

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

— PART II —

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On 25-26 April 2003—the eve of the formation of a new Palestinian government and the presentation to the parties of the Quartet “Roadmap”—a group of international officials, Israelis and Palestinians convened to address operational aspects of third party intervention in the current conflict. Convened by Yezid Sayigh and Jarat Chopra, this “Experts’ Forum” was hosted in Cambridge, England, by the Programme for Security in International Society at the University of Cambridge Centre of International Studies, and sponsored by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The aim of the discussions was to consider what can and cannot work from a functional perspective, within the context of social and political realities. The meeting explored a range of options and issues affecting the design of any third party international intervention in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The participants included representatives of a number of governments and international organizations and combined local and regional expertise, knowledge of the parties’ positions and experience in complex peace operations, with humanitarian, military and transitional political elements. This mixture of individuals allowed the synthesis of area-specific information, lessons of multi-dimensional missions and official positions to produce comprehensive planning considerations. The following report is a reflection of the issues discussed, and incorporates many of the ideas contributed by the participants. The content is the responsibility of the authors alone.

The “Experts’ Forum” extended the work of an earlier meeting held in the Netherlands in January 2003. The initial results developed are available in a first “Planning Considerations” report on-line at the U.S. Army War College website (<http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usacsl/publications/PCII.pdf>). This earlier document was circulated widely in international planning circles, amongst the parties and their respective communities, as well as to a diverse range of experts and interested observers. While it gleaned some principles for operating effectively and sustainably in the Israeli-Palestinian context, the second report below outlines the latest regional and ground developments in the wake of war in Iraq; identifies further requirements of intervention as required by the parties and the realities of the current situation; considers the current monitoring approach in the “Roadmap”; and assesses the degrees of international commitment available generally for third party involvement.

The conclusion reached by the authors is that there is a clear gap between the minimum threshold of involvement that is required by the ground situation if a third party is to be effective and the current monitoring approach articulated for the “Roadmap.” The level of international commitment of a number of nations to third party involvement is greater than the minimalist baseline in the “Roadmap.” However, it is still short of the needs

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14. ABSTRACT Professor Jarat Chopra, Brown University, and Professor Jim McCallum, U.S. Army Peacekeeping Institute, and two Israeli authors, Orit Gal and Professor Joel Peters, and two Palestinian authors, Amjad Atallah and Yaser Dajani, wrote Planning Considerations for International Involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict -- Part II, as a result of a meeting they attended at the University of Cambridge Centre of International Studies, UK 25-26 April 2003. At that meeting a group of Palestinians, Israelis and international officials convened for the second time. This second report outlines the latest regional and ground developments in the wake of war in Iraq; identifies further requirements of intervention as required by the parties and the realities of the current situation; considers the current monitoring approach in the "Roadmap"; and assesses the degrees of international commitment available generally for third party involvement.					
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stemming from the increasingly deteriorating conditions of the conflict. Nevertheless, this level of commitment also appears to be flexible and may increase or decrease. Bridging these various gaps will be a challenge for legitimate and effective involvement in the future.

I. Regional and Ground Developments

Developments on the ground since January 2003 have been significant and offer both the prospects for renewed progress as well as potentially dangerous obstacles. On the whole, however, there is general consensus that new opportunities have emerged for more effective international involvement. Indeed, some parts of the first phase of the “Roadmap” have already been completed.

Cycle of Violence: From the Israeli perspective, the last few months have indicated a certain degree of de-escalation in the violent attacks against Israeli civilians. The perception of the Israeli public is that this is attributed to the success of IDF operations in combating extremist militants. From the Palestinian perspective, the decrease in militant attacks against Israelis has been attributed to a psychological shift on the part of the Palestinian population at large, rather than the direct result of IDF operations or the security fence. While the level of violence may seem to have decreased on the surface, death tolls on both sides remain high. Since January 2003, a total of 290 Palestinians and 35 Israelis have died, most of whom are civilians.

Socio-Economic Realities: As the conflict persists, the deterioration in the socio-economic conditions of both Palestinians and Israelis has reached a dangerous point. Within Palestinian society, there are indications of disintegration in social cohesion. Domestic abuse in poor areas and refugee camps is on the rise and some indications suggest a breakdown in family authority and structure. These are also attributed to the continuing high levels of unemployment. Most donor assistance to the Palestinian economy—around \$1 billion a year—has been directed towards preventing complete collapse rather than enhancing economic development. The economic and social situation within Israeli society has also continued to deteriorate and there are no present signs for improvement. Social and economic unrest is expected to put more political pressure on the new Israeli government. The absence of an exit strategy is expected to cause further psychological anguish and social repercussions on both sides.

