

Text of Secretary's letter:

Dear Foreign Minister:

On July 16 President Bush reiterated his commitment to a vision of two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. Progress toward this goal is one of the highest priorities of his Administration over the coming year.

Recently the Israelis and Palestinians have made progress in their bilateral dialogue. As they take the historic step to launch bilateral negotiations toward the establishment of a Palestinian state and the realization of Israeli-Palestinian peace, President Bush's Administration will stand by the parties and support their efforts.

I believe that international support is essential. The Quartet is committed to supporting Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas as they make progress towards peace. It has called, as President Bush has, for the renunciation of violence, commitment to previous agreements between the parties, and recognition of Israel's right to exist. The Quartet has also sponsored the Roadmap, which was endorsed by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1515, providing for a two-state solution based on the foundations of the Madrid Conference, the principle of land for peace, UNSCRs 242, 338, and 1397, agreements previously reached by the parties, and the Arab League Peace Initiative calling for acceptance of Israel as a neighbor living in peace and security, in the context of a comprehensive settlement.

In order to seize this opportunity to mobilize international support to achieve meaningful progress towards a just and lasting negotiated settlement to this conflict, and ultimately a comprehensive peace in the Middle East, President Bush called on the international community on July 16 to provide diplomatic support for the bilateral Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, review progress on Palestinian institution-building, and look for ways to support further reform. I invite you to join me on November 26-27, 2007, for this conference which will signal broad international support for the parties' courageous efforts, and will be a launching point for negotiations leading to the establishment of a Palestinian state and the realization of Israeli-Palestinian peace, in accordance with the Roadmap.

Your participation at the conference will help demonstrate international and regional support for the parties' efforts as well as for the development of the Palestinian economy and institutions of governance central to the viability and prosperity of a Palestinian state. In addition to the parties, invitees will include the members of the Arab League Follow-Up Committee, the members of the Quartet, and other key international actors. I will host a dinner, which President Bush will address, on November 26 in Washington. The next day, November 27, we will continue our talks at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, where President Bush will deliver remarks to formally open the conference.

We look forward to confirmation that you will be able to join us in this important work toward a just and lasting settlement to the conflict.

Sincerely,

Condoleezza Rice