

Minutes from Security Session
Post Annapolis
Thursday, 28th February 2008, 5:30pm
Office of Ms. Tzipi Livni, Tel Aviv

Attendees:

Palestinian

- Ahmed Querei (AA)
- Dr. Saeb Erekat (SE)
- Brig. Gen. Hazem Atallah (HA)
- Salah el-Alayan (SA)
- Rami Dajani (RD)

Israeli

- FM Tzipi Livni (TL)
- Gen. (ret.) Amos Gilad (AG)
- Tal Becker ? (TB)
- Udi Dekel (UD)

Meeting Summary (*not verbatim*):

TL:

- [On Gaza] If rocket attacks continue, more will be killed. We were forced to leave Gaza, but maybe will have to go back. Our public is demanding we do something about the situation.
- How does Gaza affect the West Bank street?

AA:

- People are worried: Where will this lead? But Hamas does not have a problem with it.

TL:

- For them it's resistance ... so giving them more power?

AA:

- Steadfastness – resistance. All this is promoted by TV channels, and stories of conspiracies against them.

TL:

- This [present situation] is going to be continued. Effectiveness of measures is not the question. Some will need to be taken into consideration, but impossible to just do nothing and hope that nothing happens.

AA:

- Are you ready for a real ceasefire?

TL:

- Hamas will strengthen and build its forces more. Speaking openly, what we do in Gaza is because they target Israel. They know the equation. Once they stop we stop and they know it. When there is quiet, they build up power. So we need not only to stop the rockets but also smuggling of weapons. Negotiating with Hamas strengthens them and weakens you.

AA:

- But to continue with this situation?

AG:

- Negotiating with “Hamastan” will harm both of us. They will continue smuggling military and terror, building power.
- Even if we accept ceasefire, it cannot include West Bank because we need freedom to act to prevent suicide attacks.
- Rockets are aimed not only to murder, but also to terrorize – so even one is not acceptable.
- Hizbollah is involved in Gaza, and Egypt is doing what it is doing. They are sensitive to Muslim Brotherhood at home so they are feeding the monster. There is coordination with Egyptian government officials – not only corruption. They are riding the tiger but the tiger bites. When Aljazeera reported everyone cheered against the great Egypt.

AA:

- But this is like a children’s game – attacks and counterattacks.

AG:

- But we have stopped a spectacular act of terror. We are trying our best not to hurt civilians, using better technology.
- Hamas is not only a terror organization, they are using prisons, torture. They want to establish Hamastan and extend it to the West Bank.

TL:

- What are Hamas’ parameters for success in Gaza?

AA:

- Steadfastness in the face of the occupier with no peace process working. They invest in events like massing at the border and demonstrations when people are killed. They know how to use this.

SE:

- Yesterday I asked a question about *tahdi’a*. We need to stop the killing on both sides. Sure that Hamas won’t respond. The idea was to bring Omar Suleiman here to work on a complete ceasefire. Now he is not coming because of events.

- The major problems on a regional scale, between Iran and Europe play a role. Arab summit may not be held. Situation with Syria and Iran precludes attack in the North. Only options are inside Lebanon and from Gaza.

AG:

- Regarding Omar Suleiman, maybe he delayed because he is afraid we will attack while he is here. It will hurt him – would look like collaborator. It is significant that Hamas can delay visit of Egypt's Number Two.

AA:

- We are here to discuss the future: security after establishment of a Palestinian state – not the present.

AG:

- But we are inspired by the present... to understand the future.

TL:

- One way or another we have to address the situation in Gaza.

SE:

- You don't need to worry about Gaza in this discussion. You are protected by Annapolis. Implementation is subject to ...

TL:

- Yes

AG:

- You find a solution in international force, but we believe in partnership between us in security, as for example we have with Jordan. Such partnership cannot exist without reliable security forces. There are two main lessons from the past: the Jordan Valley in the 1970s, and the Philadelphi corridor in hands of Palestinians.
- It is difficult to understand why Egyptians are acting this way now – supporting strategic threats to the peace camp. They need to manage Hamas, together with Muslim Brotherhood, these are their strategic rivals with agenda to radicalize and destabilize and take over the region. So the Egyptians conclude to live with the threat by feeding the monster with weapons.
- Situation in Gaza is changing constantly because Iran is investing heavily. Iran has a new line of product: simple missiles with 17km range that are easy to assemble (they come in 4 parts). These will widen the belt of terror, so the GoI won't tolerate it. Like in the Jordan Valley in the 70s, open to all gangs of terror.