IDF Management System: The infrastructure of the District Coordination Offices (DCO) throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territories, which previously regulated cooperation and coordination between the Palestinian Authority and the IDF on security-related matters (such as joint patrols in Area B), has now been abolished and replaced with a new system altogether. During the past few months, the IDF has extracted the resources and manpower of the DCOs and is now using them to implement a new system of civil administration management, treating each city within the West Bank, with the exception of Jericho and East Jerusalem, as a separate microcosm, with headquarters in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. While the working relationship between the international donor community

and the IDF has somewhat improved, such ‘cantonization’ measures will inhibit any real revitalization of Palestinian economic activity. At this point, it is unclear whether this system will allow for future re-institutionalization of coordination and cooperation between both sides, hence potentially complicating future efforts to create a cohesive liaison and cooperation mechanism.

Security Fence: Israeli plans to continue building the first phase of the security fence in the West Bank remain unchanged. According to present indications, 14km of the fence has been already constructed in various locations of the West Bank. Palestinian fears concerning the fence stem not only from the fact that the initial phase of the fence has not been built along the Green Line, therefore beginning to unilaterally establish a de-facto border line inside Palestinian areas, but also from fear that it will be extended around all Palestinian cities in the future. Furthermore, Palestinians believe the IDF has thus far confiscated 160,000 *dunums* of land, which amounts for approximately 10% of the West Bank, including the destruction of 83,000 trees causing serious damage to more than 10,000 *dunums* of agricultural land, with 13,000 Palestinians trapped between the fence and the Green Line.

From an Israeli perspective the security fence is intended only to separate the West Bank from Israel with the aim of stopping Palestinian militants from entering Israeli cities and towns. Moreover, the demand for the fence is said to have come from public pressure, especially from the center and left constituencies, in the hope that it will provide more security and allow for rapid IDF withdrawal. Within Israeli society, the issue of the security fence is controversial and its future remains to be determined. Throughout the internal public debate, the idea of the fence has actually been opposed by the far-right wing as it creates a de facto border between the West Bank and Israel. In addition, the likelihood of its construction in the first phase is considered by Israelis as questionable due both to continued political pressure from the right as well as its very high cost at a time of pressures for further cuts in government spending.

IDF Initiatives: Since January 2003, the IDF has instituted a new coordination mechanism to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian supplies into the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The international donor community now coordinates its efforts directly with this special office, beginning to limit unnecessary delays. Furthermore, the IDF has also introduced a 24-hour hotline for complaints, whereby Palestinians can report human rights violations and other abuses. This may ultimately have a direct impact on improving the code of conduct of the IDF, which in the mindset of the Palestinians has a record of lack of discipline.

Israeli Elections: The new Israeli government, formed after a Likud landslide victory, while including extreme far-right elements, also incorporates the more moderate party of Shinuy, thus allowing Prime Minister Ariel Sharon more leverage in presenting new political initiatives. The de-escalation in violent attacks against Israelis, added to the “Roadmap” initiative and internal Israeli difficulties in the socio-economic sphere, might provide the needed incentives for more flexibility on the Israeli leadership side. While Palestinians are generally sceptical about Likud intentions, some believe that the current

Israeli government is ready to strike a deal with the new Palestinian government. The international community will have to work with the Likud dominated Government of Israel, as well as the new Palestinian government, in order to find a way out of this current cycle of violence and to pave the way for real peace. .

Palestinian Leadership: In accordance to Palestinian reform efforts, Palestinian *Ra'is* Yasser Arafat has nominated a new Prime Minister, Dr. Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen). The Palestinian Legislative Council has met and agreed to changes in the Palestinian Basic Law, which serves as a Palestinian interim constitution until independence, to ratify the *Ra'is'* proposed changes. The Prime Minister in turn has selected a new Cabinet that was submitted to the PLC along with a government program for reform including an endorsement to put an end to violence.

