Initiative, such parameters are very well defined.

We believe thus that the time has come to abandon the gradual approach and instead adopt one that would make use of all the efforts outlined above to affect the solution in a short period of time so that the anti-peace forces cannot derail the process as they have done in the past. The international community, possibly through the Quartet mechanism, can act as a facilitator, monitor and guarantor of such a process. We believe the parameters should include the following:

1. Adopting the Arab Initiative as one of the terms of reference for a solution. Sadly, this important initiative has never been given the attention it deserves from the Israeli public. We would like to remind everyone again of what it offers in return for full withdrawal by Israel from Arab occupied land:

- **A collective offer to end the conflict with Israel.**
- **Security guarantees for all states in the region, including Israel.**
- **A collective peace treaty and normal relations with Israel.**
- **An agreed solution to the refugee problem.**

2. Principles drawn from the result of negotiations conducted between the Palestinians and the Israelis over the last fifteen years, including those from the Clinton parameters, the Taba talks, and the Geneva Initiative.

3. Peace has to be comprehensive, and has to include Syria and Lebanon. The overall parameters for a solution to the Syrian-Israeli and Lebanese-Israeli tracks have also become known to all.

4. Peace needs a sustained involvement from the international community. The policy of leaving the parties to solve the problem on their own has been a failure, and has further radicalized the region. As we assemble in this capital, we look forward to an even more active European role in the process in the time ahead.

Finally, we would like to extend a word to our Israeli partners in peace. Experience in Lebanon and Iraq has taught us that military might, no matter how stronger one party is, cannot offer lasting solutions. Unilateral solutions are not the answer either. In the post-Berlin wall era, we should not look to erect new walls, but to bring down existing ones—physical and psychological. King Hussein and Prime Minister Rabin realized this a decade ago. King Abdullah II has carried the torch and proved that peace with Israel can be sustainable. Israel's wish to be accepted in the region and live among friendly neighbors can be better served not through building a wall around itself, but by allowing people to live in freedom and having twenty two Arab flags fly in Israel.

Thank you.

Lebanon: Amine Gemayel, former President of Lebanon

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to the organizers of the Conference “Madrid: 15 years later” for their great initiative, and I hope that their effort will be successful for the benefit of Middle Eastern nations, and for international peace.

Let me first start by presenting some of the ideas elaborated at the 1991 Madrid Conference fifteen years ago:

1. The Arab-Israeli conflict witnessed deep strategic deterioration. The peace agreement signed between Israel and Jordan in 1994 once again highlighted that it is difficult for a conventional war to occur between the Arabs and Israel. The Oslo track also stressed the principle of two states co-existing as a solution for the conflict. While the delay in implementing what has been agreed upon, in light of the international deterioration, made the final settlement hard to achieve. Although the Arab League summit in Beirut (2002) has accommodated the Madrid and Oslo initiatives, as well as adopted the initiative of Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz, King of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which seek to achieve peace in the Middle East, the Arab party was unable to deal with the challenges that followed the incident of 11 September 2001, namely terrorism, and the war in Iraq. All this closed the horizon for achieving a settlement, and crippled the efforts of international diplomacy to achieve peace in which the Palestinian would establish their own independent state.
2. The Syrian-Israeli conflict remained unresolved, despite the three decades of calm on the Golan front. It was in the interest of the governments of Israel and Syria to see that the conflict between them be projected onto the Lebanese scene. This was part of a pragmatic understanding between Syria and Israel.
3. Fifteen years after Madrid I, the phenomena of Islamic extremism has prevailed and has embarrassed the Arab political systems, as well as hindered their efforts in resolving the conflict with Israel. In the meantime, the spread of resistance movements replaced the role of the countries in terms of war and peace resolutions. In addition, the Arab political systems were not able to expand internal participation in the political resolutions, which emphasizes the dramatic de-legitimization of some of the Arab systems in encountering Israel.

The complicity of the Arab political system increased with the unexpected emergence of Iran as a regional strength with ideological power emanating from the ambition to export the Khomeini revolution, as well as to play an indirect role in the Arab-Israeli conflict by creating allies in the region, such as is the case in South Lebanon and Gaza.

Particularly in Palestine, as a consequence of all these deteriorations, a division amongst Palestinians has taken place, some in favor of two states co-existing and others in favor of armed *intifada* (uprising), which have increased the risk of a Palestinian civil war.

While in Lebanon, the resistance has been restricted to the framework of Hezbollah, which dismisses other parties’ right to defend their land and to determine resolutions in terms of war and peace. This has led to the phenomena of a state within a state, which persisted after the 2000 liberation, and caused the war in Lebanon in summer 2006.

In light of the above, and since the conference “Madrid: 15 years later”, the Arab world is confronted, in general, and Lebanon, Iraq, and Palestine, in particular, with the following challenges and deteriorations:

First: From one hand, the existential crisis that Israel suffers, and its incapability of imposing its own view of peace even via unilateral withdrawal, and on the other hand, the incapability of the radical violence to impose the solution that it accepts.

Second: After fifteen years, the Arab world faces the risk of dismantlement of the modern nation-state, regardless of its moderate achievements.

Third: The deficiency in building the democratic nation-state, especially following the failure of the dictatorial regime in Baghdad. In addition to the deficiency in merging the resistance for land liberation with the democratic plan which preserves the rights of individuals and groups.

Fourth: The issue of Palestinian refugees is of great concern for Lebanon and constitutes a great challenge as well.

All these factors render the geopolitical status, which emerged following the fall of the Ottoman Empire, vulnerable to internal fragmentation and the possible redrawing of current borders in the Middle East.

In this sense, the challenges facing “Madrid: 15 years later” are huge and need different creative approaches that take into consideration the above mentioned changes. This will require the convening of a new conference on the Middle East that would be one of the items of the new international order.

In conclusion, I would like to tackle the situation in Lebanon as a hot spot in the current conflict in the Middle East. The Lebanese crisis is a result of the failure of the Arab-Israeli peace attempts. A solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict would be the right approach to resolve the Lebanese crisis. A resolution of the current situation in Lebanon and its reservation as a democratic, pluralistic, and independent identity will equally be a guarantee for the creation of a modern democratic state in the Arab world capable of preserving a permanent peace in the Middle East.

What is the logic behind the international community’s blindness towards a live experiment in full peace and coexistence between various religions, civilizations, ethnic groups and cultures, while this same world is totally blind to the exemplary model of the Lebanese experiment; especially that Lebanon today is a victim to countless threats and aggressions.

Supporting the path to global peace and a dialogue of civilization requires first helping Lebanon overcome its current crisis and helping her achieve internal peace and security in the face of external interventions and aggressions.

The second imperative for the international community is to encourage the Lebanese to enhance their national dialogue in the framework of a global strategy that aims at spreading the dynamic of peaceful communication between peoples and nations.

Palestine: Hanan Ashrawi, former Palestinian spokesperson at the 1991 Madrid Middle East Peace Conference – Verbatim transcription

Mr. Chairperson,

We appreciate the invitation and on behalf of the Palestinians here I would also like to express our gratitude for the conveners and the organizers of this significant meeting and I would like to promise an involvement perhaps even more engaged than before. First of all, I am very glad to see that there are a few more women in this gathering. However, this does not mean that we have gender parity or that we have women on the basis of equal participation as we would like to have, so I would encourage more women participation in any future peace making efforts.

Perhaps it is quite appropriate that we meeting here in January because as you know January is called after the Roman god *Janus*, which looks both ways, backwards and forwards; backwards to the past and forward to the new year. And here we are, perhaps indulging and looking backwards with a bit of nostalgia to Madrid fifteen years ago. I would like to say that we have to look with more exuberance and excitement to a future that we are called upon to shape as the result of this conference.

The spirit of Madrid fifteen years ago was a spirit of confidence that said “we are able to intervene in reality and change it; we can legitimize the language of peace-making and delegitimize the language of conflict resolution through violence”. Can we recapture that spirit perhaps? We are here all a bit older and hopefully a bit wiser; a bit more mellow with a dash of cynicism, but at the same time we are more determined because we all have experienced the ramifications and consequences of the failure of efforts at genuine peace-making; and having experienced that we are fully committed to hand out our hand again, this time with greater success –we hope– having learned the lessons of the past.

The tragic irony is that we all know what the solution is and what was true fifteen years ago is still true today; the two state solution is still the only viable solution. We know the core issues to be dealt with: a viable Palestinian state, democratic and contiguous, a legal and just solution to the refugee question, the 1967 line as the basis of the boundaries between the two states, and of course the status of Jerusalem as the two capitals for the two states. These are issues that we keep reiterating. The problem is that we need the political will and the engagement in order to bring them about. The tragic irony is also the fact that within public opinion there is a majority that favors peace in both sides – in Palestine and Israel – which is related to what someone said this morning about the gap between decision makers and public opinion. Regardless of the difficult situation for both publics, I would like to include the Arab public as a whole within the public opinion, which remains committed to a just solution. The question is how we can fulfill the aspirations and hopes of this public opinion. Another irony is that there is already a global consensus on peace and on the nature of the peace agreement as well as on the fact that there is no military possible solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict as well as to the ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestinian and Arab land. Violence has proven to be a failed policy, oppression has failed and more of the same is not going to produce any results, it will produce even greater failure.

Again, there is general agreement that the Palestinian question remains the focal question and the most emotive issue in the region; it is an issue that has the force of galvanizing public

opinion as well as influencing perceptions and policies. Therefore, it can go either way as well: the way you treat the Palestinian question could lead to greater destabilization, greater violence, greater extremism, greater polarization, or it could lead to the re-legitimization of peaceful conflict resolutions, human based development programs as well as issues dealing with genuine democracy and genuine good governance and development. We all know that security and democracy are not prerequisites for peace. I think ongoing injustices and situations contribute to a lack of democracy and security, but if you have a just peace that is when you have greater horizons for pluralistic democracy, inclusiveness as well as for genuine security, but if you make security a prerequisite for peace then you will never have peace at all. And the same thing with democracy; it is a simplistic notion reiterated by an Israeli and picked up by George Bush. I was amazed by the fact that a particular Israeli wrote a book and that George Bush read the book. Anyway, the premise is entirely mistaken, so let us just put the record straight: we do need genuine conflict resolution in order also to unleash the forces of democracy and of course of development and good governance and to produce security for everybody.

The Palestinian question must not be allowed to continue to fester in the region and it must not be allowed to continue to be exploited by those with extremist agendas who seek to borrow our legitimacy and the integrity of our cause. We would like to stress that, again, we cannot de-contextualize Palestine and the Palestinian issue from the region; and the failure of the neo-con agenda – the agenda of the extreme right in the United States – has proven that the more you de-contextualize and the more you isolate issues, the more you tend to fail in resolving the underlying causes. You cannot export the democratic revolution or deal with the freedom deficit, if you are totally oblivious of the long standing grievances and sense of injustice in conflict in the region; these have to be addressed simultaneously. And of course the region and the Arab world is not a set of isolated, discrete, hermetically sealed entities and therefore it cannot be dealt with in isolation or in artificial fragmentation. The lessons from Iraq and the war in Lebanon are certainly clear lessons for everyone to learn. We know that militarism has failed. Militarism cannot solve the problem, especially when we are talking against non-regular forces or against a captive population. There are limits to power. Israel has learnt that no matter how much power it uses against people under occupation, it will not be able to defeat the Palestinians, and the failed use of power cannot be dealt by exercising greater power; it will produce even greater failure, particularly the military part.

Again, the defeat of unilateralism – whether in South-Lebanon or in Gaza – shows that unilateralism cannot work, does not work. You need a partner. You need a partnership for peace and you need positive third-party intervention, which is the lesson of Lebanon again, and you need UN participation, and UN resolutions including troops on the ground if needed for there to be stabilization and the removal of the immediate causes of hostilities.

Arab public opinion is suffering from a variety of emotions that have unfortunately taken over and rather dictated themselves on policy and decision making. Anger, frustration, a sense of disenfranchisement, largely traumatized, marginalized, and excluded, but at the same time we cannot discount the degree of national humiliation that is felt by public opinion, leading to the adoption to absolutist causes and perhaps even religious alternatives. Traditionally, we talked about the simplistic polarization between either corrupt or inept national regimes as opposed to the only alternative being a religious ideological alternative, at the expense of pluralism and democracy and the emergence of third alternatives. This has certainly weakened the democratic impetus and the reform forces in the region. We would like to try to combat the emergence of a new polarization in the region – a polarization arising

from the emergence of one axis versus another. We think we have to deal with the region in a more integrated, more responsible, homogenous way, rather than starting to deal with the emergence of national alliances and the emergence of an axis that might be seen to fit within the labeling of the world as either devils or angels, or with a sword against us and therefore again oversimplifying the complexity of reality.

In Palestine, we see ourselves again suffering from this polarization at the edge of the abyss. Internally, we are threatened with lawlessness, with chaos, with the breakdown of law and order, and possibly with civil war. This can be no solution. If we are trying to avoid a military solution to the occupation, to the Arab-Israeli conflict, then there is no way in which domestically the solution can be a violent one. We need genuine serious dialogue, we need new structures of governance – whether it is national unity, whether it is a coalition, whether it is a government of independents, whether there are elections.

It is imperative to lead to a change in the current dynamic, which is both internal and external – external because the Palestinians have started to feel a sense of futility and failure of the voices of moderation and peace because there was no reciprocal action, there was no recognition, and this has contributed to the rise of Hamas, fundamentalism and religious ideologies. There were no steps in order to legitimize and reinforce the voices that are calling for peace and moderation.

One way of dealing with the domestic situation is of course to make the prospect of peace possible, probable and workable by providing a solution that can work. We have to deal with the Palestinian reality as one of human security, to ensure the rule of law, internal security with economic relief and, of course, with the promise and hope to end the occupation and achieve freedom. We must not continue with the sanctions against the Palestinians who must feel that there is something positive to work for, to strike for, and that there is a chance for a solution.

The nation building process must be merged directly with peace making, and of course that in itself would also help with the emergence of a vibrant civil society, with democracy and reform and, of course, the empowerment of women. The time has come, dear friends, for bold, rapid and decisive steps because reality is unraveling before our very eyes and the two-state solution is disappearing. We all know that it is not sitting there waiting for us to pick it up at any time we want. Unilateral measures are making it next to impossible and we have to be able to rescue it as soon as possible.

This calls for several decisive steps. One is that we must define our objectives clearly, and these objectives must be boldly and clearly articulated without any ambiguity. Ambiguity in this case is quite destructive, there is no such thing as constructive ambiguity. We must build on existing initiatives and ideas. I reiterate the basic principles of “land for peace”. The Arab initiative is there and ready to be picked up and developed and translated into a plan of action, and of course there are studies, whether it is with the ICG or the Baker-Hamilton study that can be used as a launching pad.

We must deal directly with the core issues, with the permanent status issues: Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, boundaries. The last thing we can afford is another long transitional, or partial, or hesitant process. We do need to have a bold, integrated, rapid process, simultaneous, and dealing with permanent status issues. We cannot permit a sequential conditional approach that was discussed earlier as adopted by the Roadmap, in accordance

with the fourteen reservations that Sharon imposed on it. And in this context, again, we cannot deal with phase two or with a state with transitional borders. There is no such creature.

Ladies and gentlemen, we need to deal with a state with real boundaries. I think there is an emerging consensus that a state with transitional borders is not going to work. It would be a failed state and entirely dependent, entirely vulnerable, and essentially a reorganization of the occupation. Again, the process should not be a process for its own sake or an exercise of virtuosity, which was one of the reasons for the failure of the previous process. We need a binding time-line and this process must have an impact on reality on the ground. You cannot dissociate it from the actual practices. Israel cannot continue to build settlements, to confiscate land, to carry out a policy of assassination, home demolitions, continue with this siege that is strangulating Palestinians; and at the same time say “there is a process, people are talking to each other”. It does not work that way: you either behave in a way that is commensurate with the prerequisites and requirements of peace or this disassociation is going to undermine any peace process completely. We need a cessation of violence, of course on both sides. The Palestinians also must add here to have a quiet ceasefire, but redefining resistance. I used to be very fond of the time of resistance until it became reserved and defined only as violent resistance. However, I believe the spirit of resistance to oppression and to injustice is a very active and positive spirit and it must be maintained, but we have to redefine it because if you acquiesce and succumb to injustice and oppression then you have lost your spirit and therefore your willingness to continue and survive.

