

**Weisglass – Erekat Meeting Minutes**  
**June 15, 2005, 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM**  
**Jerusalem, Dan Panorama Hotel**

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Attendees:

PLO: Dr. Saeb Erekat, Habib Hazzan,  
GoI: Dov Weisglass, Shalom Tourjman

SE: Summit is in 6 days. We need good results, reiterate Sharm understandings and improve from there. We need to finalize a joint statement before the summit.

DW: Mofaz told us he is ready to show progress on the city handover at the meeting or as a result of the meeting.

SE: Announce it at the meeting.

DW: Ok, Bethlehem then Qalqelia.

HH: There was a fifth city, we forgot about it? What about Ramallah?

DW: Of course, of course.

HH: What about it? When?

ST: We will see how Bethlehem and Qalqelia go and then progress on Ramallah.

[**Action Note**: So far, in all the times this approach was declared, and especially when it comes from ST, the result is that the issue is left undecided and fizzles with time.

Last time this happened was when we agreed to a two step approach for Jericho and Tulkarem. The second step which included the removal of the substantial checkpoints was supposed to happen within a month's time when the Israeli commanders in the field see how the first step was performed. There is consensus that the first step was very successful and yet the second step was never carried out.

Recommendations:

1. We must insist on a time line for areas handover. For Example: Bethlehem within one week of the summit, Qalqelia two weeks later and Ramallah two weeks later. A time-lined handover is easier to monitor and enforce and in any case will serve as a catalyst for the Palestinian side to do the necessary preparations to assume responsibility.

2. We should insist on implementing the second step of Jericho and Tulkarem and the removal of all checkpoints in those areas.
3. Reference should be made to areas and not cities. City and the surrounding villages.

SE: Fugitives and Deportees?

DW: After the handover of Bethlehem all deportees from the nativity church can come back to where they were deported from which is Bethlehem. All of them can come back with no distinction.

HH: No distinction of blood on their hands, including the six the security people refused to allow back after Sharm?

DW: Yes, all of them allowed back.

DW: We will find out about the prisoners tomorrow. I will speak with Zippi Livni, the Minister of Justice.

SE: We will reiterate the "Tahdea", the cease fire.

ST: We will make a fool of ourselves. There is no quite or cease fire and we will re commit to something we did not deliver, neither one of us?

DW: I do not see the problem. We both can re-commit to the cease fire. No problem with that?

ST: No Problem, we will find the language.

SE: Gaza? I still insist on a briefing by the NSU team to you. The soft landing approach, let me know what you came up with. What did you decide on the airport.

HH: Sorry Dr, but this issue was already agreed by Mofaz, he accepted the Palestinian position on the airport. Isn't this what he told Dahlan on Friday?

DW: I will tell you exactly what Mofaz told Dahlan. He did not say he will open the airport. All what he said was that hopefully after the Disengagement Plan is successful and the atmosphere is ripe we will discuss it. We will then build it to operate, we do not want to build it now and then not to operate it.

SE: Even if a third party is involved, you can not have us operate it now?

ST: We do not believe in third parties, even the US.

DW: On this issue, the answer is still negative. But in the summit we can say that Abu Mazen raised the issue of the airport with Sharon and the parties agreed it is going to be discussed in the near future.

[**Action Note:** this approach is dangerous. It will finally close the door on the airport issue. It will prevent us from raising it with the international community and with Jim Wolfenhson.

**Recommendation:**

The issue of the Airport as well as the other things related to Gaza access should be escalated and raised as a major concern with Rice by Dahlan and supported by Abu Mazen in his meeting with Rice.

If we are not successful with the airport issue before June 21<sup>st</sup> then it should not be addressed at all so that we leave the door open for another summit, for pressure on JW and International Community].

SE: Rafah / Egypt ?

ST: We are thinking about that right these days. We are also concerned what will happen to the customs envelope.

DW: The overall intention is to create east access to and from Gaza. How we do this should be worked out at other levels; not the PM – President level.

ST: The future of the Pheladilphi belt is also very important and relevant.

DW: We are taking concrete steps regarding replacing the equipment in order to reduce the hold time for people and goods. We are thinking of a transportation link between Gaza and the West Bank. This has two sub-issues, the first is the permanent status link between Gaza and the West Bank and then there is the immediate need, for the link on the day after the Disengagement. We need to provide solutions for both. We will not go back to what we had in the recent past but will find out solutions. In terms of intention you will hear the PM say all the positive things but details to translate this into reality will come in the few weeks after the summit.

ST: We will declare the importance of people and goods movement.

SE: When you do that you need to forget about me and Habib and Dahlan, think what the layman in Gaza will say. Think how would he judge these new arrangements on the ground and once he experiences them. Is he convinced something changed? If yes, we have done our job.

DW: We will prepare a joint statement to reflect the intention to find a solution and allow movement.

SE: What is your concern about the airport and other issues you are still saying no to?

DW: in Judea and Samaria the calm is very good, it is very quite and there is a difference from January until now. In Gaza, however, it is becoming hell. Kassams, mortars, and shootings. This is the Palestinian paradox. Where we are leaving you to yourself you are creating trouble and giving us a daily illustration of what will happen in the day after evacuation, the worst case scenario is shaping up in front of our eyes. You are not able to do anything to stop it. Every mortar that is fired, the flying objects called the Kassam's are causing no damage to Israel but few dents in some roof. They however, every mortar fired reduced 1% of the Israeli public support for the Disengagement. The worst case scenario is also Bibi's narrative and was supported lately by your friend Bogi Yaalon. (Former Chief of Staff in the Ha'arev interview).