HA:

- They are primitive home-made rockets.

AG:

- No. The range is most important. Assembled not home-made.

- Jordanians almost lost the kingdom... you know well that in Jordan things can change quickly. Jordan needs a stable cooperative counterpart on the western side.
- You ask to take control. This will be problematic for Israel – to give it to you or an international force. International force lacks both intelligence and capabilities – these are not parades in Rome. They need to be able to investigate, arrest, run courts, which runs well in Jordan. But Jordan may not be able to continue with it if situation changes dramatically on the western side..

TL:

- Question is how can we keep the same effectiveness under new arrangements ...

AG:

- It [Jordan Valley] is one security entity as we witnessed in the 70s.

AA:

- Times are different now.

AG:

- Security is the same.
- Our assessment is that Iran is eager to open channels: through Hizbollah to Gaza, and through southern Iraq to Jordan and the West Bank. They have established infrastructure in south of Iraq. In Jordan it is difficult because it is strong, but still contacts are developing. So we need to prepare for these threats.

TL:

- So we need effectiveness on future Palestinian-Jordanian border, and in Gaza, effectiveness on Egypt border.

AG:

- It is not only Iran, there are others in Iraq – al Qaeda.

AA:

- It is not their priority.

SE:

- So they can put bombs in Amman hotels and not be able to touch you because of border arrangements?

AG:

- [mentions name of suspect as case in point] We gave the name to Dahlan and he refused to act. So we took him by force. Al Qaeda is eager to penetrate. Dughmush are their representatives ... Jabal Hilal. They try in Jordan – if there is no sense of deterrence they will keep trying.

TL:

- So at the crossings, you need effective supervision of what and who is coming and going. You don't want Al Qaeda coming.

AA:

- This is our responsibility.

AG:

- Cooperation is needed and should be based on real criteria and real security. Now we don't have that. Your agencies are penetrated. If present capabilities continue ...

AA:

- Please think differently. Situation will be different after end of the occupation. Right now everyone is suffering. In the future we can deal with each other as equals.
- But if you continue to think of tomorrow like today, we won't be able to agree.
- So we need a strong agreement with strong support, respect and implementation.
- We have no objection to having a third party to give you confidence, and we will build our own strong police, with mechanisms to be supported.
- If you maintain arrangements that keeps it like the occupation, this will create problems, for example if you control our crossings.
- The situation today is different from 20 years ago. Threats are more sophisticated. You can easily fire missiles from Tehran.

HA:

- In a future independent state, people will have something to protect and die for – they will have to protect their dream.

TL:

- We need a prescription, which like any medicine, is not fool-proof and will have some negative side effects. Like when you treat a patient, you expect side effects.
- So some of the things we discuss can affect the feeling that you describe. But we need efficiency, while respecting your need for freedom and dignity. On the other hand, some things we need because we cannot just rely on people's perception.
- I was optimistic during the disengagement. I remember the discussions with Wolfensohn on greenhouses, infrastructure, prosperity etc. Instead we got a slap – all of us – so I am trying to learn from the past.
- We have certain needs. Maybe in the future they won't be needed. It is problematic because there is a period of time before the creation of the state (which we all support), but the situation will not change the day after.
- Some Palestinians hate us, and maybe they have reasons.
- Effectiveness of your forces now is not reliable
- We can give list [unclear]. AG will address this.. Some aspects you will say this affects independence and sovereignty but this is a question of feeling – the difference between what is agreed and what is forced.

- I know the importance of symbols and can think of ways of doing what is needed without affecting the symbols.
- Some of these parameters can also be removed after the creation of the state – they are transitional arrangements.
- You may say this is putting us in a vicious cycle – of anger and mistrust, but let's refer to each need and see how problematic it is.
- On international forces: Israel does not have an answer yet, but we know they are not effective and don't want to have a situation of another war.

