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SPEAKER:

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The following is a transcript of a keynote address delivered by Lt. Gen. Keith Dayton to The Washington Institute's 2009 Soref Symposium on May 7, 2009. General Dayton currently serves as U.S. security coordinator for Israel and the Palestinian Authority, a post he has held since 2005. He recently accepted appointment for another two-year term.

It is truly an honor for me to have the opportunity to address such a distinguished audience. My name is Keith Dayton, and I head a small team of Americans, Canadians, British, and a Turkish officer who were sent to the Middle East to assist in bringing some order to the Palestinian Authority's security forces.

The name of our group is the United States Security Coordinators Team—USSC for short—but we are really an international effort. We are English speakers all, just with a lot of accents. [Laughter.] I look forward to sharing my thoughts with you on this evening's topic: Peace through Security: America's Role in Building Palestinian Authority Security Forces. But do keep in mind as I go along, it is not just the United States, but Canada, the United Kingdom, and Turkey, who are working on the task at hand.

Looking out at this group, we have a lot of people here tonight, and this is no doubt due to the invaluable work being done by the Washington Institute scholars here. It reminds me of a story that I heard about Winston Churchill. I love Churchill stories; I have to warn you, there will be two of them in this talk. The story is that once a young woman cornered Churchill and in a gushing voice, she walked up to him and said, "Oh, Mr. Prime Minister, doesn't it thrill you to know that every time you make a speech, the hall is filled, packed to overflowing?"

And Churchill, of course—he was never at a loss for words—said, "Yes, Madame, it is quite flattering. But whenever I feel this way, I always remember that if, instead of making a speech, I was being hanged, the crowd would be twice as big." [Laughter.] Well, tonight, I will be direct with you, as befits a soldier who has served in the uniform of his country for almost thirty-nine years. I will tell you what is unique about our team, what we've been doing, and what we hope to accomplish in the future.

I will talk about opportunities and I will touch on challenges. I would like to leave politics and policy to those better qualified than I am. The countries involved in this enterprise have sent officers to be part of this mission because, in the words of an esteemed Washington Institute scholar, Las Vegas rules no longer work in the Middle East. While it may be true that what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas, it is no longer true that what happens in the Middle East stays in the Middle East.

And all of us on the security coordinator's team share the conviction that the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is in the national interests of our respective nations, and for that matter, of the world. Let me state at the outset a few bedrock principles that guide me in my work.

First, as I just said, I profoundly believe that it is in the national security interest of the United States to help resolve the Israeli-Palestinian dispute.

Second, I am one of those who firmly believes in a two-state solution: a Palestinian state living in peace and security alongside the state of Israel is the only solution that will meet the long-term needs of Israel and the aspirations of the Palestinian people. This has long been the policy of our national leadership, and I share it.

Third, let me state very clearly my deep conviction—and I tell this to my Israeli friends all the time—that as President Obama said last year, the bond between the United States and Israel is unbreakable today, it is unbreakable tomorrow, and it is unbreakable forever. [Applause.]

Before I begin, I want everyone in this room to know that I consider—and this is really sincere—The Washington Institute to be the foremost think tank on Middle East issues, not only in Washington, but in the world. [Applause.] I'm not done yet. I read the Institute's reports, I talk with the Institute fellows and staff about key matters. The people here at The Washington Institute give analytical and unbiased advice. I depend on it, and sometimes I feel I would be lost without it.

Moreover—and some of you may not know this—but Washington Institute staff give of themselves. Mike Eisenstadt, you've got to be in the room—are you here? Mike, would you stand up? [Applause.] What some of you may not know—no Mike, you've got to keep standing. [Laughter.] That's an order—What some of you may not know is that this is Lt. Col. Mike Eisenstadt, U.S. Army Reserve. And he is a senior fellow here at The Washington Institute, and he's just completed an active duty tour as the plans officer on my staff in Jerusalem. [Applause.] I will tell you that Mike's knowledge and wisdom has contributed much toward our future plans and strategy, and Mike, I've got to tell you, I'm proud of you and this Institute should be proud of you too and thank you for your service. [Applause.]

