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SPECIAL DOCUMENT FILE

THE ANNAPOLIS CONFERENCE

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In late spring 2007, the George W. Bush administration decided to launch a new effort to promote calm in the Middle East, including pressing for a halt to violence on the Palestine front and a revival of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, in hopes of stabilizing Iraq in time for an interim report to Congress on the troop surge scheduled for September 2007. The Hamas-Fatah clashes, culminating in Fatah’s ouster from the Gaza Strip on 15 June, delayed the planned peace initiative but also underlined the importance of containing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The administration viewed the break between Hamas and Fatah as a new opportunity to promote Palestinian Authority President Mahmud Abbas’s leadership of the West Bank as a model for future Palestinian governance, to underscore the benefits of political moderation over Islamist extremism, and ideally to result in an Israeli-Palestinian peace treaty that would be the capstone of the Bush presidency. With these objectives in mind, President Bush made a major policy

speech on 16 July outlining his "West Bank first" vision and calling for an international summit in fall 2007 to relaunch the Israeli-Palestinian final status negotiations, suspended since 2001 (see Doc. C3 in JPS 145). The terms of reference of those negotiations had been the Oslo accords (see the Special Document section of JPS 89). The Annapolis summit illustrated the extent of the transformation of the terms of reference for Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

President Bush's call for a summit took the Palestinians by surprise, and although Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert had been briefed, he had not given his endorsement. Only after his 16 July address did Bush phone Abbas and the leaders of Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia to discuss the idea. While Abbas welcomed a summit, hoping it would produce a detailed timeline and work plan for concluding and implementing a final status accord, Olmert quickly acted to limit the scope of any talks, proposing the start of negotiations for an agreement of general principles to guide future final status talks (see Quarterly Update in JPS 145). In September, the United States persuaded Abbas and Olmert to form teams to draft a joint declaration presenting a common vision for advancing the peace process. Fundamental gaps remained between the two sides. Several times over the last months it seemed unlikely that the conference would take place. Outside observers were skeptical about the summit; a number of prominent former policymakers laid out what they saw as fundamental prerequisites for a meaningful conference (see Doc. D3 in JPS 146).

Meanwhile, the United States deployed diplomatic efforts to secure the widest possible attendance by Arab states, which, led by Saudi Arabia, had threatened not to attend unless the summit were to be serious and substantive and produce a clear vision of the endgame. Of the Arab states invited, only Iraq, Kuwait, and Libya did not attend the conference held at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD, on 27 November. Syria had initially insisted that the Golan Heights be placed on the agenda, agreeing to attend only after discussion of a "comprehensive Middle East peace" was included, during which the Golan issue could be raised (see Quarterly Updates in JPS 146 and this issue).

In all, representatives of more than 40 countries and international organizations representing the Quartet, major donors, the Arab and Muslim world, and the wider international community attended. Bush opened the conference by reading a "joint agreement" hastily finalized by the Israeli and Palestinian teams less than an hour earlier (see Quarterly Update for details). An open plenary session followed, during which Bush, Abbas, Olmert, Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, and Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal, among others, gave formal addresses. In the afternoon, three closed-door sessions were held to discuss Israeli-Palestinian issues, economic support to the Palestinian Authority, and "comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace."

A. ISRAEL AND THE PLO, "JOINT UNDERSTANDING," PRESENTED TO THE ANNAPOLIS CONFERENCE BY U.S. PRES. GEORGE W. BUSH, 27 NOVEMBER 2007.

This statement, read as part of Bush's opening remarks to the Annapolis conference, was finalized by Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert less than an hour before the conference began. The statement's references to the road map clarify that negotiations following the Annapolis conference will prioritize Israel's security concerns. The text of the joint understanding is available on the Council on Foreign Relations Web site at www.cfr.org.

The representatives of the government of the State of Israel and the [Palestine] Liberation Organization [sic] represented respective[ly] by Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and President Mahmud Abbas, in his capacity as chairman of the PLO Executive Committee and president of the Palestinian Authority, have convened in Annapolis, Maryland, under the auspices of President George W. Bush of the United States of America, and with the support of the participants of this international conference, having concluded the following joint understanding:

We express our determination to bring an end to bloodshed, suffering, and decades of conflict between our peoples; to usher in a new era of peace, based on freedom, security, justice, dignity, respect, and mutual recognition; to propagate a culture of peace and nonviolence; to confront terrorism and incitement, whether committed by Palestinians or Israelis. In furtherance of the goal of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security, we agree to immediately launch good-faith bilateral negotiations in order to conclude a peace treaty, resolving all outstanding issues, including all core issues without exception, as specified in previous agreements.

We agree to engage in vigorous, ongoing, and continuous negotiations and shall make every effort to conclude an agreement before the end of 2008. For this purpose, a steering committee, led jointly by the head of the delegation of each party, will meet continuously, as agreed. The steering committee will develop a joint work plan and establish and oversee the work of negotiations teams to address all issues, to be headed by one lead representative from each party. The first session of the steering committee will be held on 12 December 2007.

President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert will continue to meet on a bi-weekly basis to follow up the negotiations in order to offer all necessary assistance for their advancement.

The parties also commit to immediately implement their respective obligations under the performance-based road map to a permanent two-state solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict, issued by the Quartet on 30 April 2003—this is called the road map—and agree to form an American, Palestinian, and Israeli mechanism, led by the United States, to follow up on the implementation of the road map.