Palestinian Constitution: Simultaneously, the Palestine Liberation Organization has appointed a Palestinian Constitutional Committee to complete the program of drafting a constitution to be submitted to Palestinians for consideration in advance or at the time of statehood. The draft constitution calls for specific checks and balances between the branches of government and protection for individual Palestinian political and civil rights.

Palestinian Security Sector Reform: The government's program also calls for the immediate implementation of previous security sector reform decisions. The three agencies entrusted with internal security—Preventive Security, Police Forces and Civil Defense—now fall under the jurisdiction and direct supervision of the Prime Minister, thereby effectively creating a clear chain of command and control. With the appointment of a Minister of State for Internal Affairs, the new Palestinian security apparatus is now in the process of consolidating power and reconstituting Palestinian security forces with a view to establishing law, order and security in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Implementation of this plan depends in large part on the renewed engagement of the United States in the Security Oversight Group as well as Israel's active engagement to assist the process.

The War in Iraq: The continued presence of U.S. and U.K. military forces in Iraq has, as of yet, unknown consequences on the rejuvenation of efforts to end the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. President George Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair have indicated very clearly and repeatedly that they intend to give the same level of commitment to resolving the conflict within the parameters of President Bush's vision of two states living side by side as they did to their involvement in Iraq. The introduction of military and civilian components into Iraq may lessen traditional discomfort with similar operations in the Palestinian Territories. As important, Israel is now undergoing a reconsideration of its strategic defense policy in light of the new realities. Finally, there is a general belief amongst Arab and European states that the situation in Iraq now allows for full engagement on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

II. Requirements of Involvement

Filling the Vacuum of Trust: The single most limiting factor in addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the lack of trust between the parties. Accordingly, any third party involvement must structure itself so that it immediately begins and sustains a process of building trust between the parties. The most vulnerable time for a third party in any involvement is at the beginning of deployment, when each side is wary of the other's willingness to fulfill its obligations. Palestinians and Israelis stress the critical importance for the third party to be prepared with sufficient capacity during the early stages of its presence.

Imperative of Returning a Relative Normalcy to Day-to-Day Living: There are small practical things to be done that will improve the daily lives of Palestinians significantly. Both Israeli and Palestinian populations need to see that conditions can change for the better as all previous attempts at implementation of peace plans have failed. Minor tactical actions can bear long-term strategic benefits. The third party involvement needs to give priority to actions that accomplish this objective.

Building a Partnership: The third party should approach each of the parties as partners. Adapting the language of intervention is important as the international community will "assist" the parties and not impose solutions on them. Moreover, the purpose of each partnership is to fashion over time a direct Palestinian and Israeli partnership. This does not mean that the international community will not be given powers of authority and enforcement with the agreement of the parties to fill the vacuum of trust.

Israeli Sovereignty: As a sovereign state, Israel is responsible for its security. Any third party will have to cooperate with Israel to create the modalities of its involvement to satisfy Israel's security concerns.

Assistance to Palestinian Government: Analogously, what the Palestinians are seeking is the assistance of the international community as its new government builds its security and governance capacity as it moves toward a sovereign, viable state.

Comprehensive Involvement: The need for security for both Palestinians and Israelis is paramount but it is not sufficient. Security is only a tool to normalize the lives of Palestinians and Israelis. In past efforts, security has not been linked to other functional areas and that has contributed to their failure. The humanitarian, economic, and state building sectors need equal attention so as to provide the needed environment for long-term stability. What is required is a comprehensive approach that rationalizes the myriad of international agencies and actors operating on the ground. The international involvement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is among the most extensive in the world. Times have changed and these agencies need to change also. Without such harmonization of effort on the part of the international community, there is the serious risk that individual efforts will be counterproductive and retard the capacity building of the Palestinian state. This mix of political, economic, humanitarian, state building, and

potentially military elements, necessitates a coherent structure and single leadership for the international involvement to be most effective.

Visibility and Transparency of Third Party Mechanism: The lack of trust among the parties makes the visibility and transparency of the actions of the third party central to building trust initially in the third party, then to the process, and finally to the parties. Therefore, it is important that the third party planning include an informational capacity keyed to both publics. Additionally, the third party must be visible as a partner with Israeli and Palestinian officials when they are addressing violations.