Okay, let's get started. I arrived in the region in December 2005, coming from the Pentagon in Washington, where I served as the deputy director of strategy plans and policy on the Army staff. Before that, I was in Iraq, where I set up and commanded the Iraq survey group, which was charged with the search for weapons of mass destruction. And some have questioned whether this assignment in the Middle East was a reward for the Iraq effort or someone's idea of retribution. [Laughter.] Secretary Wolfowitz, I won't ask you which it is. [Laughter.]

I had been the defense attache of the United States in Russia, but in my heart, I'm an artilleryman. [Applause.] Thank you, I appreciate that. [Laughter.] It's important because artillerymen are schooled in the concept of "adjust fire." You

fire your first round down range to get as close to the target as you can using all the local information you have available to you and then you apply that local knowledge to subsequent rounds and adjust until you hit the target.

That is very much what the team and I do in the Middle East. We have become steeped in an understanding of the context and dynamics of the conflict from the perspective of both sides through daily interaction on the ground, and we adjust fire accordingly. Now, the Office of the U.S. Security Coordinator came into existence in March of 2005 as an effort to assist the Palestinians in reforming their security services. The Palestinian security forces under Yasser Arafat were never able to achieve internal cohesion, they were not properly trained, they were not properly equipped, and they had no clear or effective security mission.

The idea in forming the USSC was to create an entity to coordinate various international donors under one plan of action that would eliminate duplication of effort. It was to mobilize additional resources and to allay Israeli fears about the nature and capabilities of the Palestinian security forces. The USSC was to help the Palestinian Authority to right-size its force and advise them on the restructuring and training necessary to improve their ability, to enforce the rule of law, and make them accountable to the leadership of the Palestinian people whom they serve.

Why was a U.S. general officer chosen to command this thing? Well, three reasons. The first was that senior policymakers felt that a general officer would be trusted and respected by the Israelis. Put that one in the "yes" block. The second was that a general's prestige would help leverage Palestinian and other Arab cooperation. You can put that in the "yes" block. And the third idea was that a general officer would have greater influence over the U.S. government interagency process. Two out of three isn't bad. [Laughter.]

Okay, so where are we now, or who are we and how do we fit into the regional context? And this is kind of important. We're kind of "coming out" tonight to let you know what we are, because we don't do this very often. As I said earlier, we are a multinational team. This is important. U.S. personnel have travel restrictions when operating in the West Bank. But our British and Canadian members do not.

In fact, most of my British contingent—eight people—live in Ramallah. And those of you who know about the overseas missions [know] that the United States does understand that living among the people you work with is invaluable. The Canadians, who are going up to about eighteen people, are organized in teams we call road warriors, and they move around the West Bank daily visiting Palestinian security leaders, gauging local conditions, and working with real Palestinians in sensing the mood on the ground.

Canada provides the team with highly proficient Arab-Canadian translators who relate directly with the people. The Canadians and the British are my eyes and ears. And when I meet with Palestinian security leaders and Israeli military leaders, for that matter, I bring the Canadians and the British with me. Being multinational is a very strong point.

Another strong point is that we were given permission from the outset to work with all sides of this conflict except the terrorists. That means we work on a daily basis with both Palestinians and Israelis—something that is unique in the region, believe it or not. On a given day, I may meet in Ramallah with the minister of the interior or the commander of the Palestinian Authority national security forces in the morning and then meet with the director general of the Israeli Ministry of Defense in the afternoon.

My team and I frequently visit Jordan and Egypt and we've even been granted permission to coordinate with the Gulf States. Our watchword is to move forward carefully, in full coordination with all sides. And I'll show you in a few minutes how this is working. We are also networked with all the other missions in the region working the Arab-Israeli conflict. My team and I are in daily contact with a group called EUPOL COPPS. It's a team of European policemen who actually live there who are charged with reform of the Palestinian civil police—the cop on the beat.

And we are also working closely together with them on reform of the Palestinian judicial system. We are well tied in with the efforts of the Quartet special representative, Tony Blair, and his team. We're tied in with a colleague of mine from the Joint Staff—Lt. Gen. Paul Selva, United States Air Force, who is the roadmap monitor and reports directly to Secretary of State Clinton.

And we meet with a variety of other international actors in the region in the course of our coordination, ranging from individual countries, nongovernmental organizations, to officials of the United Nations. But perhaps the most important thing about who we are is that we live in the region. We do not parachute in for a few days and then go home. We stay there. In a region where understanding the reality on the ground while building relationships is the cornerstone of getting something done, you have to invest the time, and we've done that.