The parties further commit to continue the implementation of the ongoing obligations of the road map until they reach a peace treaty. The United States will monitor and judge the fulfillment of the commitment of both sides of the road map. Unless otherwise agreed by the parties, implementation of the future peace treaty will be subject to the implementation of the road map, as judged by the United States.

B. U.S. PRES. GEORGE W. BUSH, OPENING STATEMENT TO THE ANNAPOLIS CONFERENCE, 27 NOVEMBER 2007 (EXCERPTS).

President Bush opened the Annapolis conference with these remarks less than an hour after receiving a joint statement from Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, reproduced above. Bush spent only 3 hours at the daylong conference, where he praised Arab League members' participation in the summit and called for normalization of relations between Israel and Arab states. Text of the speech can be found on the Council on Foreign Relations Web site at www.cfr.org.

We meet to lay the foundation for the establishment of a new nation—a democratic Palestinian state that will live side by side with Israel in peace and security. We meet to help bring an end to the violence that has been the true enemy of the aspirations of both the Israelis and Palestinians. . . . [At this point, Bush read the joint statement (above).—*Ed. Note*]

The Palestinian people are blessed with many gifts and talents. They want the opportunity to use those gifts to better their own lives and build a better future for their children. They want the dignity that comes with sovereignty and independence. They want justice and equality under the rule of law. They want freedom from violence and fear.

The people of Israel have just aspirations as well. They want their children to be able to ride a bus or to go to school without fear of suicide bombers. They want an end to rocket attacks and constant threats of assault. They want their nation to be recognized and welcomed in the region where they live.

Today, Palestinians and Israelis each understand that helping the other to realize their aspirations is key to realizing their own aspirations—and both require an independent, democratic, viable Palestinian state. Such a state will provide Palestinians with the chance to lead lives of freedom and purpose and dignity. Such a state will help provide the Israelis with something they have been seeking for generations: to live in peace with their neighbors.

Achieving this goal is not going to be easy—if it were easy, it would have happened a long time ago. To achieve freedom and peace, both Israelis and Palestinians will have to make tough choices. Both sides are sober about the work ahead, but having spent time with their leaders, they are ready to take on the tough issues. As Prime Minister Olmert recently put it, “We will avoid none of [the historic questions], we will not run from discussing any of them.” As President Abbas has said: “I believe that there is an opportunity not only

for us but for the Israelis, too. We have a historic and important opportunity that we must benefit from." It is with that spirit that we concluded—that they concluded this statement I just read.

Our purpose here in Annapolis is not to conclude an agreement. Rather, it is to launch negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians. For the rest of us, our job is to encourage the parties in this effort—and to give them the support they need to succeed.

In light of recent developments, some have suggested that now is not the right time to pursue peace. I disagree. I believe now is precisely the right time to begin these negotiations, for a number of reasons:

First, the time is right because Palestinians and Israelis have leaders who are determined to achieve peace. President Abbas seeks to fulfill his people's aspirations for statehood, dignity, and security. President Abbas understands that a Palestinian state will not be born of terror, and that terrorism is the enemy standing in the way of a state. He and Prime Minister [Salam] Fayyad have both declared, without hesitation, that they are opposed to terrorism and committed to peace. They're committed to turning these declarations into actions on the ground to combat terror.

The emergence of responsible Palestinian leaders has given Israeli leaders the confidence they need to reach out to the Palestinians in true partnership. Prime Minister Olmert has expressed his understanding of the suffering and indignities felt by the Palestinian people. He's made clear that the security of Israel will be enhanced by the establishment of a responsible, democratic Palestinian state. With leaders of courage and conviction on both sides, now is the time to come together and seek the peace that both sides desire.

Second, the time is right because a battle is underway for the future of the Middle East—and we must not cede victory to the extremists. With their violent actions and contempt for human life, the extremists are seeking to impose a dark vision on the Palestinian people—a vision that feeds on hopelessness and despair to sow chaos in the Holy Land. If this vision prevails, the future of the region will be endless terror, endless war, and endless suffering.

Standing against this dark vision are President Abbas and his government. They are offering the Palestinian people an alternative vision for the future—a vision of peace, a homeland of their own, and a better life. If responsible Palestinian leaders can deliver on this vision, they will deal the forces of extremism a devastating blow. And when liberty takes root in the rocky soil of the West Bank and Gaza, it will inspire millions across the Middle East who want their societies built on freedom and peace and hope.

By contrast, if Palestinian reformers cannot deliver on this hopeful vision, then the forces of extremism and terror will be strengthened, a generation of Palestinians could be lost to the extremists, and the Middle East will grow in despair. We cannot allow this to happen. Now is the time to show Palestinians that their dream of a free and independent state can be achieved at the table of peace—and that the terror and violence preached by Palestinian extremists is the greatest obstacle to a Palestinian state.

Third, the time is right because the world understands the urgency of supporting these negotiations. We appreciate that representatives from so many governments and international institutions have come to join us here in Annapolis—especially the Arab world. We're here because we recognize what is at stake. We are here because we each have a vital role to play in helping Palestinians forge the institutions of a free society. We're here because we understand that the success of these efforts to achieve peace between Israelis and Palestinians will have an impact far beyond the Holy Land.

