

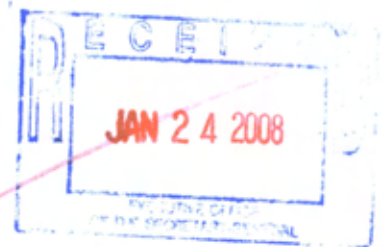
United Nations



Nations Unies

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR



DATE: 24 January 2008

TO: Mr. Vijay Nambiar

A: Chef de Cabinet

Executive Office of the Secretary-General

REFERENCE:

THROUGH:

S/C DE:

FROM: *H. Heilmann*
Horst Heilmann

DE: Director

Security Council Affairs Division
Department of Political Affairs

SUBJECT: Security Council: Report on Activities

OBJET:

Attached please find, for the attention of the Secretary-General, a note on the proceedings of the Security Council on Wednesday, 23 January 2008 (p.m.).

cc: Mr. Pascoe
Mr. Menkerios



PROCEEDINGS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Wednesday, 23 January 2008 (p.m.)

INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President drew members' attention to the revised text of a draft PRST on the humanitarian situation in Gaza, which had been worked out at an expert-level meeting this morning (Attachment).

Most delegations expressed support for the revised text, praising it as more balanced than the initial draft. The Russian Federation and Burkina Faso welcomed the inclusion of the call to cease the firing of rockets into Israeli territory. Italy suggested that the last paragraph (on all acts of violence including rocket attacks) should be moved between the second and third paragraphs. South Africa proposed to delete the word "recent" in the first sentence of the last paragraph.

Panama and Belgium, supported by others, reiterated the need to adopt a statement as soon as possible in light of the fragile and fluid situation. The case in point, the Russian Federation and Libya noted, were the ominous developments at the border between Egypt and the Gaza Strip, which might well worsen the already "extremely volatile situation". Ambassador Ettalhi stated that the Egyptian Ambassador had informed him that some 350,000 Palestinians had already crossed the border into Egypt. At this juncture, many delegations expressed their readiness to continue consultations with a view to accomplishing a consensus text. While open for further amendments, China and the United Kingdom underlined the need to keep the text as simple as possible.

However, the United States repeated his deep scepticism over, if not outright rejection of, the possibility that the Council could attain a consensus text any time soon. Ambassador Wolff clearly stated that his delegation would not agree on a text today, as he needed instructions from a "very high level" in Washington. He added that the US Secretary of State was in a "different time zone" now. At the same time, he stressed that this did not mean that the US was not interested in any statement or any undertaking by the Council on the matter. Rather, he explained that his delegation had a "slightly different perspective" than other members, due to the "unique role" the US was playing, i.e., the Middle East Conference in Annapolis, the recent visit of President Bush to the region and the ongoing US contacts with all parties. He recalled in this context the

scepticism he had expressed after yesterday's debate over the merits of adopting a statement. He reiterated that the situation in Gaza should not be looked at in isolation, and that the Council must know how to articulate its voice on the "broader issues". The current attempt to issue a statement, he noted, seemed to obscure, if not diminish, "what are the real problems here". Those problems included the "coup d'état" by Hamas against the legitimate Palestinian government, which the Council had never addressed, and the firing of rockets against Israel, which had continued ever since the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza.

In view of the above, the President suggested that the Council convene another round of informal consultations at 11 am tomorrow to continue its discussion of the draft PRST.

Other matters

Non-proliferation (Iran): Citing media reports that the "P5 Plus One" had agreed on a new draft resolution on Iran, South Africa pleaded to the P5 to provide the elected members with the text as soon as possible so that they would have sufficient time to consult their capitals. Ambassador Kumalo stated (half-jokingly) that he anticipated another "déjà vu", in which the P5 "forced" the elected members to act on their draft resolution in a rush. A similar concern was expressed by Indonesia.

France responded by stating that as a co-sponsor of the envisaged draft, his delegation understood Ambassador Kumalo's concerns and agreed on the need for the elected members to have sufficient time to consider the draft resolution. He stated that the co-sponsors would introduce the draft resolution "in a few days". He suggested that the draft should first be discussed at the expert level.

Kiyotaka Kawabata/Xiaoning Huang
SCSB/SCAD/23 January 2008

Draft PRST on the Middle East.

The Security Council expresses deep concern about the steep deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip due to the closure of all of the Gaza Strip's border crossings, and the recent decision by the Israeli Government to reduce fuel supplies, to cut off electrical power, and to prevent the delivery of food and medical supplies to the Gaza Strip. The Security Council notes Israel's decision to suspend the closure of the crossing points and calls for it to be fully implemented.

The Security Council calls upon Israel to abide by its obligations under international law, including humanitarian and human rights law towards the Palestinian civilian population in the Gaza Strip. In this context, it calls upon Israel to ensure unhindered access for humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people to alleviate the situation, and to open the border crossing to facilitate the passage of imports and exports and access of humanitarian workers to the Gaza Strip.

The Security Council welcomes the proposal made by the Palestinian Authority to assume responsibility for the Palestinian side of the Gaza Strip border crossing points.

The Security Council calls on the international community to continue to provide emergency and humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip to meet their dire humanitarian needs.

The Security Council also expresses its deep concern about the recent violence affecting Gaza and communities in Southern Israel. The Council calls on all parties to immediately cease all acts of violence including the firing of rockets into Israeli territory and all activities which are contrary to international law and endanger civilians.