So we need cessation of violence on both sides and it has to continue, it has to be extended to the West Bank. You cannot treat the Gaza Strip and the West Bank as two separate entities. We need an exchange of prisoners, the lifting of the siege, both territorial, internally and externally, and economically. We have to lift this boycott if the Palestinians are to survive in order to be able to make peace. And let me say something not very orthodox: I am really very worried about the term “CBMs” – the “confidence building measures” – because this all back fired. It was seen as a sort of a concession from the strong to the weak. People also demanded paybacks for the “CBMs”; paybacks that the Palestinians did not have. Rather they should be addressed clearly and must be observed as obligations and requirements. They must be seen as compliance with international law, and requirements for the integrity and viability of the process and must be done simultaneously with the political process, not separate, because the prevailing logic was let us deal with the simple issues and let us postpone the difficult and complicated issues. This led to the undermining and prejudging of the difficult issues.

And please let us avoid any more photo opportunities, and symbolic gestures with no substance. The last meeting between Mahmoud Abbas and Ehud Olmert was praised here, but it was more about symbolism, rather than actual outcome or genuine results. Let us not have embraces. I would much rather see people sit there, lock heads, and come up with agreements than embrace and come out with nothing. We did not see any release of prisoners, we didn't see the removal of road blocks or checkpoints, we didn't see any move forward to any negotiations at all, there was a raising of expectations, a dashing of expectations, and once again the undermining of those who need the credibility of people who are involved in this is being subverted as a result.

The Palestinian question must be treated as a question of self-determination. It is not a question of charity or emergency relief or just temporary crisis management. It is one of freedom and self-determination and therefore the core issues must be addressed, and it should be done within a comprehensive and integrated approach. When we talk about the

comprehensive approach it is of course regional, but it is also internal in the sense that all the issues of permanent status must be addressed simultaneously in an integrated way. We also believe that peace cannot be achieved in a fragmented way and the region must be involved, and here we are talking about states like Syria and Jordan and of course any other states that are willing to adopt peace.

Nothing can be unilateral here because unilateralism is the negation of the other and is again the use of power politics against the weak; but there is a partner for peace. We cannot use the election of Hamas as an excuse not to have negotiations because the PLO is there, even the National Accord Document states clearly that the President is the one empowered to negotiate and to sign any agreements. The solution cannot be unilateral, not even be bilateral even given the power balance; it must be multilateral, with third party participation, positive engagement rather than negative intervention. In this context, we welcome the international conference that everyone talked about.

We would like also to suggest the expansion of the Quartet format to include real Arab participation. Perhaps we could suggest a unique form of a coalition of the willing, but this time for peace and not for war. It is time that a new coalition is formed with a real commitment to peace and a genuine will to bring about this peace. They must have the ability to carry out mediation, arbitration as well as having monitoring and verification mechanisms. We also need a massive program for reconstruction and development for empowerment and hope.

The whole endeavor ultimately must be embedded in international law and UN resolutions in order to restore its integrity and to ensure a global rule of law. Everyone now talks about a convergence of negative factors whether it is the domestic Palestinian reality and even the threat of disintegration and internal conflicts and whether it is the dysfunctional political system in Israel or whether it is the drastic consequences of the abysmal failure of the US war on terror and its intervention in the region, but perhaps because of the difficulty of the situation now it is the time to be able to engage and to intervene and to find ways out and to adopt creative initiatives. There is an opportunity and I think this meeting can come out not with more discussions and more statements, but with an action plan that can be activated and that can activate all players.

Thank you.

Riad Daoudi, Legal Adviser to the Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the occasion of celebrating an historical event as the one that is gathering us today, one's feelings get mixed with a sense of doubt and certitude, hope and frustration regarding the settlement of the Arab Israeli conflict which constitutes one of the most important, if not the most important conflict, threatening international peace and security. This is true especially when one considers the current situation in the Middle East one decade and a half after the Madrid Conference.

The Madrid Conference was held in 1991 following the set up of an international coalition joined by Syria to implement the resolutions of the international legitimacy relating to the liberation of Kuwait. The tenure of this Conference was based on the principle of the necessity to fully implement not only those resolutions relating to Kuwait but also those concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict especially Security Council's resolutions 242 and 338 and the principle of land for peace.

Unfortunately, the result of a long, tenuous and complicated negotiation which lasted over nine years on the various tracks of Arab-Israeli peace process is the absence of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. The Arab-Israeli conflict remained so a conflict threatening international peace and security albeit the partial accomplishment achieved which, in our opinion, were not destined to put an end to the conflict but rather to weaken the stance of the Arab side thereof and leaving it an open one.

We have responded to the invitation to participate in this gathering because we found in it, in the actual prevailing circumstances at the regional and international levels, an opportunity to express our convictions that the achievement of peace and security cannot be done by resorting to the use of force; that the continuation of the occupation intensifies the conflict, and finally that the establishment of stability in the Middle East cannot be done but through the return to the peace process and commitment to its basics. Our meeting today is the occasion to reconfirm the basics of the Madrid Conference and to push forward in the direction of reactivating its orientations, in order to put the peace process back on track. Consequently, we would like to thank the Spanish government for hosting this meeting and the organizers for their initiative to organize it.

In their letter of invitation, the organizers refer, rightly, to the fact that the current crises in the region call for an immediate response and that these crises might increasingly become a dangerous impasse. In our perspective, the absence of a just and comprehensive peace is the main reason behind the mounting tensions in our area through decades, and actually in different forms. We believe that the repeated calls by Syria to resume peace negotiations according to the Madrid formula express the most important and urgent demand not only for Syria but also for the whole region.

The absence of peace in the past five years led to the increase of extremism and its expansion to all the parties of the Arab-Israeli conflict and to the increase of violence. Terrorism grew benefiting from the reality of popular frustration and the deep suspicions among the public opinion regarding Israel's intentions to achieve peace. There is no need to explain further the danger that terrorism constitutes for the area and the world. On the other hand, the absence of peace led to the encouragement of the arms race in it, a negative impact on efforts of

development in the area. Our region including Syria is badly in need to fulfill the aspirations towards a sustainable development which guarantees prosperity, security and stability for all.

Syria's intentions regarding the achievement of peace in the region are clear and publicly announced. Syria made the achievement of peace its strategic option. This was declared since many years by the late President Hafez al-Assad and the same was asserted by his successor President Bashar al-Assad, while the intentions of Israel to make peace are uncertain. Hence Syria was always forthcoming on achieving peace since the Madrid Conference, but Israel was hesitant and even hindering the peace process. Clear cut evidences prove that Israel has obstructed any achievement of peace with Syria in various sequences of the peace process, specifically in the negotiations held in 1996 and in 2000. Israel is still following policies that aim at undermining efforts to revive the peace process despite Syria's calls to revive it.

In addition to this Israeli position, we have to mention the policy of the present US Administration which has dropped the peace process from its priorities and resorts to the use of force to impose its hegemony on the region and on the present and the future interests of its people being ignorant or ignoring the simplest priorities of the region and its needs for peace and security, which constitutes the basis for its development and prosperity. This policy caused only more tension, turmoil and increased terrorism. Those elements are mere depressive factors for peace initiatives and frustrating its realization.

In conclusion, the existence of a genuine political will in Israel to reach a just and comprehensive peace guaranteeing the return of rights to those entitled to them, and affording security and tranquility to all peoples of the area, on the one hand, and the change of the US Administration's policy that ignores the nature of basic needs of the area and the existence of US willingness to sponsor in a just and honest way the peace process are basically indispensable requirements for the success of the peace process. We think that Europe has a fundamental role to play in guaranteeing the existence of these requirements. Europe can work actively to reactivate the peace process on its right basis and to influence its developments.

Syria has been and is still today subjected to considerable pressures at various levels aiming at undermining its role which calls for and encourages the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

We have attended this meeting to assert that Syria's political priority is the return of the Golan within the framework of just and comprehensive peace. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to call for the resumption of the Madrid Conference in order to resume negotiations on all official tracks with Israel, taking into consideration that the majority of peace elements on the Syrian track had been agreed upon, particularly the return of the Golan to the line of 4 June 1967.

Finally, we call upon all those who are interested in living in peace in our region, wherever they are, to work for removing all obstacles that certain parties are insisting to maintain to hinder the peace process. This call is destined to preserve the interests of all.

Thank you.

**MIDDLE EAST PLENARY SESSION I:
LEBANON-ISRAEL ISSUES**



* Source: www.un.org

Moderator:

Hubert Védrine, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, France

Hubert Védrine (France) said that accepting to participate in the conference was sending a message to awaken the spirit of peace, despite the difficult circumstances in the region.

Ghassan Salameh (Lebanon) claimed that the 1991 Madrid Conference was not as comprehensive as it appeared, but rather that the Spanish Ministry of Justice organized bilateral venues. He stated that "if Madrid had gone the way it should have, then unilateralism would not be an option. A negotiated withdrawal is always better than a unilateral one."

Unilateralism creates “facts on the ground, but not peace”, as was the case with the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon in May 2000. Salameh stressed the need for the creation of an independent and sovereign Palestinian state, which would be neither a gift for the Palestinians, nor a sacrifice for the Israelis, and which would create stability in the Middle East.

Regarding European involvement in the region, Salameh said that after the summer 2006 war between Israel and Lebanon, the deployment of 6,000 Europeans under the umbrella of UNIFIL II was a “European political adventure” with important stakes for Europe in southern Lebanon and implications throughout the region. If UNIFIL II succeeds, then Salameh noted that it could be considered as an example for the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and even for Iraq, all of which would require US approval and European implementation. The EU, he stated, needed to adopt a strong stance; if not, intervention in southern Lebanon could turn into a new Suez (1956). He asked whether Europe was conscious of the high stakes involved in intervention.

Domestically, Salameh claimed that it would be very difficult to form a new Lebanese government should the current one fall. He emphasized the need to resist changing the President and his cabinet. He concluded that the comprehensive Arab initiative is “the only game in town”.

David Kimche (Israel) claimed that Israel has “no conflict with the people of Lebanon” and that the “last thing Israel wanted last summer was the war that suddenly exploded”, which was “disastrous for the government” of Israel. He said that after the war Israel had fulfilled all the items requested by UN Resolution 1701, but Israel was waiting for the disarmament of Hezbollah and the return of its two soldiers. Kimche stated that Israel was watching the present crisis in Lebanon very carefully, and wished to see the central government remain strong, with the parliament in power, and a strong national army capable of disarming Hezbollah to eliminate the threat to its northern border.

He stressed the importance of the 17 May 1983 agreement between Israel and “all confessions present in Lebanon”. However, the *de facto* peace agreement did not go into effect due to the interference of a neighboring country. The crisis in Lebanon, Kimche continued, is “a microcosm of the whole regional order.” He said that if the Lebanese government falls, then it would be a victory for those against democracy, with negative implications for Israel, Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

Mousbah al-Ahdab (Lebanon) said that Lebanon is a “proxy battle-field for regional powers” and that “it is time to be aware that there is a race in our part of the world between development and radicalism.” He expressed the need to restore Lebanon with “a new *raison d'être*”, in which the target zones should be to establish the rule of law, develop the economy, and fight social injustice; and that a comprehensive solution should be multilateral. Al-Ahdab claimed that for UN Resolution 1701 must be accepted by all parties in order to be properly implemented. He asserted that Israeli over-flights of Lebanese territory were not constructive in reaching that end. Al-Ahdab stated that there was general Lebanese consensus over the use of armed resistance to liberate occupied territory. He said the Shebaa Farms were exemplary: a resolution of the controversy over the farms would remove the reasons for resistance. After

such a step, Lebanon could ask Hezbollah to disarm and a positive transition would be possible.

Védrine asked whether it was possible to differentiate between the issues. **Al-Ahdab** responded that it was not, and that any resolution must be multilateral. Védrine then asked whether a chain of events could be envisioned. Al-Ahdab said Syria could recognize the Shebaa Farms as Lebanese territory with official documentation. With territorial sovereignty resolved, Israel could then deal directly with the Lebanese state, rather than with Hezbollah.

Dan Meridor (Israel) asserted that UN Special Envoy, Terje Roed-Larsen, said that the Shebaa Farms were not part of Lebanon. Meridor also stated that for once Israel had followed the UN and had withdrawn to the line accorded by the UN. He said that though there was a unanimous statement against unilateralism, but that without a partner capable of implementing accords Israel was left with two options: either stay and occupy territory, or withdraw unilaterally. He concluded that it was important to take the Israeli position into consideration, and noted that separate settlements had worked with Egypt and Jordan.

Terje Roed-Larsen (UN) said that Madrid 1991 had been a “total failure” and that Oslo as an alternative had not fared any better. However, he also stated that the “ideological revolution” that began the process of Madrid 1991 had resulted in the Israeli withdrawal of Lebanon in May 2000. Accordingly, the negotiated withdrawal had been bilateral, and the South Lebanon Army (SLA) had been dismantled, which was not to Israel’s liking. Roed-Larsen asserted that the UN “blue line” between Israel and Lebanon had been “unanimously approved”, letters were signed by the Lebanese President Emile Lahoud, and there was general respect for the “blue line”. The violation in the summer 2006 by Hezbollah instigated the Israeli reprisals, the effects of which still reverberate.

Roed-Larsen emphasized the differences in legal and political realities between southern Lebanon and the Gaza Strip. He said that the debates over the Shebaa Farms were largely misinformed. The UN states clearly that the Shebaa Farms are not officially part of Lebanon. He said that there is no territorial definition; there is no clear cartographic definition of the Shebaa Farms. However, he also recognized that the political reality had changed. If Syria says the territory is Lebanese, then an agreement could be reached with Lebanon. If Shebaa were transferred to Lebanon, then Hezbollah’s reasons for resistance and credibility would be diminished. He urged for dialogue between the governments of Syria and Lebanon to resolve this issue.

Roger Eddé (Lebanon) claimed that until a comprehensive peace is obtained, Shebaa Farms remains an interim step which would allow Lebanon to return to pre-1967 border (without any territorial disagreement with Israel). Prior to Shebaa, he claimed the Lebanese government “always stressed that it does not have disputes with Israel.” He also stated that a civil war in Lebanon would extend immediately to Syria because of the mutual ties between both countries. He concluded that Syria is “unable to negotiate peace” because of its “special relationship” with Iran, and that talking about peace without addressing Iran is futile.

Munther Haddadin (Jordan) referred to the bilateral peace between Jordan and Israel, which resulted from the 1991 Madrid Conference, as “part of the quest for comprehensive peace” (as elucidated in the preamble of the 1994 peace treaty). Concerning the Lebanese-Israeli agenda, Haddadin emphasized that the territorial conflict is related to water resources and specifically the exploitation of ground water resources; and most importantly, the unresolved issue of Palestinian refugees residing within Lebanon.

David Kimche responded that Israel had no conflict over water with Lebanon, and that the Shebaa Farms’ issue was artificially created by Hezbollah.

Pini Meidan-Shani (Israel) said the Syrian willingness to negotiate peace with Israel was encouraging. He also stated that the Israeli people are now willing to make significant territorial concessions. These concessions should be under a new paradigm shift – “land for long-term security” instead of “land for undefined peace”. He concluded that any peace agreement without tangible security guarantees will not be stable.

Riad Daoudi (Syria) said that the EU could initiate a more substantial role, and stressed that there should be preconditions to opening negotiations. He stated that Syria had no problem with Shebaa or the implementation of UN Resolution 1701, and that the 7 basic points were agreed upon. He emphasized the need to relate the different paths to peace developed since Madrid 1991. Daoudi also asked how borders could be demarcated when territory is still being occupied, but concluded that Syria would negotiate.

Shlomo Ben-Ami (Israel) said that the Israel-Lebanon issues were “collateral to other issues”. He also recalled that Prime Minister Fouad Siniora recently said that “Lebanon would be the last Arab state to make peace with Israel”. Ben-Ami agreed that Lebanon had been a playground for regional powers, and that the solution resided with Syria and the Palestinians, while “upholding the solidity of the Lebanese state.” Referring the summer 2006 war, he stated that Israel had responded according to the principle of maintaining the legitimacy of its violated international border. He concluded that the deployment of an international force to the Gaza Strip should only be carried out within the framework of a peace plan; otherwise, the international community would be sending forces into a chaotic vacuum.

