

REUNIÓN MINISTERIAL
“INICIATIVA PARA LA PAZ EN ORIENTE MEDIO”

Viernes, 3 de junio de 2016

Intervención Sr. Ministro 5’

Introducción

- I consider this **French initiative extremely important** in order to revitalise the Middle East peace process.
- Indeed, I consider this step so important that, during the Open Debate about the Middle East which took place in October last year under the Spanish Presidency of the UN Security Council, **I proposed a new "Madrid II" International Conference** which would renew the "Madrid spirit" and would allow a political horizon to be created and to advance towards the solution of two States.

Proceso de Paz en Oriente Medio

- In fact, in 2016 we will celebrate **25 years since the historic Madrid Peace Conference**. For the first time, Israelis and Palestinians sat down at the same table to talk.
- This signified an **important turning point**. We stop talking about the "Arab-Israeli conflict" and started to refer to the "Middle East peace process".
- **25 years and a generation later**, the path outlined by the Madrid Conference and Oslo Agreements runs the risk of being abandoned.
- **Peace can only be achieved by the parties**. That was true in 1991 and is also true today, but it is not possible to achieve peace without international partners who are committed to assist them.

Principales temas a abordar

- There are a number of substantive issues that will need to be addressed in order to pave the way towards an International conference.
- 1) **Rebuilding trust between the parties.** In order to achieve it, **Israel needs to be assured that their security concerns will be properly addressed; and Palestinians have to see credible steps that are consistent with their legitimate aspirations towards statehood.**
- 2) It is important to focus on the **improvement of living conditions of Palestinians** and on their institutional empowerment. Regarding prevention of violence we should look for appropriate mechanisms to oversee commitments by the parties.
- 3) The **Gaza strip** is an essential part of the equation, as it must be part of a future Palestinian state. The social and economic situation in the strip is unsustainable and fuels confrontation. Reconstruction and a profound transformation of its economy must be urgently undertaken. This will certainly entail a firm commitment of the international community, but also a united and functioning Palestinian government.
- 4) Beyond improving the situation on the ground, the international Community can assist in **creating conditions towards a renewed and mutually agreed framework for negotiations between the parties.** This should include terms of reference and parameters based on international standards, as well as a calendar and benchmarks, with agreed incentives.
- 5) **The incentives approach could be appealing for the parties because of the potential benefits it entails.** Within this context, the **European Union** could build on the so called **Special Privileged Partnership** already offered to Israel and to the Palestinians in the event of a final status peace agreement. At the same time revisiting the **Arab Peace Initiative** could introduce a very relevant regional security perspective.

- Spain is determined and committed to contribute to the collective efforts to recreate hope and rebuild trust in the Middle East Peace Process:
- 1) We stand ready to actively **participate in the preparatory process of an International Conference** and provide support, including hosting meetings in Spain.
- 2) I firmly believe that **intercultural and inter religious dialogue** are a key instrument in promoting a culture of peace among communities. During the recent Conference on Preventive Diplomacy in the Mediterranean held in Alicante last Monday, an important segment was devoted to this subject. In this regard, **we shall organize a meeting of prominent religious leaders of the Holy Land** with the aim of preventing religion from being used as a source of conflict, and of working towards reconciliation and mutual respect among peoples of all faiths.
- 3) We shall continue to work in **the Security Council** where the Arab Israeli conflict should remain a priority on the Council's agenda. A new pronouncement by the Council could again be considered when it can be more efficient and bear most impact. In this regard, an **endorsement by the Council of the outcome of an International Conference** could add to its political leverage.

Palabras finales

- The success of an International Conference will depend on the firm commitment of all relevant stakeholders in a concerted and constant effort.
- **Israel and Palestine are the first and paramount parties.** But our motivation should be stronger than ever to protect and defend the two state solution that will become unfeasible if we do not act.