

**SUMMARY OF THE MEETING BETWEEN  
SAEB EREKAT AND GENERAL YOUSEF MISHLEV**

*22 March 2007*

*Sheraton Plaza, Jerusalem*

**Attendees:**

*Palestinian Side:*

- Dr. Saeb Erekat, NAD Chief
- Dr. Muhammad Mustafa, President's Economic Advisor
- Nazmi Muhanna, Director General of Crossing Points
- Hatem Yousef, Director General of Customs and Excise
- Naser Al-Sarraj, Checking Points Commerce Official
- Enas Abu Laban-Masri, NAD
- Bader Rock, NAD
- Basem Khouri, Private Sector Representative (West Bank)
- Dr. Abdulmalek Jaber, Private Sector Representative (West Bank)
- Ma'moun Abu Shahla, Private Sector Representative (Gaza)

*Israeli Side:*

- General Yousef Mishlev, Israeli Army
- Director of Karni Crossing Point, Israeli Airports Authority
- General Betslal Tarayber, Crossing Points Official at the Army's Ministry
- A number of army and civil administration officers and an MFA representative

**Meeting Minutes:**

**Dr. Erekat:** Thanked the delegates for their participation. He stated that the meeting was a follow up for the economic meeting in Hertzilya on 13 February 2007. Therefore, it was important to have representatives from the Palestinian private sector in the West

Bank and Gaza Strip to directly present to the Joint Working Group<sup>1</sup> the daily problems that face the private sector, and matters related to trade with Israel to attempt to resolve them.

Then, Dr. Saeb presented the structural changes approved by the Crossing Points Administration Committee, which included the appointment of Mr. Naser Al-Sarraj in charge of trade at crossing points, Mr. Hatem Yousef in charge of customs at crossing points, transfer them administratively from their ministries to NAD and open a private account to deposit customs collected at Kerem Shalom Crossing Point. These changes aim to assure the Israeli side and deal with the problems raised by the Israeli side which prevent the opening of Kerem Shalom Crossing Point. Accordingly, Dr. Saeb requested from the Israeli side to encourage the Israeli government to sign the custom annex in the Agreement on Principles to activate Rafah Crossing Point and open Kerem Shalom Crossing Point without any additional delay.

In his introductory comments, Dr. Saeb stated the following:

- The Palestinian side recently met with General Dayton. They discussed procedures to start implementing a plan to develop the Palestinian side of Karni Crossing Point. They explained to the Israeli side that Israel must give all the necessary facilities, including the release of the crossing point's special equipment held by Israel.
- The Norwegian government will allocate \$5 million for the project to develop Karni through Dayton team. The British government also expressed interest in the project, and would like to allocate a similar amount of money.
- Private sector representatives (Mr. Basem Khouri) would like to make a presentation about the problems facing them at Karni Crossing Point. These problems were often mentioned in the past, and it is good to directly hear them from the private sector.
- We understand the political difficulties. But these difficulties must not affect the life of ordinary people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

---

<sup>1</sup> It was agreed to form this group in Hertzelya meeting.

- In the latest meeting between Abbas and Olmert, the two sides agreed on the importance of continuing the work of the Joint Working Group to ease the burden on people.

**Dr. Muhammad Mustafa:** We must focus on a specific issue during meetings and reach solutions that can be presented as achievements on the ground to gain people's trust. In today's meeting, we would like to focus on problems at Karni Crossing Point, a symbol of disorder and corruption. If we manage to resolve Karni problems, we can overcome many other problems.

**General Betslal Tarayber:** He presented the developments at Al-Jalamah Crossing Point which can process 150 trucks daily. This shows an increase in the movement of trucks at a percentage of 20% during the past two months. An important development also occurred two months, i.e. the transfer of containers between the two sides without a need to unload them, which was not possible in the past. Demand at the crossing is still low, and the number of exchanged containers is not more than 20 container a day. The Israeli side can allow 120 trucks every 10 hours at Al-Jalamah Crossing Point. If there is a commitment, this number of trucks can increase.

**Director of Karni Crossing Point:** The Israeli government took a decision to develop Karni Crossing Point. It allocated for this development NIS150 million over three years, which will be invested in technology, security and other procedures inside the crossing point. At the end of 2007 and the beginning of 2008, the operation of the new survey machine will begin, which will allow the passage of 1200 truck in both sides (400 truck from Gaza to Israel and 800 from Israel to Gaza). In the summer of 2008, new, fixed and highly developed survey machines will be installed, which will increase the number of trucks to 1400 truck. As of 15 April, the crossing point will be opened until 23:00, and lanes will be opened gradually so that the crossing point can operate with its full capacity at the end of 2007.

**Naser Al-Sarraj:** The main problem is to coordinate the entry of trucks to Gaza between drivers, which leads to paying bribes and make us lose the ability to define priorities.

**Dr. Erekat:** Requested from General Mishlev to follow up with Dr. Muhammad Mustafa the issue of issuing permits to Jordanian investors.

**General Mishlev:** The commercial crossing point was opened in Jordan valley. The army will hand it over to Tarayber next Sunday.

We opened road no. 1 (Ma'aleh Adumim) for the residents of Bethlehem, Abu Dis, Hebron, El-Azariah and their districts. We will open the Wadi Al-Baadhan road to enter and exit Nablus on all days, except the closure days or when there are suspicions about attacks.

After Jewish feasts, we will start renovating checkpoints to enable the residents of the north to reach Al-Ghour. We must also meet after the feasts to discuss the renovation of the remaining checkpoints.

We are interested in renovating the Mu'arrajat road. We prepared the necessary maps which I will hand over to Dr. Saeb after the meeting.

**Dr. Erekat:** He requested to meet with General Mishlev in private to discuss these issues and to define achievements in Japan in this regard.

**Basem Khouri:** He made a power point presentation about the problems facing the private sector at Karni Crossing Point, corruption in the system of defining roles and private sector roles to reform the situation (see presentation).

**Dr. Erekat:** Emphasized the importance of the strong link between the bad economic situation and the security situation, and that the best way to guarantee security is to improve people's economic and living conditions.

**General Mishlev:** He requested a copy of the presentation to study it, and promised to discuss it in the coming meeting. We will exert the necessary efforts to resolve the problems that can be resolved at this stage, although there are problems that cannot be resolved. The committee will continue to meet every two weeks. He requested to reduce the number of participants in order to focus on the necessary points and solutions. He thanked everyone for participating.