Terje Roed-Larsen concluded that the Shebaa Farms were a Syrian-Lebanese issue. Both countries could establish diplomatic representation in the other, and delineate the border amongst themselves. Only then, he said, would it be possible to sit with Israel.



MIDDLE EAST PLENARY SESSION II
PALESTINE-ISRAEL ISSUES



* Source: www.un.org

Moderator:

Thorbjørn Jagland, Speaker of the Parliament, former Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Norway.

Thorbjørn Jagland (Norway) said the situation is more complicated than ever, and asserted that if the parties had implemented what was agreed at Oslo, Israel would have had more security and the Palestinians would probably have had a State on their territory. He claimed that there would not be such futile ground for extremism, and that there would probably not

be such fear about the rise of Shiite Iran. He suggested looking to the past to address the future.

Jagland's points of reference for this session were the presentation made by Shlomo Ben-Ami, who said that the Middle East is a "cemetery for peace plans" and who indicated that there is something wrong with the peace plans on the table. Jagland also referred to Hanan Ashrawi's presentation, which did not favor a new interim agreement with provisional borders, as had been advanced as the second phase of the Oslo Accords. He challenged participants to move towards that direction of debate.

Regarding a political solution to the Palestinian situation, Jagland considered there are two possible approaches: having a coalition unity government with Hamas and Fatah, capable of negotiating with Israel; or having President Mahmoud Abbas as leader of the PLO negotiate on behalf of the Palestinians, and then putting the results to a popular referendum and maybe moving from there to new elections. Jagland supported exploring the possible approaches and suggested elaborating on these issues.

Nabil Shaath (Palestine) said that the interim phase was an option for the Palestinian; if they were given autonomy over Areas A and B, then they could expand areas of control. For a coalition government to be formed he said the Palestinians would need Arab and international support; and they would need Syria for comprehensiveness. He also affirmed that only when the US becomes active would there be progress in the peace process. Shaath emphasized the need for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to become a main issue for US foreign policy, as in the meantime, the Palestinian cause has been put to back-burner. He suggested that Europe could initiate engagement, and the US would be compelled to "catch-up". He expressed general consensus on the need for third party intervention, the need to build Palestinian institutions, and to recognize the devastation of the Gaza Strip. Shaath concluded that the collective punishment against Hamas had destroyed Abbas' ability to negotiate with popular credibility, and that if the motto of security before negotiations were abandoned, peace would then bring security.

Mustafa Barghouti (Palestine) enumerated seven lessons from the fifteen years since the 1991 Madrid Conference:

1. The Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory had lasted forty years since June 1967. The prolonged peace process proved that interim phases do not work; and confidence-building measures (CBM) had created mistrust.
2. A clear-cut solution can be propounded at an official international conference, based on international law and international resolutions; and with the support of strong international intervention and participations, without an approach of double-standards to end the imbalance-of-power.
3. The process had substituted peace, and the peace process had been substituted with the Quartet Roadmap.
4. All interim agreements and provisional borders are perceived by the Palestinians as delaying the final status issues.

5. Democracy is a precondition for peace: only an agreement that is democratically endorsed by the Palestinians will be viable. This is why the Palestinians are trying to establish a national unity government.
6. Is Israel prepared to accept East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine? Is Israel prepared to end the military occupation and to remove the separation wall?
7. Time is of great essence: there remain over 600 military checkpoints; Gaza Strip is completely isolated; and the economy is further deteriorating.

Barghouti concluded by asking whether under the current situation of apartheid (as described by former US President, Jimmy Carter) the Palestinians and Israelis would see a two-state solution or one bi-national state?

Colette Avital (Israel) claimed that there were also “successes to the peace process”, and asserted that the Israelis and Palestinians “share many mistakes”. She said that there was nonetheless “growing pragmatism” to mutually discuss the end-game. The peace process had failed, but now an end-game could be elaborated, and the details could be resolved later. She said that it is not enough to speak bilaterally with the Palestinians; a “new regional context” is present. Coupled with regional support, the Israeli Labor Party had supported the Saudi 2002 initiative. She asked why there was no Palestinian-Israeli initiative, and concluded with Rabin’s comment that a peace process can continue in the presence of terrorism, and the fight against terrorism can continue in the presence of a peace process. **Roni Milo** (Israel) agreed that Israel is “not so big and not so strong” and that there was a fundamental difference between “hudna” (truce) and peace.

Mohammad Shtayyeh (Palestine) said that the Middle East is “not capable of handling its own problems” and that “honest brokers” were needed. He also pointed out that labeling Abbas as an ally to Israel and the US had actually back-fired and had assisted in the election of Hamas in January 2006. Shtayyeh said that if Israel had permitted Abbas more room to maneuver then Hamas would not have been elected. He called the situation a zero-sum game. He mentioned that 75 percent of Palestinians are under the poverty line, and 55 percent are unemployed, both of which situations have been exacerbated since the severe closure policy of the past six years (2000-06). Shtayyeh concluded that the multilateral track was a total failure, that regional cooperation had flopped and that temporary borders were not advisable.

Dan Meridor (Israel) agreed that a comprehensive final status agreement was needed, but that blaming the other side was not a way forward. He suggested that both sides would have to compromise on “sacred issues” such as Palestinian refugees, Jerusalem and borders. Meridor said that 80 percent of Israelis want a two-state solution, and concluded final status issues need to be addressed by those who reject gradualism. **Jibril Rajoub** (Palestine) claimed that the Palestinians do not see an Israeli partner for peace. He said the issue of Israeli security was humiliation for the Palestinians. Rajoub asserted that settlement growth needed to be halted along with the confiscation of land. He also mentioned the demographic/geographic situation in East Jerusalem, stressed that Hamas was an internal Palestinian problem, and asked where the borders for a viable Palestinian state would be. **Moshe Shachal** (Israel) asserted that the Labor Party had been a partner for peace.

Fayez al-Tarawneh (Jordan) said that a second international Madrid peace conference, perhaps sponsored by the UN was needed. In order to finish with interim phases, he agreed with Colette Avital to start with the end-game first, but he realized that moving backwards they would meet the “devil in the details”. **Samuel Lewis** (US) agreed with Nabil Shaath that the US would join an initiative started by Europe. He also recognized that the Bush administration had not put much energy into resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict, and that the US is “deep in the mire of Iraq” and increasingly preoccupied with the “Iranian threat”. He recommended “smaller, off-the-record preparations” for an international conference, and concluded that “time is running out” and such initiatives cannot wait for the next US President.

Nabil Shaath (Palestine) admitted that times were difficult for a peace community to be reactivated, but that nonetheless an initiative is needed. Hamas, Hezbollah and the US were also largely absent from this non-official exercise, he concluded. **Hanan Ashrawi** (Palestine) said the Palestinians were ready to negotiate and asked whether Israel was ready to remove its settlements. He also stressed that “demography should never be a motive for negotiations”. She said she would not discuss the nature of the State of Israel, and that if the Jews wished to be exclusive that was their choice. Ashrawi also asserted that the Palestinians were against interim agreements because they had a tendency to become permanent, and the passage of time had caused facts on the ground.

Shlomo Ben-Ami (Israel) stated that there is a “dysfunctionality of the respective political systems” and that neither side is capable of making “historic decisions” or of consolidating commitments. He said that the Oslo Accords failed because the interim agreements were based on trust, and that there is “no such thing as trust between the occupier and the occupied”. He claimed that the sides can “build trust after making peace”. Trust is part of the NGO business, not of diplomacy, he asserted and affirmed that building settlements had been a violation of the Oslo Accords, but were not mentioned in the agreements.

Ben-Ami said the Israelis and Palestinians were both fragmented and that the solution to the conflict needed to come from a “strong international escort” which would supervise the implementation of a final status agreement. He asserted that “politics is not a side-show of the peace process; the peace process is politics.” He agreed with the need for interim phase, conditioned by a final status settlement, and supported the idea of having the Arab states buttress a Quartet initiative. Ben-Ami also recognized that for Israel to make concessions, the US would have to exert diplomatic pressure. He concluded that a transatlantic alliance was necessary for peace in the Middle East.

**AUDIENCE WITH HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF SPAIN, JUAN CARLOS I, AT THE
PALACIO DE EL PARDO**

Antonio Garrigues, President of the Toledo International Centre for Peace (CITpax)

Your Majesty,

The Middle East continues to suffer from ever greater and ever deeper problems, and the crises only seem to get worse – the danger of escalation is great and substantial, intervention is essential. The civil society institutions which organized this event, the Toledo Centre for International Peace, the Search for Common Ground, Fundación Tres Culturas, FAFO and the International Crisis Group, very much believe that this is the time to draw attention to the urgent need for a comprehensive regional approach to achieving stability and peace in the Middle East. “Madrid + 15” aims to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference and rekindle the spirit of regional peace-making that prevailed in that era. It is this spirit which has led to this initiative and with which we aim to bring the parties together. It is important to note that this meeting is an unofficial gathering and not a forum for negotiations. There are four major objectives for “Madrid + 15”:

- a) To deliver a message that all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict can meet and discuss the issues in contention between the sides, frankly and constructively
- b) To map the expectations and concerns of all parties, especially in light of existing proposals such as the Arab League Initiative of 2002, the Clinton Parameters, and other instruments, including the recent Iraq Study Group report.
- c) To serve as an example and springboard for official talks
- d) To catalyze efforts for cooperation between current officials, former officials, and civil society stakeholders.

At the working meetings held this morning, everybody shared these objectives and we hope that the same happens at tomorrow’s meetings. This is important, because it is necessary to avoid, at all costs, losing all hope of a solution. We should ensure that the efforts achieved do not seem, or prove, to be in vain. We have to reaffirm that the right to peace is the most important human right, and that war is the most unjustifiable human mistake. All of us therefore have to be agents for peace. Feeling insignificant, incapable or incompetent is not an option for us. Quite the contrary. If everyone does what he or she has to do for peace, there *will* be peace, no matter how much the violence is seeping into and poisoning our minds. Redressing the current situation may seem impossible to us. But even if it were impossible (which it is not), it will then be necessary to do the impossible, and it *can* be achieved.

Today’s event is vouched for by Your Majesty’s presence, as it was in Madrid in 1991. We are all grateful to Your Majesty for this gesture and all that it signifies from the Spanish Monarchy, which has played a crucial conciliatory role that has been, and is, universally recognized and appreciated.

**DINNER AT THE INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL
HOSTED BY THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT OF CASTILLA-LA MANCHA**

Fernando Lamata – First Vice-President of the Government of Castilla-La Mancha.

Fernando Lamata welcomed all participants on behalf of the President of Castilla La Mancha, José María Barreda, and thanked the organizers of the conference. He referred to removing the “rubble from our souls” as the only way to move forward. He also mentioned the terrorist attack at the Madrid airport (30 December 2006) and the forty thousand tons of rubble caused by the explosion. He claimed that for a completely different reason, the symbolism of removing the rubble could be applicable to working together toward resolving conflictive issues. He emphasized: “This is why I would like to wholeheartedly thank participants for coming, especially because despite their very different points of view they are here to listen to each other. You are the people behind peace. You have my entire admiration and gratitude, and I am speaking on behalf of Castilla-La Mancha and Spain. Congratulations and thank you very much for your many efforts.”

Bernardino León – Secretary of State León said it was a pleasure to present Benita Ferrero-Waldner, who “with her presence has enriched the conference”. He thoroughly described her curriculum vitae and gave her the stage.

Benita Ferrero-Waldner, EU Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighborhood Policy (ENP); Keynote speech:

THE MIDDLE EAST IN THE EU’S EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Señor Vicepresidente,

Señor Secretario de Estado,

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Quisiera en primer lugar agradecer al Vice-Presidente Lamata su hospitalidad y su invitación a esta velada y al Secretario de Estado Bernardino su amable presentación. Es para mí un honor dirigirme a ustedes al final de este día de trabajo para todos.

I am certain you have had very fruitful working sessions today, with plenty of intellectual nourishment. And tonight’s physical nourishment promises to be equally enjoyable and enriching!

We have spent today discussing how we can create the conditions for a comprehensive regional settlement in the Middle East and I trust you have had very useful working sessions this afternoon.

The real question we need to ask is what do we think the Middle East will look like in ten years time? Either we will have made progress in solving the root causes of the region's conflicts, in Lebanon, Israel and Palestine; or we will have failed, and the situation will look more hopeless than ever before.

If we fail, there will be more and more needless death on both sides and both communities will still be living with fear. The conflict will still be used as a beacon and excuse for extremism and terrorism across the globe.

But if we succeed – and we have to succeed- and are able to facilitate sustainable peace and stability in the region there could be two independent states of Israel and Palestine living side by side I would like to renew the commitment of the EU to a Middle East where the Palestinians are masters of their own destiny finally able to realize their own potential, and there is a lasting solution to Israel's legitimate security fears.

There's no question to which is the preferable scenario. The question of course is how we ensure it's the scenario we see 10 years from now.

Although many events over the past years can easily lead to deeper pessimism, I am an optimist by nature and continue to believe that progress is possible.

As I said this morning, I firmly believe that the only way this could be achieved is through consensus and dialogue rather than violence. I described this morning the main elements that I consider necessary to be part of a global solution. I do not want to repeat myself and would not elaborate further now. Just allow me again to thank the Spanish authorities and civil society for their efforts to pull together this key international conference as part of reviving this process.

The EU is more of a global player than many Europeans imagine. Despite the setback of the constitutional treaty's rejection in 2005 we have been gradually strengthening our foreign, security and defense policy to enable us to play a stronger role in dealing with crises and conflicts around the world. As a result we now have around 60,000 European peacekeepers serving across the globe. We are working actively to promote sustainable development and secure peace in Aceh, Afghanistan, Lebanon and around the world.

Clearly there is still room for improvement in our foreign policy-making. We have to find ways of improving our performance, in particular to address three cross-cutting issues which all relate to our discussions today.

1) The first is **human security** which encompasses both freedom from fear and freedom from want. Nowhere is the need to create freedom from fear and freedom from want more poignant than in the Palestinian Territories. The vicious cycle of poverty and violence has to be broken and we all have a contribution to make.

2) The second issue is the **dialogue of cultures** and civilizations. It is clear that one of the most important issues we are facing at the dawn of the 21st century is defeating the myth of a clash of civilizations. The plight of the Palestinian people is sadly often instrumentalised in support of political agendas. But the fact remains; it is one of the most emotive conflicts on earth. We would be doing humanity a great service in bringing it to a good end.

3) The third issue is **climate change and energy security**. An unstable climate will bring a huge additional strain on areas like the Middle East. In a region where five per cent of the world's population already has to share only one per cent of the world's water, climate change will mean there is even less water to go round.

And of course there will be huge ramifications for the region from global energy policy and oil prices.

Ladies and Gentlemen, although the EU is a global power with interests around the globe we pay particular attention to those countries closer to us. We believe that we need to create the conditions for peace also by working in promoting a favorable environment that integrates economic, social and political issues and shows the EU's commitment to the people in the region.

Since 1995, **the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership** has provided a wide framework for political, economic and social relations between EU Member States and partner countries in the Southern Mediterranean, based on democracy and human rights.

Despite the lack of progress in the political chapter, work done in the economic and social chapters should not be underestimated. The EuroMed Partnership is still today the only regional grouping which brings together Israel with its neighbors. It stands as a testimony to the region's desire to engage in dialogue and work together.

Last year we celebrated the tenth anniversary of the Barcelona Process I believe that Barcelona has made **a difference to people's lives** in the region already. And it has permitted the EU to **reinforce its strong links and solid relations** with our **Mediterranean Partners**. At the time of the Tenth Anniversary, we set out an agenda for the next five years: **a work programme with target dates for action and measures** focusing in few **critical areas**: human rights and democracy, sustainable economic growth and reform, and education.

UNDP Arab Human Development reports have underlined the importance of education and of gender equality to the development of the region. I believe that **Education is crucial to the future prosperity and well-being of these countries**

In our economic relationship, the Euro-Med partnership has been very **successful** laying the foundations for free trade in industrial goods. The Barcelona declaration set the objective of a Free Trade Area across the Mediterranean by 2010.

