

PRESS POINTS FOR THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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QUARTET PRESS CONFERENCE IN BERLIN, 21 FEBRUARY 2007

[On questions regarding the Mecca Agreement and Quartet position on a possible National Unity Government]

- The Quartet had a very full discussion today about the Mecca Agreement and the ongoing efforts to form a National Unity Government.
- The Mecca agreement came at a very important time in calming down the internal Palestinian situation.
- The agreement also marked a welcome Arab involvement in efforts to promote calm and moderation in the region.
- Mecca was a very important step, but we are now waiting to see how the agreement is implemented.
- Obviously, we would like to see a government that is committed to the basic principles that are indicated in Quartet statements. We are all clearly committed to that position.
- We don't actually have a national unity government yet, so it is a little bit premature to say what we will and will not do once it is in place.
- We will be watching any new government's words and its actions very carefully, particularly related to taking action against violence and facilitating prisoner releases.
- My desire would be to encourage any positive evolution that we may be seeing and try to push it further.
- Once we see what sort of a government we are dealing with, we will individually and collectively decide how to proceed.

[On questions relating to Secretary Rice's initiative]

- I warmly welcome Secretary Rice's initiative. The active engagement of the United States in the peace process is very important, and we thank Secretary Rice for her readiness to keep going back to the region to pursue this effort.
- Last Monday's meeting was a very important first step at a very delicate time, and it reaffirmed the international community's determination to pursue the political process and ensure that the parties maintain dialogue with each other.
- We had a very good discussion today about how the Quartet can be actively engaged in supporting efforts to advance the political dialogue. What I would like to see is a process of dialogue developing that focuses on the political horizon and how to achieve it.

[On questions related to aid issues]

- We had a very full discussion about the range of issues related to international assistance to the Palestinians.
- Our goal must be to preserve Palestinian institutions, revive the Palestinian economy, and support any political process.
- I want to thank the European Commission for the ideas it is developing in this respect. Exactly how we proceed will depend on what happens on the political front.
- It is also very important to keep pressing for implementation of the Agreement on Movement and Access, which is the key to reviving the Palestinian economy.
- In the meantime, the UN is continuing its efforts to deliver life-sustaining assistance to the Palestinian people.