Top-Down, Bottom-Up: Two approaches to third party involvement can be defined. The first, “Bottom-Up”, is an incremental approach, responding to the prevailing needs and constraints on the ground while taking on new tasks and roles as the situation evolves. This approach seeks to take immediate action and then build on successes as the situation allows. It may be more easily “sold” to some of the parties involved and more quickly implemented; however, there is the fear that small actions at the bottom never lead to action that will resolve the conflict. The second approach, “Top-Down”, calls for a comprehensive model of involvement with clearly defined long-term objectives and up-front full commitments on implementation. While this approach may be more constructive for the over-all political process and the realization of its final objectives, it requires significantly greater political commitment by all parties to successfully negotiate its details and take on the full range of commitments it entails. So far in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict only bottom-up approaches have been attempted with limited success.

Different Mandates Possible: It is possible for the third party to have different mandates with respect to each party. For example, the third party may have a monitoring and verification mandate with one party while it has a capacity-building mandate with the other party. The key is mutual clarity so there is no danger that one party thinks the international involvement is there to do one thing while the other thinks it is there for something else. The two mandates would be complementary to each other within the context of the situation on the ground.

Presence Is Not a Mandate: The third party involvement must have a clear mandate with specific tasks that are then matched with appropriate resources. There can be a desire to generate momentum by getting something on the ground so the process begins but this has caused failures in peace operations in the past. The third party presence may help stabilize the situation, but it is not sufficient as a mandate.

Intelligence Gathering: Although the third party will need to develop its own tactical and operational level intelligence, this will take time. (It is assumed that a mission will probably be well served with strategic intelligence.) Both Israel and the Palestinian government must make explicit agreements to provide and share tactical and operational intelligence with the third party from the outset of any deployment. This will not be easy as trust will not have been established on the ground by this stage but it will be essential for the security of the third party and for the success of its effort. The third party also needs its own sources of information and intelligence independent of the parties. This is

especially important in addressing potential violations of actions on which the parties have agreed.

Ability of Third Party to Deal with Impasses by Either Party: There must be an effective dispute resolution mechanism in place immediately so that the third party can resolve disagreements and/or violations of what the parties have agreed to do. The elements of an effective mechanism include the following: authority and capacity to go anywhere the third party wishes; a tiered structure that seeks to resolve matters at the lowest level; authority on the ground to make decisions and not just file reports; and a set of costs and incentives that can be imposed.

This means the third party needs a strong political leader on the ground and delegation of authority to each level. The third party political center of gravity needs to be with the leader on the ground, not back in the national capitals. A coordination mechanism is not a dispute resolution mechanism. The structure of the dispute resolution mechanism does not have to be intrusive but it has to be effective enough to accomplish its mandate.

U.S. Leadership: U.S. leadership of the third party involvement is an Israeli requirement and is seen as vital to all other parties.

Filling the Gap Between Palestinian Capacity and Israeli Withdrawal: There is a dilemma Israelis see as they plan for the withdrawal of their forces from portions of the West Bank. The Palestinian government's capacity to conduct its security functions must be developed and facilitated and this will take time. Is withdrawal contingent on the demonstration of capacity of the Palestinians? What is the benchmark and who is the judge? If the IDF withdraws before the Palestinian capacity is fully developed, who will be responsible for filling the gaps in the Palestinian capacity to perform these security functions?

Tension Between What the Parties Want and What They Can Get: Both Israelis and Palestinians need to outline in clear terms what they want from each other and from a third party involvement. And the states and the organizations that would contribute to a third party involvement need to outline in clear terms what they want from the Palestinians and the Israelis. What remains to be done is to reconcile the conflicting interests of Israel and the Palestinians versus what they can effectively expect from the international community in a way that provides for an effective third party involvement.

III. Monitoring the “Roadmap”

1. Overcoming Past Failings

While discussions around the world have focused on the necessary mechanisms required to stabilize and then resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the United States, Russia, the European Union and the United Nations—called the Quartet—have been involved in developing a “Roadmap” that would lead to a permanent status agreement between

Palestinians and Israelis and the creation of two states living side by side in peace and prosperity. The Quartet has attempted to address three major failings of previous peace initiatives with the “Roadmap.”

Comprehensive Scope of Issues: First, the roadmap is comprehensive, including security, socio-economic, governance, and political steps. These include steps to stabilize the current situation including security responsibilities by both parties, an end to and reversal of Israeli settlement policy, and re-starting the Palestinian economy. The political steps are to ensure the parties keep their sights on finally resolving the conflict. These include a plan to begin permanent status negotiations between the parties as well as further Palestinian democratisation in order to have a fully functioning Palestinian state.