These are the reasons we've gathered here in Annapolis. And now we begin the difficult work of freedom and peace. The United States is proud to host this meeting—and we reaffirm the path to peace set out in the road map. Yet in the end, the outcome of the negotiations they launch here depends on the Israelis and Palestinians themselves. America will do everything in our power to support their quest for peace, but we cannot achieve it for them. The success of these efforts will require that all parties show patience and flexibility—and meet their responsibilities.

For these negotiations to succeed, the Palestinians must do their part. They must show the world they understand that while the borders of a Palestinian state are important, the nature of a Palestinian state is just as important. They must demonstrate that a Palestinian state will create opportunity for all its citizens, and govern justly, and dismantle the infrastructure of terror. They must show that a Palestinian state will accept its responsibility, and have the capability to be a source of stability and peace—for its own citizens, for the people of Israel, and for the whole region.

The Israelis must do their part. They must show the world that they are ready to begin—to bring an end to the occupation that began in 1967 through a negotiated settlement. This settlement will establish Palestine as a Palestinian homeland, just as Israel is a homeland for the Jewish people. Israel must demonstrate its support for the creation of a prosperous and successful Palestinian state by removing unauthorized outposts, ending settlement expansion, and finding other ways for the Palestinian Authority to exercise its responsibilities without compromising Israel's security.

Arab states also have a vital role to play. Relaunching the Arab League initiative and the Arab League's support for today's conference are positive steps. All Arab states should show their strong support for the government of President Abbas—and provide needed assistance to the Palestinian Authority. Arab states should also reach out to Israel, work toward the normalization of relations, and demonstrate in both word and deed that they believe that Israel and its people have a permanent home in the Middle East. These are vital steps toward the comprehensive peace that we all seek.

Finally, the international community has important responsibilities. Prime Minister Fayyad is finalizing a plan to increase openness and transparency and accountability throughout Palestinian society—and he needs the resources and support from the international community. With strong backing from those gathered here, the Palestinian government can build the free institutions that will support a free Palestinian state.

The United States will help Palestinian leaders build these free institutions—and the United States will keep its commitment to the security of Israel as a Jewish state and homeland for the Jewish people.

The United States strongly feels that these efforts will yield the peace that we want—and that is why we will continue to support the Lebanese people. We believe democracy brings peace. And democracy in Lebanon is vital, as well, for the peace in the Middle East. Lebanese people are in the process of electing a president. That decision is for the Lebanese people to make—and they must be able to do so free from outside interference and intimidation. As they embark on this process, the people of Lebanon can know that the American people stand with them—and we look forward to the day when the people of Lebanon can enjoy the blessings of liberty without fear of violence or coercion.

The task begun here at Annapolis will be difficult. This is the beginning of the process, not the end of it—and no doubt a lot of work remains to be done. Yet the parties can approach this work with confidence. The time is right. The cause is just. And with hard effort, I know they can succeed.

President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert, I pledge to devote my effort during my time as president to do all I can to help you achieve this ambitious goal. I give you my personal commitment to support your work with the resources and resolve of the American government. I believe a day is coming when freedom will yield the peace we desire. And the land that is holy to so many will see the light of peace.

The day is coming when Palestinians will enjoy the blessings that freedom brings—and all Israelis will enjoy the security they deserve. That day is coming. The day is coming when the terrorists and extremists who threaten the Israeli and Palestinian people will be marginalized and eventually defeated. And when that day comes, future generations will look to the work we began here at Annapolis. They will give thanks to the leaders who gathered on the banks of the Chesapeake for their vision, their wisdom and courage to choose a future of freedom and peace.

C. PALESTINIAN PRES. MAHMUD ABBAS, STATEMENT TO THE ANNAPOLIS CONFERENCE, 27 NOVEMBER 2007 (EXCERPTS).

Text of the speech can be found on the Council on Foreign Relations Web site at www.cfr.org.

Mr. President,

What we face today is not only the challenge of peace but also a test of the credibility of all involved: the credibility of the United States of America, members of the Quartet, the entire international community, Israel, the PLO, and the Palestinian National Authority, as well as the Arab and Islamic group [of nations]. It is a test that will draw deep marks in the future of the region and the relations among its peoples on the one hand and on the international forces that care about the region's peace and security on the other.

With this outlook, we come to Annapolis today. We therefore recognize the weight of responsibility upon our shoulders and the burden we will have to bear. We recognize, and I believe that you share our opinion, that the absence of hope and the infiltration of desperation into peoples' hearts is what feeds extremism. It is therefore our joint duty to allow for real hope to thrive. This way, we hope that with your full support and involvement we might achieve a complete transformation and that a genuine peace can be achieved soon, before the end of your term, Mr. President.

Tomorrow, we embark on a serious and comprehensive negotiations process on all the permanent status issues—including Jerusalem, refugees, borders, settlements, security, and water, as well as others. We must support such negotiations with tangible and direct steps on the ground, which will be taken as proof of having embarked on an irreversible track toward a negotiated, comprehensive, and full peace. Such steps must involve freezing all settlement activities, including natural growth, reopening institutions in Jerusalem, removing settlement outposts, removing checkpoints, releasing prisoners, and facilitating the mission of the Palestinian Authority in restoring law and order.

With all frankness, and without any hesitation, I have to defend the right of my people to open their eyes to a new dawn free of occupation, settlements, apartheid walls, prisons full of prisoners, targeted assassinations, and the siege of checkpoints around villages and cities. I look forward, your excellency, to the day when our prisoners are free and to the day when they can assume their roles in supporting peace and building their homeland and state. It is also my duty to say that the destiny of Jerusalem is a key issue in any peace treaty we reach. We want East Jerusalem to be our capital—a capital where we will have open relations with West Jerusalem and where we will guarantee for believers of all religions the freedom to practice their rituals and to have access to the holy sites without discrimination and in accordance with international humanitarian law.