We have over the last year started **negotiations on liberalization of these key areas in the second half of this year**. **In services and establishment, the aim is to start with those partners willing to enter into such a regional agreement, and expand the group as others become ready to come on board**. **In agriculture we agree on a road map towards a high degree of liberalization in all products, with only a few exceptions**

To reap the full benefit of these proposals, the countries of the **Mediterranean need to do more to expand South-South trade between themselves**. **Without this, our 2010 objective will remain unfulfilled**.

Finally, the third core element of Barcelona is a reform agenda that brings your countries closer to the EU. The EU doesn't believe in imposing reform, but we do want to do all we can to support the region's own reforms quite simply because we believe that democracy, good governance, rule of law, and gender equality are essential for stability and prosperity.

This has always been an objective of the Barcelona process and it is the cornerstone of the Neighborhood Policy.

The European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) complements and builds upon the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. ENP is our policy for bringing the EU's neighbors to its east and south closer to us, and so extending our prosperity, stability and security to others. Our Neighborhood Policy can facilitate the countries coming much closer to the EU, participating freely in our internal market and building a free trade area. If the conditions are right there will be more freedom of movement for legal migrants, and more exchanges between our scholars, our businessmen, our young people and our tourists. Our peoples will have greater links with one another and the region will enter an era of prosperity unknown for long time.

Politically the region will open up, allowing people to take advantage of the new opportunities on offer and to express their views without fear of reprisals. There will be a greater acceptance of diverse opinions and religious practices as inter-religious tensions diminish.

I take advantage of the presence of the Vice President to stress the important role that European regions are meant to play in a successful ENP. The regions of both sides of the Mediterranean are the motors of the ENP; they need to work in partnership and from here I can only call on all of you to ensure that this channel is maximized as a means to promote closer ties from the citizens of both region.

I would also like to mention those Arab countries a little bit further away geographically but nevertheless very close also to our hearts and minds: the countries East of Jordan. The EU's Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East aims at promoting a common zone of peace, prosperity and progress in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, including countries east of Jordan. We will not forget them and as I have said before and on many occasions I believe they are also called to play an important role in supporting peace efforts in the region.

There is an important player I would not wish to forget, I would like to make a call on civil society, so well represented here tonight and stress my believe on the important role that they can play in forging ties among people inside the region, between the region and Europe. I have always found their ideas refreshing and in a process like this new and creative solutions are always welcome. Please continue to work.

Ladies and gentlemen, to conclude I would like to return to the main issue under discussion at this conference: a long tern sustainable peace in the Middle East.

There have been some positive signs. We fully support the efforts in Palestine and Lebanon to find a compromise solution which includes all parties and very much hope both efforts will succeed. I hope the meeting on 23 December between PM Olmert and President Abbas can pave the way for renewed dialogue between the two sides.

Yet, I would like to call your attention to an interest coincidences, as today's conference preparations were finalized and even today, the same day of the conference; we are hearing more and more voices in the region and in the International Community calling for the need to advance in the Roadmap and moving straight forward to the last stages of its implantation. There are indications that during her forthcoming visit to the region Secretary Rice might be discussing the idea of a provisional Palestine state. I am not going to comment on what are for the time being just unofficial sources but I believe that the series of initiative that have

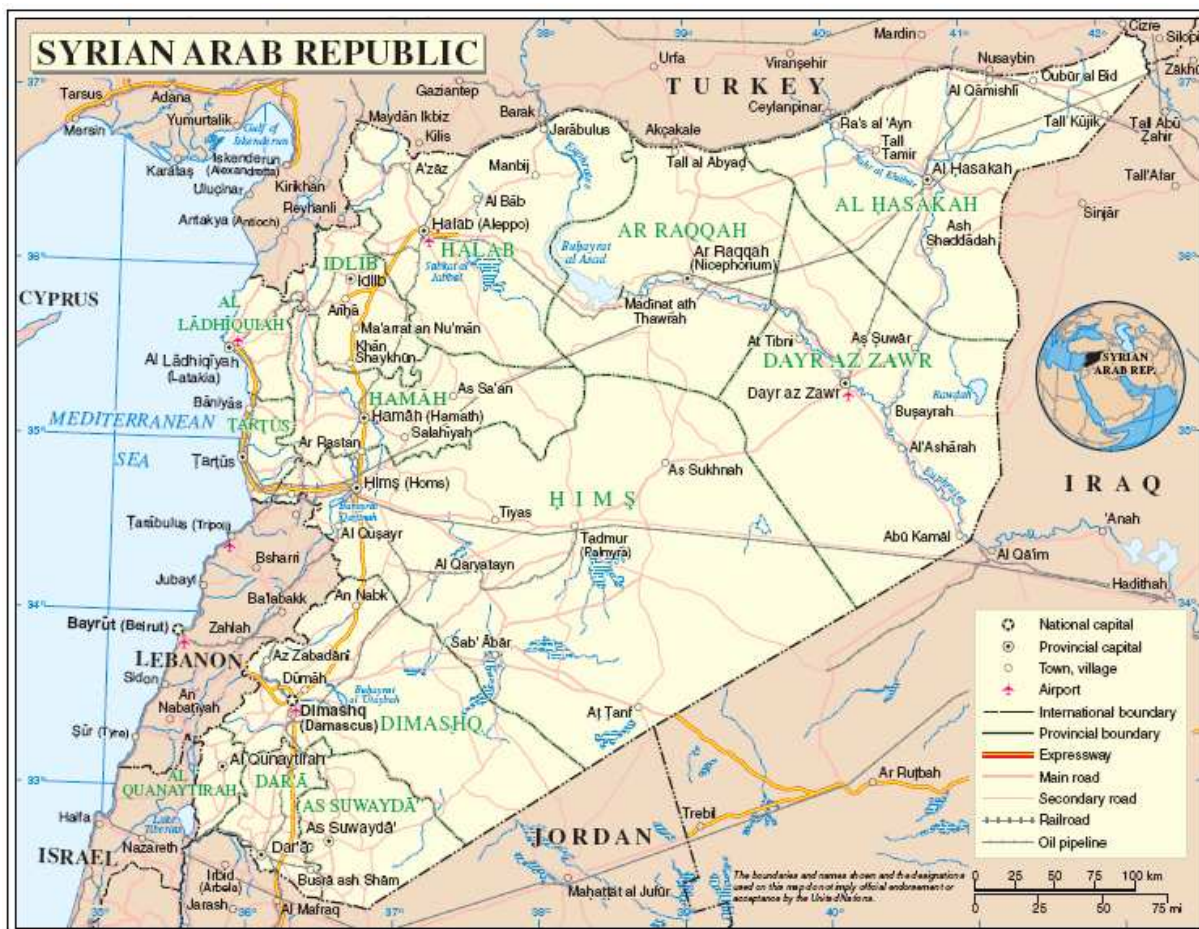
been put on the table recently: the Spanish initiative (that I have supported from first moment), the Livni ideas, Peretz plan, US proposals...are a sign of realization by all players that there is a need for action. And this is already welcome.

This region has tremendous potential, and with sustainable peace and a sufficient injection of resources from the international community, that potential could finally be realized. As Kofi Annan put it, "We might like to think of the Arab-Israeli conflict as just one regional conflict among many. But it is not. No other conflict carries such a powerful symbolic and emotional charge among people far removed from the battlefield. As long as the Palestinians live under occupation, exposed to daily frustration and humiliation; and as long as Israelis are blown up in buses or in dance-halls: so long will passions everywhere be inflamed."

Thank you.

Friday, 12 January 2007

MIDDLE EAST PLENARY SESSION III
SYRIA-ISRAEL ISSUES



* Source: www.un.org

Moderator:

Josep Piqué, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Spain.

Josep Piqué introduced the session and gave the floor to participants.

Bushra Kanafani (Syria) said that events in the Middle East were developing into a dangerous impasse, and stressed the need for a renewal of the peace process. She claimed that Syria had been calling for peace talks for some time, but that the Israeli response was negative. She expressed Syrian doubts about the “Israeli sincerity for peace talks”, and stated that Israel repeatedly justifies its rejection of negotiations on the same claims. She noted that Syria had negotiated with five Israeli governments since Shamir. She concluded that Israel needs to “depart from its previous ways, acknowledge the grave absence of peace” and “remove all obstacles to reach peace.”

Riad Daoudi (Syria) – Verbatim transcription

Thank you, Mr. President. Let me, with your permission, go through the long history of Syrian-Israeli negotiations and the lessons that were drawn from this history. I would like to review the history of the Syrian-Israeli negotiations which lasted many years, over nine years, and as my colleague just mentioned it was done with five successive Israeli governments from both parties, Likud and Labour. We started, as everybody knows, in Washington, with about twelve rounds of talks; the first five rounds took place with the delegation of the Shamir government at that time, headed by Yossi Ben Aharon. During those five rounds, we can say that we did not get any fruitful results. We got mutual accusations and a review of the historical enmity between the two parties. What we heard from Yossi Ben Aharon at the time was that “you will never hear about the word withdrawal, at least not before ten years of negotiations”. Afterwards we continued those rounds in Washington with Rabin and the delegation headed by Itamar Rabinovich and we worked on a document which was a declaration of principles. This document contained the concerns for both parties: the withdrawal for the Syrians, the extent and nature of peace for Israel, and the security arrangements.

During all those seven rounds that lasted at least for a year, we never heard about withdrawal. The Israeli delegation was using certain maneuvers as using certain vocabulary like “withdrawal from the Golan”, or submitting the extent of withdrawal to the nature of peace that the Syrians can afford to Israel. All in all, after twelve rounds nothing happened, but at least we could precise what kind of problems we had and which are the limits.

We tried a thirteenth round of talks in Washington between the heads of the delegation because we felt that maybe with the presence of the whole delegation, with different opinions, it would be difficult to deliver anything. The thirteenth round did not lead to any concrete result. Then, we turned from the Washington talks to another method of contact between the ambassadors in Washington. I should say that the Clinton administration was very interested in the peace process and active. Secretary of State Christopher was moving to the region and paying visits to Syria and Israel at the same time.

With those talks between the ambassadors, the Syrian ambassador and the Israeli ambassador in Washington – Walid Muallem was the Minister of Foreign Affairs as was Itamar Rabinovich – they arrived at what we can call a commitment from the Israeli side to a complete withdrawal. This commitment was taken by late Prime Minister Rabin in 1993. Then, negotiations started about the security arrangements, but then both parties realized that they could not discuss security arrangements without knowing the precise limit of where the withdrawal was going to be; complete withdrawal is good but up to what line. Again

Christopher moved back and forth between Israel and Syria and got from late Prime Minister Rabin the commitment to withdraw to the line of 4 June 1967. At this point, we considered that all the discussions about the interpretation of UN Resolution 242 had ended and we had a clear cut view about how to apply resolution 242. Having this in hand, both parties, through the ambassadors, turned to discuss a document called “objectives and principles of security arrangements”. It was finalized at a meeting between the two chiefs of staff of both armies. This document was not entitled, it was not signed, but it is a recent document and considered by both parties that it should be applied to any security arrangements. Basically, there are two principles:

- That the security arrangement for one party should not be done on the account of the security of the other party
- That the principle of equivalence in the security arrangement should be observed

With this document we can move forward to tackle other aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict in further negotiations.

From now on we have two pillars:

- The Rabin commitment to withdraw to the line of 4 June 1967
- The document on the objectives and principles of security arrangements

Negotiations were resumed at that time and the place proposed was Wye Plantation Resort. Both sides were invited to come to Washington at the end of 1995. I have to say that the Rabin commitment, the Rabin deposit, was considered as something kept in confidence. Many other Israel responsables did not know about the content of this document. But I should say at the same time that this document contained the commitment to withdraw to the 4 June 1967 line, but it was written that the Israeli concerns were also satisfied.

During the presence of Clinton and the funerals of late Prime Minister Rabin, he talked to Mr. Peres about the deposit and Mr. Peres had no knowledge about its existence and he asked him if was possible for him to accept it and Mr. Peres said yes. At that time, Secretary Christopher conveyed to the Syrians that Peres was ready to go ahead and that he wanted to go to elections with a peace agreement with the Syrians in hand. Based upon this, we started negotiations at the end of 1995 in Wye Plantation Resort, in the United States.

During those negotiations, the Israeli delegation headed by Uri Saguy was very forthcoming. We approached all issues, whether those agreed on or other issues, such as the elements needed for normal relations between the two countries. We agreed to restore diplomatic relations and to examine the agreements that should be concluded to give effect to those peaceful relations between the two countries.

At the same time, what was discussed thoroughly was the timetable, how to put all this elements together and how to implement them one by the other; the talks were very tenuous, but very serious. At the moment – this happened at February 1996 – we were informed by Christopher during his visit to Damascus, that Mr. Peres renounced to go ahead with the idea of going to elections with a peace agreement in hand so the momentum of the negotiations became low and without interest for Israelis; and at that time those explosions happened in Jerusalem, in Tel Aviv, in Ashkalon one after the other and this caused the interruption of the negotiation.

After the elections in Israel, which led to the situation that the Likud won the election and Netanyahu became Prime Minister; during the presence of Mr. Netanyahu in office the initiative was taken also to address Syrians and indirect talks happened, but when we arrived to the issue of withdrawal up to the line of 4 June 1967 there was no answer from the Israeli side. Many elements were tackled indirectly, all the elements I spoke about in Wye plantation, namely the withdrawal, the security arrangements, the peaceful relations and the timetable were discussed indirectly, but when we asked if there was this commitment from the Israeli side to withdraw completely to the line of 4 June 1967 the answer was silence.

After the election in 1999 in Israel, Barak became Prime Minister and we witnessed an exchange of messages between late President Assad and Mr. Barak. The Americans became active again in order to resume negotiations between Syria and Israel, and preparatory work was done in order to gather both parties in Washington after establishing the basis for resuming those negotiations.

One of the conditions was to confer the deposit of late President Rabin. We had some talks about this and what we heard from Barak was that he was unable to confirm the deposit, but that he would not withdraw it either; for us it was an ambiguous position. He was not going to stick to it. He did not accept to consider it as something in hand, but it was there. He would not touch it. He would not withdraw it, but he would ignore it.

Assurances coming from the Clinton administration caused Syria to accept going ahead with this. At that time, in another round, in order to prepare the resumption of negotiations in Shepherdstown, we discussed many items. One of them was the withdrawal and for the first time we discussed with Israelis where exactly is the line of 4 June 1967. What we heard at that time was: “you are asking about the line of 4 June 1967, it is a line which we do not know where it is, and nobody knows where it is”. But we do know where it is, and the Israelis know where it is, and the Americans know where it is. Because this line is in certain parts of the demilitarized zone, which was established according to the armistice agreement between the two countries; and at certain places it is a *de facto* line in a sense because it is a demilitarized line where the presence of military forces should not exist.

In fact, the Israelis tried to push and they used to enter from time to time in this zone and the Syrians used to resist them and those clashes led to a line drawn by the UN observers and it was a clear cut line at that moment. In this zone, the line is a line that cannot be crossed by the Israelis to the east or by the Syrians to the west. It is a very determined line and it was established according to the documents of the UN following the reports of the observers during the years from 1949 up to 1967. So what we heard at that time was “ok, you are speaking of this line, but we considered that we can draw any line and we can call it the 1967 line and you can sell it to your country”. This is a way that did not collaborate with what was agreed, but it was a *bona fide* approach to negotiations, but anyhow it is tactics and we considered at that time that it would not be possible to accept.

Following those talks about this issue, the American side presented a paper – I am speaking about this paper because it is related to a later event to which I will refer in a moment – saying it was a compromise, “I want you to have a look on it, just check it, and if you think I can go to the Syrians with it, it’s ok”. I looked to the map very quickly and I realized that this map reflected exactly what the Israelis proposed as the line of 4 June 1967. So I told Dennis Ross: “it is better to leave this aside, I did not see it, and my advice is that it is better not to present such a proposal to the Syrian leadership because it is not going to work and it might affect your position”. He said: “ok, we’ll forget about it”.

Then came Shepherdstown. We arrived there and we convened with the Americans to establish four committees: a committee on borders, a committee on security arrangements, a committee on regular peaceful relations and a committee on water. We sent the Americans on the other side the names of those who would deal with each issue. We received the names from the Israelis only for three committees, but not for the border committee. We remained in Shepherdstown for three weeks and only received those names during the last week.