I've been away from home, as you heard, for about three-and-a-half years. My staff routinely extend their tours and some have been away even longer than I have. If anyone were to drive by the American consulate in Jerusalem late at night or on a weekend, he would see a few lights on in the building. Quite often those are my guys. I think it was Disraeli who said, "The secret of success is constancy of purpose."

So let me tell you a little bit of the history and figure out where we've been since March of 2005. Gen. Kip Ward was the first commander of the USSC, and his mission was to begin the process of training and equipping the Palestinian

security forces. But his mission was, frankly, captured by the Israeli disengagement from the Gaza Strip in 2005 and he never got work done on that particular task.

When he passed command to me in December 2005, he said, "Good luck." Little did I appreciate how much luck I would need, because a month later, Hamas won the Palestinian Legislative Council elections and my mission changed overnight. For the first eighteen months I was there, we faced a situation of either a Hamas government in the Palestinian territories or a unity government led by a Hamas prime minister.

So as a result, we focused on coordinating international activity to help to get the Gaza economy going, largely through coordinating the activities of Israel, Egypt, and the Palestinians at the large border crossings in Gaza at a place that's called Rafah and Karni. We also coordinated British and Canadian training assistance to the Palestinian Presidential Guard who were manning those border passages.

And because the Presidential Guard reported directly to President Abbas and was not influenced by Hamas, they were considered to be in the game. But all other security forces suffered greatly from Hamas neglect, nonpayment of wages, and persecution, while Hamas went on to create its own security forces with lavish support from Iran and from Syria. In June 2007, as I think most of you know, Hamas launched a coup in the Gaza strip against the legitimate Palestinian authority security forces there.

And those Iranian and Syrian-sponsored, well-equipped, well-funded and well-armed Hamas militiamen overthrew the legitimate Palestinian Authority's security forces, keeping in mind those guys hadn't been paid for sixteen months and they were poorly equipped and poorly trained. Keep that thought in mind. And despite all that, the Palestinian forces fought back for five days and lost several hundred killed and wounded. But at the end of all that, Hamas still won, and my mission changed again, very dramatically.

With the appointment of Prime Minister Salam Fayad and his technocrat government by President Mahmoud Abbas in June of 2007, our focus changed again from Gaza to the West Bank. In July, President Bush announced a request to Congress that \$86 million be provided to fund a security assistance program for the Palestinian security forces, and Congress readily agreed. We were back in the game again.

What he didn't say was that for those first eighteen months, we had zero operational budget—we had no money. I was truly a coordinator of other people's efforts. But this time, we actually had money in our pocket and a mission to go out and achieve. And since then, we have followed a consistent azimuth of support to the moderate government of President Abbas and Prime Minister Fayad in the West Bank.

The U.S. administration and Congress provided an additional \$75 million last year, bringing to \$161 million that the USSC has been able to invest in the future of peace between Israel and Palestinians through improved security. So what have we done? At the risk of boring you, we did it in four major areas. First: Train and equip. Although we work closely with the Presidential Guard even now, we have focused on transforming the Palestinian national security forces into a Palestinian gendarmerie—an organized police force or police units, as it were—to reinforce the work being done by the civilian police advised by the European Union.

The training is a four-month program at the Jordan International Police Training Center—we abbreviate it as JIPTC for short—outside of Amman. It features a U.S.-Jordanian police training cadre and a U.S.-developed curriculum that is heavy on human rights, proper use of force, riot control, and how to handle civil disturbances. The training is also focused on unit cohesion and leadership.

Now, you might ask, why Jordan? The answer is pretty simple. The Palestinians wanted to train in the region, but they wanted to be away from clan, family, and political influences. The Israelis trust the Jordanians, and the Jordanians were anxious to help. Our equipping is all nonlethal and it is fully coordinated with both the Palestinians and the Israelis. Make sure you understand that. We don't provide anything to the Palestinians unless it has been thoroughly coordinated with the state of Israel and they agree to it. Sometimes this process drives me crazy—I had a lot more hair when I started—but nevertheless, we make it work.

We don't give out any guns or bullets. The equipment ranges from vehicles to socks. We have also graduated, now, three battalions—an average of five hundred men each—from JIPTC and another battalion is currently in training. The graduates have also been extensively schooled by the Jordanians, who have really stepped up to this task, on loyalty to the Palestinian flag and the Palestinian people.

