

# Letters of Invitation to the Madrid Peace Conference

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## I. U.S. Letters of Assurances on the Terms of the Peace Conference, Washington, D.C., mid-October 1991 (main points).

*[The final versions of the Letters and Assurances (LOAs), in lieu of the more binding, bilateral "memoranda of understanding" that had originally been planned, were conveyed, cited a Number of drafts, to the various negotiating parties by the United States in mid-October. No authoritative texts of any of the LOAs have been [...] released, but the main clauses have been reported in various regional press organs.]*

### A. U.S. Letter of Assurances to the Palestinians

*[Mideast Mirror carried the following points, obtained from its own sources, on 24 October 1991]*

- Palestinians and Israel must respect each other's security, identity, and political rights.
- Bilateral talks will begin four days after the opening of the conference.
- Multilateral talks will open two weeks after the opening of the peace conference.
- We believe that Palestinians should gain control over political, economic, and other decisions that affect them and their fate.
- The U.S. will seek to avoid prolongation and stalling by any party. All negotiations should proceed as quickly as possible toward agreement.
- The U.S. doesn't seek to determine who speaks for Palestinians in this process. We are seeking to launch a political negotiating process that directly involves Palestinians and offers a pathway for achieving the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people and for participation in the determination of their future. We believe that a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation offers the most promising pathway toward this end.
- Palestinians will be free to announce the component of the joint delegation and to make a statement during the opening of the conference. They may also raise any issue pertaining to the substance of the negotiations during the negotiations.
- The U.S. understands how much importance Palestinians attach to the question of East Jerusalem. Thus we want to assure you that nothing Palestinians do in choosing their delegation members in this phase of the process will affect their claim to East Jerusalem or be prejudicial or precedential to the outcome of the negotiations.
- The U.S. is opposed to the Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem and extension of Israeli law on it and the extension of Jerusalem's municipal

boundaries. We encourage all sides to avoid unilateral acts that would exasperate local tensions or make negotiations more difficult or preempt their final outcome.

- The U.S. believes that Palestinians of East Jerusalem should be able to participate by voting in elections of an interim governing authority. The U.S. further believes that Palestinians from East Jerusalem and Palestinians outside the occupied territories who meet the three criteria should be able to participate in the negotiations on final status. The U.S. supports the right of Palestinians to bring any issue including East Jerusalem to the table.
- The purpose of negotiations on transitional arrangements is to effect the peaceful and orderly transfer of authority from Israel to Palestinians. Palestinians need to achieve rapid control over political, economic, and other decisions that affect their lives and to adjust to a new situation in which Palestinians exercise authority in the West Bank and Gaza. For its part the U.S. will strive from the outset and encourage all the parties to adopt steps that can create an environment of confidence and mutual trust, including respect for human rights.
- Negotiations between Israel and Palestinians will be conducted in phases beginning with talks on interim self-governing arrangements. These talks will be conducted with the objective of reaching agreements within one year. Once agreed the interim self-governing arrangements will last for a period of five years. Beginning the third year of the period of self-governing arrangements, negotiations will take place on permanent status. It is the aim of the U.S. government that permanent status negotiations will be concluded by the end of the transitional period.
- Palestinians are free to argue for whatever outcome they believe best meets their requirements. The U.S. will accept any outcome agreed by the parties. In this regard and consistent with long-standing U.S. policies confederation is not excluded as a possible outcome of negotiations on final status.
- The U.S. believes that no party should take unilateral actions that seek to predetermine issues that can only be reached through negotiations. In this regard the U.S. has opposed and will continue to oppose settlement activity in territories occupied in 1967 which remain an obstacle to peace.
- Any party will have access to the sponsors at any time. We are prepared to work hard with you in the period ahead.

