
Berlin, Germany, 21 February 2007 - Secretary-General's press encounter with German Foreign Minister Frank Walter Steinmeier [unofficial transcript]

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SG: Thank you, Minister Steinmeier. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. It is a great pleasure for me to visit Germany again, after my first visit in December last year, but this time in my capacity as Secretary-General of the United Nations.

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And I am very much happy to be part of this Quartet and we will continue to analyze the situation and try to help to encourage this peace process in the Middle East which has very great implications for world peace and security. I assure you of my full support and commitment in working very closely with the European Union as well as all other communities of the international community as Secretary-General of the UN. Thank you very much.

Q: Mr. Secretary-General. What makes you hopeful that this session of the Middle East Quartet will provide, will achieve, some results after almost five more or less unsuccessful years?

SG: Peace and security in the Middle East has been long standing and unresolved. This has great, very serious and important implications for world peace and security, not only the situation in the Middle East. We were encouraged by the recent diplomatic initiatives including the most recent Mecca deal, as well as the trilateral meeting among the United States, Palestinian Authority and Israel, though this process may be very sensitive and may be very difficult because of the very complex nature of the situation. However at this time, it would be crucially important for the international community to encourage this Mecca deal and this ongoing diplomatic initiative in the Middle East. We hope that, through our Quartet meeting this afternoon, we will first be able to analyze the situation of the Mecca deal, as well as the trilateral meeting. We hope to be briefed by Secretary Rice about her meeting with Palestinian and Israeli leaders. I know that this will be again a very difficult process but, this time, what we need to do is to encourage the parties concerned, and participants should try to encourage and try to make the sort of framework to support such kind of peace process.

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