And what we have created—and I say this in humility—what we have created are new men. The average age of the graduates is twenty to twenty-two years, and these young men, when they graduate, and their officers believe that their mission is to build a Palestinian state. So if you don't like the idea of a Palestinian state, you won't like the rest of this talk. But if you like the idea of a Palestinian state, listen on.

Let me quote you, for example, from an excerpt of the graduation remarks of a senior Palestinian official as he spoke to the assembled troops in Jordan last month. He said, "You men of Palestine have learned here how to provide for the safety and security of the Palestinian people. You have a responsibility to them and to yourselves. You were not sent here to learn how to fight Israel, but you were rather sent here to learn how to keep law and order, respect the right of all

of our citizens, and implement the rule of law so that we can live in peace and security with Israel."

Now, upon the return of these new men of Palestine, they have shown motivation, discipline and professionalism, and they have made such a difference—and I am not making this up—that senior IDF commanders ask me frequently, "How many more of these new Palestinians can you generate, and how quickly, because they are our way to leave the West Bank."

The second area we focused on has been capacity building in the Ministry of Interior. That may seem like a mundane task, but it is absolutely vital, because we are trying to form a normal government. In the Palestinian Authority, the minister of interior is responsible for all the security forces to the prime minister and president. And when Gaza fell, the Ministry of Interior fell with it, which really wasn't a bad thing because the ministry had been dominated by Hamas, and the ministry had been focused on building up what's called the Executive Force—which was the Hamas alternative to the legitimate security forces. And when the ministry fell, it was one of the good things that happened in June of 2007.

Well, the new Fayad-appointed minister had literally no one else to work with when he walked into his office, and as he complained to me, he didn't even have a typewriter. Think about that. Who talks about typewriters these days? But he didn't even have a typewriter. In the last eighteen months, we have invested considerable funds and personnel into making the ministry a leading arm of the Palestinian government with a capacity to budget, to think strategically, and to plan operationally. As I said, it's the key to normalcy for Palestine. Security decisions in Palestine are no longer made by one man in the middle of the night. In this we have come a very long way.

Infrastructure is the third area. It's hard to describe how decrepit were the Palestinian security facilities we first encountered—not really fit for human habitation. In the past eighteen months, we have worked with Palestinian contractors to build a state-of-the-art training college for the Presidential Guard in Jericho as well as a brand-new operational base that will house—as a matter of fact, is housing now—one thousand of the returning NSF gendarmes from Jordan on a hilltop outside of Jericho city.

We are planning on building another one of these operational bases in Jenin and it's with the full agreement and endorsement of the Israeli army. We are also in the midst of rebuilding a major Palestinian police gendarmerie training center, also in Jericho. And I've got to tell you, the pride and confidence that the beneficiaries of this work exhibit has been a persistent observation of American and allied visitors to these sites, including frequent congressional delegations that have gone there. For the first time, I think it's fair to say that the Palestinian security forces feel they are on a winning team.

And the fourth area we've focused on is senior leader training. That may sound kind of dumb—but actually it's a small program—but in my view, it's probably the one of the greatest lasting value. We've already graduated two classes of people at the ranks of major, lieutenant colonel, and colonel from an eight-week seminar-like course where we get thirty-six men from all the security services together and they learn how to think about current-day problems and how to operate jointly and with respect for international standards. It's the most popular thing we do.

I've been to two graduations and it's like graduation from college. They bring their families, all of their leaders are there; everyone's dressed up. It is really something to behold, because they feel that they are now entering the community of nations in the fact that they are being treated as senior leaders for people whose time may be coming to actually run their own lives as a state.

We give a final exam in this course. It's an essay question they have to answer. And the essay question is taken from a menu of ten. And it might surprise you to learn that the most popular essay—more than 50 percent select this consistently—is, "Why do human rights matter in Palestine?" Now, who would have expected that? And do you know what? The senior leader graduates have gone on to promotions and more responsible positions.

The new battalion commander of the unit training in Jordan, whom I visited last week, is a recent graduate of the senior leader course, and he is just proud as punch that he is taking what he learned there and applying it to leading his new unit of five hundred men and anticipating their return back to the West Bank.

