

Address by PM Ariel Sharon at the Fourth Herzliya Conference-Dec 18- 2003

Good Evening,

I congratulate the organizers of this conference for the important and interesting gathering which you have held here. During the past three days, you have been discussing Israel's situation. I, as Prime Minister, am responsible for the planning and implementation of the measures which will shape Israel's character during the next few years.

We are all entrusted with the duty of shaping the face of the Jewish and democratic State of Israel a state where there is an equal distribution of the burden, as well as the acceptance of rights and shouldering of duties by all sectors, through different forms of national service. A state where there is a good and efficient education system which educates a young generation imbued with values and national pride, which is capable of confronting the challenges of the modern world. A country whose economy is adapted to the advanced global market of the 21st century, where the product per capita crosses the \$20,000 line and is equal to that of most developed European countries. An immigrant-absorbing state which constitutes a national and spiritual center for all Jews of the world and is a source of attraction for thousands of immigrants each year. Aliyah is the central goal of the State of Israel.

This is the country we wish to shape. This is the country where our children will want to live.

I know that there is sometimes a tendency to narrow all of Israel's problems down to the political sphere, believing that once a solution is found to Israel's problems with its neighbors, particularly the Palestinians, the other issues on the agenda will miraculously resolve themselves. I do not believe so. We are facing additional challenges, which must be addressed the economy, educating the young generation, immigrant absorption, enhancement of social cohesion and the improvement of relations between Arabs and Jews in Israel.

Like all Israeli citizens, I yearn for peace. I attach supreme importance to taking all steps, which will enable progress toward resolution of the conflict with the Palestinians. However, in light of the other challenges

we are faced with, if the Palestinians do not make a similar effort toward a solution of the conflict I do not intend to wait for them indefinitely.

Seven months ago, my Government approved the Roadmap to peace, based on President George Bush's June 2002 speech. This is a balanced program for phased progress toward peace, to which both Israel and the Palestinians committed themselves. A full and genuine implementation of the program is the best way to achieve true peace. The Roadmap is the only political plan accepted by Israel, the Palestinians, the Americans and a majority of the international community. We are willing to proceed toward its implementation: two states Israel and a Palestinian State living side by side in tranquility, security and peace.

The Roadmap is a clear and reasonable plan, and it is therefore possible and imperative to implement it. The concept behind this plan is that only security will lead to peace. And in that sequence. Without the achievement of full security within the framework of which terror organizations will be dismantled it will not be possible to achieve genuine peace, a peace for generations. This is the essence of the Roadmap. The opposite perception, according to which the very signing of a peace agreement will produce security out of thin air, has already been tried in the past and failed miserably. And such will be the fate of any other plan which promotes this concept. These plans deceive the public and create false hope. There will be no peace before the eradication of terror.

The government under my leadership will not compromise on the realization of all phases of the Roadmap. It is incumbent upon the Palestinians to uproot the terrorist groups and to create a law-abiding society, which fights against violence and incitement. Peace and terror cannot coexist. The world is currently united in its unequivocal demand from the Palestinians to act toward the cessation of terrorism and the implementation of reforms. Only a transformation of the Palestinian Authority into a different authority will enable progress in the political process. The Palestinians must fulfill their obligations. A full and complete implementation will at the end of the process lead to peace and tranquility.

We began the implementation of the Roadmap at Aqaba, but the terrorist organizations joined with Yasser Arafat and sabotaged the process with a series of the most brutal terror attacks we have ever known.

Concurrent with the demand from the Palestinians to eliminate the

terror organizations, Israel is taking and will continue to take steps to significantly improve the living conditions of the Palestinian population: Israel will remove closures and curfews and reduce the number of roadblocks; we will improve freedom of movement for the Palestinian population, including the passage of people and goods; we will increase the hours of operation at international border crossings; we will enable a large number of Palestinian merchants to conduct regular and normal economic and trade relations with their Israeli counterparts, etc. All these measures are aimed at enabling better and freer movement for the Palestinian population not involved in terror.