Explicit Timeline: Second, the “Roadmap” recommends a timeline for the accomplishment of these objectives in accordance with President Bush’s “vision” for completion of permanent status talks by June 2005.

Monitoring: Third, and most importantly for the purposes of this report, the “Roadmap” explicitly calls for monitoring the implementation of all the provisions of the “Roadmap.” The “Roadmap” states that:

“[r]elying on existing mechanisms and on-the-ground resources, Quartet representatives [will] begin informal monitoring and consult with the parties on establishment of a formal monitoring mechanism and its implementation.”

At this stage, there appears to be a lack of consensus among the Quartet on the exact nature of “informal monitoring” and it has yet to consider the formal monitoring mechanism.

2. “Informal Monitoring”

There are differences of opinion on the nature of “informal monitoring.” It appears that the Quartet will begin with a concept that simply coordinates the existing international actors already on the ground while the Quartet uses the remainder of phase one to consult together and with the parties on additional mechanisms in accordance with the salient “Roadmap” provisions.

Existing Task Forces: Currently, the international community has organized international relief efforts and international assistance to Palestinian reform into seven separate task forces. These cooperate as necessary with Palestinians and Israelis to recommend ways of furthering Palestinian goals of reform and promoting the minimum level of humanitarian aid to Palestinians in the absence of a functioning economy under the current level of Israeli occupation. The task forces report periodically to the Quartet envoys who in turn report to the Quartet principals, including Secretary-General Kofi Annan, European Union Representative Javier Solana, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell, and the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, Igor Ivanov.

A Coordination Tool: The Quartet operates on a principle of consensus. The informal monitoring mechanism will leverage the existing architecture on the ground. Security will be addressed separately and in parallel with the other existing task forces which will be combined into three separate groups—Palestinian institutional reforms; socio-economic issues, including humanitarian aid; and one on all the remaining “Roadmap” tasks including settlement freeze and dismantlement. Israel’s responsibilities under the “Roadmap” will be added to the list of responsibilities on which the Quartet will judge performance. And the Quartet, after consulting with the parties, will provide benchmarking of the individual requirements of the “Roadmap.” There may be a U.S. coordinator informally on the ground, who will collect the reports and pass them up to the Quartet envoys.

In effect, “informal monitoring” is less a mechanism with independent capacity than a means for providing a set of “organizing” or “coordinating principles” to existing international involvement.

3. International Debate

Critics

Getting Past the First Step: There is much debate among the international community whether such an informal mechanism will even begin to be useful in implementing the “Roadmap.” Critics, including Israelis and Palestinians alike, worry that the first phase of the “Roadmap” is the most important as its success will dictate any movement forward. It therefore requires the maximum encouragement and engagement by the international community. A set of “coordinating principles” will not be sufficient, critics argue, to overcome the mistrust inherent in the relationship between both parties.

Input without Output: Specifically, there is a concern that the principles provide only input to the Quartet but not output to the parties. The provision of reports does not address what happens when something is not being implemented.

Time Lag Before Monitoring: There is a question of the political effect on the ground of a significant time lag between presentation of the “Roadmap” and the beginning of its implementation.

Wrong Message About Seriousness of Purpose: It is obvious that the “coordinating principles” are also only designed for Phase One. Phase Two, which calls for international recognition of a Palestinian state with provisional borders, and Phase Three, which calls for permanent status negotiations to resume and be completed are not addressed at all. This slow preparation for Phase One may be interpreted by the parties, and especially by their respective publics, as a lack of international commitment to the Roadmap’s implementation. The lack of any preparation for Phases Two and Three may be interpreted as a lack of international seriousness to move beyond Phase One, thereby fundamentally undermining the entire “Roadmap.”

Inability to Resolve Disputes: Many are also concerned that there is no dispute resolution mechanism that can overcome the inevitable differences of interpretation by the parties on what the “Roadmap” actually requires. This has been missing in virtually every Palestinian-Israeli agreement, as well as in all third party plans presented to the parties since the Madrid/Oslo Process began.