In this context, I would like to emphasize that we will continue to carry out our responsibilities in accordance with the road map in fighting lawlessness, violence, and terrorism and in restoring law and order. The government of the PA is working tirelessly in extremely difficult conditions to achieve this noble cause. We do this for our own people because we must, not because it is a political requirement imposed upon us by previous accords or by the road map.

Our people clearly understand the difference between the threat posed by terrorism versus using terrorism as a pretext to maintain an intolerable situation. Our civil, security, and economic institutions must be given the opportunity to function, and this process must be sponsored by the international community until our authority and government are able to fully assume their responsibilities. I must also stress that our determination to end occupation stems from our vision that by doing so we destroy one of the most important excuses for terrorism in our region and in the world. I say this without undermining the necessity to fight terrorism regardless of time, conditions, or

source, because it is a danger that threatens the future of all peoples and can doom civilization and destroy its accomplishments. . . .

Mr. President, I want to use this opportunity to speak to the mind, heart, and conscience of every Israeli citizen, based on my full recognition that without undermining the importance of international and regional backing, the determining element for making peace and sustaining it is public opinion in Palestine and in Israel and the commitment of their legitimate leaderships.

I would like to begin by saying that in spite of our differences over some of the most difficult issues in the conflict, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has shown a desire for peace that I felt during our bilateral meetings. This desire for peace has genuinely contributed to our reaching the important step that we inaugurate today. Mr. Prime Minister, I would like to continue working closely with you until we are able to complete this historic, long-awaited mission together. It is essential that each one of us uses his weight, experience, and determination to overcome the difficulties that will face us and to bridge the gaps between our two positions so that we can achieve a resolution. This is how we will end occupation and long years of suffering for our refugees; this is how we will ensure neighborly relations, economic cooperation, and people-to-people relations, all of which are the strongest guarantees for a sustainable peace.

I would also like to speak to the citizens of Israel on this exceptional occasion to tell them, our neighbors on this small piece of land, that neither you nor we are begging for peace from one another. Peace is a common interest of yours and ours. Peace and freedom are our rights, just as peace and security are your rights and ours. . . .

To my Palestinian people, to all Palestinians in Gaza, Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the refugee camps in the diaspora, I would like to share these words with you: I recognize that each and every one of you has their personal pain and special tragedy stemming from this conflict and years of the nakba and bitter occupation. Do not lose confidence or hope. The entire world is extending their hands to us to help end the years of our everlasting nakba. The world is trying to help us end the historic injustice that was inflicted on our two peoples. We will be ready as individuals and as a people to overcome the pain and tragedy when we reach a settlement that will give us rights that are equal to people elsewhere on this world: the right to independence and self-determination.

And to Palestinian mothers who are awaiting the return of their jailed sons; to the children who are dreaming of a new life and a prosperous and more peaceful future; to our brave prisoners; and to all of my sons and daughters, wherever you are: Have faith in tomorrow and the future, because an independent Palestine is coming. This is the promise of the entire world to you today. Trust that the dawn is coming.

To my people and family in the Gaza Strip: You are in my heart, and the hours of darkness will vanish before your determination does and our determination to the unity of our people in the West Bank and Gaza as a unified and unbreakable geographic and political entity will overcome. Your suffering will end. Justice and peace will prevail.

D. ISRAELI PM EHUD OLMERT, STATEMENT TO THE ANNAPOLIS CONFERENCE, 27 NOVEMBER 2007 (EXCERPTS).

It is important to note that the Government of Israel's understanding of the "previous agreements" constituting the basis for negotiations are Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, the road map, and President George W. Bush's 14 April 2004 letter to Israeli Prime Minister Sharon, endorsing Israel's plan for unilateral disengagement from Gaza (Special Doc. B in JPS 132). In that letter, Bush declares inter alia that the solution to the Palestinian refugee issue must be found "through the establishment of a Palestinian state, and the settling of Palestinian refugees there, rather than in Israel," and that "in light of new realities on the ground, including already existing major Israeli population centers, it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949." This letter represented an unprecedented departure from established U.S. policy, by formally accepting for the first time Israel's negotiating positions on final status issues such as borders, settlements, refugees, and Jerusalem. The letter also implicitly approved Israel's interpretation of the road map as spelled out in its road map reservations of 27 May 2003 (see Special Doc. G in JPS 128), which stated that cessation of Palestinian "armed activity" and the dismantlement by the PA of Palestinian "terrorist infrastructure" must precede all other steps. Bush's letter of 14 April 2004 has been cited by some commentators as the most important document since the Balfour Declaration. Text of Olmert's speech can be found on the Council on Foreign Relations Web site at www.cfr.org.

The honorable president of the United States, George Bush; my colleague, president of the Palestinian Authority Mahmud Abbas; heads of delegations; and distinguished guests: I came here today from Jerusalem, Mr. President, at your invitation, to extend, on behalf of the people of Israel and the state of Israel, to the Palestinian people and to our neighboring Arab states, to extend a hand in peace, a hand which marks the beginning of historic reconciliation between us and you, the Palestinians, and all Arab nations.

