
MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: Blair: Tony Blair (TB)
Rob Danine (RD)
Pals: Salam Fayyad (SF)
Nizar Farsakh, NSU

Subject: Follow up of projects

Date: Thursday May 8, 2008; 1:15 – 2:45 pm

Location: PMO

Summary:

- SF & TB discussed how Jenin was going very well and that Barak himself had noted that to Rice without any qualifications. Therefore, SF is optimistic that the Jenin example can be followed in other areas. TB believes there is a change in Israeli mindset after Jenin even if people don't perceive that change yet. SF stressed on the need for Israel to change its behavior and hopes that the Jenin example will help achieve that.
- Barak meeting was good in that it was frank and Barak was committal. Barak said he will look into the incident in which Israeli troops entered Jenin last week and that there will be no incursions without specific and direct threat.
- On Palestinians from Israel being allowed to come to Jenin, SF said that people, not with their own cars, will be allowed in going to happen soon but without announcements so as not to put pressure on GoI. Apparently Livni was not comfortable with the idea.
- TB is trying to get agricultural workers permission to take their cars to the Jordan valley; 150 or so to begin with and then build on that. SF said these small things help but only if they are a start for more easing of restrictions.
- Work is going ahead on the Jalame industrial estate. TB confirmed that Israel has no issues with that. He also added that the Israelis have given approval for a school in Area C in that area.
- Barak promised to freeze house demolitions but said he his mandate does not extend to Jerusalem.
- TB put forward to the Israelis a set of checkpoints to lift. Objective is not the number of checkpoints but the actual improvement of movement. He believes the Israelis are willing to approach this in a phased manner. He asked if it is fine by SF to have this as part of a package that Israel delivers. SF said that the PA will not be involved in this but encouraged TB to pursue it with Israel.

- TB's idea has for elements:
 1. Economic projects
 2. Projects in area C
 3. The checkpoints
 4. Jenin specifically
- On the Bethlehem conference TB cautioned that on the one hand investors should be told frankly of the challenges but on the other hand they should be encouraged to invest. Therefore, the message should be that this is a first step and that great opportunities lie ahead. Once it starts gaining momentum, TB believes Israel will internalize this fact and facilitate access and investments.
- On Gaza, SF is going to Egypt to discuss ways of easing the situation. TB mentioned that it is important that either convince Hamas of a period of calm so that West Bank gets opportunity to improve or make clear that Hamas received a reasonable offer that they turned down. SF noted that with the siege it is difficult to change the situation. Therefore, if the passages are open under PA control that will put a wedge between Hamas and the people of Gaza and will put pressure on Hamas.