Lack of Harmonization: Furthermore, some argue that even within the parameters of simply trying to better coordinate existing international involvement, there needs to be a horizontal relationship among the task forces and not just separate vertical lines of reporting to the Quartet. For example, under the proposed monitoring mechanism, different international actors would be involved in helping Palestinians rebuild their security capacity and in improving the Palestinian judiciary and general rule of law issues, although the two are inextricably linked. As another example, the “Roadmap” requirement that Israel withdraw to pre-September 28, 2000, deployment positions is a Security Task Force issue, whereas the “Roadmap” requirement that Israel improve Palestinian humanitarian conditions by lifting curfews and easing restrictions on movement of person and goods while allowing full, safe, and unfettered access of international and humanitarian personnel falls under the aegis of the Socio-Economic Task Force, despite the fact that the two issues are also inextricably linked.

Imbalance of Efforts: Most fundamentally, there is a general assessment that what is already on the ground in the form of international involvement has only been enough to keep the conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories from turning into an even worse humanitarian disaster. While great work has been done on issues relating to Palestinian reform, under current conditions of occupation, they have limited relevance in improving the lives of Palestinians or changing the underlying conditions encouraging resort to violence by either party.

Catch-22 of Security Capacity-Building: The greatest challenge, noted especially by Palestinians and Israelis, is that there may exist a gap between creating the security conditions under which Israeli forces would begin their required withdrawal and the ability to create those conditions while the occupation of Palestinian areas continues. The resulting Catch-22 is that Israelis and Palestinians agree that Palestinians need to rebuild their security capacity destroyed over the past two years but that Israelis require guarantees that providing the “space” necessary for such rebuilding will not result in increased incidents of violence against Israelis.

Existing Efforts Already Greater: Proponents of greater involvement note that there is already an informal European Union security team on the ground in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip that has been engaged in monitoring compliance with existing agreements. Also, international policing has already been approved by Palestinians and Israelis for specific tasks in Jericho. Such third party activity is actually greater than that envisioned in “informal monitoring.”

Lack of Independent Means: There is disagreement between the parties on how much space, how much time, and how much physical third party assistance may be needed to rebuild security capacity while providing Israelis and Palestinians with necessary guarantees that violence in either direction will be ended. However, the current “coordinating principles” do not provide an independent means of conducting an assessment to determine in fact how much space, time, and third party assistance is needed nor do they suggest a willingness to fill the capacity need as so defined.

Proponents

Beginning Slowly: Proponents of the “coordinating principles”, however, respond that this is only the beginning and there remains the potential for a formal monitoring mechanism in the future which may respond to some, if not all, of these concerns.

Informal Dispute Resolution: They also point out that there is an informal dispute resolution mechanism inherent in the “coordinating principles.” The task forces will now informally establish the benchmarks for progression, effectively interpreting the “Roadmap” for the parties. If there are disputes on the interpretation or the implementation that cannot be resolved by the task forces, the key member of the Quartet will attempt to informally mediate the dispute. Evaluating the accomplishment of the benchmarks may potentially have a “rolling start” as benchmarks are created, rather than waiting for all the benchmarks to be determined.

Reliance on Political Will: Proponents also argue that the current Quartet effort reflects the limits of some parties’ political willingness to re-engage in a Palestinian-Israeli peace process. They also note that the success of the “Roadmap” will be based on the political willingness of all parties, including the members of the Quartet, to make it succeed and not on any specific monitoring mechanism.

IV. Degrees of International Commitment

Scenarios to Clarify: There are several possible scenarios to consider that affect the potential international willingness for involvement beyond the current level of monitoring envisioned for the “Roadmap.” First, a third party role within the “Roadmap” process may be expanded. Second, the “Roadmap” may fail, leading to an alternative initiative with another kind of third party role. Third, an international involvement may be deployed under seemingly workable conditions that then deteriorate, requiring a larger commitment mid-stream. In addition, there may be wild-card scenarios that a mission may find itself confronting. Precision on possible contingencies will need to be clarified in order to measure the willingness of nations to contribute to an intervention.

Evolving Commitments: There is already commitment to a monitoring effort and Palestinian reform. There is a potential willingness to make additional contributions if requested within the process of the “Roadmap”, though a political decision within governments may depend on a concrete request to do so first. For others, there is already

a willingness to respond to the conflict that is greater than that expressed by the type of monitoring envisioned for the “Roadmap.”