I had many good reasons not to come here to this meeting. Memory of failures in the near and distant past weighed heavy upon us. The dreadful terrorism perpetrated by Palestinian terrorist organizations has affected thousands of Israeli citizens, has destroyed families, and has tried to disrupt the lives of the citizens of Israel. . . .

The ongoing shooting of Qassam rockets against tens of thousands of residents in the south of Israel, particularly in the city of Sederot, serves as a warning sign, one which we cannot overlook.

The absence of governmental institutions and effective law enforcement mechanisms; the role of Hamas in the Gaza Strip; the ongoing activity of murderous organizations throughout all the territories of the Palestinian Authority; the absence of a legal system that meets the basic criteria of democratic government; all of these are factors which deter us from moving forward too hastily.

I am not overlooking any of the obstacles liable to emerge along the way. I see them. But I came here, despite the concerns and the doubts and the hesitations, to say to you, President Mahmud Abbas, and through you to your people, and to the entire Arab world, that the time has come.

We no longer and you no longer have the privilege of adhering to dreams that are disconnected from the sufferings of our peoples, the hardships that they experience daily, and the burden of living under ongoing uncertainty, which offers no hope of change or of a better future.

We want peace. We demand an end to terror, an end to incitement and to hatred. We are prepared to make a painful compromise, rife with risks, in order to realize these aspirations. I came here today not in order to settle historical accounts between us and you about what caused the confrontations and the hatred, and what for many years has prevented a compromise, a settlement of peace.

I want to tell you from the bottom of my heart that I acknowledge the fact that alongside the constant suffering that many in Israel have experienced, because of our history, because of the wars, the terrorism, and the hatred toward us, a suffering that has always been part of our lives in our land, your people, too, have suffered for many years, and there are some who still suffer.

Many Palestinians have been living for decades in camps, disconnected from the environment in which they grew up, wallowing in poverty, in neglect, alienation, bitterness, and a deep, unrelenting sense of humiliation. I know that this pain and this humiliation are the deepest foundations which fomented the ethos of hatred toward us. We are not indifferent to this suffering. We are not oblivious to the tragedies that you have experienced.

I believe that, in the course of negotiations between us, we will find the right way, as part of an international effort, in which we will participate, to assist these Palestinians in finding a proper framework for their future in the Palestinian state that will be established in the territories agreed upon between us. Israel will be part of an international mechanism that will assist in finding a solution to this problem.

The negotiations between us will not take place here in Annapolis but rather in our home and in your home. These negotiations will be bilateral, direct, ongoing, and continuous, in an effort to complete the process in the course of 2008. The negotiations will address all of the issues which we have thus far avoided dealing with. We will do this directly, openly, and courageously. We will not avoid any subject. We will deal with all the core issues. . . .

In the course of the negotiations, we will use previous agreements as a point of departure. UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, the road map, and the letter of President Bush to the prime minister of Israel dated 14 April 2004.

When the negotiations are concluded, I believe that we shall be able to arrive at an agreement that will fulfill the vision expressed by President Bush: two states for two peoples, a peace-seeking Palestinian state, a viable, strong, democratic, and terror-free state for the Palestinian people; and the state of

Israel, Jewish and democratic, living in security and free from the threat of terrorism, the national home of the Jewish people.

Clearly the implementation of the agreement will be subject to the implementation of all obligations in the road map with all of its phases and according to its complete sequence, as concluded between us from the very beginning. . . .

The agreement with you and its gradual implementation, cautiously and responsibly, is part of a much wider whole that will lead us, I believe and hope, to peace, to a peace agreement with all of the Arab states. . . .

I am pleased to see here in this hall representatives of Arab countries. Most of them do not have diplomatic relations with Israel. The time has come for you as well. We cannot continue to stand by indefinitely and to watch the—watch you standing and watching from the sidelines, watching the peace train, as it were, going by. The time has come to end the boycott, the alienation and the obliviousness toward the state of Israel. It does not help you and it hurts us.

I am familiar with the Arab peace initiative, which was born in Riyadh, affirmed in Beirut, and recently reaffirmed by you in Riyadh. I value this initiative, I acknowledge its importance, and I highly appreciate its contribution. I have no doubt that we will continue to refer to it in the course of the negotiations between us and the Palestinian leadership. . . .

We aspire for normalization with those Arab states that eschew as much as we do radical and fanatical fundamentalism and that seek to grant their citizens a more moderate, tolerant, and prosperous world. . . .

E. ISRAELI FM TZIPI LIVNI, STATEMENT TO THE ANNAPOLIS CONFERENCE, 27 NOVEMBER 2007 (EXCERPTS).

Foreign Minister Livni recognized and thanked the Arab delegates for their participation in the summit and promoted normalization of relations between Israel and Arab states. Text of the speech can be found on the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs Web site at www.mfa.gov.il.

I did not come here today to argue about rights. I did not come here to argue whose claims are more justified. I came today to tell my colleagues from the Arab world that the right thing to do is not to relinquish our sense of justice or our belief in rights. I have no intention of asking another nation to do that, just as I do not ask that of myself—and I believe in the Jewish nation's right to all of the Land of Israel. This is the time to think about a different right—the right of our children to live in peace and mutual dignity, according to the values that I believe are the legacy of all the peoples in the region, and certainly the values of all the religions. Your important participation here, even though for some of you this was not an easy decision, testifies to that fact and instills in me hope for the future.

True, there is a national conflict between us, whose just resolution is to give expression to the national aspirations of each of the nations in its own state.