In addition, subject to security coordination, we will transfer Palestinian towns to Palestinian security responsibility.

Israel will make every effort to assist the Palestinians and to advance the process.

Israel will fulfil the commitments taken upon itself. I have committed to the President of the United States that Israel will dismantle unauthorized outposts. It is my intention to implement this commitment. The State of Israel is governed by law, and the issue of the outposts is no exception. I understand the sensitivity; we will try to do this in the least painful way possible, but the unauthorized outposts will be dismantled. Period.

Israel will meet all its obligations with regard to construction in the settlements. There will be no construction beyond the existing construction line, no expropriation of land for construction, no special economic incentives and no construction of new settlements.

I take this opportunity to appeal to the Palestinians and repeat, as I said at Aqaba: it is not in our interest to govern you. We would like you to govern yourselves in your own country. A democratic Palestinian state with territorial contiguity in Judea and Samaria and economic viability, which would conduct normal relations of tranquility, security and peace with Israel. Abandon the path of terror and let us together stop the bloodshed. Let us move forward together towards peace.

We wish to speedily advance implementation of the Roadmap towards quiet and a genuine peace. We hope that the Palestinian Authority will carry out its part. However, if in a few months the Palestinians still continue to disregard their part in implementing the Roadmap then Israel will initiate the unilateral security step of disengagement from the Palestinians.

The purpose of the Disengagement Plan is to reduce terror as much

as possible, and grant Israeli citizens the maximum level of security. The process of disengagement will lead to an improvement in the quality of life, and will help strengthen the Israeli economy. The unilateral steps which Israel will take in the framework of the Disengagement Plan will be fully coordinated with the United States. We must not harm our strategic coordination with the United States. These steps will increase security for the residents of Israel and relieve the pressure on the IDF and security forces in fulfilling the difficult tasks they are faced with. The Disengagement Plan is meant to grant maximum security and minimize friction between Israelis and Palestinians.

We are interested in conducting direct negotiations, but do not intend to hold Israeli society hostage in the hands of the Palestinians. I have already said we will not wait for them indefinitely.

The Disengagement Plan will include the redeployment of IDF forces along new security lines and a change in the deployment of settlements, which will reduce as much as possible the number of Israelis located in the heart of the Palestinian population. We will draw provisional security lines and the IDF will be deployed along them. Security will be provided by IDF deployment, the security fence and other physical obstacles. The Disengagement Plan will reduce friction between us and the Palestinians.

This reduction of friction will require the extremely difficult step of changing the deployment of some of the settlements. I would like to repeat what I have said in the past: In the framework of a future agreement, Israel will not remain in all the places where it is today. The relocation of settlements will be made, first and foremost, in order to draw the most efficient security line possible, thereby creating this disengagement between Israel and the Palestinians. This security line will not constitute the permanent border of the State of Israel, however, as long as implementation of the Roadmap is not resumed, the IDF will be deployed along that line. Settlements which will be relocated are those, which will not be included in the territory of the State of Israel in the framework of any possible future permanent agreement. At the same time, in the framework of the Disengagement Plan, Israel will strengthen its control over those same areas in the Land of Israel which will constitute an inseparable part of the State of Israel in any future agreement. I know you would like to hear names, but we should leave something for later.

Israel will greatly accelerate the construction of the security fence. Today we can already see it taking shape. The rapid completion of the security fence will enable the IDF to remove roadblocks and ease the

daily lives of the Palestinian population not involved in terror.

In order to enable the Palestinians to develop their economic and trade sectors, and to ensure that they will not be exclusively dependent on Israel, we will consider, in the framework of the Disengagement Plan, enabling in coordination with Jordan and Egypt the freer passage of people and goods through international border crossings, while taking the necessary security precautions.

I would like to emphasize: the Disengagement Plan is a security measure and not a political one. The steps which will be taken will not change the political reality between Israel and the Palestinians, and will not prevent the possibility of returning to the implementation of the Roadmap and reaching an agreed settlement.

