

**Relaunching of Israel-Palestinian talks**  
**Statements by US Sec Kerry, Palestinian negotiator Erekat and Justice Min Livni**  
**30 July 2013**

Sec of State Kerry: "We're here today because the Israeli people and the Palestinian people both have leaders willing to heed the call of history, leaders who will stand strong in the face of criticism and are right now for what they know is in their people's best interests".

US Sec Kerry, Palestinian negotiator Erekat and Justice Min Livni at relaunching of negotiations

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SECRETARY KERRY: I'm delighted to stand here – I think it's still morning – it is still – with Minister Tzipi Livni and Dr. Saeb Erekat, both of whom I've had the privilege of knowing for some period of time and enjoyed working with for all of it.

As all of you know, it has taken an awful lot of work and a long time, a lot of time, to reach this new moment of possibility in the pursuit of an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It's taken the leadership of President Obama, who set this process in motion with his historic visit to the region this spring. And then he spoke powerfully about the necessity and possibility of peace, not only to the leaders but also to citizens who overwhelmingly hope for a better future for their children and for their countries, for their peoples.

The President's support for our efforts, including his personal engagement with the parties this morning, has been essential, and I thank him for that. And we had a very positive meeting with the President and the Vice President earlier this morning at the White House. I want to also emphasize that Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas have both demonstrated courageous leadership to bring us here, and I commend them for the tough choices that they made in terms of the politics at home.

I know the path is difficult. There is no shortage of passionate skeptics. But with capable, respected negotiators, like Minister Tzipi Livni and Dr. Saeb Erekat, standing side by side here today and last night sharing an Iftar meal together with all of us, with their efforts, their expertise, and their commitment, I'm convinced that we can get there.

We're here today because the Israeli people and the Palestinian people both have leaders willing to heed the call of history, leaders who will stand strong in the face of criticism and are right now for what they know is in their people's best interests. Their commitment to make tough choices, frankly, should give all of us hope that these negotiations actually have a chance to accomplish something.

I'm pleased to report that in the conversations we've had last night and again today, we've had constructive and positive meetings, both meetings with the United States present and also meetings with the parties by themselves. The parties have agreed to remain engaged in sustained, continuous, and substantive negotiations on the core issues, and they will meet within the next two weeks in either Israel or the Palestinian Territories in order to begin the process of formal negotiation.

The parties have agreed here today that all of the final status issues, all of the core issues, and all other issues are all on the table for negotiation. And they are on the table with one simple goal: a view to ending the conflict, ending the claims. Our objective will be to achieve a final status agreement over the course of the next nine months. The parties also agreed that the two sides will keep the content of the negotiations confidential. The only announcement you will hear about meetings is the one that I just made. And I will be the only one, by agreement, authorized to comment publicly on the talks, in consultation, obviously, with the parties. That means that no one should consider any reports, articles, or other – or even rumors – reliable, unless they come directly from me, and I guarantee you they won't.

The United States will work continuously with both parties as a facilitator every step of the way. We all understand the goal that we're working towards: two states living side by side in peace and security. Two states because two proud peoples each deserve a country to call their own. Two states because the children of both peoples deserve the opportunity to realize their legitimate aspirations in security and in freedom. And two states because the time has come for a lasting peace.

We all appreciate – believe me – we appreciate the challenges ahead. But even as we look down the difficult road that is before us and consider the complicated choices that we face, we cannot lose sight of something that is often forgotten in the Middle East, and that is what awaits everybody with success. We need to actually change the way we think about compromise in order to get to success. Compromise doesn't only mean giving up something or giving something away; reasonable principled compromise in the name of peace means that everybody stands to gain. Each side has a stake in the other's success, and everyone can benefit from the dividends of peace.

We simply wouldn't be standing here if the leaders – President Abbas and Prime Minister Netanyahu – and their designated negotiators and all of us together didn't believe that we could get there. We can envision a day when Palestinians can finally realize their aspirations for a flourishing state of their own, and the groundbreaking economic initiative that we've been working on the with the Quartet and with Tony Blair and others, with the help of the private sector, can help transform the Palestinian economy and build up unprecedented markets and unblocked waves of foreign investment. And we shouldn't forget that the new jobs, the new homes, the new industries that can grow in a new Palestinian state will also benefit Israelis next door, where a vibrant economy will find new partners.

We can also envision a day when Israelis actually can truly live in peace – not just the absence of conflict, but a full and a lasting peace with Arab and Muslim nations, an end once and for all to the pernicious attacks on Israel's legitimacy. Israel and – Israelis and Palestinians both have legitimate security concerns. Our commitment to Israel's security is why President Obama's Administration has done more than any before it to strengthen our unshakeable bond and why General John Allen is on the ground working to ensure Israel's security needs will be met. And I emphasize we have worked very closely with our Palestinian friends to help develop Palestinian security capacity. And we cannot forget that the security of Israel will also benefit Palestinians next door.

