



משרד ראש הממשלה
THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE
مكتب رئيس الحكومة

HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION
AND MEDIA ADVISER TO THE PRIME MINISTER

ראש מטה ההסברה
ויועץ ראש הממשלה לתקשורת

01/09/2010

Remarks by Prime Minister Netanyahu Before Working Dinner with President Obama, President Abbas, President Mubarak and King Abdullah

Mr. President, Excellencies, *Shalom aleichem. Shalom al kulanu.* Peace unto us all.

I'm very pleased to be here today to begin our common effort to achieve a lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

I want to thank you, President Obama, for your tireless efforts to renew this quest for peace. I want to thank Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Senator Mitchell, the many members of the Obama administration, and Tony Blair, who've all worked so hard to bring Israelis and Palestinians together here today.

I also want to thank President Mubarak and King Abdullah for their dedicated and meaningful support to promote peace, security, and stability throughout our region. I deeply appreciate your presence here today.

I began with a Hebrew word for peace, "shalom." Our goal is shalom. Our goal is to forge a secure and durable peace between Israelis and Palestinians. We don't seek a brief interlude between two wars. We don't seek a temporary respite between outbursts of terror. We seek a peace that will end the conflict between us once and for all. We seek a peace that will last for generations -- our generation, our children's generation, and the next.

This is the peace my people fervently want. This is the peace all our peoples fervently aspire to. This is the peace they deserve.

Now, a lasting peace is a peace between peoples -- between Israelis and Palestinians. We must learn to live together, to live next to one another and with one another. But every peace begins with leaders.

President Abbas, you are my partner in peace. And it is up to us, with the help of our friends, to conclude the agonizing conflict between our peoples and to afford them a new beginning. The Jewish people are not strangers in our ancestral homeland, the land of our forefathers. But we recognize that another people shares this land with us. I came here today to find an historic compromise that will enable both our peoples to live in peace and security and in dignity.

I've been making the case for Israel all of my life. But I didn't come here today to make an argument. I came here today to make peace. I didn't come here today to play a blame game where even the winners lose. Everybody loses if there's no peace. I came here to achieve a peace that will bring a lasting benefit to us all.

I didn't come here to find excuses or to make them. I came here to find solutions. I know the history of our conflict and the sacrifices that have been made.

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I know the grief that has afflicted so many families who have lost their dearest loved ones. Only yesterday four Israelis, including a pregnant women -- a pregnant woman -- and another woman, a mother of six children, were brutally murdered by savage terrorists. And two hours ago, there was another terror attack. And thank God no one died. I will not let the terrorists block our path to peace, but as these events underscore once again, that peace must be anchored in security.

I'm prepared to walk down the path of peace, because I know what peace would mean for our children and for our grandchildren. I know it would herald a new beginning that could unleash unprecedented opportunities for Israelis, for Palestinians, and for the peoples -- all the peoples -- of our region, and well beyond our region. I think it would affect the world.

I see what a period of calm has created in the Palestinian cities of Ramallah, of Jenin, throughout the West Bank, a great economic boom. And real peace can turn this boom into a permanent era of progress and hope.

If we work together, we can take advantage of the great benefits afforded by our unique place under the sun. We're the crossroads of three continents, at the crossroads of history, and the crossroads of the future. Our geography, our history, our culture, our climate, the talents of our people can be unleashed to create extraordinary opportunities in tourism, in trade, in industry, in energy, in water, in so many areas. But peace must also be defended against its enemies. We want the skyline of the West Bank to be dominated by apartment towers -- not missiles. We want the roads of the West Bank to flow with commerce -- not terrorists.

And this is not a theoretic request for our people. We left Lebanon, and we got terror. We left Gaza, and we got terror once again. We want to ensure that territory we'll concede will not be turned into a third Iranian-sponsored terror enclave armed at the heart of Israel -- and may I add, also aimed at every one of us sitting on this stage.

This is why a defensible peace requires security arrangements that can withstand the test of time and the many challenges that are sure to confront us. And there will be many challenges, both great and small. Let us not get bogged down by every difference between us. Let us direct our courage, our thinking, and our decisions at those historic decisions that lie ahead.

Now, there are many skeptics. One thing there's no shortage of, Mr. President, are skeptics. This is something that you're so familiar with, that all of us in a position of leadership are familiar with. There are many skeptics. I suppose there are many reasons for skepticism. But I have no doubt that peace is possible.

President Abbas, we cannot erase the past, but it is within our power to change the future. Thousands of years ago, on these very hills where Israelis and Palestinians live today, the Jewish prophet Isaiah and the other prophets of my people envisaged a future of lasting peace for all mankind. Let today be an auspicious step in our joint effort to realize that ancient vision for a better future.

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