The Disengagement Plan does not prevent the implementation of the Roadmap. Rather, it is a step Israel will take in the absence of any other option, in order to improve its security. The Disengagement Plan will be realized only in the event that the Palestinians continue to drag their feet and postpone implementation of the Roadmap.

Obviously, through the Disengagement Plan the Palestinians will receive much less than they would have received through direct negotiations as set out in the Roadmap.

According to circumstances, it is possible that parts of the Disengagement Plan that are supposed to provide maximum security to the citizens of Israel will be undertaken while also attempting to implement the Roadmap.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My life experience has taught me that for peace, as well as for war, we must have broad consensus. We must preserve our unity, even in the midst of a difficult, internal debate.

In the past three years, the Palestinian terrorist organizations have put us to a difficult test. Their plan to break the spirit of Israeli society has not succeeded. The citizens of Israel have managed to step into the breach, support each other, lend a helping hand, volunteer and contribute.

I believe that this path of unity must be continued today. Whether we will be able to advance the Roadmap, or will have to implement the Disengagement Plan, experience has taught us that, together, through broad national consensus, we can do great things.

Let us not be led astray. Any path will be complicated, strewn with obstacles, and obligate us to act with discretion and responsibility. I am confident that, just as we have managed to overcome the challenges of the past, we will stand together and succeed today.

We will always be guided by the words of Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, who said, on the day after the Declaration of Independence:

"These days, our purpose is only to build the State of Israel with love and faith, in Jewish brotherhood, and to defend it with all our spirit, and as long as necessary. We are still in the midst of a difficult battle, one that has two fronts: political and military. Let us not embellish our deeds and, of course, our words, with grandiose names. We must remain humble. We achieved what we have achieved by standing on the shoulders of previous generations, and we accomplished what we have accomplished by preserving our precious legacy, the legacy of a small nation which has endured suffering and tribulations, but which is, nevertheless, great and eternal in spirit, vision, faith and virtue."

I am also a great believer in the resilience of this small, brave nation, which has endured suffering and tribulations. I am confident that, united in the power of our faith, we will be able to succeed in any path we choose.

Thank you very much, and happy Hannukah.

Address by PM Netanyahu at Bar-Ilan University

14 Jun 2009

I turn to you, our Palestinian neighbors, led by the Palestinian Authority, and I say: Let's begin negotiations immediately without preconditions. Israel is obligated by its international commitments and expects all parties to keep their commitments...

In my vision of peace, in this small land of ours, two peoples live freely, side-by-side, in amity and mutual respect.

_null

Photo: Reuters

Address by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the Begin-Sadat (BESA) Center for Strategic Studies, Bar-Ilan University

(simultaneous English translation)

Honored guests, citizens of Israel.

Peace has always been our people's most ardent desire. Our prophets gave the world the vision of peace, we greet one another with wishes of peace, and our prayers conclude with the word peace.

We are gathered this evening in an institution named for two pioneers of peace, Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat, and we share in their vision.

Two and half months ago, I took the oath of office as the Prime Minister of Israel. I pledged to establish a national unity government - and I did. I believed and I still believe that unity was essential for us now more than ever as we face three immense challenges - the Iranian threat, the economic crisis, and the advancement of peace.

The Iranian threat looms large before us, as was further demonstrated yesterday. The greatest danger confronting Israel, the Middle East, the entire world and human race, is the nexus between radical Islam and nuclear weapons. I discussed this issue with President Obama during my recent visit to Washington, and I will raise it again in my meetings next week with European leaders. For years, I have been working tirelessly to forge an international alliance to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

Confronting a global economic crisis, the government acted swiftly to stabilize Israel's economy. We passed a two year budget in the government - and the Knesset will soon approve it.

And the third challenge, so exceedingly important, is the advancement of peace. I also spoke about this with President Obama, and I fully support the idea of a regional peace that he is leading.

I share the President's desire to bring about a new era of reconciliation in our region. To this end, I met with President Mubarak in Egypt, and King Abdullah in Jordan, to elicit the support of these leaders in expanding the circle of peace in our region. I turn to all Arab leaders tonight and I say: "Let us meet. Let us speak of peace and let us make peace." I am ready to meet with you at any time. I am willing to go to Damascus, to Riyadh, to Beirut, to

any place - including Jerusalem.

