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Israel-Palestinians >> Additional Documents >> Partners in Peace Reaffirm Support for Mid-East Peace Process

Partners in Peace Reaffirm Support for Mid-East Peace Process September 27, 1999

Representatives of regional and international parties gathered in New York on September 24, 1999, as "Partners in Peace" to demonstrate their strong and unwavering support for the Middle East Peace Process.

The participants at the meeting "reaffirmed their belief that the opportunity to achieve comprehensive peace in the Middle East is extremely promising," according to a summary by the Co-Sponsors, released September 24.

The representatives expressed strong support for the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum signed by Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat on September 4, 1999, and for the parties "as they undertake bold and courageous measures to end decades of conflict and create a future of peace."

The participants rededicated themselves to advancing all tracks of the peace process, most importantly the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, and underscored that achievement of a comprehensive peaceful settlement is impossible without the successful conclusion of these tracks. They also expressed the hope that activities under the multilateral track would resume as soon as possible and noted their readiness to exert all necessary efforts to move forward on that track.

The "Partners in Peace" expressed appreciation for the important roles played by the co-sponsors, the United States and the Russian Federation, and key regional leaders who have worked to advance the negotiations, particularly President Mubarak of Egypt and King Abdullah of Jordan. They saluted the important contributions of the European Union, Japan, Canada and Norway, and encouraged all the parties to support enhanced regional cooperation, the multilateral track of the peace process and the Palestinian assistance effort.

Following is the text of the State Department press statement:

(Begin text)

U.S. Department of State
Office of the Spokesman

Press Statement
September 24, 1999

Co-Sponsors' Summary "Partners in Peace" New York, New York, September 24, 1999

Representatives of regional and international parties gathered in New York on September 24, 1999, as "Partners in Peace" to demonstrate their strong and unwavering support for the Middle East Peace Process. They took note of the substantial progress that has been achieved since the Madrid Conference in 1991 and expressed their strong commitment to the achievement of a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace in the Middle East based on UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

The participants at the "Partners in Peace" meeting reaffirmed their belief that the opportunity to achieve comprehensive peace in the Middle East is extremely promising. In this regard, they expressed strong support for the Sharm el -Sheikh Memorandum signed by Israeli Prime Minister Barak and PLO Chairman Arafat on September 4, 1999. They noted the successful implementation of the first elements of the agreement and the resumption of permanent status negotiations on September 13, 1999, exactly six years after the signing of the Israeli-Palestinian Declaration of Principles at the White House in Washington in 1993. The participants at the "Partners in Peace" meeting expressed their support for the parties as they undertake bold and courageous measures to end decades of conflict and create a future of peace. They called for broadening and deepening of progress on all outstanding issues and underlined the need to carry on with the faithful and expeditious implementation of all agreements reached among the parties.

Looking to the future, the participants at the "Partners in Peace" meeting rededicated themselves to advancing all tracks of the peace process. In this regard, they underscored the importance of effective and prompt steps to resume negotiations on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, which are an integral part of the peace process. The participants underscored that achievement of a comprehensive peaceful settlement is impossible without the successful conclusion of these tracks.

The Participants also expressed the hope that activities under the multilateral track would resume as soon as possible. They underscored their readiness to exert all necessary efforts to move forward on that track.

The "Partners in Peace" meeting demonstrated the international community's commitment to support the regional parties as they work to build peace in the Middle East. In this regard, they expressed appreciation for the important roles played by the co-sponsors, the United States and the Russian Federation, and key regional leaders who have worked to advance the negotiations, particularly President Mubarak of Egypt and King Abdullah of Jordan. They saluted the important contributions of the European Union, Japan, Canada and Norway, and encouraged all the parties to support enhanced regional cooperation, the multilateral track of the peace process and the Palestinian assistance effort.

Believing that there is now a real opportunity to achieve an end to the Arab -Israeli conflict through a comprehensive resolution of all outstanding issues, the "Partners in Peace" rededicated themselves to do everything possible to maintain a positive and supportive environment for peacemaking.

(End text)

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