I think it was Martin Indyk who disclosed this information saying that upon the arrival of Mr. Barak to Andrews base in Washington to participate in Shepherdstown negotiations he asked Martin Indyk to come to the aircraft before getting down and he told him “I cannot deliver, the situation in Israel does not permit me to go ahead with those negotiations and we are not going to do it. I am unable to do it”. Nevertheless, he got down and we started negotiating without negotiating in the sense that we remained there for three weeks without doing anything significant in any of the committees. The only gathered meeting, the committee of the border, at the end of the third week, was a meeting in which the Israeli side asked their legal adviser to present a statement about the interpretation of resolution 242. This statement was the same statement given by the same person at the first week of the Washington talks at the end of 1991. It was a signal that we were back to square one with Israel after almost eight years of tenuous talks going and coming, going and coming, and where we considered that Israel had an obligation to withdraw from the land and we were ready to give Israel peace and security and agreements were reached about peace and security.

Now, to get back to the end of all this exercise, let me just provide you with information about what happened at the end of our stay at Shepherdstown. President Clinton asked us to come to the meeting – Mr. Shara’ was present and myself too– and he was sorry about what had happened, about wasting our time for three weeks, especially because Mr. Barak told us that he had some commitment in Israel and that he had to get back. So we decided to go back home and to put an end to this futile exercise. During the meeting with Mr. Clinton, he said almost word by word to Mr. Shara’: “if I knew that Prime Minister Barak was going to behave the way he behaved in Shepherdstown, I would never have asked late President Assad to send his personal representative to this place”. This was a clear-cut recognition on the American side that Syria was forthcoming and ready for peace and Israel once again was not ready for peace.

After this, as Israel was preparing withdrawal from southern Lebanon in year 2000, to reverse things they convinced Mr. Clinton again to call late President Assad to ask for a meeting with them saying that they had news and that they had something that was good for Syria corresponding to its desires and its needs. Mr. Clinton did not disclose what he had in hand over the telephone. The meeting was agreed and we decided to go to Geneva in March 2000 but we had mixed expectations, and envisioned many scenarios of what Mr. Clinton could have: if it was the withdrawal to the 1967 lines, there was no need to put it in such secrecy because it would be good for the Syrians and would be forthcoming to any meeting, so we had some doubts; there should be something that was not clear in this maneuver. When we discussed the possible scenarios, we put forward one scenario being the paper that had been presented to me by Dennis Ross. So we went there and effectively what happened was this: the Americans asked to have a reduced meeting between the two presidents with the President of Tunisia, the Foreign Affairs Ministers and the two translators. We were about to leave the room when Mr. Clinton said “Dennis has something to show you so he is going to remain.” President Assad was upset, but he said: “well, he can remain just to show this and go out”. What happened exactly is Dennis opened the map and showed the same line that he

showed to me in Washington. At this time it was a refusal and this refusal was a closing of the door. However, the refusal now came from the Syrians, and not from Israel.

We still need a political will which did not exist with five consecutive Israeli governments, with the two main parties. And today we are still not sure at all about the willingness of Israel to go ahead. I understand that maybe certain Israelis are keen to have peace with Syria, but we are still doubtful about the decision of the Israeli establishment and the Israeli government of whether they want peace with Syria or not and if they would prefer to live in enmity with the region.

Moshe Shachal (Israel)

Mister Chairman, honorable participants of the Madrid +15 Convention,

I welcome the convention organizers' initiative, which enables us to meet face to face, to voice positions and to hear positions which, even if there is no absolute agreement thereon, can serve as a foundation discussing the possibility of mutual existence in our region; this is our belief and our hope.

Middle Eastern countries continue to suffer from difficulties of greater number and severity than those encountered in the past, whereas past difficulties were sufficiently onerous in their own respect. Palpable threats of confrontation hover over the entire region, and this time, they are not linked to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The fact that these encounters are informal enables the participants to express themselves more freely than in formally-held talks, and the paramount value of a format of talks of this sort is the ability to return home with the message that there is someone to talk to.

The leading team of the Rabin Center's "Circles of Peace" initiative, of which I am a member, intends to propose that the State of Israel or informal Israeli parties, such as the initiative leaders, be invited to present before a forum of the Arab League their response to the Saudi initiative, which assumed force of resolution as the Arab League Initiative of 2002.

Our intention is to examine the possibilities for advancing towards an encompassing solution based on the Saudi initiative and the Arab League. Such a move—beyond the immense symbolic importance inherent in this mode of directly approaching the Arab League—can substantially aid the region's leaders to set in motion processes of crucial importance to us all: to Israel, to the neighboring Arab countries, among them, the Palestinians, Syria, Lebanon, the Arab world, and the Middle East at large.

The Saudi initiative, which became the initiative of the entire Arab League, is the first encompassing initiative wherein the whole Arab world talks of ending the conflict, recognizing Israel, and normalization of relations. This initiative deserves an earnest Israeli response. This initiative contains important elements, and even though there are difficult-to-solve issues, it possesses a certain extent of flexibility, which may yield concrete results, including formulation of the solution to the refugee problem.

As a native of this region, I was born in Iraq to a family that had lived there for over 2500 years, and as an eleven-year-old boy, became a refugee, along with my family.

The initiative is important by the very virtue of its proposal, as well as by its being a "framework proposal", which allows for its infusion with meaningful content. Mutual examination of the initiative's meanings can lead to an influence on public opinion on both the Israeli side and the Arab side, and after all, we all seek peace between the peoples, not only between the governments.

There is a severe problem of incredulity; in Israel, there is disappointment in the consequences of the Oslo Accord, such that the current situation is unwillingness on the part of the Palestinian government to recognize Israel as a neighboring state, even on the basis of the 1967 borders.

The Israeli public, of which 70% lent their support to the Rabin government at the time of signing the Oslo Accord, was willing to pay the price of peace, provided that it is convinced that the other side, too, was willing to take the same step itself and live in peace with the State if Israel as a neighboring state to a Palestinian state.

I was a close associate to the talks held by the late Yitzhak Rabin, through the Americans, with Syria, and I can tell you that there was willingness on his part to reach a peace agreement based on UN resolutions 242 and 338, provided that at the conclusion of the process, true, normalized peace would be established between both countries. Rabin's assassination cut short the initiative; however, it is difficult to persuade a people who have endured numerous wars that true peace is attainable if the other side does not demonstrate an attitude of reconciliation, but instead, encourages acts of hostility against their would-be allies on peace.

The Arab League's consent to hear the Israeli side's thoughts, even if they aren't expressed formally, will strengthen the parties in the Middle East who believe in reaching arrangements without foreign mediation. The ability to build channels of rapprochement is of extreme importance, even if there is eventual international involvement of any kind in resolving the conflict.

The Arab League, too, will find it more convenient to hold such a meeting, whether as a whole or by delegating representatives. Only a direct encounter can bridge the gap between positions and abolish the residues of extant incredulity.

And so I turn to the honorable members here and propose that opportunity be granted to holding such a dialog, out of respect and appreciation for one another, for the benefit of our children and for generations to come.

Riad Daoudi (Syria) said there was harmony and common understanding between the President, the Foreign Ministry, and the delegation to Madrid 1991. He emphasized that there were no discrepancies on the Syrian side at any moment. He said that former Foreign Minister Shara' was upset by the confusion which arose over the comments by Dennis Ross at the Geneva talks, but reconciled with former President Hafez Assad.

Opher Pines-Paz (Israel) claimed that "peace with Syria and all its neighbors is a strategic goal of Israel", but "peace must serve the security needs of Israel". He stated that Israel was listening to the voices coming from Damascus, but it was also watching their actions. He

asserted that Syria is harboring terrorist activity by arming Hezbollah and sheltering Hamas. Syria also has close ties to Iran, which openly calls for the destruction of Israel; therefore, Pines-Paz concluded that Israel distrusts Syria's good intentions. He repeated that "peace cannot only be achieved by recuperating territory", but that the other side would also "have to give Israel security".

Riad Daoudi agreed that both sides needed to raise concerns over respective policies; he reaffirmed that Israel should not set conditions for negotiations; and reasserted that Syria would not withdraw its proposals.

Marwan Muasher (Jordan) - Verbatim transcription

Thank you very much Mr. Chairman.

I think we have heard today very powerful statements from both sides, and I like that the debate is turning this way because frankly I think that the Syrian statement has been very comprehensive, and deserves to be seriously listened to and addressed. At the same time, I think the fact that the Israeli delegation offered to talk about the Arab initiative also needs to be listened to, for it is the first time that this takes place. As one of the main participants in drafting the Arab initiative and in the deliberations that led to it, I would like to shed some light here on what the Arab initiative means, from an Arab point of view, to Israel.

When we deliberated at the Beirut summit (2002) about the Arab initiative, we wanted to make sure that this was an initiative that not only addressed the needs of the Arab side, but also the needs of the Israeli side. We asked ourselves: what does Israel need from the Arab world so that it feels secure, so that it can be accepted as a member of the Arab neighborhood, in security? We decided – and I would like to see if we missed any point – that there were four main points that Israel wanted from Arabs:

1. Least importantly from our point of view, were *peace treaties with the Arab world*, which we gave, a collective peace treaty. Not a peace treaty with countries neighboring Israel, but a peace treaty with 22 Arab states, even those that had no territorial problems with Israel.
2. We thought Israel needed more than that: Israel needed *collective security guarantees*, including not only the Palestinians, Jordanians and Egyptians, but also Iraqis, Libyans, and Algerians, and every single Arab state, as well as Saudi Arabia. This was also put in the Arab initiative.
3. And we went further: Israel wants to know that once a Palestinian State is established and occupied territories go back to the Syrians, the Lebanese and the Palestinians, that *Arabs will not demand a return of Arab cities in Israel*, such as Haifa, Jaffa and Akka (Acre). We explicitly stated that it would mean an end to the conflict.
4. The last point, which I think is the most important, is about *refugees*. This is what Israel probably missed: for the first time we said "yes, the right of return is important to us Arabs, we are not going to give it up before a final peace treaty, but at the same time we want to assure Israel that *no Arab state has in mind the return of four million*

Palestinians to Israel, and the demographic change this would insinuate. We understand this. We are not looking for a solution that we know is impossible to implement. So we inserted the word “agreed”, which is a very important word, which has never been used before and it was used to assure Israel that any solution to the refugee problem will have to be an agreed solution, not between us, Arabs, but between Arabs and Israelis.

If we missed anything, please let us know. I certainly believe that we have very seriously, as Arab states, addressed all issues that concern Israel security. Of course, in return we ask for the return of the occupied Arab land because this is what the Arabs need, and the establishment of a viable and independent Palestinian State. And I think that if these points are understood we can move forward, because we need more than the debate that we have seen so far in this conference, we need to move forward. And we need to come up with ideas that are not stuck in debating what went wrong, but at using everything that has happened in the last fifteen years in order to move forward. Today we have heard a very powerful and forthcoming statement from the Syrian delegation and I believe we also heard willingness on part of Israel to at least understand, or try to understand, what the Arab initiative means. We have been, frankly, partly at fault for not marketing the Arab initiative to the Israeli public in an effective manner; and maybe we should have done more to do so, but that does not change the reality of the Arab initiative.

I would like to close with a final remark: despite all the wars, and the lack of a political process during the last five years, and the occupation, and the invasion of the West Bank territory, and Gaza, and the targeted assassinations, and the suicide bombings, and all the violence that took place, not one Arab state withdrew its signature from the Arab initiative. No Arab state came forward and said “we no longer believe in this initiative, we no longer want to offer it to Israel, we want to withdraw this offer and to go back to a different scenario”. It’s a very powerful statement by Arab states, those who are moderate and those who are not moderate. And so I think the will does exist on the Arab side to do something serious about this and end this conflict. I hope that this conference might at least point the way to move forward based on what we have heard today and yesterday.

Thank you.

Adnan Abu Odeh (Jordan) considered the Arab initiative to be a “new premise for peace talks”, which had been neglected for the past five years, thus opening the “field for extremism.” He also agreed that without Syria, there would be no comprehensive peace. He stated that the difference between the Palestinian and Syrian occupied territories was that Syria can continue acting as a state without the Golan Heights, whereas the Palestinians need territories for their state. Abu Odeh stressed the need to respect Syria’s own way of approaching the international scene, as other countries have their ways too. He asserted that the example of Sadat does not work for everyone, and that long disputes have a tendency to become chronic. He mentioned the pivotal issue of the Palestinian refugees, in particular UN Resolution 194, and concluded that the Israel should either accept the right of physical return or establish an international fund for financial compensation, as suggested by former US President, Bill Clinton.

Mustafa Barghouti (Palestine) stated that “normalization before peace will not happen”. He proposed two options for an Israeli response to the Arab peace initiative: 1) deliver a private response to Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinian President; or better, 2) call for an international peace conference to deliver public response. He reiterated that the Palestinian call for peace along the 1967 borders was a “historical compromise”, that Hamas was now ready for a two-state solution, and that the international community and Israel could not ask the Palestinians to “compromise a compromise”. Now, Barghouti claimed, there is a problem with Islam and with Iran; there would “always be problems to deter peace”, and concluded that peace would prevent the extreme forces from abusing the problems.

Hanan Ashrawi (Palestine) said that the “repeated call for negotiations from Syria” along the Madrid formula was met by continual “Israeli consternation”. She asserted that “it is time for an Israeli response”, and that the “land-for-peace equation applies” to Syrian-Israeli peace. She said Israel was aware that no regional peace would come to be without Syria, and yet the Israeli participants “just asked Syria to reinvent itself”. Ashrawi called for mutual respect of the respective terms of negotiation, and concluded that the Syrian-Israeli border was the quietest. **Shlomo Ben-Ami** (Israel) responded that this was because of the crisis in Lebanon. **Dan Meridor** (Israel) asked two questions: 1) was Syria’s call for peace a separate bilateral call or part of the more general framework of the Arab initiative? And 2) does the acquisition of territory by force, as mentioned in the Preamble of UN Resolution 242, go both ways or not?

Abdel Monem Said Aly (Egypt) decided to “interject some *realpolitik*”. After sixty years of conflict, Syria is not at peace with Israel; and precisely because there is no peace, Syria will continue to make life difficult for Israel. Through negotiations, Syria could reach a security agreement with Israel, if that is what Israel wants, but the borders would be harder to negotiate. Said Aly said that like everyone, Syria builds ties with allies, and continues to make Israel uncomfortable, which is a “typical balance-of-power” scenario. He also stressed that “if the higher objective for Syria was peace, then diplomatic initiatives were not achieving it”. He concluded that the Arab initiative, particularly Article 7, focuses on the “wrong target”, and should be “directed to Israel.”

Dalia Rabin (Israel) claimed that the Arab initiative needs the support of the international community as well, because Israel no longer trusts peace initiatives after it was “flooded with terror” after making steps towards final peace with the Palestinians. **Nabil Shaath** (Palestine) stated that the Arab initiative was a “courageous Saudi approach”, which had now gained unanimity among Arabs. He also mentioned the “competition between the tracks” and said that Israel repeatedly refused to negotiate on all fronts for a comprehensive agreement. He asserted that for Palestinians, there was no competition with the Syrian track and that the inclusion of Syria was very important for Lebanese and Palestinian stability. He reinforced the fact that refugees’ rights would not be given by the Palestinians but the issue could be negotiated within a comprehensive agreement. Shaath concluded that it is important to provide continuity for negotiations.

David Kimche (Israel) admitted that Israel “missed opportunities” at Shepherdstown, West Virginia (January 2000), but stressed the need to continue going forward. He accused the Syrians of “still arming Hezbollah”, which remains a “security problem for Israel, not just for the instability in Lebanon”. Kimche said that the term “pre-negotiations” needed to be applied with Syria. **Roger Eddé** (Lebanon) repeated that there was a “high risk of implosion in Lebanon” and that Lebanon could “not absorb the Palestinian refugees”. **Colette Avital** (Israel) clarified that Israel was not asking Syria to “reinvent itself” by asking them to stop arming Hezbollah.

Shlomo Ben-Ami (Israel) suggested that a slight change in Syria’s strategy may be useful. He recognized the difficulty of this, but also the possibility of maneuvering politically within the “rigidity of the regime” in order to send Israel a serious sign of peace. Ben-Ami claimed that the difference between the international border and the 1967 border were minor. He also mentioned that Peres had interrupted negotiations because Syria was pressuring for normalization. He concluded that there would be internal difficulties in propounding a peace agreement that would not have repercussions on the “domestic climate” of Syria.

