

July 2012

# All about The Arab Peace Initiative (API)

## In Questions and Answers

Promoting the Arab Peace Initiative  
as a basis for a comprehensive  
Middle Eastern Peace Project



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Founded in 1997, The Center for Democracy and Community Development is a non-profit Palestinian NGO based in Jerusalem aimed at: disseminating the concepts and experiences of community –based participatory democracy; promoting the practices and theories of just peace in the Palestinian community North Africa, and the countries of West Asia ; encouraging the participation of marginalized groups in the decision – making processes ; working with children , youth, women, and community groups to improve society ; developing exchange programs , research project ; and policy initiatives for the purpose of community building , training , empowerment , and rehabilitation; and coordinating with all local, regional and global institutions that conduct related work.

This pamphlet aims to clarify the content of the Arab Peace Initiative (the API) and its relations with other peace plans such as the Road Map Plan of 2003.

The pamphlet also aims to clarify the process of the implementation of the API and the relationship between the bilateral and the multilateral tracks in this regard.

The pamphlet, published in English, Arabic, and Hebrew, is prepared in order to be used in an educational campaign for the Israeli, the international, and the Arab States publics about the API leading to an advocacy and lobbying activities with the decision makers toward the API promotion.

These activities are taking place as part of an EU supported project continuing until almost the end of 2013. The project partners are: The Center for Democracy and Community Development (CDCD), the Negev Institute for Strategies of Peace and Development (NISPED), and IKV PAX CHRISTI. Additionally involved are six associate organizations from Jordan, Egypt, Israel, and Syria along with the Middle East Citizen Assembly (MECA) which is an assembly of citizens that consists of members from 19 Middle Eastern countries, most of which are Arab and including Israel, Turkey, and Iran along with others.

This pamphlet is the result of thorough and intensive work regarding the API in the last six years. Most of what was written

about the API follows as does information on activities that took place locally in Israel and Palestine, and regionally. In the pamphlet we included the 20 frequently asked questions (FAQ) about the API.

Besides the pamphlet, the project partners and associates prepared an action plan of activities to be conducted with the public and the decision makers in the countries of the region and globally. This pamphlet will be used as a tool in the campaign.

We would like to thank the interns: John Michalek and Lianet Vazquez who edited this booklet before sending it to the publication house.

Please enjoy reading and let us know of any further ideas for the promotion of the comprehensive peace in the Middle East together.

The Center for Democracy and Community Development  
(CDCD)

The Negev Institute for Strategies of Peace and Development  
(NISPED)

**IKV PAX CHRISTI**



NISPED aims to support and encourage peace making efforts, on the grassroots, people-to-people level, through the joint design and implementation of courses and projects with our Palestinian and Arab neighbors. In spite of the ongoing violent Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the stagnation of formal peace endeavors, we continue to seek out partners in the Middle East for work that enhances dialogue, co-existence, mutual respect, joint economic work, and non-violence



IKV Pax Christi works for peace, reconciliation and justice in the world. We join with people in conflict areas to work on a peaceful and democratic society. We enlist the aid of people in the Netherlands who, like IKV Pax Christi, want to work for political solutions to crises and armed conflicts. IKV Pax Christi combines knowledge, energy and people to attain one single objective: there must be peace!

IKV Pax Christi works on peace programmes at the request of Pax Christi and IKV; it operates as one organisation with one Supervisory Council and one Management Board. IKV and Pax Christi continue to exist. IKV's Board and Pax Christi's Membership Council monitor mission and identity, contribute to developing a vision and evaluate the consistency of these with IKV Pax Christi's policy.

# THE API IN QUESTIONS

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## 1) What is the significance of the API?

When the Arab Peace Initiative was launched by the Arab Countries summit of Beirut on March 27th and 28th in 2002, it represented a crucial shift in the Arab position towards Israel.

Previously the Arab countries were against any peace, recognition, or negotiations with Israel.

The Khartoum summit’s three “No’s” of September 1967, are well known; no recognition, no negotiation, no reconciliation (Sulh) with Israel. At that time Abed Al Nasser’s slogan: “No voice prevailing over the voice of the battle,” was dominant.

The Arab position toward Israel started to witness changes in the 1980s. In 1982 the Fez Arab summit Initiative for peace responded to the King Fahd of Saudi Arabia Initiative (1981) that called for the rights of all states “of the region to live in peace.” Several years later the Arab extraordinary summit of Cairo in June 1996 stated that “a comprehensive Peace in the Middle East in the strategic option of the Arab Countries.”

In February 2002, another crucial change took place when Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia Abdullah Abdel Aziz released the “Saudi Initiative.” This called for a full Israeli withdrawal to the June 4th 1967 borders in exchange for Arab recognition and complete normalization with Israel.

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The Saudi Initiative was presented at the Beirut summit of March 2012. The outcomes of this presentation and discussion led to the launching of the Arab Peace Initiative (API) as an agreed upon initiative for peace with Israel in the name of all 22 Arab Countries.