AA:

- Why do you say they are not effective?

TL:

- Europeans are not going to come the Middle East to die for our peace.

AA:

- They have been effective elsewhere – in Bosnia for example.

TL:

- We can talk about air strikes ...

AA:

- Who gave independence to Kosovo?

SE:

- [To TL] Your assumptions are not true – they are not objective and tested against reality. Your 'truth' is that failure in Gaza was because of us. It was unilateralism that destroyed us – it was the Israeli mistakes. But you don't admit your mistakes. You blame me for everything.

TL:

- Unfortunately, I blame myself ... AG said we need cooperation and I agree ...

AG:

- Not exactly. I said cooperation between reliable, effective, credible partner, but right now we don't consider you a partner.

SE:

- We are speaking about the future. We have Dayton, EU BAM and others helping us improve performance. We are trying to get there. However, I know that you will protect yourself and won't need me to protect you.
- But, don't make assumptions about Jordan and security. If your assumption is that we failed Gaza so you can't trust us in the West Bank, that you don't want to gamble with Jordan ...

TL:

- Since you are not good to take care of security now, the West Bank can be a threat to me. So we need to take measures; we can do them before statehood.
- Since I believe that at the end of the day the government on the other side needs to be effective, legitimate and able to fight terror (which is lacking in the region – Gaza, Lebanon) we need to address this issue.
- We can work in different ways: for example, here are parameters on what you are strong enough or not to do now, or, put on the table issues that can help the process. We are willing to take some risk.
- So, I said “no army” – a demilitarized state. You said “internal security”

AA:

- We are willing to consider limited arms.

SE:

- This is a contradiction. Why did we differentiate between the Road Map and permanent status. You have a guarantee that building the forces comes before implementation. So don't tell me at the same time to put parameters.

TL:

- You were at Camp David. Do you expect the state to have an army?

SE:

- No.

TL:

- Without these measures we cannot afford another state between Jordan.

AA:

- It is not clear what we are talking about. We are supposed to be discussing the future concept, this is an open discussion – no agenda. This is important for both sides. We both agree that we need a comprehensive and detailed agreement satisfactory to both. So, let us ask what are the issues. We can explore these issues. AG and HA and others can do this.

TL:

- They can have a meeting next week ...

AA:

- Then come back. [internal discussion between TL and AG]

AG:

- No problem to have the meeting, but since SE thinks there is contradiction it is better to discuss here before making a list.

AA:

- Give me titles. What do you want? Enough with general concept.

TL:

- Next week's meeting will have concrete expression of the concepts and will explore disagreements, but AG still feels we need to discuss the concepts here.
- [To HA] You will share your vision. I hope you don't believe that we will just have borders ... and that's it.

HA:

- No. These misunderstandings cause problems. I will talk about the past before the future.
- Before the intifada, the forces worked well. The officers had discipline, they had a reason to work well.

TL:

- But can you explain Gaza? I can't understand ... the mood of the people. We left. How come they continue to fight? It's not about whether there was coordination – which is something technical.

HA:

- Hamas used the withdrawal for propaganda: signs comparing results of 10 years of negotiations with those of struggle.

TL:

- I heard this and used this point internally to argue that unilateralism was a mistake.

HA:

- At the same time, I cannot forget what happened to the security forces during the intifada. They were destroyed. It was clear until then that the fight was against Hamas and Jihad. With Israeli attacks came infiltration of the services by Hamas.
- We are now cleaning the services. It's a campaign for the future. We are recruiting and training young people who will work according to the law – to maintain law and order.

TL:

- We can take care of our security but do not want a failed state next to us. How do you see the role of the international force? To help with the construction?

HA:

- The internationals are already doing this. It is moving slowly but we are training in Jordan with help of Dayton. Third party can definitely help building the forces.

TL:

- Regarding Philadelphi – whether or not it was a mistake to leave it. If indeed it was a mistake, since Egypt is not effective like Jordan, can our agreement provide for Israeli presence in Philadelphi?

