

1 October 2007

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Lord Hannay
UN Association of the UK
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Foreign &
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From The Minister of State

Dear Lord Hannay

Thank you for your letter of 9 August, to the Foreign Secretary, about the situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). I am replying as minister responsible for our relations with the Middle East.

We agree that the UK has an important role to play in achieving peace in the Middle East. The Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and I are committed to this. We will continue to work alongside our international partners, including the UN and the EU, towards our vision of a negotiated two-state solution.

The bedrock of the Government's approach will be threefold: first to be unstinting in our support for a two-state solution in the Middle East; secondly, to support those who are committed to peaceful progress in the region; and thirdly, to support economic and social development across the OPTs.

The key elements of a negotiated settlement will include an end to occupation, the exchange of 'land for peace' leading to a viable state of Palestine alongside the State of Israel, both secure and respected within recognised borders, as set out in UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338 and 1397, 1435 and 1515. It should also build on the Arab Peace Initiative, which offers full normalisation of relations between the Arab States and Israel, in the context of a final settlement. We therefore very much welcome the work by the Arab League to take forward the Arab Peace Initiative, and the international meeting that President Bush has proposed in the autumn.

PK KIM HOWELLS

(Agreed by the Minister and signed in his absence by the Private Secretary)