Hard Questions Affecting Participation: International participants do have hard questions that they want answered before they are prepared to make a decision on what they will contribute to third party involvement. Why is the third party there? What is the mandate? Who is leading? What is the end-state so they know when it is time to leave? Nations are not prepared for an open ended commitment and will not get involved in a situation if it looks like it could become another Cyprus. Will they assume a more supervisory role, exercise powers of selective control of failed security officers, censor incitement, or accept a variety of security responsibilities? Will they be limited to traditional peacekeeping tasks, the provision of medical facilities or training activities? They expect an integrated effort across civilian and military entities. These tasks can be accomplished, but they must be spelled out.

Onus on the Parties: The international community prefers to come forward and commit once the parties have done their homework and can present what they want the international community to do in concrete terms. (However, Israelis and Palestinians point out that if they were able to come to a prior understanding by themselves, it would lessen both the imperative for and the mutual interest in third party involvement and presence on the ground.)

Military Precondition for Involvement: If military forces are requested, the force inserted needs to be sized so that it is large enough for the mandate. Key to this determination is defining what the force is going to do and not going to do. A small force deployed may still need a larger force available and prepared to act if things go wrong, although this is not necessarily the preferred model.

Compositional Precondition for Involvement: Potential contributing nations see the requirement for U.S. involvement and leadership to provide deterrence for a third party involvement. The size of the involvement is one issue, but where the troops and civilian personnel are from is equally important. European participation may provide additional impartiality to the effort and Arab involvement may provide legitimacy and engage interested Arab parties so they are invested and committed to the process. Arab states can also provide training for security services, as well as monitoring. Some Arab states have a special advantage as friends of both parties. Some countries’ participation may be limited or excluded due to historical or other regional considerations.

Political Precondition for Involvement: Any decision to commit to a third party involvement needs to fall within a political context. The international contributors need some form of an agreement between Israel and the Palestinian government. For most, it is not sufficient that the agreement is between Israel and the international community, and the Palestinian government and the international community. The question remains what is the specific meaning of “an agreement.” Is something short of a final permanent status agreement possible or desirable? Is an “understanding” between Israel and the Palestinian government sufficient?

Consensual Precondition for Involvement: Political assent from the two parties is one aspect of the consent that the international community requires. There is also a requirement for an environment of consent amongst the publics of both parties, as the third party will be involved with each local population and there needs to be a fair degree of support from them. Consent also means acceptance of the composition of the third party involvement.

Structural Preconditions for Involvement: There must be complete clarity of the mission and clear lines of responsibility. Every task beyond monitoring that has a security responsibility cannot be shared; ultimate responsibility must rest with one party. Detailed planning needs to be done once the third party mandate is determined. This detailed planning will develop the ways in which the mandate will be accomplished. The mandate determines the amount and quality of resources required, and not the other way around. There must be utter transparency in the planning and the starting point for this planning must be the existing international effort on the ground, which remains a very confusing environment.

Need to Move Forward Despite Persisting Tensions: Just as the two parties have to reconcile what they want versus what the international community is prepared to provide, the international community may face the requirement to get involved before it has all that it wants from the two parties. These tensions will not disappear and what must be done is to figure out how to move forward despite them. Can the introduction of a third party alter the political equation and move the parties back on the road to a permanent settlement?

Political Convergence: Over the course of the last year, there has been an increasing convergence of policy opinion among western nations on how to pursue a peace agreement between Palestinians and Israelis, primarily due to the creation of the Quartet. Similarly the Arab League Summit Resolution of March 2002 placed all Arab nations on record as being prepared to establish normal relations with Israel once Israel withdrew from the occupied Arab territories and established peace treaties with its neighbours. However, while there is general agreement on principle, the diplomatic and physical mechanisms for implementing these visions of peace remain lacking.

Bilateral vs. Quartet: Some nations feel progress is too slow and have suggested that they would be prepared to bilaterally establish arrangements with both parties to accommodate the gaps between the Roadmap's ambitious goals and timetable and the modest effort to implement those goals within that timeframe. This willingness apparently includes readiness to commit international police and/or security officers, as well as civilian personnel to especially promote the implementation of Phase One of the "Roadmap." Critics of this policy express concern that coordination efforts will once again become difficult if nations resort to bilateral agreements. Proponents note that they would prefer to work through the Quartet, but if the requirement for consensus in the Quartet makes effective action impossible, they have no choice but to work directly with the parties.