I call on the Arab countries to cooperate with the Palestinians and with us to advance an economic peace. An economic peace is not a substitute for a political peace, but an important element to achieving it. Together, we can undertake projects to overcome the scarcities of our region, like water desalination or to maximize its advantages, like developing solar energy, or laying gas and petroleum lines, and transportation links between Asia, Africa and Europe.

The economic success of the Gulf States has impressed us all and it has impressed me. I call on the talented entrepreneurs of the Arab world to come and invest here and to assist the Palestinians - and us - in spurring the economy. Together, we can develop industrial areas that will generate thousands of jobs and create tourist sites that will attract millions of visitors eager to walk in the footsteps of history - in Nazareth and in Bethlehem, around the walls of Jericho and the walls of Jerusalem, on the banks of the Sea of Galilee and the baptismal site of the Jordan. There is an enormous potential for archeological tourism, if we can only learn to cooperate and to develop it.

I turn to you, our Palestinian neighbors, led by the Palestinian Authority, and I say: Let's begin negotiations immediately without preconditions.

Israel is obligated by its international commitments and expects all parties to keep their commitments. We want to live with you in peace, as good neighbors. We want our children and your children to never again experience war: that parents, brothers and sisters will never again know the agony of losing loved ones in battle; that our children will be able to dream of a better future and realize that dream; and that together we will invest our energies in plowshares and pruning hooks, not swords and spears.

I know the face of war. I have experienced battle. I lost close friends, I lost a brother. I have seen the pain of bereaved families. I do not want war. No one in Israel wants war.

If we join hands and work together for peace, there is no limit to the development and prosperity we can achieve for our two peoples - in the economy, agriculture, trade, tourism and education - most importantly, in providing our youth a better world in which to live, a life full of tranquility, creativity, opportunity and hope.

If the advantages of peace are so evident, we must ask ourselves why peace remains so remote, even as our hand remains outstretched to peace? Why has this conflict continued for more than sixty years?

In order to bring an end to the conflict, we must give an honest and forthright answer to the question: What is the root of the conflict?

In his speech to the first Zionist Conference in Basel, the founder of the Zionist movement, Theodore Herzl, said about the Jewish national home "This idea is so big that we must speak of it only in the simplest terms." Today, I will speak about the immense challenge of peace in the simplest words possible.

Even as we look toward the horizon, we must be firmly connected to reality, to the truth. And the simple truth is that the root of the conflict was, and remains, the refusal to recognize the right of the Jewish people to a state of their own, in their historic homeland.

In 1947, when the United Nations proposed the partition plan of a Jewish state and an Arab state, the entire Arab world rejected the resolution. The Jewish community, by contrast, welcomed it by dancing and rejoicing. The Arabs rejected any Jewish state, in any borders.

Those who think that the continued enmity toward Israel is a product of our presence in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, is confusing cause and consequence. The attacks against us began in the 1920s, escalated into a comprehensive attack in 1948 with the declaration of Israel's independence, continued with the fedayeen attacks in the 1950s, and climaxed in 1967, on the eve of the Six-Day War, in an attempt to tighten a noose around the neck of the State of Israel. All this occurred during the fifty years before a single Israeli soldier ever set foot in Judea and Samaria.

Fortunately, Egypt and Jordan left this circle of enmity. The signing of peace treaties have brought about an end to their claims against Israel, an end to the conflict. But to our regret, this is not the case with the Palestinians. The closer we get to an agreement with them, the further they retreat and raise demands that are inconsistent with a true desire to end the conflict.

Many good people have told us that withdrawal from territories is the key to peace with the Palestinians. Well, we withdrew. But the fact is that every withdrawal was met with massive waves of terror, by suicide bombers and thousands of missiles.