The significance of the API is that it represents the shift of the Arab strategic option towards Israel from war to peace. This shift took more than two decades in order to be before finally being realized in the API.

## **2) What are the main components of the API?**

The API includes a preamble and 4 components included in the seven articles of the initiative. The preamble refers to the Saudi Initiative presented to the summit by Crown Prince Abdullah which called for Israel's withdrawal from all the 1967 Arab occupied territories and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its Capital. In return, all Arab countries will establish normal relations with Israel.

The preamble also includes another very important point, stating, "The conviction of the Arab Countries that a military solution to the conflict will not achieve peace or provide security for the parties." The preamble declares that just and

comprehensive peace is the strategic option of the Arab States".

The API's first component is to address Israel. This was done in several articles. In article number 1, a Quranic language that was not expressed in the official translation of the API is presented, asking Israel to "lean to peace" and therefore to declare that just peace is its strategic option as well. In article 2, Israel is requested to withdraw from all the Arabic occupied territories including the 1967 occupied Golan Heights and the Lebanese occupied territories of 1967 and 1948. Also the article requests Israel to accept the establishment of a Palestinian state in the 1967 occupied territories and to accept an agreed upon just solution to the Palestinian refugees problem that is in accordance with the UN General Assembly resolution 194.

Furthermore, article number 5 requests the Israeli Government and the Israeli public to accept the initiative in order to:

- 1) "safeguard the prospects of peace."
- 2) "Stop the further shedding of blood."
- 3) "[Enable] the Arab Countries and Israel to live in peace and good neighborhoods."
- 4) Provide future generations with security, stability, and prosperity.

The API's second component affirms the Arab countries readiness to 1) end the conflict. 2) Enter in a peace agreement with Israel. 3) Provide security to all the states of the region. These affirmations are included in article 3 of the API,

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In article 4, the Arab Countries confirm their rejection of all forms of Palestinian patriation (Tawtin). This article was added in order to satisfy Lebanon, who always expressed fears that the patriation of the refugees in Lebanon will change the demographic balance in Lebanon. This article is not contradictory to article 2 mentioned above which spoke about an agreed upon solution to the Palestinian refugees problem (see more details in a later answer).

The third component of the API includes the Arab responsibilities in presenting the API to the international community as expressed in article number 7. This article asked the General Secretary of the Arab League office to establish a committee that includes the concerned member States and the General secretary, to work for the international support of the API.

Beyond this article, Jordan and Egypt, being the two countries who achieved peace agreements with Israel, were asked by the Arab successive summits to be in continuous contact with the Israeli government, in order to get the Israeli government to approve the API.

This request to Jordan and Egypt was included in the API follow-up committee resolution of its April 2007 meeting and in other meetings as well.

In its fourth component expressed in article number 6, the API called upon the international community with all its States and Organizations to support the API.

In conclusion, the API includes what is requested from Israel and what is requested from the Arab States in order to make peace. Also, it contains (together with other summit final Declaration, and the Riyadh summit of 2007 decisions of final declaration) follow-up mechanisms for its promotion within the international community (through an Arab States committee) and with the Israeli Government (through Jordan and Egypt).

### **3) Is the API an Initiative or a position? Is it a “take it or leave it plan?”**

The API was presented in 2002 by the Arabs based on their conviction that giving Israel more incentives might be the way to encourage Israel to move forward in peace negotiations with Syria, Lebanon, and the Palestinians. The API was a product of the thinking that promises the end of conflict, along with peace and recognition of Israel from Syria, Lebanon, and Palestinians. This might not be enough to encourage Israel to move toward agreements on these three tracks though. Therefore by promising Israel recognition, security, and normal relations from all the Arab Countries might be the way to encourage Israel to support the API. With this in mind, the API was presented as an incentive to Israel to move in the three tracks, rather than being

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an ultimatum. The Arab League website includes numerous statements about it being an incentive.

The Arab League is not a negotiator by itself because they want to respect the rights of Palestinians, Syria, and Lebanon to discuss the details of their tracks with Israel. The Arab League does not wish to impose solutions on these three countries and so it allowed for the negotiation tracks to confer and agree upon the final peace accords between each of them and Israel. Upon finalization in the three tracks, the API states clearly that the reward to Israel will be full normal relations from all the 22 Arab countries (Later on the 57 Islamic countries).

In conclusion the API was not presented as an alternative to negotiations on the three tracks. It promises Israel full normal relations with all the Arab countries, once the agreements are finalized in the three tracks. Normal relations with the Arab countries offer an incentive for Israel to accept the API and continue engaging in the three negotiation tracks.