This is why we are not assuming cooperation or trusting you in sensitive security things like the airport and Rafah.

Transportation arrangements between Gaza and the West Bank. If we had total trust in PA security forces capabilities and will, we would convince our people to trust the movement of a Palestinian car inside Israel like the in the Oslo period. If we had total calm, we do not and hence no one in the Israeli security establishment will allow for a Palestinian vehicle to move freely inside Israel.

HH: Just to clarify you are willing to offer us a short term , immediate effect, solution for the facilitated movement of goods and people from the West Bank to Gaza, not the rail link idea that will take up to three years to operate.

DW: No, the rail link is discussed and the offer stands but we are also talking immediate effect measures.

SE: We need to see the specifics before the summit.

DW: The summit will declare the intention to facilitate movement. Not the details.

SE: What about elections coordination. We need to kick it off. The elections themselves are going to happen only after Disengagement is over. We will not gamble to have them before or during. This time however we need to work out all details ahead of elections week. Israel's facilitation of the elections in East Jerusalem and in the rest of the West Bank.

ST: We will initiate a very small coordination group. Your team, your delegates to this team can raise all issues that need coordination.

- HH: We will submit a checklist of issues that need coordination and improvement compared to the Presidential elections.
- ST: Acceptable. We will work on them each one by one in this committee. But this is not for the presidents' meeting.
- SE: Why not? This is good PR even for Israel – facilitating democracy.
- DW: Yes, I agree with Saeb. I think we should have in the joint statement that President Abbas declared his intention to advance the Palestinian elections preparations and hold democratic and free elections for the PLC and that Sharon agreed to help and facilitate these elections. As a result of the meeting the parties formed a joint committee to discuss all elections issues.
- SE: President Abbas asked me to tell you that he wants to revive the joint anti incitement committee.
- DW: We will look into it, we have no idea what it did in the past.
- SE: And some other issue which is not for the President's meeting and is not a request of the president which is the reactivation of TIPH coordination with the Israeli army.
- DW: What is TIPH? We have no idea what they do. We will study it and have an answer but this is not for Tuesday.
- SE: What about all the humanitarian issues we raised regarding for example the 45,000 visit permits problems.
- ST: Mofaz already told Dahlan on Friday. After the disengagement we will consider a positive answer. This is also related to all Gaza access arrangements.
- SE: What about the CBM package. We need to see it before the summit.
- HH: And not at 1:30 AM before the summit. We would like to have an input regarding the package. It must include work permits inside Israel.
- DW: You will have it on Sunday. But we need to see it before ou see it and we still have not.
- SE: Tirawi issue?
- DW: We are having a discussion on Sunday afternoon for any one on our side that was ever involved in the Tirawi issue and we will decide.

SE: Saadat and Shubaki.

DW: The answer is still no. The President can raise it but the answer will be negative. It is better not to raise it.

SE: Silwan and all the house demolitions. They must stop.

DW: We checked, they are in very early stages in court and the attorneys can stop them for months and months. If the president raises it now in the meeting we have to say that legally we can not interfere. It is better not to raise it.

HH: There is a prerogative for the Attorney General, the government legal advisor and employee to freeze the proceedings. You should use this power to benefit the foreign relations of Israel. This is what the power is intended to.

DW: I suggest Habib can check the issue and see how the legal proceeding can be used to delay it in few months after that we might be able to do something.

ST: We need to smallest team possible from both side in the meeting. From our side it will be only the advisors: DW, me, Yuav Garnot and Asaf Sharev.

SE: From our side it will be only Abu Mazen, Abu Alaa, me, Dahlan and Habib.

DW: No Mofaz no Shalom and no Nasser Yousif or Nasser EL Kidweh. By the way can you ask El Kidweh to repeat his statements about the weapons again and again they were very helpful to us. He needs to repeat them in case Rice did not hear them.

ST: We want the meeting to be held in the Prime Minister's office in West Jerusalem.

SE: This is a problem. We need to hold it either in Jericho or at the Ranch.

ST: In the future yes but not this one. What is the problem with PM office? They held four meetings before in that location. But we will check it.

DW: We will check.

ST: What is your position on the houses.

SE: It must be according to International law however there are few options under international law. Abu Mazen does not want to declare something to impose on Sharon he want us to agree to something together. What is the preferred option for Sharon?

DW: Demolish and pay. We will discuss the how later but we prefer to destroy the houses. Leave the debris and rubble behind and pay the PA to remove the rubble.

The cost of removing the rubble will not be yours to pay. We or a third party will pay. All environmental concerns addressed, the method of demolishing. We will also provide you with information which of the rubble is suitable for re-use in infrastructure projects like creating a platform for roads or for the port.

Handing over the homes is not a good option. We are bound by the government decision to destroy, if we change our mind we need to go back and get a new government decision and it might create a problem with Bibi. The Military is against the destruction of the houses. They think it will prolong the evacuation process and add a burden on their shoulders they are better off without. However, this solution reduces the number of days or months needed to complete the evacuation and will allow us a clean cut to go out of Gaza as fast as possible after civil evacuation.

This is also a job creation and the influx of few millions of dollars to Gaza is always desirable. This is the most desirable scenario for the PM.

SE: I do not think we will have a problem with this proposal, however, the details should be agreed, the "how" is important.

ST: We will send our draft for a joint statement and work on it Sunday. Let's meet at five PM on Sunday.

SE: Agreed.