We tried to withdraw with an agreement and without an agreement. We tried a partial withdrawal and a full withdrawal. In 2000 and again last year, Israel proposed an almost total withdrawal in exchange for an end to the conflict, and twice our offers were rejected. We evacuated every last inch of the Gaza strip, we uprooted tens of settlements and evicted of Israelis from their homes, and in response, we received a hail of missiles on our cities, towns and children.

The claim that territorial withdrawals will bring peace with the Palestinians, or at least advance peace, has up till now not stood the test of reality. In addition to this, Hamas in the south, like Hizbullah in the north, repeatedly proclaims their commitment to "liberate" the Israeli cities of Ashkelon, Beersheba, Acre and Haifa.

Territorial withdrawals have not lessened the hatred, and to our regret, Palestinian moderates are not yet ready to say the simple words: Israel is the nation-state of the Jewish people, and it will stay that way.

Achieving peace will require courage and candor from both sides, and not only from the Israeli side. The Palestinian leadership must arise and say: "Enough of this conflict. We recognize the right of the Jewish people to a state of their own in this land, and we are prepared to live beside you in true peace."

I am yearning for that moment, for when Palestinian leaders say those words to our people and to their people, then a path will be opened to resolving all the problems between our peoples, no matter how complex they may be. Therefore, a fundamental prerequisite for ending the conflict is a public, binding and unequivocal Palestinian recognition of Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people. To vest this declaration with practical meaning, there must also be a clear understanding that the Palestinian refugee problem will be resolved outside Israel's borders. For it is clear that any demand for resettling Palestinian refugees within Israel undermines Israel's continued existence as the state of the Jewish people.

The Palestinian refugee problem must be solved, and it can be solved, as we ourselves proved in a similar situation. Tiny Israel successfully absorbed hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees who left their homes and belongings in Arab countries. Therefore, justice and logic demand that the Palestinian refugee problem be solved outside Israel's borders. On this point, there is a broad national consensus. I believe that with goodwill and international investment, this humanitarian problem can be permanently resolved.

So far I have spoken about the need for Palestinians to recognize our rights. In a moment, I will speak openly about our need to recognize their rights. But let me first say that the connection between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel has lasted for more than 3500 years. Judea and Samaria, the places where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, David and Solomon, and Isaiah and Jeremiah lived, are not alien to us. This is the land of our forefathers.

The right of the Jewish people to a state in the land of Israel does not derive from the catastrophes that have plagued our people. True, for 2000 years the Jewish people suffered expulsions, pogroms, blood libels, and massacres

which culminated in a Holocaust - a suffering which has no parallel in human history. There are those who say that if the Holocaust had not occurred, the state of Israel would never have been established. But I say that if the state of Israel would have been established earlier, the Holocaust would not have occurred.

This tragic history of powerlessness explains why the Jewish people need a sovereign power of self-defense. But our right to build our sovereign state here, in the land of Israel, arises from one simple fact: this is the homeland of the Jewish people, this is where our identity was forged.

As Israel's first Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion proclaimed in Israel's Declaration of Independence: "The Jewish people arose in the land of Israel and it was here that its spiritual, religious and political character was shaped. Here they attained their sovereignty, and here they bequeathed to the world their national and cultural treasures, and the most eternal of books."

But we must also tell the truth in its entirety: within this homeland lives a large Palestinian community. We do not want to rule over them, we do not want to govern their lives, we do not want to impose either our flag or our culture on them.

In my vision of peace, in this small land of ours, two peoples live freely, side-by-side, in amity and mutual respect. Each will have its own flag, its own national anthem, its own government. Neither will threaten the security or survival of the other. These two realities - our connection to the land of Israel, and the Palestinian population living within it - have created deep divisions in Israeli society. But the truth is that we have much more that unites us than divides us.

I have come tonight to give expression to that unity, and to the principles of peace and security on which there is broad agreement within Israeli society. These are the principles that guide our policy. This policy must take into account the international situation that has recently developed. We must recognize this reality and at the same time stand firmly on those principles essential for Israel.

I have already stressed the first principle - recognition. Palestinians must clearly and unambiguously recognize Israel as the state of the Jewish people.