AA:

- Palestine will be independent but can coordinate. Agreement should reflect that with a commitment to security.
- Therefore regarding parameters I believe security is part of regional vision. Other neighbours don't have a problem -- regional security is interconnected.

TL:

- What is the idea of working with Gen. Dayton?

HA:

- Building up and improving the NSF, police and Presidential Guard.

TL:

- What is their role?

HA:

- Law enforcement. Problem was due to delays, but now it is going well. We are building new units and carrying out the program of retirement, the target being a young organization. So right now, if we want to deploy 2 battalions, the capacity is becoming available with newly trained people. There are 4 more battalions to be completed.
- At the same time EU COPSS is training the police force.
- Let me talk about the future shape of Palestinian security.

TL:

- So you've talked about the present, now the future.

HA:

- Plan to develop the security services is based on a defensive security strategy. The main function will be to protect the population and the territory.

TL:

- What does territory mean?

AA:

- Palestine – 67 borders.

HA:

- Protection requires knowing where the borders are first ... and preventing smuggling and infiltration.

TL:

- This means an army.

HA:

- No. It can be done in different ways. Army is only one way. Border guards and international force are other ways.

TL:

- Guarding from what?

HA:

- From everything, like infiltration – like the problem in Gaza now. We are talking about sovereignty. Every country needs to protect its borders.
- Another function of the security forces will be maintaining law and order and carrying out law enforcement duties.
- This is something we are testing ourselves with right now in Nablus – next it will be Hebron.
- Again functions are to defend borders and to fight crime and terrorism.

TL:

- We have an understanding of threats, so when you talk about borders, smuggling is fine, but external threats .. are you talking about a foreign army? If it is to defend against foreign attacks, then we have a big gap.

HA:

- No one is thinking of building an army to fight Israel. We are talking about something more than police and less than an army.

TL:

- This is something you can discuss later with AG.

AA:

- I'm afraid we are going into details that may not be necessary in a peace agreement.
- You need to say a strong police...

TL:

- Demilitarized state.

HA:

- There is no such thing. There is no example of it anywhere in the world. There are demilitarized zones, not states.

TL:

- We live in a small space.

SE:

- So Palestine will be a buffer zone? A demilitarized zone?

HA:

- We need strong security forces, as AA said. With enough ability to carry out their functions.
- Now we have serious problems just bringing in bullet proof vests.
- Security forces need appropriate weapons. So for example, not tanks, but armoured scout cars.

AA:

- Not demilitarized but limited.

TL:

- [discusses “limited” with AG] “Limited” seems to be no tanks, no airforce, no artillery, no missiles...

AG:

- Demilitarization is a meaningful term. It is not an NSU term. Limited: *Mahdud*. Regarding NSF the 1995 Interim Agreement limited them to 45,000. Now after fall of Saddam, may seem like less threat, but including Iran in the equation, the chances of destabilization, nuclear threat have increased. Now there is Shiite-stan in south Iraq, Hizbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza. Hostile military coalitions are possible – given geographic data.
- So it is understood that demilitarization must be a pillar, especially as it related to hostile alliances.

HA:

- Can any country maintain security by itself without any regional cooperation?

AG:

- Consider the Dayton plan. It took two years to send one battalion to one country with real training. Egypt training was a real problem.

HA:

- That was a shame.

SE:

- There is an Arabic proverb: You don’t cut the snake’s tail, rather you cut the head.

AG:

- About Dayton: it is a good idea. We should test it. We are watching carefully, testing the future by beginning in the present.

HA:

- Then why don’t you help us?

AG:

- We have facilitated Dayton’s work.

HA:

- There are still problems – for example with funding.

AG:

- You want money from us?

TL:

- You got 7 billion in Paris.

HA:

- That is all on paper.

AG:

- Regarding the future, there is the possibility of hostile alliances – we need demilitarization and no hostile alliances.

AA:

- You want a Palestinian state or a military base ...

TL:

- So next week you [HA and AG] meet. Sunday or Monday?
- [To HA] This work is important. As decision-makers we have problems that are historical. Our publics are not supportive because of risks to our security. Some risks we can take, but some things we must address.