## **B. U.S. Letter of Assurances to Syria**

*[The points below, taken from the letter as published on 15 October in the Saudi daily Asharq al-Awsat were reproduced in Mideast Mirror the same day.]*

1. The peace conference and the talks that follow must be based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.
2. The object of the conference is to prepare for direct bilateral Arab-Israeli talks within two days and also for multilateral talks within two weeks. The bilateral talks will run on two parallel tracks: direct talks between Israel and the neighboring states, and direct talks between Israel and "the Palestinians."
3. The U.S. intends to work actively towards a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and do everything it can to keep the two-track process going in that direction. The U.S. is not an advocate of linkage between the "various forms of negotiations," but believes that speedy action in all negotiations to arrive at an agreement is needed and would serve the interests of a comprehensive settlement.
4. The conference will convene under U.S.-Soviet auspices and can reconvene with the approval of all parties.
5. The role of the UN consists in the dispatch by the UN secretary-general of a representative to attend the conference as an observer.  
The U.S. and the USSR will keep the secretary-general informed of the progress of the negotiations. Any agreements reached by the parties will be registered at the secretary and communicated to the Security Council, whose endorsement will be sought by the participating parties. The U.S., cognizant of all parties' interests in the success of the process, will not, as long as the process is actively under way, support any parallel or conflicting action by the Security Council.
6. The final settlement can be reached only on the basis of mutual concessions during the negotiations. The U.S. will throughout these negotiations continue to be committed to the fact that Security Council Resolution 242 and the land-for-peace principle are applicable to all fronts, including the Golan Heights.
7. The U.S. does not intend to recognize or accept any unilateral action on the part of Israel vis-a-vis the extension of its laws, sovereignty or administration to the territory of the Golan Heights.
8. The U.S. will continue to oppose Israeli settlement activity in the territories occupied in 1967, which remains an obstacle to peace.
9. The U.S. is prepared to serve as guarantor of the security of whatever

borders Israel and Syria agree on.

10. The U.S. will continue to act as a mediator that genuinely seeks a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict on the basis of recognition of all the parties' "needs and requirements." The U.S. and the USSR will remain the "moving force" in this process to help the parties make progress towards a comprehensive peaceful settlement.

The U.S. and USSR are ready to remain in constant touch with any of the parties at any time, and the U.S. is also ready to participate in the negotiations in any of their stages with the approval of the parties involved.

#### **C. U.S. Letter of Assurances to Lebanon**

*[The following summary, reported in the London-based Lebanese daily al-Haya was translated in Mideast Mirror on 16 October.]*

- An assurance that Security Council Resolution 425, which calls for an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, has nothing to do with resolution 242 and will be treated as a separate issue.
  - An assurance that the withdrawal of Israeli troops and the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon are two separate issues, the former addressed by resolution 425 and the latter by the Taef agreement, which also calls for the withdrawal of all non-Lebanese forces from Lebanon.
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#### **D. U.S. Letter of Assurances to Israel**

*[The Jerusalem Post on 16 October listed what it reported to be all the clauses of the 17-point Letter of Assurances to Israel. The list was reproduced in Mideast Mirror the same day.]*

1. The U.S. sees the objective of the Middle East negotiations as the attainment of genuine peace and reconciliation between the peoples of the region, accompanied by peace treaties and full diplomatic relations.
2. The opening conference will have no power to make decisions, hold votes or impose positions.
3. Negotiations will be direct only.
4. The U.S. will not support linkage between the various bilateral negotiations.
5. No party need sit with another party against its wishes.
6. The U.S. has no intention of bringing about a dialogue between Israel

and the PLO or negotiations between them.

7. Palestinians taking part in negotiations must be resident of the West Bank or the Gaza Strip who accept phased direct negotiations in two tracks and are ready to live at peace with Israel.

8. The U.S. will not support the creation of an independent Palestinian state.

9. Israel holds its own interpretation of Security Council Resolution 242, alongside other interpretations.

10. Israel is entitled to secure and defensible borders.

11. The U.S. will take steps to enlarge the circle of peace in the Middle East.

12. The U.S. will take steps to bring the Arab economic boycott to an end and to have UN Resolution 3379 equating Zionism and racism annulled.

13. The U.S. will consult closely with Israel and show due consideration for Israel's positions .in the peace process.

14. The U.S. reconfirms ex-president Gerald Ford's written commitment to ex-premier Yitzhak Rabin of September 1975 regarding the importance of the Golan Heights to Israel's security.

