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Subject: **INTERVIEW: PA MINISTER SA'EB EREKAT ON NEXT STAGES IN WYE (typ corrected)**

INTERVIEW: PA MINISTER SA'EB EREKAT ON NEXT STAGES IN WYE

Aaron Lerner Date: 8 August, 1999

IMRA interviewed the Palestinian Authority's top negotiator, PA Minister of Local Government Dr. Sa'eb Erekat, in English, on August 8 1999:

IMRA: Barak says he is going to start with the implementation of Wye some time in September. . .

Erekat: I think that there is some kind of misunderstanding here. Barak says that the clock will start ticking at the end of three weeks. That doesn't mean he will start with implementation in three weeks.

IMRA: Let me put it this way. Is the next thing that is supposed to happen an Israeli withdrawal or something by the Palestinians or what?

Erekat: Implementation of the further redeployment- the withdrawal, the release of the prisoners, implementation of the outstanding agreements and commitments, construction of the harbor, the opening of the safe passage, the opening of the Shuhada street in Hebron. On the Palestinian side we are supposed to hand the Israelis a police list, convene the legal committee, convene the people to people committee, continue with the illegal arms collection, continue the anti-incitement committee work.

IMRA: The Israeli withdrawal comes during, before or after these things.

Erekat: They go in parallel. At the same time. The withdrawal was supposed to happen after the PNC met in December. But now since we have the 12 weeks over in Wye we should do our mutual obligations in accordance with a parallel approach. These things that I mentioned to you we should do: to hand in the police list and then convene and implement the legal issues committee, convene and implement the people to people program, continue with the illegal arms collection, continue with the anti-incitement work.

IMRA: Now Israel is supposed to wait until it gets that police list or is it to withdraw before it gets the list or what.

Erekat: They were supposed to withdraw the second stage of the further redeployment immediately after the meeting of the PNC. Now the timeline of Wye is over. It is history.

IMRA: So now you see them withdrawing before they get the list or what?

Erekat: We told them we were willing to implement our side of the deal immediately.

IMRA: So you are going to be handing over the list before the Israelis withdraw.

Erekat: Once we agree on what should be done. This has to be agreed - a time line.

IMRA: I have a copy of the agreement and I see on the time line that the last thing listed to happen in Week 2-6 was the Israeli withdrawal.

Erekat: The week of the 6th was supposed to happen in the late part of 1998. Now we did all of our obligations from that period. We convened the PNC and the Central Council and the Executive Committee concerning the Charter. We issued the anti-incitement decree, we issued the law on arms collection, we outlawed the terrorist organizations.

IMRA: The police list also?

Erekat: We are ready to hand in the police list immediately. But the time-line of Wye is over as of February 1st 1999. So what do we do now? Do we bring back 1999 alive or do we say that we can abort?

IMRA: So the scenario in September is that the PA hands over the list and then the Israelis withdraw?

Erekat: We are going to say that we have to agree on a timeline to implement all of our mutual obligations.

IMRA: So it is still unsettled.

Erekat: That's what we are talking about.

IMRA: This has not yet been resolved.

Erekat: No, that's the problem. We have an argument over the timeline.

IMRA: One last question. When I look at the timeline and I think back as to what is written in Wye the timeline doesn't seem to address the issue of illegal weapons held by the PA itself. It seems more to address the question of illegal weapons held by other parties that may have weapons. When are weapons held by the PA that are not on the agreed list of PA weapons addressed?

Erekat: Well, that's addressed in the American-Palestinian committee.

IMRA: And that's an ongoing discussion.

Erekat: It is an ongoing discussion. The illegal arms have been collected. We have been accused by Sharon of having piles of weapons which is absolutely untrue.

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