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ROADMAP FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE MUST BE BUILT ON PERFORMANCE AND HOPE, SECURITY COUNCIL TOLD

Secretary-General's Representative Gives Briefing on Latest Quartet Action

A new roadmap for peace in the Middle East must not only be based on performance, but also founded on hope, Terje Rød-Larsen, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, told the Security Council this morning.

Briefing the Council on the situation in that region, including the Palestinian question, he said the Quartet principals and their envoys would flesh out the roadmap in the coming days. On Tuesday, 17 September, the Quartet (United Nations, Russian Federation, United States, European Union) held three [meetings](#), including one with five Arab Foreign Ministers, and one with Israeli and Palestinian representatives. The meetings focused on the humanitarian situation, security issues, institutional reform, and the political process, all of which were closely linked.

Mr. Rød-Larsen said members of the Quartet had expressed great concern about the humanitarian situation. Half the Palestinian population now depended on food hand-outs from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) or the World Food Programme (WFP), while malnutrition and water-borne diseases were spreading. Members of the Quartet had underlined to the Israeli delegation the problems of access and movement within the occupied territory and how closures adversely affected Palestinian security training, humanitarian delivery and the implementation of reform. The Quartet pointed out that progress on reform had been uneven at best, although there had been promising signs.

He said the Secretary-General had told the parties to the conflict that in spite of high-level assurances of increased Israeli cooperation with humanitarian agencies, officials of those agencies were reporting only marginal improvements on the ground. The bottom line was that there could be no real progress on the humanitarian front if Israel did not alter its security system, which, while based on entirely legitimate and understandable concerns, was hurting an increasingly significant portion of the Palestinian population.

Members of the Quartet had agreed on a three-phase plan of action for achieving a two-State solution within three years, he said. Since there was such a lack of confidence between the parties, forward movement would be monitored and assessed by a third-party mechanism to be established by the Quartet. An important step could be a declaration of statehood with provisional borders, should the Palestinians opt for that.

Israel must take immediate steps to allow far greater freedom of movement for Palestinians and goods, withdraw from self-rule areas reoccupied since October 2000, end targeted killings and freeze settlement activity, he emphasized. That would be followed by permanent status negotiations and an international conference that would address all tracks of the peace process. It was essential that both parties take action on all subjects — humanitarian, security, reform and the political process.

Turning to the recent escalation in the conflict, Mr. Rød-Larsen said the upsurge of violence in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza included the bombing of a Palestinian school, and Israeli Defence Force (IDF) operations across the West Bank and Gaza. Troops had fired into a crowd of schoolchildren, and there had been two suicide bombings against Israelis. In recent weeks, there had also been widespread arrests by the IDF, assassinations and a tightened regime of closures and curfews.

He said that in the month leading up to 17 September, 56 Palestinians had been killed by Israelis and five Israelis by Palestinians. Nevertheless, there had been a long period without suicide bombings, marked by sustained introspection on the Palestinian side. Today, however, Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat's offices were once again under siege. While reform remained important, with Palestinian legislators awaiting a new Cabinet and many calling for the appointment of a Prime Minister, the security situation of recent days continued to undermine the prospects.

Concerning southern Lebanon, he said a four-month period of tense stability had been shattered on 29 August by a Hezbollah attack on IDF positions in the Shaba farms area. Tensions had also been raised by a looming water crisis. Lebanon had been urged to provide a detailed report on water projects, but no documentation had been received.

Concluding his briefing, Mr. Rød-Larsen stressed the vital importance of improved performance in security and humanitarian delivery by both Israelis and Palestinians. It would be impossible to sustain progress in either field without parallel movement in the political area, he added.

Following the briefing, the Council went into closed consultations on the Middle East.

The formal meeting, which began at 11:16 a.m., adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

*The 4608th, 4609th, 4610th and 4612th meetings were closed.

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