15. The U.S. would be ready to give its own guarantees to any border agreed upon between Israel and Syria.

16. Israel is entitled to a secure border with Lebanon and Security Council Resolution 425 on Lebanon must be implemented in a manner assuring the stability and security of the border.

17. The U.S. is committed to Israel's security and to the maintenance of Israel's qualitative edge.

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## **II. U.S.-Soviet Letter of Invitation to Peace Talks in Madrid, 18 October 1991.**

*[The following is the full text of the invitation to the Madrid peace conference jointly issued by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin to Israel, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and the Palestinians. A text of the invitation was made available by al-Hayat to the Mideast Mirror, which published it on 21 October 1991.]*

18 October 1991

Your Excellency:

On behalf of President Gorbachev and President Bush, we are very pleased to convey the attached invitation. After extensive consultations with Israel, Arab states, and the Palestinians, we have concluded that an historic

opportunity exists to advance the prospects for genuine peace throughout the region. The United States and the Soviet Union are deeply committed to helping the parties realize this opportunity.

We look forward to working with you closely in this historic endeavor, and count on your continuing support and active participation.

To facilitate preparations for the conference and ensuring negotiations, we urgently request your positive response as soon as possible, but no later than 6:00 P.M. Washington time, 23 October.

Sincerely,  
James A. Baker, III  
Boris Dmitriyevich Pankin

#### Invitation

After extensive consultations with Arab states, Israel, and the Palestinians, the United States and the Soviet Union believe that an historic opportunity exists to advance the prospects for genuine peace throughout the region. The United States and the Soviet Union are prepared to assist the parties to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement, through direct negotiations along two tracks, between Israel and the Arab states, and between Israel and the Palestinians, based on United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. The objective of this process is real peace.

Toward that end, the president of the U.S. and the president of the USSR invite you to a peace conference, which their countries will co-sponsor, followed immediately by direct negotiations. The conference will be convened in Madrid on 30 October 1991.

President Bush and President Gorbachev request your acceptance of this invitation no later than 6 P.M. Washington time, 23 October 1991, in order to ensure proper organization and preparation of the conference.

Direct bilateral negotiations will begin four days after the opening of the conference. Those parties who wish to attend multilateral negotiations will convene two weeks after the opening of the conference to organize those negotiations. The co-sponsors believe that those negotiations should focus on region-wide issues such as arms control and regional security, water, refugee issues, environment, economic development, and other subjects of mutual interest.

The co-sponsors will chair the conference which will be held at ministerial level. Governments to be invited include Israel, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. Palestinians will be in the conference as an observer, and GCC member states will be invited to participate in organizing the negotiations on multilateral issues. The United Nations will be invited to send an observer, representing the secretary-general.

The conference will have no power to impose solutions on the parties or

veto agreements reached by them. It will have no authority to make decisions for the parties and no ability to vote on issues or results. The conference can reconvene only with the consent of all the parties.

With respect to negotiations between Israel and Palestinians who are part of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, negotiations will be conducted in phases, beginning with talks on interim self-government arrangements. These talks will be conducted with the objective of reaching agreement within one year. Once agreed the interim self-government arrangements will last for a period of five years. Beginning the third year of the period of interim self-government arrangements, negotiations will take place on permanent status. These permanent status negotiations, and the negotiations between Israel and the Arab states, will take place on the basis of resolutions 242 and 338.

It is understood that the co-sponsors are committed to making this process succeed. It is their intention to convene the conference and negotiations with those parties who agree to attend.

The co-sponsors believe that this process offers the promise of ending decades of confrontation and conflict and the hope of a lasting peace. Thus, the co-sponsors hope that the parties will approach these negotiations in a spirit of good will and mutual respect. In this way, the peace process can begin to break down the mutual suspicions and mistrust that perpetuate the conflict and allow the parties to begin to resolve their differences. Indeed, only through such a process can real peace and reconciliation among the Arab states, Israel and the Palestinians be achieved. And only through this process can the peoples of the Middle East attain the peace and security they richly deserve.