This is exactly the principle determined 60 years ago, after years of bloodshed between the residents of this country—the principle of two states for two peoples: one a Jewish state, as decreed by the UN resolution, and the other an Arab state. . . .

I am proud [of] where Israel is today. I am sorry that the Arab world rejected the principle of partition in the past, and I hope and pray that today there is an understanding that instead of fighting, the right thing to do is to build a shared future in two separate states: one—the State of Israel, which was established as a Jewish state, a national home for the Jewish people; and the other—Palestine—which will be established to give a full and complete solution to Palestinians wherever they may be. Those who are in Gaza and the West Bank, and those in the refugee camps in other Arab countries with temporary status, waiting for a sense of belonging to a national state—the same feeling of wholeness that the establishment of the State of Israel gave to the Jewish refugees who were forced to leave Arab countries and Europe and became partners in building Israel.

I believe that the solution of two nation-states serves the interests of both sides. Not every celebration of ours is cause for sorrow on the other side, and vice versa. I say to my Palestinian colleagues: Do not bemoan the establishment of the State of Israel; establish your own state, rejoice in its establishment and we will rejoice with you, since for us the establishment of the Palestinian state is not our *nakba*, or disaster—provided that upon its establishment the word “*nakba*” be deleted from the Arabic lexicon in referring to Israel.

Knowing that the conflict has a solution is not enough. Reaching the solution depends first of all upon us—on the two sides themselves and their ability to conduct negotiations, to touch on the most sensitive points and to provide answers based on the understanding that neither side can obtain everything it wants and that compromises are necessary on both sides.

The solution also depends on the ability of the leaders to cope with extremists and terrorism, and we are not speaking here only of the leaders of the sides directly involved in the conflict. This is the central task of the entire world leadership, and especially of the Arab and Muslim world.

Alongside the fact that we have gathered here to launch the peace process—we cannot ignore reality. Gaza, which is supposed to be part of the Palestinian state, is controlled by a terrorist organization and arms continue to flow into it; Hizballah—the long arm of Iran—prevents stability in Lebanon and persists in arming itself despite the UN resolution; Iran is threatening the entire region, and extremist entities within your own countries are being manipulated from outside by radical organizations.

This is the time for decision. Everyone must decide which side they are on, and the sides, ladies and gentlemen, have changed. They are no longer Israel on one side and the Palestinians on the other side. They are no longer the Arabs on one side and the Jews on the other side. In one camp is everyone who is sitting here in this room—Jews, Muslims, and Christians; Israelis and Arabs; Americans and Europeans.

You know who did not come: those who are working against the conference. The states that did not come are those that support terrorist organizations and radical elements in your home countries; those who wish to cause instability in the region; the organizations and leaders who use God's name to sow hatred, to send children out to be killed. The same God we see as the God of mercy and peace. This is the battle that must be won.

Sitting on the fence will not accomplish it. Neither is one-time participation in an event sufficient. The common goal is comprehensive peace in the region for all the peoples and all the states. Peace is not merely an agreement in exchange for land; peace means ending incitement, ending support of terrorism and actively opposing it. And that is the role of leadership—even if it has to cope with inflamed public opinion. . . .

I have heard those who say that Israel needs to pay for normalization. Such talk is based on an approach whereby normalization is a kind of prize that should be given to Israel only after comprehensive peace is achieved between Israel and its neighbors, an approach that assumes that it is in Israel's interest to achieve normalization with the Arab world instead of a difficult peace process including compromises. This, ladies and gentlemen, is a mistake. . . .

Normalization is not something that you give and Israel receives; it is something from which everyone benefits.

I have heard some say that Israel should not expect a handshake, and I will not ask for one. But let us imagine what might happen if the worst possible scenario occurs and there is a handshake between an Israeli leader and an Arab leader whose country has no diplomatic relations with Israel, and that handshake is broadcast around the world.

Then the extremists in the Palestinian Authority will understand that the fact that Abu Mazen [Mahmud Abbas], Salam Fayyad and Abu Ala [Ahmad Qurai] are meeting with Israelis and conducting peace talks is not a betrayal of these principles but rather a process that is supported by the Arab world.

Then the extremists in the Arab countries will understand that a new era is beginning, that the process is right, and that it is being implemented in stages. Should you announce today that you will promote ties with Israel beyond a handshake, with Israel taking additional steps for the benefit of the Palestinians, those same extremists will understand that you are not helping Israel and neglecting the Palestinian channel, but rather you are helping the Palestinians and utilizing the normalization with Israel in order to help them.

And it can make things easier for us as well. When the Israeli public, which has been victimized by terrorist attacks, fails to understand how we can permit ourselves to promote a peace process in the current reality, we can say that we are changing the face of the entire region. You can help Israel to help the Palestinians.

Today we set out on three parallel tracks. The first—the political track—is an ongoing bilateral dialogue between us and the Palestinians in an attempt to reach the agreements that will allow for the realization of the vision. The second—the practical track—according to the road map, requires hard and

diligent work vis-à-vis the terrorist organizations, wherever they are, in Gaza, in the West Bank—a battle against the leaders, a battle against incitement, a battle against their patrons, one place after another. This is a difficult task that the Palestinian Authority has begun, and at the end of the political track, we will return to the practical track to check whether the conditions are ripe for the establishment of the Palestinian state.

