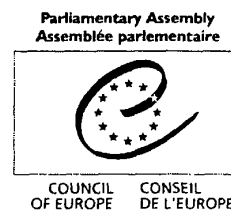


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(Second part)

REPORT

Eleventh sitting

Tuesday 11 April 2006 at 3 p.m.

**ADDENDUM 1**

**Situation in the Middle East**

The following texts were submitted for inclusion in the official report by members who were present in the Chamber but were prevented by lack of time from delivering them.

Mr MAHOVLICH (Observer from Canada) – I congratulate the rapporteur on an excellent report and the Political Affairs Committee on presenting a balanced draft recommendation to this Assembly. It sets out clearly and concisely what the new governments of Israel and the Palestinian territories must do to allow the peace process to continue. I endorse it fully.

Let us be clear: only a renewed peace process can lead to long-term peace and security for Israelis and Palestinians alike. This requires a clear commitment to dialogue and compromise on both sides. For the new Hamas-led cabinet, this means the unequivocal and immediate renunciation of violence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the road map.

Its failure to commit clearly to these internationally accepted led the Canadian government to the decision to suspend assistance to the Palestinian Authority and to have no contact with the members of the Hamas cabinet. At the same time, our government will continue to work with voices of moderation in Palestinian society and to respond to the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people continue to benefit, while avoiding the diversion of funds to Hamas or other listed terrorist entities.

For the new Israeli government a clear commitment to dialogue and compromise requires it to refrain from taking any unilateral action that would prejudice negotiations aimed at achieving a peaceful two-state resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In particular, Kadima's stated goal of establishing Israel's final borders unilaterally in the next few years is unacceptable.

Security is, without question, the precondition for stability and prosperity in the Middle East. When we consider the issue of security in the region and the problem of widespread insecurity for so many Palestinians and Israelis, we need to define it broadly as both security of Israel and a Palestinian state, and as human security. This means taking a people-centered approach to peace and security in the Middle East which recognises that lasting stability cannot be achieved until people – not only states – are protected from violent threats to their rights, safety, lives and livelihoods.

In the end, what all of us, I believe, want to see in the region are socially, economically and culturally viable communities that live side-by-side in peace. Politically sanctioned violence and ideologies advocating violence against individuals, states or peoples can have no place here, nor can policies that sacrifice the human security and economic viability of one group for the sake of achieving these goals for the other.

Thank you.

Mr AUSTIN (United Kingdom) – My colleague, Lord Tomlinson, described a camel as a horse designed by a committee and likened this resolution to a camel. A camel is of great value in the desert and I believe this resolution would be of great value in the Middle East.

Earlier speeches called for respect for the rule of law. Today my thoughts are with the family of Tom Hurndall, an Englishman killed by Israeli forces in Palestine. Earlier this week a British court found the Israeli defence forces culpable of murder. Those responsible should be brought to justice – that would send a very positive message to the Palestinians and the Israelis that we do believe in the rule of law.

I too congratulate Mr Margelov on his report. He says the Hamas victory was predictable, but his report says the result came as a surprise to the west – not to me, nor, it seems, to Mr Margelov.

I have travelled frequently to the occupied territories over a number of years – post-Madrid, pre-Oslo, post-Oslo, pre-Camp David, post-Camp David, before Arafat's return, after Arafat's return, pre-Abbas and post-Abbas. The one thing that has been constant is that each time I have visited, the plight of the Palestinians has been worse than the time before. Years of oppression, humiliation and occupation. Madame Durrieu was right to remind us of that occupation and that any people occupied are bound to resist. Israel and the US said they could not deal with Arafat and that the Palestinians must elect a new leader. They did. The west said Mahmoud Abbas was a man they could do business with but Israel refused. Israel rejected the Oslo accords and rejected the road map so that Fatah was unable to deliver anything to the Palestinian people. Yes, there was corruption; but the main reason for Fatah's defeat was the frustration felt by the Palestinian people at the lack of progress in the Peace Process, as well as respect for the social and welfare services delivered by Hamas.

Governments are right to lay down conditions for dealing with Hamas, but I question the wisdom of the US and EU cutting off direct aid which can only add to the Palestinians' sense of frustration and isolation. So long as a Palestinian government can show that the money is being spent for the purpose for which it was given, aid should continue.

I welcome this resolution's commitment to parliamentary dialogue but I cannot accept the amendment to paragraph 15 of the resolution. The resolution is even-handed but accepting the amendment would be to place conditions on Hamas but not on Israel. But in any case, the conditions in paragraph 10 should not be preconditions to the parliamentary dialogue envisaged in this resolution and resolution 1245. It is precisely that dialogue which could lead to the confidence building which would result in paragraphs 10 and 11 becoming reality.

There has to be movement on both sides. The truce announced by Hamas in 2004 was rewarded by assassination attempts, some successful, on Hamas leaders. Most of this debate has been about the need for Hamas to change – but there must be red lines for Israel too.

Israel should comply fully with international law, honouring past agreements including, in particular, the road map's call for an immediate halt to all settlement expansion. Secondly, the new Israeli government and all its component parts must recognise the right of the Palestinians to have a viable, independent and sovereign state. Thirdly, the borders of this state should be negotiated and not determined unilaterally by Israel and not based on the route of the separation barrier, which has been deemed illegal by the International Court of Justice, where it is built on Palestinian land.

Our governments should make it absolutely clear that they do not view Jerusalem or the Golan Heights as sovereign Israeli territory. If we are seeking to persuade Hamas to change, we should also make it clear to Prime Minister Olmert that it is not acceptable to include in the coalition an overtly racist party, such as Yisrael Beiteinu, whose policies include the forcible return of Arab citizens of Israel.