Riad Daoudi (Syria) reiterated that he is not an official Syrian representative, and that as mentioned, Syria would negotiate on all tracks with Israel along the basis of the Madrid agreement. He reaffirmed that this was not a bilateral initiative, but rather a regional issue of comprehensiveness, which is defined by the interlinking of the different tracks, as demonstrated by the Palestinian refugees also present in Syria. Daoudi concluded that “Israel should be respectful of its engagement”, and referred to Article 7 of the 1949 Armistice agreement concerning “commitments” and to UN Resolution 242, which calls for Israel to withdraw to the line before the “recent conflict” of 4 June 1967.

**MIDDLE EAST PLENARY SESSION IV:
A REGIONAL APPROACH**



* Source: www.un.org

Moderator:

Marc Otte, EU Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process

Marc Otte said that all issues are interconnected in the Middle East, which he described as currently “on fire”, and noted that non-state actors are now strategic players in the region. He mentioned global problems affecting the “margin of maneuver” in the Middle East, such as energy supplies, the lack of economic development and opportunity, and the feeling of injustice and rejection. Otte called for recognition of failures on all sides, and expressed hope for the Middle East to become a bridge between the West and the Far East.

André Azoulay considered the Arab initiative to be a “major breakthrough” and stressed the importance to give the region, including Israel, a chance to understand the meaning of the peace proposal. He asked why the Israeli reaction had been so flat; why the initiative did not exist in the domestic agenda of Israel; and why Israel did not explain the proposal to its people. Azoulay emphasized that these were “new terms of reference” and that there is now a “new culture for peace in the Arab world”, as demonstrated by the fact that no Arab country withdrew its signature from the proposal. He said that the question of Palestine remained central to the people of the Arab world, and that they would agree to continue supporting the Arab League peace proposal. However, he also claimed that the lack of an Israeli response had caused “deep doubt” across the Arab world. Azoulay reiterated that the “miserable daily life of the Palestinians creates distress and doubt within the minds of those engaged for peace”. He mentioned the publication of a “White Paper” which would recapitulate the last sixty years of Palestinian suffering; and concluded that with the support of the international community and the UN signature of approval, this series of recommendations to the UN Secretary General could make a difference in restoring dignity and respect.

Gaspar Zarrías, stated that the conference had achieved two major goals: bringing together all parties, countries and organizations that play a key role as mediators in the region, including the active civil society component; and enabling discussions that serve to map common fears and sensitivities to take place. He stated that a consensus has been reached on one core issue: a comprehensive approach to the region is primordial to solving its conflicts. He said that such a consensus can serve as a powerful base from which to call for a new international conference. He affirmed that simply waiting for the conditions to spontaneously get better for such a conference is not realistic, because if anything spontaneous is to happen, it is more likely to be the explosion of a catastrophe.

Zarrías said that the approach of a comprehensive conference is adequate because all the issues in the region are interconnected. War in Lebanon, pending relations between Syria and Iran, chaos in Iraq, Iran’s role and its nuclear ambitions, the emergence of new key players such as Hamas and Hezbollah, and, of course, the core conflict: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, are clearly intimately linked today. After six wars in the Middle East and three in the Gulf, he stressed two outstanding truths:

- Conflicts in the region cannot be solved by military means; a win-lose equation cannot exist. He reinforced that parties live so close to one another that any dream of destruction is a self-destruction chimera.
- The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is at the heart of stability/instability in the region; there will not be peace in the region without a just and lasting solution.

Zarrías concluded that if these two premises are coalesced to take into account what is the critical situation in the region, then it is clear that an active involvement from the international community is urgent.

Terje Roed-Larsen said that there were significant achievements since Madrid 1991, which could be perceived as a “launching pad for Oslo”, and which was in turn an alternative to the multilateralism propounded at Madrid. He asserted that Madrid had started an “ideological

revolution” which led to the Israeli-Jordanian peace in 1994, to the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000, and to the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon in the spring 2005. Nonetheless, he recognized that the regional context had changed dramatically and claimed that there were paradigm shifts which made the Madrid/Oslo model no longer adequate.

Roed-Larsen emphasized four epicenters of conflict in the Middle East. 1) Iraq, which is more related to foreign occupation and fragmented regionalism; 2) Iran’s nuclear power aspirations, which may lead to a collision of Arab and Persian nationalism; 3) the Lebanese-Israeli conflict, in which Syria’s aspiration to hegemony is a pivotal player; and 4) the Israel-Arab conflict. He asserted that the current perception among Arab leaders is that Iran has become the center, and acts like an “octopus with its tentacles extending into all conflicts”. He expressed surprise that Iran was absent at the “Madrid +15” conference, considering the role it plays in the Middle East.

Roed-Larsen claimed that the two-state solution was still the answer to the Palestinian-Israel conflict. He also stated that there were flaws with the “approach of gradualism” initiated at Madrid 1991 and followed up with Oslo, as well as with the “approach of totalism” as elaborated by Barak and his unilateral Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon and his secret bilateral talks with Syria. Roed-Larsen said that both approaches had created crises due to the expectations aroused. This coupled with increased Israeli militarism led to another critical juncture in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Roed-Larsen proposed negotiating directly with Mahmoud Abbas, legally the PA President and PLO Chairman, and thus establishing a realpolitik framework with two simultaneous steps: 1) create a Palestinian state with provisional borders, and 2) open state-to-state negotiations on final status settlement. He concluded that “micro-interventions do not work”, and called for a sustained international support for a regional solution to the Israeli-Arab conflict.

Hans Blix, former head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Swedish Foreign Minister

NUCLEAR QUESTIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this conference and I shall try to contribute some thoughts on the problem of nuclear weapons in the Middle East.

Some six months ago the international Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission (WMDC) that I chaired presented a unanimous report urging governments to wake up from what Kofi Annan has called their current “sleepwalking” and revive arms control and disarmament. My comments today are made partly against the background of this report.

Let me start by saying that 40 years after the conclusion of the Non Proliferation Treaty (1968) and more than 15 years after the end of the Cold War the nuclear weapon states should – as Kofi Annan urges – take the lead in phasing out nuclear weapons rather than developing new weapons or means of delivery. It is not a recipe for success to preach to the rest of the world that it must stay away from the weapons, which they claim are indispensable themselves.

Perhaps it might be a little less difficult to persuade **Iran** to suspend a program for the enrichment of uranium and accept far-reaching verification, if all nuclear weapons states negotiating with Iran were to be ready at least to accept a verified stop on the production of enriched uranium and plutonium for weapons.

Apart from such climate changing measures, which means of persuasion are available to prevent further proliferation? In all **cases economic incentives** may be helpful. **The DPRK** is offered heavy oil and assistance for development. **Iran** is offered investments and support to become a member of the WTO. There seems also to be relatively broad support for disincentives through the withholding of positive measures or through the imposition of various economic sanctions, provides that they do not- like the boarding of ships for export controls – risk leading to armed clashes.

The WMDC, which I chaired, stressed the need in all cases to understand the factors which may induce a state to acquire WMD and to seek to remove the incentives. Two factors were identified as particularly common and relevant:

- **Perceived security; and**
- **Demands for recognition (status)**

Quest for **recognition and status** may be important to governments that, for various reasons, have been isolated and ostracized. **Libya, the DPRK and Iran** may be examples. **Libya** divested itself of its nuclear program after negotiations leading to enhanced official recognition and the lifting of UN sanctions. In the case of the **DPRK** President Carter’s visit to President Kim II Sung in 1994 opened the way for agreement and a current offer of a **normalization of relations with the US and Japan** sends a signal that a nuclear deal would end the DPRK’s isolation.

In the case of **Iran** diplomatic relations exist with all the negotiating parties, except the US. Although potentially it could carry great weight, the US has not, to my knowledge, made any offer of normalization of relations a part of a deal with **Iran**.

Now let me turn to **the issue of perceived security**. What will convince a state that its security will be better served by a credible renunciation of the nuclear weapons option than by the retention or use of that option?

One approach by the current US administration has been – both in the case of the DPRK and Iran – to convey the message that moving toward nuclear weapons will **not bring but will jeopardize security** – that it will result in increased isolation and vulnerability and may trigger preventive counter-proliferation action and/or Security Council intervention.

Such threats – including messages that “all options are on the table” have several **difficulties**. **One** is that recipients, contrary to the aim of the messages, may seek to move **faster to nuclear weapons** in the belief that this will help to deter counter-proliferation. **Another** difficulty lies in the field of **legality and legitimacy**. A state’s apparent – or real – moving toward nuclear weapon capability does not constitute an “**armed attack**” that justifies the use of armed force in self defense without Security Council authorization. Ignoring this Charter restriction on the use of armed force may have negative effects, as we have seen in the case of war launched on Iraq.

The Security Council, although entitled under the Charter to authorize military action, not only against “armed attacks” but also when it decides that there is a ‘threat to the peace’, seems unlikely to go that far to eradicate alleged or apparent WMD programs that are not actively used as treats.

Hence my conclusion that especially after the horrendous consequences of military action in Iraq, both the Council and member states are likely to limit their actions regarding WMD in the Middle East to measures of political, diplomatic and economic kinds.

If military action is ruled out can the opposite – positive guarantees about security – be persuasive as an incentive to stop or forego nuclear programs? In the case of the DPRK the US administration seems to think so. As a part of a deal and perhaps to meet the DPRK’s stated concern about the “hostile attitude of the US” guarantees against attack from the outside appear to be offered.

Is the question of security of relevance to Iranian decisions on the nuclear issue? At the present time Iran can hardly worry about Iraq or other neighboring states. However, it might perceive the US military presence in the region and US policies of regime change and preventive counter-proliferation as a current threat. Although security guarantees have not been on the table as they are in the case of the DPRK it is hard to believe that the issue of security could be irrelevant to Iran.

The security issue is obviously of central importance to all states in the region. It is not very meaningful to search for more evidence to verify the claim that Iran’s enrichment program aims only to produce nuclear power fuel. Aims can change over time and the cold fact remains that the physical existence of an industrial scale enrichment plant in Iran would dangerously increase tension in a region, which is in dire need of lower tension. Practically all would want to see a negotiated agreement under which Iran suspended the program of enrichment and was ensured inter alia of support for its program to use nuclear power. However, currently, Iran is rejecting the suspension that is urged. There is a risk of escalation of the controversy and fears of long term domino effects. Can any element relating to security be introduced?

A zone free of nuclear and other WMD in the Middle East inspired mainly by security considerations, was first proposed by Egypt and Iran in 1974 and has been a universally supported since then. It may well be an indispensable part of a broader peace settlement but is not realistic in the present political and security climate.

Arrangements to limit the number of enrichment and reprocessing plants in particularly sensitive areas might be another matter. In the denuclearization declaration of 1992 the two Korean states agreed between themselves that neither would have enrichment or reprocessing plants on their territory and this feature is expected to be confirmed in any new nuclear arrangement for the peninsula.

Could the Korean pattern be followed by the states in the Middle East, which form another sensitive region? In the past year several states in the region have voiced interest in developing nuclear power and there have been speculations that in the wake of such developments sensitive nuclear fuel cycle facilities might also be contemplated. This would surely increase tension. Perhaps an agreement should be reached without delay under which all states in the region would forego any enrichment of uranium and reprocessing of plutonium for a prolonged period of time and be guaranteed fuel cycle services were arranged outside the region?

Such an agreement would not touch existing quantities of enriched uranium or plutonium whether in laboratories, stores or Israeli weapons. However, if such an agreement were subject to effective international inspection it could assure all that no further quantities of HEU or Pu were added anywhere in the region and it might constitute step on the long and difficult road to the zone free of WMD.

(For more information: www.wmdcommission.org).

Nassif Hitti, Ambassador of the League of Arab States to France

Nassif Hitti articulated five points related to the regional peace initiative proposed by Saudi Arabia at the Arab League Summit in Beirut 2002:

1. The Arab peace initiative “opened the door for more than bilateral talks”, and pushed for a regional approach to peace in the Middle East. The initiative also called for the “normalization of relations”, which Hitti said was a “matter of perception”, and the Arab perceptions are unified for “inter-societal relations”.
2. The Arab peace initiative cannot be divorced from the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Shortly after the Arab summit in March 2002, former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon launched “Operation Defensive Shield”, which hampered political, social and economic movement in the West Bank.
3. The epicenter of the Arab-Israeli conflict had shifted to the Gulf, and the real issue of the Arab-Israeli conflict had been “high-jacked by an ideological cross-fire”, in which Western demands for democracy, for example, have been overwhelmed by more pressing interests such as security.

4. There is a need to define “concrete objectives” to reach a final destination based on reciprocal treatment. Hitti expressed satisfaction that many now recognize the importance of the Arab League peace proposal.
5. Third-party intervention is needed to end the Arab-Israeli conflict. Hitti said the Quartet could fulfill this role adequately by engaging the parties in building peace. He described the current situation as one of mutual unilateralism despite the interconnectedness of the regional issues. He suggested more multilateralism and greater comprehensiveness when addressing these issues.

Samuel Lewis, former Ambassador of the United States to Israel

Samuel Lewis described an environment of “more optimism” surrounding the “Madrid +15” Conference, in which there were “dormant seeds sprouting”, despite the difficulties of translating hopes into reality. He claimed that an American initiative is “in the works”, and stated that during her trip to the Middle East, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, would try to sell the “comprehensive peace with provisional borders to Abbas.”

Assuming no breakthrough comes of Rice’s trip to the Middle East, Ambassador Lewis recommended taking the following steps:

- Establish a small steering/planning group led by the European Union, the Scandinavians/Nordics and the Spanish; associated with non-governmental actors; including 1-2 Israelis, Palestinians, Syrians, Jordanians, Egyptians, (and Lebanese), as well as non-official Americans, thus reflecting the mixture of groups and propounding concrete proposals for an international conference.
- Based on a plan between the Arab League peace plan and the Clinton parameters, the members of the steering committee would talk to the regional governments involved and acquire the backing of the Quartet; and with enough regional receptivity to pursue the peace process, the steering group would thus instigate final negotiations.
- Israel would probably disagree with a regional peace plan, and would demand the involvement of the United States. At this point, the US could officially endorse and join the international initiative.
- The peace package would be presented by an official affiliate of the steering committee (the EU representative for example) to the Quartet, which would then need to seek the approval of the Arab states (via the Arab League). A mutually agreed-upon and official sponsorship would convene an international peace conference.

Ambassador Lewis emphasized the leading role that the EU could play in jump starting an international peace initiative. Considering US concerns and involvement in the Middle East, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan, and with the nuclear development of Iran, he was optimistic about the possibility for the US to endorse such a European initiative.

Gareth Evans, President of the International Crisis Group (ICG)

THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT: MOVING FORWARD

How can we now move forward, to capture and build on whatever momentum this conference has generated, following the two days of concentrated, frank and constructive debate we have witnessed between its Israeli, Arab, international, government and non-government participants? What in particular should be the role of the outside players - the major states, major intergovernmental organizations and major civil society actors - who are not immediate parties to the inter-related Israel-Palestine-Syria-Lebanon conflicts but have been generally acknowledged as having an important part to play in settling them?

Nobody can be under any illusion as to how difficult a task we face. On a personal note, I have to say, for what it's worth, that in all the years I have been working on conflict prevention and resolution, both as Australia's foreign minister and president of the International Crisis Group - from Cambodia in the 1980s to Darfur today - I have never seen any set of conflict issues on which there is such a huge and depressing gap between, on the one hand, the collective *awareness* of what needs to be done and, on the other hand, collective *impotence* when it comes to doing it.

There are reasons for that discrepancy, and all of them have been mentioned over the last two days: inherent flaws in the Madrid I and Oslo processes, with their focus on sequentialism, incrementalism and confidence building at the expense of the endgame; inadequate preparation - and time - when a more comprehensive (or 'totalist', as Terje Roed Larsen puts it) approach has been adopted, as by Barak in 2000); dysfunctional Palestinian - and, let's be frank, Israeli - political systems; U.S. disengagement; European divisions; and insufficient, and inadequately sustained, Arab leadership.

