
Donors' conference on the Palestinian Territories (Paris, October 17, 2007)

Joint statement by M. Bernard Kouchner, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, Mr Tony Blair, Quartet special envoy for the Middle East, and Mr Jonas Gahr Støre, Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs

France will host a donors' conference on the Palestinian Territories at the end of the year at the request of President Mahmoud Abbas. Mr. Tony Blair and Norway will co-chair the conference with France: Mr. Tony Blair in his capacity as special representative of the Quartet and Norway as president of the ad hoc liaison committee (AHLIC).

The conference will aim to mobilize donors, following on from the Annapolis conference, and to provide financial and political support to the Palestinian Authority by creating the capacities and the conditions for building a viable state.

The conference will allow Mr. Salam Fayyad to present his program of reforms for the next three years in all areas of State operations, including security.

The conference will also focus on ways of moving forward with regard to the daily lives of the Palestinians and the fundamental elements of a state.

**PARIS DONORS' CONFERENCE
STATEMENTS MADE BY
M. BERNARD KOUCHNER,
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS,
DURING HIS JOINT PRESS BRIEFING
WITH MR TONY BLAIR,
QUARTET SPECIAL ENVOY FOR THE MIDDLE EAST,
AND MR JONAS GAHR STOERE,
NORWEGIAN MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
- EXCERPTS -**

THE MINISTER – We're going to start preparing the conference and we'll have a second meeting with Tony Blair next week in Jerusalem after which we'll be able to issue the invitations.

It is, I believe, a moment of hope, a politically crucial moment. We think what will happen in Annapolis (1) is obviously a first stage (...) but, immediately afterwards, there will have to be action and we'll ensure there is, and we'll also have to monitor it.

ANNAPOLIS CONFERENCE

Q. – President Abbas has just stated that he wouldn't go to the United States if there were no timetable or deadline for the negotiations. Do you think the Palestinians are right to demand such a deadline?

THE MINISTER – Before going to Annapolis – and I hope he goes – I think the Palestinians can indeed demand – as, on their side, the Israelis are doing for different reasons – clarity on all the points so that things don't remain vague. All these difficulties will be resolved as we get closer to the conference. I'm totally convinced that, not in spite of but thanks to these sometimes conflicting demands, we'll move towards a document which both parties will find satisfactory.

PARIS CONFERENCE

Q. – You've told us what the situation is regarding the donor countries' conference; some contacts have perhaps already been established. How have these countries reacted regarding their participation in this conference, given that the Arab countries' positions on the peace conference scheduled by the Americans don't seem very clear?

THE MINISTER – Listen, we haven't yet issued the invitations. We'll do so after the meeting in Jerusalem with Tony Blair. I think we mustn't be pessimistic.

Admittedly, the two conference are extremely closely linked to each other; I don't think there will be a valid donors' conference if the Annapolis conference isn't successful.

There is indeed a need to get clarification on the participation of certain Arab countries and of others in fact. Let me remind you that no one has yet received an invitation for either conference.

So we have time to resolve these problems and I don't doubt that we shall succeed even if there are, of course, still differences of view (...).

I think this is what we call momentum, it's something which is psychologically, historically even politically justified and necessary. It's being created, you'll see, it will succeed./.

(1) US sponsored Middle East conference in Annapolis