



Mission permanente d'Israël
auprès de l'Office des Nations Unies
et des Organisations Internationales à Genève

משלחת ישראל
ליד משרד האומות המאוחדות
והארגונים הבינלאומיים בג'נבה

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Mr. President,

I do not have many substantive remarks on the report that has been presented today. The Mission has been completed, recommendations have been made, and there is no dearth of eager commentators, all of whom will speak at great length in the hours to come. The one issue I would like to flag at the outset is Israel's concern that the Mission appears to have legitimized the iron-fisted control that the Hamas terrorist organization holds over the Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip. It is not clear to me whether such action is appropriate by a representative from the Quartet. Hamas has forcefully repeated time and time again that they have no interest in supporting the Road Map to peace, as endorsed by the UN. What seems clear, however, is that such legitimization is not in the interest of Israelis, Palestinians, or those who seek to support the peace process. However, I will let my Palestinian colleague speak on his own behalf in this regard.

Mr. President,

It is the Peace Process to which I would like to devote the majority of my remarks today. In a little over two months' time, we will mark one year since this long-dormant process was revived at the Annapolis conference. Although there is no lack of skeptics, I can speak authoritatively as to just how much progress has been made. Both Israel and its Palestinian partners, led by President Abbas, have publicly committed themselves to reaching a just solution, based on the idea of two nation-states, living side by side in peace and security. This is a promise we have made to our own citizens, and one which we do not have the option of leaving unfulfilled. The question can no longer be about who is "more right" or "less wrong," as circular and self-serving debates do nothing to alleviate the suffering of Israeli and Palestinian civilians. Rather, the questions—and answers—must be more concrete: *when* will peace be achieved? And *how*? I am not naïve, and don't believe that finding a just solution is easy – but it is imperative.

As is stated in Israel's Declaration of Independence, and repeated by Foreign Minister Livni at Annapolis, (quote) "our hands are still stretched out in peace to the entire Arab and Muslim world, without exception" (end quote). Along the way, there will be speed bumps. There will be terrorist attacks and military operations and lamentable, regrettable civilian deaths. Although it is easy to forget what happens halfway around the world, there have been five major attacks in Jerusalem this year alone. A Kassam rocket fired from Gaza hit the outskirts of a Sderot neighborhood just four days ago. What is not easy is trying to explain to Israeli citizens that the international community doesn't believe such attacks should provoke Israel into action, that we are expected to sit on our hands and sacrifice our citizens for the greater good. Nevertheless, we remain committed to the peace process, to the renewed hope that blossomed at Annapolis.

Mr. President,

Such hope is not without foundation. Such hope leads to remarkable breakthroughs, like the Camp David accords, which 30 years ago today marked an astonishing breakthrough in Israeli-Arab relations, leading to the signing of a historic peace agreement between Israel and Egypt. This month also marks 15 years since the Oslo Accords, which established the Palestinian

Authority, Palestinian self-rule and lay the groundwork for peace between Israel and the Palestinians. Thus, we cannot discount the importance of what hope and perseverance can eventually achieve.

Mr. President,

The report presented today will take its place in the vast library of UN reports on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The resolution that it will spawn will take its place on the lost-list of one-sided resolutions that this Council has passed against Israel so far. In my opinion, neither one will be later remembered for having significantly contributed to the Peace Process between Israel and the Palestinians. Thus, I'll leave the commentary to others, and focus my energy on hope for a better future—both here in the Council and in our region at large.

Thank you.