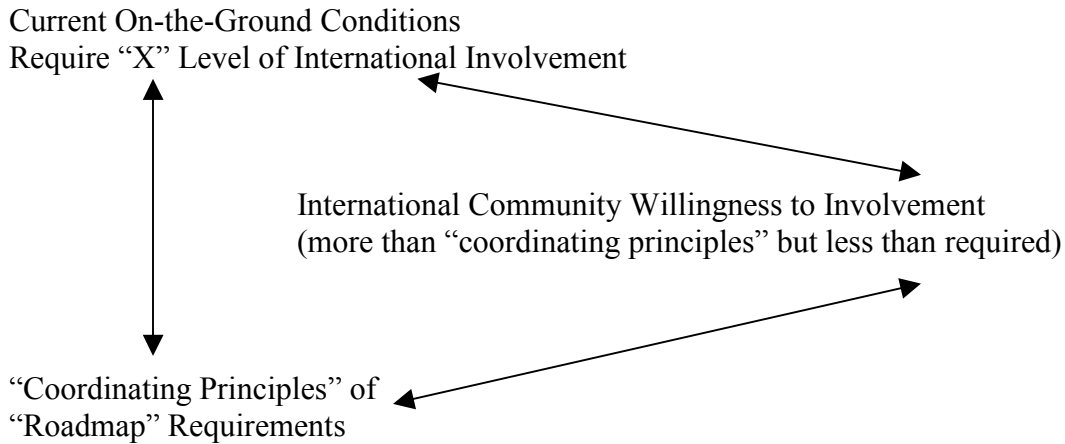
International Over-Extension: The number of nations acceptable to both parties is small, and this is generally a difficult period for obtaining contributions in light of the large number of international commitments currently being fulfilled around the world. These nations are already heavily overextended and are making preparations for potential future involvement in Iraq as well. Nevertheless, virtually all nations agree that resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is the international community's top priority right now.

V. Conclusion

Conflicting Tensions: There are obvious tensions within the international community and between the parties concerning the nature and scope of international intervention in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. On the one hand, there is an existing political process represented by the Quartet "Roadmap" that provides a framework for the requirements of international involvement. Yet, Israelis, Palestinians, and some nations are sceptical about the political willingness of the international community to take the steps necessary to assure the success of the "Roadmap." A failure of the "Roadmap" is believed by all to lead to a significant worsening of the crisis and perhaps even to erase the positive opportunities that have recently arisen. Thus, some argue that planning needs to consider the far more significant level of international involvement should the "Roadmap" fail.

You Go First: Another tension reflects a general trend among the international community to adopt the Israeli and Palestinian tendency to demand steps from each other first before the other is willing to take steps. The parties generally argue that they need the intervention of the United States and/or the international community in order to break the deadlock created by a total lack of trust. On the other hand, the international community generally seeks maximum safeguards of assured success before they are willing to engage. In this case, such precautions take the form of asking the parties to come to an agreement first or placing agreements such as the "Roadmap" with the parties and then laying full responsibility for its implementation on their shoulders. In the Palestinian-Israeli context, this process of waiting for the other before taking any significant steps has had very limited success.

Gaps: These tensions highlight the gaps in the current situation that will need to be bridged before any real progress can be made. On the one hand, the disastrous humanitarian and security conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and the continued security threat to Israelis as well as the worsening economic conditions in Israel indicate that the minimum level of involvement by third parties will have to be fairly comprehensive, compared to previous or current involvement levels. Yet, between this minimum level of involvement and the Roadmap's informal "coordinating principles" there is a significant gap. Furthermore, there is a gap between what the international community appears ready to do, which is greater than what the Roadmap's "coordinating principles" suggest, and what the minimum level of involvement demanded by current conditions requires. This can be graphically represented as follows:



Tracking the Gaps: Along each of the “gap lines” lies a spectrum of involvement. Future efforts should focus on identifying not only what lies along these spectrums, but also what additional efforts will be required if the current incrementalist approach fails, as it has in many other international conflicts. As planners often note, preparations must always be designed to handle the worst-case contingency. In the Israeli-Palestinian context, hoping for the best is certainly admirable but it is rarely realistic. Preparations must be made for the range of involvement necessary to address current conditions as well as potential future conditions if the international community finds it lacks the will to encourage the parties to implement the “Roadmap.”

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