Okay, so what have we and the Palestinians—I've got to emphasize this—what have the Palestinians achieved? Because I'm a force provider—I help them. But they do a lot of this themselves. Let's talk about facts on the ground. The USSC security partnership with the Palestinians and Jordanians and the Israelis is now in its eighteenth month. The results are beyond our most optimistic expectations, and they relate directly to the title of this talk, "Peace through Security." The facts on the ground have changed and will continue to change.

I don't know how many of you are aware, but over the last year-and-a-half, the Palestinians have engaged upon a series of what they call security offensives throughout the West Bank, surprisingly well coordinated with the Israeli army, in a serious and sustained effort to return the rule of law to the West Bank and reestablish the authority of the Palestinian Authority. Beginning in Nablus, then Jenin, Hebron, and Bethlehem, they have caught the attention of the Israeli defense establishment for their dedication, discipline, motivation, and results.

And I've got to tell you, the Jordanian-trained guys are the key. Let me dwell on Hebron for a minute, because if any of you know about Hebron, this is a very difficult place, okay? It's the largest city in the West Bank, it has a very large and

aggressive settler population, and it is a very holy site for the Jewish people and for the Arab people. A year ago, the IDF rejected any suggestion that the Palestinian Authority should be allowed to reinforce its garrison in Hebron, which was a small force of only about four hundred police and gendarmes for this, the largest governorate in the West Bank.

And we wanted to reinforce them with some of the graduates of the Jordan program. They said no. Yet the performance of these Jordan-trained graduates in Jenin, which was their first deployment, was so impressive that six months later, the IDF not only allowed the reinforcement in Hebron, but led it, facilitated it, and extended it. It's still going on. And the results of this reinforcement have been electric. There were villages in the Hebron governorate that had not seen a uniformed Palestinian policeman since 1967. Think about that. Not anymore.

It had become the place where tribal law, sharia law, had replaced the secular law of the Palestinian Authority. Let me give you an example of something I thought was fascinating. The governor of Hebron told me that—about three months ago—that the security forces had rounded up four guys who were guilty of some kind of a criminal ring, and they had incarcerated them, they were in jail.

And true to form, the next morning, the governor goes into work, and he finds four sheiks sitting outside his office, and he knew what was coming. These were guys from the most powerful clan in the Hebron area, and his experience with these guys in the past had always been "Give us our guys back, you can't have them, we've got them, we know how to deal with this." Well, this day was different. He said as he was sitting in his office, they came in and the head sheik said, "We know you picked up four of our men last night. And we've been watching what you've been doing here for the last two months. We just have to tell you that we believe in you and you can have them. We don't know how to deal with these guys, they are yours, the authority is back, let's go." [Applause.]

Well, I was in Hebron last week, where a company—about one hundred and twenty-five men—of the Jordan-trained second special battalion of the national security forces is operating under the authority of the Palestinian area commander, reinforcing the police and providing a gendarme presence in what Oslo called Area A and also in Area B, which is, according to Oslo, Israeli control. Why are they in Area B? Because the Israeli army commander in the area says, "I need their help and I can trust these guys—they don't lie to me anymore."

That's, again, a pretty significant transformation. And I will tell you that what I saw, and what I get reports on from my Canadians and British who travel more than I do, is that the transformation in what was arguably the politically most difficult city in the Palestinian territories has been profound. And in the midst of all this, there have been no clashes—no clashes—between Palestinian security forces and the IDF or the Palestinian forces and the Israeli settlers who

happened to live in the areas. Now, that's pretty amazing, and I think we're pretty pleased with that.

Across the West Bank, these security campaigns have featured clamping down on armed gangs amid a visible police presence, dismantling illegal militias, working against illegal Hamas activities, and focusing on the safety and security of Palestinian citizens. Crime is down. Teenage girls in Jenin can visit their friends after dark without fear of being attacked. Palestinian shops are now open after dark—they never were. A year ago they weren't.

And life is approaching normal in many of these areas. In a report published at the end of February, the International Monetary Fund, which is always critical of everybody, wrote that "During 2008, the Palestinian authority made substantial progress in establishing security in several Palestinian cities in the West Bank by deploying police and security forces. This has brought about a large measure of stability and business confidence, and 2008 was the most profitable year for the Palestinian Authority in the past decade."