The road map is not an obstacle to the process. It is the right way to advance it, and it represents the interests of the Israelis, the Palestinians, and the region. According to the road map, the path to a Palestinian state passes through the war against terrorism—not as an excuse for not establishing it, but rather as a need of the entire world. We must all provide a response to the situation on the ground, particularly in Gaza, where the kidnapped Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit, is still being held.

The third track that has been opened here today is the regional track. I hope and believe that your participation here today is an expression of support for the bilateral process—support for a legitimate Palestinian government, support for the moderate elements in the region, and the beginning of the normalization process between you and us in stages and in accordance with the steps that Israel will take to benefit the Palestinians. . . .

F. SAUDI FM SAUD AL-FAISAL, STATEMENT TO THE ANNAPOLIS CONFERENCE, 27 NOVEMBER 2007 (EXCERPTS).

Saudi Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal, unlike others presenting statements at the summit, stressed the importance of UNSC resolutions as much as the road map and the 2002 Arab League peace initiative. He specifically cited UNSC Res. 1397 of September 2005, which called for “renewed action in parallel by Israel and the Palestinian Authority [in fulfilling] obligations under the road map.” The foreign minister’s statement thus draws attention to the difference between sequential and reciprocal fulfillment of road map obligations by the Israeli and Palestinian parties. Text of the speech can be found on the Council on Foreign Relations Web site at www.cfr.org.

We have come to support the launching of serious and continuing talks between the Palestinians and the Israelis that will address all the core and final status issues. These talks must be followed by the launching of the Syrian and Lebanese tracks at the earliest [opportunity].

The United States and the Quartet have expressed their commitment to working toward, achieving a final settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict within a specific time frame, and we shall hold them to that. The terms of reference for negotiations on all tracks are UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, 1397, and 1515, the road map, and the Arab peace initiative.

It is absolutely necessary to establish an international follow-up mechanism that monitors progress in the negotiations among the parties, as well as the implementation of commitments made.

It is also essential that Israel implement such steps as the freezing of all settlement activities, the dismantling of settlement outposts, the releasing of prisoners, the halting of the construction of the wall, the removal of Israeli checkpoints in the occupied Palestinian territories, and the lifting of the siege imposed on the Palestinian people. These steps must be seriously implemented on the ground if the final status negotiations are to succeed.

Saudi Arabia is committed to promoting peace in the Middle East. It was never on the sidelines, where peace was concerned. Over the years our leaders have proposed serious initiatives to end the conflict. . . .

The Arab peace initiative is based on international legitimacy and the principles of the Madrid peace conference, especially the principle of land for peace. It provides a realistic approach to implementing the vision of the two-state solution.

[Under] the Arab peace initiative, all Arab countries committed themselves to achieve peace, security, recognition, and normalization among all the countries of the region, including Israel. The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdallah bin Abd al-'Aziz, addressed the Israeli public directly when he first proposed the Arab peace initiative at the 2002 Arab Summit in Beirut by saying:

Peace emanates from the heart and mind, and not from the barrel of a cannon, or the exploding warhead of a missile. The time has come for Israel to put its trust in peace after it has gambled on war for decades without success. Israel, and the world, must understand that peace and the retention of the occupied Arab territories are incompatible and impossible to reconcile or achieve.

In Arabic we usually end by saying "May peace be upon you," and this time let me say in addition, "May peace be achieved by you."

G. U.S. SECY. OF STATE CONDOLEEZZA RICE, CLOSING REMARKS TO THE ANNAPOLIS CONFERENCE, 27 NOVEMBER 2007 (EXCERPTS).

Text of the closing remarks can be found on the U.S. State Department Web site at www.state.gov/secretary.

The Annapolis conference, which President Bush called and convened, has been the first Middle East peace event of this kind ever held on U.S. soil. The focus here has been on the obligations not only of the parties, but of the international community to achieve our shared goal of two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.

Meeting those responsibilities is now the urgent work that must proceed immediately after Annapolis. The conference began with the joint announcement by Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas that they will begin negotiations to establish a Palestinian state and to achieve Israeli-Palestinian peace with the goal of concluding an agreement by the end of the year 2008. President Bush

has invited them both to the White House tomorrow to inaugurate those negotiations, and the two sides have agreed that they will return to the region and meet on 12 December to continue the process.

The parties also agreed to immediate implementation of the road map to improve conditions on the ground for both sides and to lay the foundations for a two-state solution. In their negotiations, the parties will address all of the core issues, including borders and refugees, security, water, settlements, and Jerusalem. This is an incredibly significant achievement for them to agree to do this, because meaningful discussions on core issues have not been held in seven years. To be sure, the issues to be resolved between the parties are very challenging. If they were not, peace would have been made a long time ago. But difficult to resolve does not mean impossible to resolve, especially with constructive engagement from regional states and the international community that we witnessed here today.

I want to applaud those attendees at today's conference who shared their views seriously and soberly, not always agreeing, but seeking to build understanding through discussion and dialogue. In addition to members of the Quartet, we also heard very important comments today from the foreign minister of Saudi Arabia, the current president of the Arab League. He reaffirmed the goal of the Arab League peace initiative, of reconciliation not only between Israelis and Palestinians, but between Israel and the larger Arab world. And although the focus of today's conference was, of course, on the Israeli-Palestinian peace, there was a discussion of steps that could lead to a comprehensive peace, including comments by the Syrian and Lebanese representatives.

