



Annapolis and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. A Role for the EU and the EMP?

Preliminary Programme

Wednesday, 12 March 2008

Kempinski Hotel Ishtar Dead Sea, The Codes Restaurant, Lobby Fl.

20.00

Welcome Dinner & Key Note Speech by H.E. Mr. Abdel Ilah Al Khatib, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Jordan

Thursday, 13 March 2008

Kempinski Hotel Ishtar Dead Sea, Larsa 1 meeting room, Fourth Fl.

9.30-10.00

Welcome & Introductory Remarks

Ibrahim Saif (CSS, Amman), Gonçalo Santa Clara Gomes (EuroMeSCo Secretariat, Lisbon)

10.00-11.30

Annapolis: Old Wine in New Bottles or Lessons Learned from the Past?

Originally destined to address the issue of institution-building in Palestine, the US-led initiative developed into a full-scale event, which was attended, among others, by the majority of Arab states, and that acted as a launching pad for renewed Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations. The final objective of the conference was the resumption of the International Quartet's Roadmap as well as permanent status negotiations, leading to a peace agreement at the end of 2008. The event itself, as well as the bilateral peace talks that started in mid-December, have however, been criticised for their lack of substance and there is a great degree of scepticism with respect to whether the talks can succeed. At the same time, and in spite of growing dissonance over the content of current talks and the kind of agreement the two parties are trying to achieve, negotiations continue and keep alive hopes that the timetable can be kept. What is at the core of Annapolis?; what are the major controversial issues?; what are the positions of the two sides?; is a compromise realistic, and what are the preconditions for success?

Chair: Mustafa Hamarneh (Al-Sijill Weekly / CSS, Amman)

Kick-off: Ezzedine Choukri Fishere (ICG, Cairo)

Kick-off: Muriel Asseburg (SWP, Berlin)

11.30-12.00

Coffee Break

12.00-13.00

Annapolis and the Issue of Territoriality – Evolving Contours of a Palestinian State

Clearly, any resolution of the conflict will have to be underpinned by, and thus the result of, exchanges of land and territory. With three months into Annapolis, contention continues over the expansion of Israeli settlements and Israeli military incursions into the West Bank, which undermine Palestinian control and authority in the region and disrespect the requirements outlined in the Quartet's Road map, as well as over the continued Gaza blockade. In view of this, is there actually any progress since the resumption of peace talks?; is the principle of territorial integrity going to be respected or will some – and if so which – settlements remain?; what will be the contours of a Palestinian state?

Chair: Mohammed Shaker (ECFR, Cairo)

Kick-off: Shlomo Avineri (Hebrew University, Jerusalem)

Kick-off: Ghassan Khatib (Birzeit University / Former Minister of Planning, PA)

13.00-14.30

Lunch Break

14.30-15.30

Annapolis and Internal Power Struggles

It seems as if the Israeli leadership and the Palestinian Authority have agreed that Hamas can under no circumstances be included in the negotiations and thus must be marginalised. To what extent is such an agreement feasible and realistic?; what are the prospects of the peace talks to succeed in view of this exclusion?; can there be any common ground between Fateh and Hamas?; what is the state of affairs between Israel and Hamas, are there any informal contacts?; at the same time, it is questionable whether Israeli Prime Minister Olmert has the full support of his government and the Israeli public. What are the different factions and positions in Israel?; to what extent does this apparent divide constrain the current negotiations and limit Olmert's room for manoeuvre?

Chair: Mahjoob Zweiri (CSS, Amman)

Kick-off: Ziad Abu Amr (Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, PA)

Kick-off: Yossi Alpher (www.bitterlemons.org)

15.30-16.30

Annapolis – The Role of Regional and Subregional Actors

Among the 52 participants that attended the Annapolis conference, all countries from the region, with the exception of Iran and the Hamas leadership, were present. Does this presence and the Arab League's offer of full relations with Israel in return for the creation of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, with East Jerusalem as the capital, and a resolution of the issue of Palestinian refugees, point to a new dawn of regional and subregional cooperation?; which subregional groupings could emerge and would it be feasible to reactivate the regional working groups set up as part of the Peace Process of the early Nineties?; what is the role of Syria?; what are the interests of actors belonging to the wider regional environment, such as Saudi-Arabia, Iran, Pakistan?; should regional non-state actors, such as Hezbollah, Hamas, Jihad be brought into the process, and if so, how?

Chair: Nadim Shehadi (Chatham House, London)

Kick-off: Samir AlTaqi (OCIS, Damascus)

Kick-off: Bassem Ezbidid (Birzeit University, West Bank)

16.30-17.00

Coffee Break

17.00-18.00

Annapolis – The Role of Non-Regional Actors – Recommendations for the EU

Undoubtedly, the Middle East is at the very centre of the world – it is surrounded by four of the five major actors in the international system, i.e. the EU, Russia, China and India, whereas the fifth major power, the U.S., due to its presence in Iraq is both a regional and an external actor. Should all of these actors play a role in the post-Annapolis process, and if so which one?; Is there a specific role for the EU and its Euro-Mediterranean Partnership?

Chair: Oussama Safa (LCPS, Beirut)

Kick-off: t.b.a.

Kick-off: Tobias Schumacher (EuroMeSCo Secretariat, Lisbon)

18.00

Conclusions & End of Seminar

Gonçalo Santa Clara Gomes (EuroMeSCo Secretariat, Lisbon)