Now, in my meeting with Palestinian commanders last week from Tulkarm and Nablus in the north to Hebron and Bethlehem in the south, there was profound confidence in their capability and positive comments about their cooperation with the Israeli army in the area. In Bethlehem, surprisingly, the area commander noted proudly that he and the local Israeli brigade commander have worked out a deal where the curfew that Israel has always applied since 2002 in the West Bank no longer applies in Bethlehem and that the Palestinians are now authorized to run checkpoints of their own to control smuggling activity 24/7.

The situation may be fragile; there are many challenges ahead. But this is real progress in changing facts on the ground. But the big challenge—and this is the one I want you all to take away if you take away nothing else tonight—was in January 2009. As the English officers on my team would say, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. And over the past year, no security challenge in the West Bank has even come close to the challenge the Palestinians had in maintaining law and order during Operation Cast Lead—the Israeli ground invasion of Gaza in January.

Before the ground invasion, my IDF colleagues warned in confidence that massive civil unrest in the West Bank was coming. Some even predicted a third intifada—something they dreaded but were willing to risk to stop the rocket fire against southern Israel. Yet as it turned out, none of these predictions were true. Demonstrations occurred, there were some loud rallies, but the promised days of rage demanded repeatedly by Hamas failed to materialize.

Why was that? Well, there were two reasons. The first was, I think, the new professionalism and competency of the new Palestinian security forces guaranteed a measured and disciplined approach to the popular unrest. Their

guidance from the prime minister and president was clear: allow demonstrations, but do not allow them to become violent, and keep the demonstrators away from the Israelis.

This time, unlike any time in the past, the Palestinian president and prime minister had tools adequate to the task. The IDF also felt—after the first week or so—that the Palestinians were there and they could trust them. As a matter of fact, a good portion of the Israeli army went off to Gaza from the West Bank—think about that for a minute—and the commander was absent for eight straight days. That shows the kind of trust they were putting in these people now.

Anyway, the Israelis deliberately kept a low profile, stayed away from the demonstrators, and coordinated their daily activity with the Palestinians to make sure they weren't in the wrong place at the wrong time for either an inadvertent clash or just to stay out of the way of the demonstrations that were coming. So typically the Palestinian commander would call the Israeli commander in the area and say, "We've got a demonstration going from point A to point B. That's very close to your checkpoint here at Bet El. We would appreciate it for two hours if you would leave the checkpoint so that we can get the demonstrators through, bring them back, you can come back."

And that's exactly what they did—amazing. Widespread demonstrations against the Gaza invasion occurred, of course. But they were largely peaceful and they never got out of control. The police and the gendarmerie applied the training they had learned in Jordan, and unlike past events, not a single Palestinian was killed in the West Bank during the three weeks of the Israeli presence on the ground in Gaza. That's pretty good.

The second reason, which is one that I think we need to study a little more -- and maybe The Washington Institute can help us with this—was one I didn't expect. I heard this in the north, I heard it in the south. The consistent theme was that although the people in the West Bank did not support the Gaza invasion—as a matter of fact, they were extremely angry at Israel for doing it—they didn't support Hamas even more.

What I'm saying here is, they showed their support for the people by blood drives, clothing drives, food drives, things like this. But they were not out there to demonstrate in favor of Hamas. They were out there to demonstrate in favor of the people of Gaza. But Hamas was clearly not on their dance card. Why? Because Hamas was perceived as having brought disorder and disaster to Gaza, and the people in the West Bank simply didn't want that anymore. Plus they had a security force amidst them that they were beginning to respect. The way I would put it is, the prospect of order trumped the prospect of chaos.

Okay, so where do we go from here? If Congress authorizes it, the USSC will continue our initiatives with the Palestinian Ministry of Interior to transform,

professionalize, and restructure the Palestinian security forces in the West Bank through more training and equipping, more capacity building, intensified work with the European Union, and more infrastructure. We have plans on the books right now to train and equip three more battalions in Jordan—that's approximately fifteen hundred more of the national security forces, and two more operational base camps to be built to house them. We have plans to expand our senior leader training to include middle-level officers.

We're aware that there's a need for a functional logistical and administrative structure that's unique to the Palestinian Authority, and we're working hard with the Ministry of Interior and the security chiefs to design such a thing that will work for Palestinians. And we're working closely with Israeli military commanders in the West Bank to explore options to further reduce the IDF footprint as the Palestinian capability and proven abilities grow. There has been progress already—I want to make sure you know that—as far as the IDF efforts to present a reduced Israeli security presence, especially in the north.