We have learned in turn from that experience some pretty clear lessons, at least among those around *this* table, as to how any future peace process needs to be conducted. Four in particular have emerged rather clearly, if not in every case unanimously, from the discussion of the last two days:

- Strong engagement in the peace process by the wider international community is necessary and unavoidable: for reasons including the lack of trust eloquently described by Dalia Rabin, the parties will find great difficulty in reaching any deal alone, without having what Shlomo Ben-Ami nicely called an 'international escort'.
- Peacemaking needs to be comprehensive. For most of us around this table, for example, it makes no sense at all to leave Syria aside, at a time when we have heard so clearly from its president, and delegation here, that it wants to resume negotiations without preconditions. Ten years ago, the U.S. and Israel would have *dreamt* of getting the Syrians so readily to the starting line; today, they are doing everything possible to hold them back.
- Interim solutions, unless part of a phased implementation with the final as well as intermediate steps agreed, are a dangerous distraction, much more likely to destroy trust than to build it.
- Action to revitalize the peace process is *urgent*. The passage of time, and more time, is not healing the problem but compounding the anger, not just in the immediate region but

in the wider Arab-Islamic world. If we wait very much longer we risk another major explosion, and the evaporation of what so far has been extraordinarily resilient support for a two-state solution.

In moving things forward, we can distinguish five distinct roles for the outside players – to do no harm; help create optimal conditions for negotiations; assist in preparing the negotiation process; assist in the conduct of the negotiations themselves; and assist in the implementation of whatever is agreed in those negotiations. A few words on each:

I. Do No Harm. Always the first rule in any kind of crisis management, this means here, putting it very simply, that outside parties should do nothing that makes peacemaking more difficult. This may sound self-evident, but as often as not is honored in the breach, as again is the case today. The U.S. is actively hindering the resumption of Israeli-Syrian negotiation. And the U.S., along with many others, is actively hindering achievement of an inter-Palestinian consensus, doing more to incite internal conflict than to prevent it: if Hamas is groping for a way to square the circle on the issue of recognizing Israel (of which we have seen some further evidence with Meshaal's statement this week – which Osama al-Baz emphasized in his contribution to our debate) then this is surely the time to be searching for common ground, not dismissing that possibility.

II. Help Create Optimal Conditions for Negotiations. That does not mean chasing illusory trust-building or confidence-building measures, of the kind which – as Shlomo again says – can hardly be conceived between occupier and occupied. But it does mean persuading both sides that a credible process can exist. To mention a few examples: the Arab League can better articulate (as Marwan Muasher did so well in our debate) and flesh out its peace initiative to convince the Israeli people that it is real, and meaningful; Israel can be encouraged to publicly endorse a vision of peace based specifically on that Arab initiative; and the Syrians can be encouraged to find ways to reach out to the Israeli public, to make it politically easier for the Israeli government to move.

Creating the optimal conditions for negotiations also means doing everything we can in the wider world of international public opinion to create an environment in support of both the urgency of conflict resolution action, and a wider understanding that successful outcomes are possible if such action is seriously undertaken.

III. Assist in Preparing for Negotiations. The critical need here is to set up a credible negotiating process, and this is an issue to which a lot of detailed attention needs to be devoted over the next few weeks and months. We've heard different ideas here, and there's a wide menu of options from which to choose:

- Amre Moussa spoke of an international conference under the auspices of the UN role; others have called for a Madrid II; and there are other ideas (on which we are, I understand, to hear more from Gabrielle Rifkind of the Oxford Research Group and Sundeep Waslekar of the Strategic Foresight Group) about creating some semi-permanent conference structure with significant input from non-government experts.
- Others have spoken of a re-energized Quartet playing the key role in initiating any new negotiating process, with many focusing on the EU playing a more creative and adventurous role in this context. One can be wholeheartedly supportive, as I am, of the Europeans doing just that, but at the same time also skeptical – as I'm afraid I continue to be – that a really united and effective front will ever be achievable within the necessary time frame.

- Others have emphasized the need for the Quartet to be either formally expanded to include Arab members, or at least – and this may be more realistic – much more actively and visibly committed to consulting with the key Arab players, and creating common positions, for example, with the Arab League Initiative being brought from the wings to centre stage.

For my part, I am in principle attracted to the idea of an inclusive international conference – not just as a way of bringing threads together and getting support commitments at the end of process, but as a way of jumpstarting that process and mobilizing energies (rather in the way that this Madrid + 15 Conference has hopefully begun to do). But there's one important qualification. We should avoid at all costs a process that will take more time setting up than it is worth. If an international conference would entail months of negotiating its terms of reference and participants, then let's forget it. We don't have that luxury.

IV. Assist in the Conduct of the Negotiations. One of the ways that could happen would be for the international community (perhaps though the Quartet) putting on the table at the outset its own ideas, fleshing out the Clinton Parameters, Arab League Initiative, and drawing on the Geneva Accord proposals, so as to concentrate everyone's mind on the need for both a comprehensive and endgame-first approach. Whatever else they do, the outside players should develop and support a mechanism which avoids indefinite, open-ended negotiations, and stand constantly ready to help work around negotiating roadblocks as they inevitably develop.

V. Assist in Implementing Agreements Once Reached. For outside players, that means above all providing the necessary economic, military, and political support – as the UN and Europeans have done very helpfully so far in Lebanon - to ensure that agreements once reached don't fall apart.

The most useful thing that can come out of this conference, in my view, would be for us – each in our own capacity, official or non-official - to help achieve these five objectives, in particular, and most urgently, the second and third of them: help create the optimal conditions for negotiations, and assist in preparing the negotiation process.

For our own part, the International Crisis Group has already made a start, by launching last October a Middle East Initiative whose objective has been precisely to create, as best we could, the conditions for rapid, credible and comprehensive peace negotiations. In addition to our normal role of producing a continuing flow of reports and briefing papers, this initiative involves several components:

- A global advocacy campaign, designed to create a climate of opinion supportive of urgent and ambitious action to achieve a comprehensive Middle East settlement. We began in this respect by persuading 135 eminent personalities – former presidents, prime ministers and foreign ministers, many of whom have attended this conference – to sign a statement that was published on 4 October 2006 in several major international newspapers, and received quite a degree of international press attention.
- A U.S.-directed effort, aimed at trying to get the Bush administration to alter what, up until now, have been extremely damaging policies toward the peace process; to that end, we have been working, so far behind the scenes, with a bipartisan group of prominent Republicans and Democrats. So far this has not borne visible fruit, but we live in hope.

- An effort that is directed at other Quartet and non-Quartet members, notably the UN, EU, and Arab League (applying an insight that Nabil Shaath and Sam Lewis have offered here – namely that the rest of us cannot afford to wait for the U.S. to wake up). Other parties need to take the lead in the interim: the Arab League can flesh out its proposals; the EU and UN can send a clear message that however the Palestinian choose to resolve their internal problem, they will be prepared to engage with the PA and lift the siege. Of course, we are not naïve enough to believe that anything can be ultimately *concluded* without U.S. involvement – but we are convinced that other parties can act in ways that will make it both easier for the U.S. to reengage, and harder for it to stay out.
- Finally, we are preparing a series of substantial visits to the region over the next few months to test and explore and advocate these various ideas, by a group led by our two co-chairs, Chris Patten and Tom Pickering, our Middle East Program Director Rob Malley and me, and involve a shifting additional cast of Crisis Group Board member, some of whom again have been attending this conference.

This Crisis Group initiative was commenced before this conference, but we claim no monopoly of either ideas or energy, and stand absolutely ready to work with others interested in advancing the themes which have come out of this conference.

The most useful follow-on exercise would appear to be for the initiators of this conference to establish, as Sam Lewis as suggested, a small steering group – involving some or all of the sponsoring governments and organizations, together with representatives of the parties to the conflict and the broader region - to explore what kind of process would now be most productive, and to try to set that process in train.

We need to think and act quickly to see whether we can integrate our efforts in this way. This conference has achieved something extremely valuable: it has created a moment. And it's our collective responsibility not to succumb to our usual dispirited collective impotence, but to seize that moment and take it forward.

Javier Solana (EU) said that Hans Blix delivered a fundamental intervention and that the EU has been working closely on the issue of Iranian nuclear power. He claimed there were about two years left to resolve the issue, and that those concerned with peace would be concerned with Iran. **Jawad Anani** (Jordan) said that the region needed to focus on the Palestinian dimension of the conflict, as well as being as inclusive as possible of related issues. Regarding the nuclear issues raised by Blix, Anani said that the Arabs were not particularly concerned about a nuclear Pakistan, but rather about a nuclear Iran.

Shlomo Ben-Ami (Israel) said that contrary to what many believed, the Israelis present had agreed to support the idea of a steering group oriented towards a regional approach. **Mohammed Shtayyeh** (Palestine) claimed that the problem with regional initiatives is that they were usually Israeli-centric. If an international conference takes place based on a regional approach, then the marginal figures should have something to gain as well.

Irina Donovna Zvyagelskaya (Russia) said that considering the geographic proximity Russia was not a regional actor. She suggested that an “inclusive regional approach” should bring all parties to the table, not just the “good guys”, thus encouraging voices of dissent to become “players of stabilization”. She mentioned Russia’s relations with Hamas, and that it was not a homogeneous organization, which included “sober and moderate members” as well. Currently there are three sources of radicalization: 1) Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, which is even affecting Central Asia (the implantation of the Islamic movement used logos of Jerusalem); 2) Iraq, with special impact in Lebanon, because it has established the model of changing political and sectarian pattern, which is what Hizbullah is doing, and 3) Iran, which contributes to anti-Americanism and radicalization all over the world. In order to counter-act this radicalization the Quartet has to work hard in order to move forward.

Gabrielle Rifkind (Oxford Research Group) said that the solution to the conflict was not the problem, but rather how to get there. She proposed “early warning mechanisms” as ways of communication – alert mechanisms – which could have prevented the summer 2006 war between Israel and Lebanon. Accordingly, she proposed “shuttle preventive diplomacy” to avoid such violent outbursts. **Sundeep Waslekar** (Strategic Foresight Group) highlighted four main points needed to go forward: 1) a structured long-term semi-permanent process; 2) engage Hamas, Hezbollah, and the extreme right in Israel; 3) initiate a steering group buttressed by the EU; and 4) create a concert of peace-builders for the twenty-first century.

CLOSING PLENARY SESSION

Felipe González opened the closing session with some general thoughts on the conflict. He pointed out that knowing the details of the conflict does not necessarily lead to the solution; President Carter, who achieved Camp David I, ignored most of the details of the conflict and that ignorance probably simplified the way to a solution. On the opposite extreme we have Clinton, who knew the details of the conflict inside out, but that did not make negotiations any easier. He maintained that the truth in politics is what people perceive it to be. Politicians forget about this and sometimes try to over run this fact. He reiterated that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the epicenter of the regional turmoil of the Middle East. The truth, for the people, is that what underlies the Middle East conflict –even in Iraq– is energy; although this may or may not be true for those who know the details, that doesn't matter because such is believed by everyone. Iran wants to be a military nuclear country: Israel's response is very different from Pakistan's, and although it is not so different from the Arab response, it is expressed in a different way. Therefore we have to study the implications of the different perceptions of truth.

Can Madrid 1991 happen again? Oslo failed because it had taken place before the conditions were ripe for it to lead to a final agreement. Looking backwards we can say that fifteen years ago the distance between the parties was greater than today, but at the same time, hopes were also higher than today. Today the details of a final agreement can be easily delineated; even language is substantially more rational. Although it is not a final solution and there is still need for final status negotiations, the Arab League initiative in Beirut 2002 was a milestone that the international community cannot ignore. Felipe González continued by saying that since World War II no country has occupied the territory of another and consolidated it. Territorial occupation has not worked and territory needs to be returned, in order to achieve a final settlement. The longer the situation of occupation lasts, the higher the costs will be, but the result will have to be the same: withdrawal. In light of new challenges, traditional methods are far from being efficient; international terrorism will not be defeated with military power. Although military power is still needed, conventional military intervention is no longer enough, something which we must bear in mind in politics today.

The solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has to be a final one. González said that the Madrid process and the Roadmap are not going anywhere. Parties now find themselves in a difficult situation: one is so strong that it cannot make any concessions because it would look weak, and the other is so weak that it cannot make any concessions either. As there are no agreements without concessions, efforts have to be put together to bridge that gap.

González closed by reviewing the current situation in Lebanon, Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan and concluded that to avoid incremental confrontation and to change the current dynamic, dialogue is the answer, including with Islamist groups like Hamas. It is not only necessary to talk with those with whom one does agree, but also with those with whom one does not.

Javier Solana stated that the “moment to act has arrived” in order to “put a political process in motion”. It is not possible to move forward with the step-by-step approach because instead of building confidence it has been creating mistrust. As an example of such, Solana

mentioned the incident when the IDF invaded Ramallah after the last Olmert-Abbas meeting. Solana doubted whether the Roadmap was going anywhere, as its potential has never been tested. Solana claimed that all the ingredients necessary for peace were present within the Roadmap, but that the political will to put it in motion has been lacking. He talked of the unprecedented opening now for a path to peace, especially under the umbrella of the Arab League's Initiative, and stressed the need for an external monitor to achieve comprehensive peace. He suggested avoiding the Sharon scenario in which he was both actor and judge of his actions. Solana concluded that time is an urgent issue and that it is necessary to urge the process forward again within the first half of the year 2007.

Miguel Ángel Moratinos congratulated the organizers and participants of "Madrid +15" for a successful conference. He said that the message from the conference was clear and hoped that official political players, as well as decision and opinion makers, would move to advance the peace process without further delay. He asserted that most importantly, a mutual quest for peace, and a quest to live in stability and security in the Middle East, is present. He reasserted that the legacy of Madrid 1991 had established the principal elements for bilateral and multilateral tracks to advance towards coexistence. Moratinos was pleased by the consensus to call for an official international conference and affirmed that Spain and the European Union would work diligently towards that goal. He reiterated that the time has come to act, that the parameters are already present, and that peace in the Middle East is within reach for the mutual benefit of the region and the international community in the twenty-first century.

The Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Miguel Ángel Moratinos, closed the session by reading the conclusions of the "Madrid + 15" conference.

CONCLUSIONS

Madrid+15

The Madrid +15 meeting offered an opportunity to reflect on the successes and failures of the Madrid process. It provided an excellent opportunity to reignite participants' interests in moving forward on the challenges emanating from regional conflicts, as well as an opportunity for civil society representatives and officials to interact and exchange perspectives on the common goals of the conference.

- We had a frank debate on where the Middle East stands today and on outstanding issues in the Arab-Israeli conflict.
- We heard an honest exchange of views on concerns, constraints, and opportunities on issues between Israel, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine as well as the regional approach.

There is a need to firmly reassert the spirit of Madrid 1991: a spirit of compromise and reason and an approach that is regional in scope. While the region has changed in the past 15 years, the spirit of Madrid 1991 and subsequent efforts such as the Clinton Peace Parameters, the Arab League Peace Initiative of 2002 and the Road map remain a basis upon which to bridge the remaining differences and assist in creating the political will tragically missing today.

- There is a clear sense of urgency in this challenge. Participants discouraged interim agreements as a negotiated destination and called for an immediate return to negotiations towards a final and expedient comprehensive regional agreement.
- Participants reached a general consensus on the need for international engagement to seize the opportunity of this meeting and push the process forward. Many encouraged states to convene an official international peace conference for the region of the Near East, in the "spirit of Madrid".

A recommendation was made for a follow-up meeting to explore ways the participants can move towards these goals. A steering group should be formed to guide the process. In this regard, the organizers of "Madrid +15" will be in touch with the participants.

LIST OF ATTENDANTS

CO – SPONSORS

Carl Bildt (Sweden) – Minister of Foreign Affairs; member of the Moderate Party; Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General for the Balkans (1999-2001); EU Special Representative to former Yugoslavia and first EU High Representative to Bosnia (1995-97); Prime Minister (1991-94); member of Parliament (1979-2001).

Per Stig Møller (Denmark) – Minister of Foreign Affairs (2001-present); Minister for Environment (1990-93), member of the Foreign Policy Committee of Danish Parliament (1994-2001), Foreign Policy Spokesman for the Conservative Party (1998-2001).

Miguel Ángel Moratinos (Spain) – Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Special Envoy of the European Union to the Middle East Peace Process (1996-2003), Ambassador to Israel (1996).

