

Joint understanding on negotiations
27 November 2007

The representatives of the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), represented respectively by Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and President Mahmoud Abbas, in his capacity as Chairman of the PLO Executive Committee and President of the Palestinian Authority, have convened in Annapolis, Maryland, under the auspices of President George W. Bush of the United States of America, and with the support of the participants of this international conference, having concluded the following Joint Understanding:

We express our determination to bring an end to bloodshed, suffering and decades of conflict between our peoples, to usher in a new era of peace, based on freedom, security, justice, dignity, respect and mutual recognition, to propagate a culture of peace and non-violence, and to confront terrorism and incitement, whether committed by Palestinians or Israelis.

In furtherance of the goal of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security:

- We agree to immediately launch good faith bilateral negotiations in order to conclude a peace treaty resolving all outstanding issues, including all core issues, without exception, as specified in previous agreements.
- We agree to engage in vigorous, ongoing and continuous negotiations, and shall make every effort to conclude an agreement before the end of 2008.
- For this purpose, a steering committee, led jointly by the head of the delegation of each party, will meet continuously, as agreed.
- The steering committee will develop a joint work plan and establish and oversee the work of negotiations teams to address all issues, to be headed by one lead representative from each party.
- The first session of the steering committee will be held on 12 December 2007.
- President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert will continue to meet on a bi-weekly basis to follow up the negotiations in order to offer all necessary assistance for their advancement.

The parties also commit to immediately implement their respective obligations under the Performance-Based Road Map to a Permanent Two-State Solution to the Israel-Palestinian Conflict, issued by the Quartet on 30 April 2003 (hereinafter, "the Roadmap") and agree to form an American, Palestinian and Israeli mechanism, led by the United States, to follow up on the implementation of the Roadmap. The parties further commit to continue the implementation of the ongoing obligations of the Roadmap until they reach a peace treaty. The United States will monitor and judge the fulfillment of the commitments of both sides of the Roadmap.

Unless otherwise agreed by the parties, implementation of the future peace treaty will be subject to the implementation of the Roadmap, as judged by the United States.

In conclusion, we express our profound appreciation to the President of the United States and his Administration, and to the participants of this international conference, for their support for our bilateral peace process.