The Israeli Government has recognized this, which is why it will be taking in the next days and weeks a number of steps in order to improve conditions in the West Bank and in Gaza. And the Palestinian security forces have recognized this, which is why we

have seen such a dramatic improvement in law and order and such a dramatic decrease in terror attacks originating from the West Bank.

The Israeli and Palestinian people understand their common interests, and that's why they continue to take positive steps on the ground to improve relations between themselves. I also want to point out that the Arab League understands this too, which is why it has reaffirmed the Arab Peace Initiative and provided vital statements of support for this process.

Finally, I'd just say everywhere I go, leaders from around the world understand that they share a stake in this endeavor's success. They all have a role to play, which is why they have continued to contribute to this effort, to advise, to make commitments of support, and to push and advocate and encourage the parties every step of the way. And President Obama and I joined in thanking all of them for their concern and initiative.

So many things are already happening. When somebody tells you that Israelis and Palestinians cannot find common ground or address the issues that divide them, don't believe them. Just look at the things they are doing together and trying to do together. There are many reasons why we need to solve this conflict, but none more important than the security and dignity of the next generations of Israelis and Palestinians, Jews, Muslims, and Christians, and the generations who will follow them and benefit from these negotiations hopefully.

I think everyone involved here believes that we cannot pass along to another generation the responsibility of ending a conflict that is in our power to resolve in our time. They should not be expected to bear that burden, and we should not leave it to them. They should not be expected to bear the pain of continued conflict or perpetual war.

So while I understand the skepticism, I don't share it and I don't think we have time for it. I firmly believe the leaders, the negotiators, and citizens invested in this effort can make peace for one simple reason: because they must. A viable two-state solution is the only way this conflict can end, and there is not much time to achieve it, and there is no other alternative. We all need to be strong in our belief in the possibility of peace, courageous enough to follow through on our faith in it, and audacious enough to achieve what these two peoples have so long aspired to and deserve.

Dr. Erekat.

MR. EREKAT: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Thank you, Minister Livni. On behalf of President Mahmoud Abbas, I would like to extend our deepest appreciation to President Barack Obama and to you, Secretary Kerry, for your relentless efforts and unwavering commitment to achieve a just, comprehensive, lasting peace between Palestinians and Israelis. Palestinians have suffered enough, and no one benefits more from the success of this endeavor more than Palestinians. I am delighted that all final status issues are on the table and will be resolved without any exceptions, and it's time for the Palestinian people to have an independent, sovereign state of their own. It's time for the Palestinian people to have an independent, sovereign state of their own. It's time for the Palestinians to live in peace, freedom, and dignity within their own independent, sovereign state.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Thank you, Minister Livni.

Ms. Tzipi Livni

JUSTICE MINISTER LIVNI: Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Secretary Kerry, on behalf of Prime Minister Netanyahu, the Israeli Government, and the state of Israel for your determination, for not giving up, because you need to know that I think it was our first meeting during this process that you said to me that failure is not an option. And you proved today that failure is not an option. And this is the man, Secretary Kerry, who showed everyone that nothing can stop true believers. And thank you for that.

I also want to thank President Obama for his personal commitment to peace and to Israel's security. The powerful impression left by the President's last visit to Israel still remains in the hearts of the Israeli people. We came here today – Mr. Molho, the Special Envoy of Prime Minister Netanyahu, and myself – after years of stalemate. We came here today from a troubled and changing region. We are hopeful, but we cannot be naive. We cannot afford it in our region. We owe it to our people to do everything, but everything we can for their security and for the hope of peace for future generations.

But it took more than just a plane ticket to be here today. A courageous act of leadership by Prime Minister Netanyahu that was approved by the Israeli Government made this visit here and the beginning of the negotiation possible. We all know that it's not going to be easy. It's going to be hard, with ups and downs. But I can assure you that these negotiations – in these negotiations, it's not our intention to argue about the past, but to create solutions and make decisions for the future.

You know, Saeb, we all spent some time in the negotiations room. We didn't reach dead end in the past, but we didn't complete our mission. And this is something that we need to do now in these negotiations that will be launched today. A new opportunity is being created for us, for all of us, and we cannot afford to waste it. Now, I hope that our meeting today and the negotiations that we have re-launched today will cause, I hope, a spark of hope, even if small, to emerge out of cynicism and pessimism that is so often heard. It is our task to work together so that we can transform that spark of hope into something real and lasting.

And finally, I believe that history is not made by cynics. It is made by realists who are not afraid to dream. And let us be these people. Thank you.

SECRETARY KERRY: Thank you very, very much.