With Annapolis behind us, we will now focus urgently on the next steps that are necessary from the international community. This will be one of the topics that we will discuss in upcoming meetings with our Quartet partners, the first of which will be held on or around 17 December. On or around that same day, the French government will host a donors conference in Paris to support Palestinian reform and institution-building. We heard today from former Prime Minister Tony Blair, Palestinian Prime Minister Fayyad, and Defense Minister Barak about this important work.

This conference will be an essential opportunity for the international community to pledge tangible and generous assistance to the economic development of Palestinian society and to provide maximal resources for the Palestinian Authority's program of institutional building in preparation for statehood. We expect broad international attendance at this meeting, and I want to thank the French government for its willingness to organize the conference.

The Annapolis conference has thus been the beginning, not the end, of a new, serious, and substantive effort to achieve peace in the Middle East. This work will be hard. It involves risks and sacrifices for all concerned. But today's events have demonstrated unambiguously that the international community will fully support the path the parties have chosen. President Bush and I have pledged the unwavering support of the United States to realize this goal. Peace between Israelis and Palestinians is a national interest for the United States, and

we now have a real opportunity to make progress. Success is vital for securing a future of peace, freedom, and opportunity in the Middle East, and no one believes that failure is an option. We must succeed. The parties today showed their strong commitment that they intend to do so.

**H. ISRAELI PM EHUD OLMERT, CABINET REPORT ON ANNAPOLIS, 2
DECEMBER 2007 (EXCERPTS).**

Text of the cabinet briefing can be found on the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs Web site at www.mfa.gov.il.

There is no doubt that this was a positive meeting that will enable the negotiations process between us and the Palestinians to move forward.

As was communicated in the joint statement that has been placed before the government and which was agreed on by us and the Palestinian Authority and recognized by the U.S. president, an effort will be made to hold accelerated negotiations in the hope that it will be possible to conclude them in 2008; however, there is no commitment to a specific timetable regarding these negotiations.

The assumption is that the two sides will enter negotiations with the intention of making every effort to move them forward. The most important thing in the joint statement—and this is what Foreign Minister Livni, who led our team, insisted upon, and we, of course, agreed to—is that any future arrangement and agreement will be operationally subject to fulfilling all of the road map commitments, including all of its stages and outlines. In other words, Israel will not have to carry out any commitment stemming from the agreement before all of the road map commitments are met.

I think that this is very important and assures the security component, which is, in our view, and in any eventuality and under any condition, the most important issue that we are dealing with. The very fact of the meeting—that so many Arab countries attended, even those that have no diplomatic relations with Israel and have never recognized us—this framework that was completely linked to a possible peace settlement between us and the Palestinians was, in our view, important, created the proper atmosphere, and will provide the momentum that we believe must be applied in order begin substantive negotiations.

By the way, one of the main issues on the meeting's agenda was the need for Arab countries to normalize relations with the State of Israel, the importance of which was recognized not as a future matter but which must begin right now.

**I. ISRAELI FM TZIPI LIVNI, CABINET REPORT ON ANNAPOLIS, 2
DECEMBER 2007 (EXCERPTS).**

Text of the cabinet briefing can be found on the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs Web site at www.mfa.gov.il.

Last week was a good week for Israel, and we succeeded in meeting the goals we set for ourselves regarding the peace process. The text of the Annapolis joint understanding contains several key issues regarding the peace process on which we insisted until the very last minute. Several points which were not included in the document, which I will enumerate, are no less important than those that were included.

1. The preeminence of road map implementation: Our implementation of the agreements will be conditional on an examination of actual implementation on the ground of the first phase of the road map. This is a principle on which I insisted throughout the talks, and an important element upon which the document was based.

2. Israel's hands will not be tied: There will be no agreement on core issues at this early stage, no inclusion of issues problematic for Israel within the framework of the negotiations—such as the Arab League initiative, which includes some issues that are awkward for us—and Israel will not be bound to a timetable. We want to negotiate—launching negotiations is in our interest—and we want to conclude the negotiations as soon as possible, but we did not commit ourselves to a timetable that will bring direct international pressure to bear on Israel. It was not easy to achieve this, but we insisted.

3. No international involvement throughout the process: We made it emphatically clear that the entire dialogue must be bilateral. It was important for us to make it clear that from now on, the negotiations will be on the bilateral track, with no direct involvement of the international community.

Another important subject that found expression in Annapolis was the participation of the Arab countries, as part of the emerging struggle between moderates and extremists. The participation of the Arab countries at the foreign minister level, as well as their moderate demeanor, is not to be taken lightly.

In my discussions with Arab leaders at the conference and in my speeches, I made it clear to them that it is not Israel who requires their support, but rather the moderate Arab leaders. It is up to them to create an atmosphere that does not equate speaking to Israel with treason to the Arab cause, and to make it clear that there are additional Arab bodies that support the dialogue. If you wait for the end of the process, you will lose the opportunity and the ability to influence and bring about change, and you will lose relevance with both the moderates and extremists.

The next test will be the donors conference in Paris. There we will see if they will continue with the dynamic created in Annapolis—in relation to the Palestinians as well as to Israel.

Annapolis was also a success in that it was made clear to everyone that negotiations do not limit Israel's freedom to act on security issues. From Israel's point of view, the road map is the minimum basic demand. Security arrangements will also be part of the ongoing talks and serve as the basis for our positions.

To summarize, the meeting and resulting joint understanding advanced Israel's standing and promoted Israeli interests with the Palestinians, the Arab countries, and the entire world.