The second principle is: demilitarization. The territory under Palestinian control must be demilitarized with ironclad security provisions for Israel. Without these two conditions, there is a real danger that an armed Palestinian state would emerge that would become another terrorist base against the Jewish state, such as the one in Gaza. We don't want Kassam rockets on Petach Tikva, Grad rockets on Tel Aviv, or missiles on Ben-Gurion airport.

We want peace.

In order to achieve peace, we must ensure that Palestinians will not be able to import missiles into their territory, to field an army, to close their airspace to us, or to make pacts with the likes of Hizbullah and Iran. On this point as well, there is wide consensus within Israel. It is impossible to expect us to agree in advance to the principle of a Palestinian state without assurances that this state will be demilitarized. On a matter so critical to the existence of Israel, we must first have our security needs addressed.

Therefore, today we ask our friends in the international community, led by the United States, for what is critical to the security of Israel: Clear commitments that in a future peace agreement, the territory controlled by the Palestinians will be demilitarized: namely, without an army, without control of its airspace, and with effective security measures to prevent weapons smuggling into the territory - real monitoring, and not what occurs in Gaza today. And obviously, the Palestinians will not be able to forge military pacts. Without this, sooner or later, these territories will become another Hamastan. And that we cannot accept.

I told President Obama when I was in Washington that if we could agree on the substance, then the terminology would not pose a problem. And here is the substance that I now state clearly:

If we receive this guarantee regarding demilitarization and Israel's security needs, and if the Palestinians recognize Israel as the State of the Jewish people, then we will be ready in a future peace agreement to reach a solution where a demilitarized Palestinian state exists alongside the Jewish state.

Regarding the remaining important issues that will be discussed as part of the final settlement, my positions are known: Israel needs defensible borders, and Jerusalem must remain the united capital of Israel with continued religious freedom for all faiths. The territorial question will be discussed as part of the final peace agreement. In the meantime, we have no intention of building new settlements or of expropriating additional land for existing settlements.

But there is a need to enable the residents to live normal lives, to allow mothers and fathers to raise their children like families elsewhere. The settlers are neither the enemies of the people nor the enemies of peace. Rather, they are an integral part of our people, a principled, pioneering and Zionist public.

Unity among us is essential and will help us achieve reconciliation with our neighbors. That reconciliation must already begin by altering existing realities. I believe that a strong Palestinian economy will strengthen peace.

If the Palestinians turn toward peace - in fighting terror, in strengthening

governance and the rule of law, in educating their children for peace and in stopping incitement against Israel - we will do our part in making every effort to facilitate freedom of movement and access, and to enable them to develop their economy. All of this will help us advance a peace treaty between us.

Above all else, the Palestinians must decide between the path of peace and the path of Hamas. The Palestinian Authority will have to establish the rule of law in Gaza and overcome Hamas. Israel will not sit at the negotiating table with terrorists who seek their destruction. Hamas will not even allow the Red Cross to visit our kidnapped soldier Gilad Shalit, who has spent three years in captivity, cut off from his parents, his family and his people. We are committed to bringing him home, healthy and safe.

With a Palestinian leadership committed to peace, with the active participation of the Arab world, and the support of the United States and the international community, there is no reason why we cannot achieve a breakthrough to peace.

Our people have already proven that we can do the impossible. Over the past 61 years, while constantly defending our existence, we have performed wonders.

Our microchips are powering the world's computers. Our medicines are treating diseases once considered incurable. Our drip irrigation is bringing arid lands back to life across the globe. And Israeli scientists are expanding the boundaries of human knowledge. If only our neighbors would respond to our call - peace too will be in our reach.

I call on the leaders of the Arab world and on the Palestinian leadership, let us continue together on the path of Menahem Begin and Anwar Sadat, Yitzhak Rabin and King Hussein. Let us realize the vision of the prophet Isaiah, who in Jerusalem 2700 years ago said: "nations shall not lift up sword against nation, and they shall learn war no more."

With God's help, we will know no more war. We will know peace.