Through the efforts of our British team in Ramallah, we've also taken on the neglected Palestinian civil defense organization. Most of you have never heard of it, but these are the first responders. These are the EMTs and the ambulances and the firemen. We've taken them under our wing. They're in our budget. We're going to help them. And we also have something in our pocket called the West Bank Training Initiative where we have plans to continue a series of courses in the West Bank on logistics, leadership, first aid, maintenance, English language, battalion staff training, and driver education. These are led by our British and Turkish officers with an eye to eventually turning this over to the Palestinians themselves.

Well, let me go back to the theme of Peace through Security. Can it really happen? That's a tough one. Do we have a long way to go? You bet we do, and the challenges along the way are formidable. Time may not be on our side. Very serious work needs to be done on terrorism, and we are actively exploring options with the Palestinians, with the Jordanians, and with the Israelis. If we are to have a Palestinian state, there is also serious work ahead on borders and crossings management, on which the Canadians on my team are in the lead. And then of course there's Gaza and the armed formations of Hamas that present an enormous challenge to the future of a Palestinian state.

But I would tell you it's not hopeless. The continuous presence in the region of a small but dedicated team of American, Canadian, Turkish, and British officers who work with all sides, who live there, and who understand the terrain in a military sense is beginning to pay off. We're building new facts on the ground from the bottom up, and we have genuine partners in the Kingdom of Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, and the State of Israel. We can't do it all of course. The negotiators and the politicians have their work cut out for them, but we believe

we are creating conditions, a security foundation, if you will, that will make their very difficult task a little bit easier.

I take to heart the much-repeated words of my friend, a very senior, tough, pragmatic leader in the Israel Defense Forces. He was formerly a severe critic. Not anymore. Now he says—and I'm quoting him here directly from a newspaper article—"The USSC is doing a great job, and as the Palestinians do more, we [the Israelis] will do less." Now, as far as I'm concerned, those are words to live by and to make a reality.

So again, the theme of this talk, Peace through Security: the road to peace in this region is a very difficult one. All of you know that. I would say it goes through forests of misunderstanding, lack of trust, old wounds, political and institutional weakness, and spoilers who would like to see us all fail. And there are dangers every step of the way. But compared with past years, we are now on that road, and we can make out the outlines of the destination ahead. We are moving forward. Peace through security is no longer an impossible dream. I think it was Herzl who said, "If you will it, it is not a dream."

As a professional military officer, I appreciate Israeli caution and Palestinian impatience. But sometimes it's useful to look backward as you look forward. I recall vividly a meeting in February with a hardened IDF officer with great direct responsibility for the security of Israel. We were talking in his headquarters about what didn't happen in the West Bank in January and the prospects for the future. He sat back in his chair and he smiled and he said, "The change among the new Palestinian men in the past year is miraculous. Mine was the generation that grew up with intifadas, and now I have hope that my children won't have to do the same thing." And as a result he pledged to take prudent risk to move things forward, and he has been true to his word. He remains cautious but hopeful. Me too.

Okay, I promised you two Churchill stories, so I'm going to end with one. And the last line of this story, I want you to think about, because that's kind of how we see ourselves right now in May of 2009 in the USSC. And this is one of my favorite stories about Churchill. I hope it doesn't offend anybody in the group. It was late in the Second World War. The tide was clearly going in favor of the Allies, and so Churchill's secretary was scheduling him appointments with civilian lobbying groups. And lo and behold on this particular day, the secretary had scheduled a meeting with the chairwoman of the British Christian Temperance Union. Okay. [Laughter.] You can see where this is going, I'm sure.

At the appointed time, into Winston's large office in Whitehall strode this little old lady with a big hat who walked up in front of his desk and without stopping for a breath started to scold him about his drinking habits. [Laughter.] "Winston," she said, "we have calculated the amount of intoxicating beverages you have consumed since the beginning of this war, and it would fill your office halfway

from the floor to the ceiling. You are a disgrace. What do you have to say for yourself?"

Well, again, Winston, never at a loss for words, reportedly moved over to the side of his desk, put his hands in his pocket, and he looked down at the floor, he looked up at the ceiling, and he said, "Ah, yes, madam, so much accomplished but so much more to be done." [Laughter.]

Thank you very much.