Jonas Gahr Støre (Norway) – Minister of Foreign Affairs; Secretary General, the Norwegian Red Cross (2003-05); State Secretary and Chief of Staff, Office of the Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg (2000-01); Chief of Staff, World Health Organization (1998-2000).

CO – ORGANIZERS

Emilio Cassinello (CITpax) – Director General of the Toledo International Centre for Peace (CITpax), Ambassador at Large for North American Affairs (2003-04), Consul General in New York (1998-2003), Commissioner General for the Universal Exposition of Seville (1985-92), Ambassador of Spain to Mexico (1982-85) and to Angola (1978-79).

Gareth Evans (Crisis Group) – President and Chief Executive of the Crisis Group; Chair of the World Economic Forum's Global Governance Initiative Peace and Security Expert Group, and a member of the International Advisory Board of UN Studies at Yale; Former Foreign Minister of Australia, former Attorney General of Australia, and member of the UN High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change.

John Marks (Search for Common Ground) – President and founder of Search for Common Ground, Head of Common Ground Productions; Skoll Fellow in Social Entrepreneurship, former US diplomat; Executive Assistant to the late US Senator Clifford Case, Fellow at Harvard's Institute of Politics, Visiting Scholar at Harvard Law School.

Enrique Ojeda Vila (Tres Culturas) – Spanish diplomat since 1994, posted in the Spanish Embassy at the United Nations, in Bolivia and in Guatemala, as well as Spanish Consulate in New York as Cultural Attaché. Since 2004, he is the Director of the Fundación Tres Culturas del Mediterráneo.

Mark B. Taylor (FAFO) – Managing Director of the Fafo Institute for Applied International Studies (Fafo AIS), Oslo, journalist, human rights advocate, and political-economic analyst for non-governmental organizations and the United Nations.

MODERATORS & SENIOR OBSERVERS

Abdul Rahman Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah (GCC) – Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council; Minister of State for the State of Qatar.

André Azoulay (Morocco) – Senior Advisor to His Majesty the King of Morocco; co-Chairman of the International Center for Peace in the Middle East; Vice President of the Fundación Tres Culturas del Mediterráneo; member of the Executive Committee of The Peres Institute for Peace; and member of the UN High Level Working Group on the Alliance of Civilizations.

Hans Blix (Sweden) – Former Executive Chairman of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) in Iraq (2000-03); head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (1981-97); Foreign Minister (1978-79).

Susan Collin Marks (Search for Common Ground) – Senior Vice President of Search for Common Ground; Peacemaker during South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy; Peace Fellow United States Institute for Peace (1994-95); Board of Executive Committee of the World Economic Forum's *Council of 100 Leaders* on Western-Islamic Dialogue; Senior Associate, International Conflict Resolution Program, Columbia University.

Álvaro de Soto (United Nations) – Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the UN Secretary General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority; former Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara; Special Advisor on Cyprus (1999 -2004); Special Envoy for Myanmar (1997-99); Former Personal Representative to the Central American Peace Process and Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

Benita Ferrero-Waldner (European Union Commission) – Member of the European Commission in charge of External Relations and European Neighborhood Policy; Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria (2000-04); State Secretary for Foreign Affairs (1995-2000).

Felipe González (Spain) – Prime Minister (1982-96); Secretary-General of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) (1974-97).

Thorbjørn Jagland (Norway) – President (speaker) of the Norwegian Parliament; Minister of Foreign Affairs (2000-01); Prime Minister (1996-97); leader of the Norwegian Labor Party (1992-2002).

Fernando Lamata (Spain) – First Vice President for the Regional Government of Castilla-La Mancha, ex Executive Vice President of the Fundación Jiménez Díaz and Director General of the National School of Health; Director General for Health Planning and Health Adviser (2000-04); Former Secretary General for Health for the Ministry of Health.

Bernardino León (Spain) – Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs; Diplomat formerly posted in Liberia, Algeria, Greece and the Permanent Representation of Spain to the European Union; ex Chief of Staff for the President of the National Agency for the V Centenary and Adviser

to the EU Special Envoy to the Middle East; ex Coordinator for the Fundación Tres Culturas in Seville.

Amr Moussa (League of Arab States) – Secretary-General of the League of Arab States (since 2001); former Foreign Minister of Egypt; Ambassador of Egypt to the United Nations (1990) and India (1967).

Marc Otte (Council of the European Union) – EU Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process; Advisor on defense and security policy to the High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP); Ambassador to Israel (1992-96).

Josep Piqué (Spain) – President of the Popular Party in Catalonia (2002-present); Minister of Foreign Affairs (2000-02); Minister Spokesperson for the Government of Spain (1998-2000).

Terje Roed-Larsen (United Nations) – President, International Peace Academy (IPA); Special Envoy for the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1559 (2004) for Lebanon and Syria; former Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority (1999-2004).

Javier Solana (European Union) – EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP); Secretary General of NATO (1995-99); Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain (1992-95); Minister of Education and Science (1988-92); and Minister of Culture (1982-88), and Spokesperson of the Government of Spain (1985-88).

Hubert Védrine (France) – Minister of Foreign Affairs (1997-2002); Secretary-General for the Presidency of the Republic (1991-95); President of the “Institut François Mitterand”; Director of the consulting agency for geopolitical strategy “Hubert Védrine Conseil”.

Gaspar Zarrías (Spain) – Regional Minister for the Presidency of the Autonomous Government of Andalucía and President of the Executive Commission of the Fundación Tres Culturas del Mediterráneo.

PARTICIPANTS

EGYPT

Osama al-Baz – Political Advisor to President Hosni Mubarak, former First Vice Foreign Minister, and political specialist on the Arab/Israeli conflict and Egyptian/Israeli relations.

Ahmed Fakhr – Director, National Center for Middle East Studies; member of the Egyptian delegation at the Madrid Conference (1991); adviser to the Prime Minister for Military Affairs (1985-89).

Ahmed Maher – Foreign Minister (2001-2004); Director of the Arab Fund for Technical Assistance to African States – Arab League (2000-2001); former Ambassador to the USA, the USSR, Belgium and Portugal.

Abdel Monem Said Aly – Director of Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies in Cairo; political contributor to books, essays and articles on Middle East regional security.

ISRAEL

Colette Avital – International Secretary of the Labor Party; member of Knesset (Labor Party); Consul General in New York (1992-96); Ambassador to Portugal (1988-92); Labor Party candidate for the post of President of the State of Israel.

Shlomo Ben-Ami – Vice President of CITpax; Minister of Foreign Affairs, Israel (2000-01); led the Israeli delegation at the Taba summit (2001); Member of the Israeli team of the Camp David summit (2000); Minister of Public Security (1999); head of the Israeli delegation at the multilateral tables on refugees (1994); Member of the Israeli delegation at the Madrid Peace Conference (1991); Ambassador to Spain (1987-91).

Israel Hasson – Knesset member (Yisrael Beytenu); founder of Hasson Energy Company; member of the Israeli delegations at Wye River and Taba; deputy head of the Israeli Security Agency (ISA); and a participant in the negotiations over the Hebron agreements.

David Kimche – President of the Israeli's Council of Foreign Relations; former Director General of Israel's Foreign Ministry (1980-87); former Deputy Head of Mossad.

Pini Meidan-Shani – Former foreign policy advisor to Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, Ehud Barak; former senior of MOSSAD, member of the Israeli negotiation team at the Taba Summit (2001); participant in the negotiations over the Sharm al-Sheikh Agreement (1999).

Dan Meridor – Former Minister of Justice and of Finance; former Knesset observer to the Council of Europe; Former Cabinet Secretary; former Knesset member.

Roni Milo – Former Mayor of Tel Aviv; President of Israeli-American Chamber of Commerce; Minister of Health (2000-01); Minister of Police (1990-92); former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs; former Minister at the Prime Minister's Office (1984-88).

Ophir Pines-Paz – Knesset member (Labor Party); Minister of Science, Technology, Culture and Sports (2006); Minister of Interior (2005-06), currently a candidate for the following elections to the post of Labor Party leader.

Dalia Rabin – Chairperson for the Yitzak Rabin Center for Israeli Studies; Deputy Minister of Defense (2001-02); former Knesset member.

Moshe Shahal – Knesset member (Labor Party); Minister of Police and of Internal Security (1992-96); Minister of Energy and Infrastructure (1984-90); participant in peace tables with the Palestinians during the Rabin Government.

JORDAN

Adnan Abu Odeh – Political Adviser to HM King Hussein of Jordan (1999-2000); Senator (1998-99); Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations (1992-95).

Jawad Anani – Member of Senate and Adviser to His Royal Highness Prince Hassan Bin Talal; former member of the Jordanian delegation to the Middle East peace process (1991-95); former Minister of Labor, Industry, Tourism, Information and of State.

Munther Haddadin – Minister of Water and Irrigation (1997-98); former senior negotiator for Jordan's delegations to the Middle East Peace Process.

Mustafa Hamarneh – Director of the Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan; Chairman of Jordan Radio and Television (2004-06); founding member of EuroMeSCo (the Euro-Mediterranean Study Commission)

Abdel Salam Majali – Senator (1997); Prime Minister (1993-95, 1997-98); head of the Jordanian delegation in the Peace Negotiations with Israel (1997); adviser to HM the King of Jordan; Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs (1970-1971, 1976-79); Minister of Education (1976-79); Minister of Health (1969-71).

Taher N. Masri – Arab League Commissioner for Civil Societies and First Vice President of Senate; Prime Minister and Defense Minister during the Madrid Peace Conference (1991); Deputy Prime Minister (1989); former Foreign Minister; Minister of State for Occupied Territories Affairs (1973-74); Ambassador to Spain, France, Belgium and the UK.

Marwan Muasher – Senator; Deputy Prime Minister (2004-2005); Government Spokesperson (2005); Minister of Foreign Affairs (2002-04); Ambassador to the United States (1997-2002); Spokesperson of the Jordanian delegation to the Middle East Peace Process (1991-94).

Fayez Tarawneh – Senator; Prime Minister (1998-99); Minister of Foreign Affairs (1997-98); Ambassador to the United States (1993-97); member of the Jordanian delegation to the Middle East Peace Process (1991-93).

LEBANON

Mousbah al-Ahdab – Member of Parliament, Vice-President of the Movement of Democratic Renewal (2005), and Deputy of Tripoli, Lebanon.

Roger Eddé – Lebanese politician, former member of the National Bloc political party, former presidential candidate, and founder of Lebanese Peace Movement.

Amine Gemayel – President of Lebanon (1982-88); member of Parliament (1970).

Ghassan Salameh – Former Minister of Culture and Education; Personal Representative of the UN Secretary General for Cultural Diversity; Professor of International Relations at the Institut d'études politiques; Senior Adviser to the UN Secretary General.

PALESTINE

Hanan Ashrawi – Founder and Chair of the Executive Committee of the Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy (MIFTAH); Member of the PLC; Official Spokesperson of the Palestinian Delegation to the Middle East Peace Process (1991-93).

Mustafa Barghouti – Member of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC); Secretary General of the Palestinian National Initiative; member of the Palestinian delegation at the Madrid peace conference (1991).

Jibril Rajoub – Former head of the Preventive Security Services (PSS) for the West Bank; former National Security Advisor to President Abbas.

Nabil Shaath – Foreign Minister of the Palestinian Authority (2003-05); Acting Prime Minister (2005); member of the Palestinian delegation at Madrid (1991), Oslo (1993), Camp David (2000) and Taba (2001).

Mohammed Shtayyeh – Former Minister of Public Works and Housing; Director-General of the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction (PECDAR); member of the Palestinian delegation at the 1991 Madrid Conference.

RUSSIA

Irina Donovna Zvyagelskaya – Vice President, Center for Strategic and Politic Studies; Lecturer, Moscow Institute of International Relations.

Andrei Gratchev – Spokesperson for President Gorbachov at the 1991 Madrid Middle East Peace Conference.

SYRIA

Riad Daoudi – Director of the Judicial Department of the Presidency; legal adviser to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Member of the International Law Commission at the United Nations.

Bushra Kanafani – Director of Communications and Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; former Spokesperson for the Syrian delegation to the Middle East peace talks.

UNITED STATES

Daniel Kurtzer – Ambassador to Israel (2001-05) and to Egypt (1997-2001); member, American Academy of Diplomacy, and former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs.

Samuel Lewis – Chair, Middle East Advisor Board, Search for Common Ground; former Director at the Policy Planning State Department; senior staff member National Security Council (Clinton Administration); Ambassador to Israel (1977-85); former Assistant Secretary for International Organizations and UN Affairs; and member, American Academy of Diplomacy.

Robert Malley – Director of Middle East & North Africa Program, Crisis Group; Assistant to President Clinton for Arab-Israeli Affairs (1998-2001), and Executive Assistant to the National Security Advisor (1997-98).

Nicholas Veliotis – Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (1981-84); Ambassador to Jordan (1978-81) and to Egypt (1984-86); Member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Middle East Institute; and member, American Academy of Diplomacy.

Theodore Kattouf – former Ambassador to the Syrian Republic; Deputy Chief of Mission in Baghdad and in Sanaa; Deputy Director and subsequently Director of the Office of Arab North Affairs; Deputy Chief of Mission in Damascus, and in Riyadh; Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates.

CIVIL SOCIETY

Hanne Adriansen – Danish Institute for International Studies

Hussein Agha – Senior Associate Member of St. Antony's College, Oxford

Haggai Alon – Senior Advisor to the Minister of Defense - Israel

Ziad Asali – Director, American Task Force on - Palestine (ATFP)

Samia Bamieh – Founding Member, International Women's Commission for a Just and Sustainable Palestinian - Israeli Peace (IWC)

Gershon Baskin – Co-Director, Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information (IPCRI)

Yossi Ben Ari – Former Co-Director IPCRI, Strategic Affairs Unit

Oriella Ben-Zvi – One Voice-Israel

Ofer Bronchtein – Casa Sefarad

Emilio Cassinello – Director-General, Centro Internacional de Toledo para la Paz (CITpax)

Ahmad Charai – Board Member, Search for Common Ground

Naomi Chazan – Founding Member, IWC

Jan De Volder – Sant'Egidio Community

Véronique Dudouet – Berghof Foundation for Peace Support (BFPS)

Karem El-Sharkawy – Director, External Affairs, Middle East, World Bank

Gareth Evans – President, International Crisis Group (ICG)

Senén Florensa Palau – Director-General, Instituto Europeo del Mediterraneo (IEMed)

Gidi Grinstein – Director, The Re'ut Institute

Samuel Hadas – Fundación Tres Culturas del Mediterráneo

Michael Hager – The Education for Employment Foundation

Lars Hänsel – Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

Bahieddine Hassan – Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies

Diego Hidalgo – President, Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE)

Yair Hirschfeld – Economic Cooperation Foundation

Michael Irving Jensen – Middle East Studies, Carsten Niebuhr Institute, University of Copenhagen

Ahmad Khalidi – Senior Associate Member of St. Antony's College, Oxford

Samaan Khoury – Geneva Initiative

Ricardo Lagos – President, Club de Madrid

Scott Lasensky – United States Institute for Peace
Reinoud Leenders – University of Amsterdam
Eti Livni – Ex Miembro del Knesset
Emile Malet – Revista Pasage
Riad Mali – Director-General, Panorama Center
Susan Marks – Senior Vice-President, Search for Common Ground
Enrique Ojeda Vila – Director Gerent, Fundación Tres Culturas del Mediterráneo
Andres Ortega – Director, Foreign Policy, Edition Espanola
Martín Ortega Carnelian – Instituto de Studios Strategic de Paris
Luis Peral – Coordinator, Conflict Prevention and Resolution Programme, CITpax
Ron Panda – The Peres Center for Peace
Michal Radoshitzky – Geneva Initiative
David Remez – Ben-Or Consulting
Gabrielle Rifkind – Oxford Research Group
Walid Salem – Panorama Center
Patrick Seale – British Journalist
Danny Seidemann – Ir Amim
Zalman Shapiro – Former President of NUMEC
John Shattuck – JFK Library Foundation
Henry Siegman – School of Oriental and African Studies - University of London
Simone Susskind – Founding Member, IWC
Clayton Swisher – Director of Programs, Middle East Institute
Sundeep Waslekar – President, Strategic Foresight Group



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