



PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

DR. DANILO TÜRK

Ljubljana, 12 April 2011

Dear Mr. Secretary General,

I am writing to you on a matter of serious concern, the need to move the process of peace in the Middle East from the current impasse to a new level and offer a genuine solution to the Palestinian problem. New impetuses are more necessary than ever.

Recent historic events in North Africa and the Middle East have transformed the political situation of the region and have shattered the well-entrenched notions which have for many years helped to maintain the uncertain, yet enduring status quo. The current transition has changed the determinants of the situation in the region. While every country undergoing transition is a case in itself, there is a trait common to all: people's desire to reclaim their dignity and see justice established throughout the Arab world. The unresolved Israeli-Palestinian and the wider Israeli-Arab conflict have been important factors with an exceedingly adverse effect on the sense of dignity of the people. It is only natural to expect that the people of the region will ever more resolutely demand a just solution to the Palestinian issue so that they can reclaim their dignity to the full. As a result of the democratisation processes the foreign policies of Arab countries will necessarily become more representative of the positions of their citizens and for that reason alone the pressures will grow. Time is of the essence. I therefore firmly believe that the moment to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, on the basis of two independent states, Israel and Palestine, living alongside each other peacefully, is now.

His Excellency
Mr Ban Ki Moon
Secretary General
United Nations Organization

New York

Admittedly, there are serious obstacles to be overcome. A mentality of immobility is strong. Trust among the two sides is non-existent. A lack of political will and courage is evident. On the other hand, the basic outline of the solution exists. The international circumstances are ripe. A breakthrough is possible if appropriate outside pressure is brought to bear. The Middle East Quartet must provide strong encouragement, pressure, and effective mediation.

Recently, there have been several converging and encouraging initiatives. The Arab Peace Initiative remains on the table. US President Barack Obama has set September 2011 as a deadline for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. Three European foreign ministers have presented a proposal aimed at reinvigorating the negotiation process. They suggest that the Quartet put forward a set of parameters for a peace agreement. During a recent discussion at the UN Security Council, Member States called for a more pro-active approach by the UN within the Quartet. I support these initiatives and join the call of UN Member States. I ask you, Mr. Secretary General, to lend a strong voice to these efforts. The Quartet meeting on the April 2011 ought to mark a clear difference from the previous meetings: it should produce a declaration setting parameters for a lasting peace agreement and defining a political framework for fresh negotiations. Consideration should be given to the idea of a peace conference aiming at a comprehensive solution.

During the past two decades many opportunities have been missed, each time further eroding trust among the parties, as well as trust in the negotiation process as the best way to achieve peace. This time the international community simply cannot afford to remain passive or without the political will necessary to bring the peace process to its final and decisive phase.

Strong determination, ample political will and generosity of spirit are needed at this crucial moment in time. The political leaders of both parties should go beyond their prejudices and misgivings, and commit to achieving lasting peace for their peoples. They need help. The help of the international community and yours, dear Secretary General, is needed more than ever. I encourage you to provide the leadership, which is now so badly needed, and wish you every success in your endeavours.

Yours, ever,

D. G. T.