More on the Arab League Website: [www. Arableagueonline.org](http://www.Arableagueonline.org)

#### **4) What does the API deliver to Israel?**

With the finalization of the peace agreements, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, the 22 Arab countries (the 57 Islamic countries) will

collectively grant Israel the following as offers and gains of peace:

- 1) Acceptance by all the Arab and Islamic countries.
- 2) Recognition by all of them.
- 3) Comprehensive peace with all of them.
- 4) “Security for all the states of the region” guaranteed by all of them.
- 5) An end to the conflict.
- 6) Normal relations by all of them with Israel.
- 7) The right to discuss the return of refugees to the Israeli proper.
- 8) Recognition of all the pre-1948 Palestinian lands constituting 78 percent of historical Palestine as Israel.
- 9) Recognition of West Jerusalem as fully Israeli.
- 10) Future historical reconciliation between Israel and the entire Islamic world.
- 11) Opening the door for Israel to become a normal and accepted member in the region.

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12) Compliance with the Arab-Islamic peace agreement from non-state armed groups such as Hamas and Hizbullah since they will be unable to put themselves in contradiction with the Arab- Islamic consensus. Also, Hamas will not be opposed to President Abbas’s negotiations with Israel, when it becomes based on the API. This will help Abbas to move forward toward an agreement with Israel. See more details later.

13) Opened economic relations which will lead to economic development in the region.

14) Recognition of 1948 Palestinians as equal citizens in Israel without discrimination because the API includes the Palestinian state up to 1967 borders.

15) Approval and support of the negotiations in the three tracks with Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine along with freedom for each track to negotiate and reach deals on the details of each agreement as clarified in the Arab League’s declaration.

In return for these 15 offers and gains, all Middle East and Islamic nations will be expected to respect the security of each other. It is anticipated that the countries and groups involved will not initiate wars, violations, or attacks against each other in order to abide by the API.

## **5) How did the API become an initiative of the Islamic countries?**

The Organization of the Islamic Countries (Today: Islamic Cooperation) (OIC), discussed and supported the API in its meeting at the Ministerial level held from June 25-27, 2002 in Khartoum, Sudan.

The OIC made the decision to adopt the API, (Paragraph 5, decision number 30/1-S) in its summit held from May 28-30, 2003 in Tehran, Iran.

Later, the OIC confirmed its adoption of the API in all its subsequent summits, such as those held in Malaysia from 17-18 October in 2005, the one in Istanbul , Turkey from June 14-16 in 2004, Sana’a, Yemen from June 28-30 in 2005, Baku, Azerbaijan from June 19-21 in 2006, and Islamabad, Pakistan from May 15-17 in 2007.

More on the OIC website: [oic-oic.org](http://oic-oic.org).

## **6) How did the API become an international Initiative?**

The “Performance based Road Map to a Permanent Two States Solution to the Israeli – Palestinian conflict” of 2003 considered the API to be a “Parameter for the endgame ”, and by its including in different United Nations Security Council

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Resolutions, mainly the resolution 1850 of 2008 , and 1860 of 2009.

Beyond that, the API was included in various EU statements as a basis for a comprehensive Middle Eastern peace, such as the EU statement of December 9, 2010. ("The EU and the Middle East.") The Quartet Moscow meeting of March 2010 ("Middle East Quartet Statement.") included the API in its statement too, and called for holding a peace conference in order to launch a process toward a comprehensive Middle Eastern peace.

The API has become an initiative not just of the Islamic countries but also of the world. Therefore the time has now passed for when the Arab and Islamic countries are able to withdraw it from the table. The API is not solely their initiative any longer.

## **7) Is the API an alternative to negotiations?**

The API was called a "parameter for the endgame" in the Road Map Plan of 2003. Therefore and as stated earlier, it is an additional incentive for the three tracks of negotiations to move forward toward signed agreements. It is not an alternative to the negotiations on those tracks. Upon the successful completion of the negotiations in the three tracks, all the Arab states will establish normal relations with Israel.

## **8) What is the status of the API today in light of the Arab Spring?**

The March 2012 Arab summit held in Baghdad, the first to be held after the changes that took place in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen, confirmed the Arab countries' commitments to peace as the strategic option for the Arabs. The Baghdad summit reiterated the Arab countries' support for the API, stating their confirmation of "the necessity to reach a solution to the Arab Israeli conflict, based on the international legitimacy, and the Arab Peace Initiative."

It is worth noting that during a previous Arab summit that was held in the city of Sirte, Libya in March 2010, when Libya was still led by Muammar Al-Qadhafi, he was against the re-adoption of the API. The new leaders of Libya had no such reservations regarding the API during the last summit in Baghdad of March 2012. The Arab Spring produced a new Libyan leadership went against Qadhafi's policy and accepted the API.

One concern that the Israeli peace camp that supports the API have is what the positions of the new Islamic ruling groups in the Arab World towards the API, and peace with Israel in general, will be. It can be said confidently, based on the statements made by the Islamic leaders in Egypt, both the Salafis and the Muslim brotherhoods, will not withdraw support

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for it. Different leaders of the Syrian National Council, in opposition to Bashar Al-Asad, made several statements in support of peace with Israel, should they withdraw from the Golan Heights (Mozgovaya, Natasha.)

Mohammad Mursi of the Muslim Brotherhoods when he was a candidate for the 2012 Egyptian Presidential elections on the 9th of May said that, “We will not cancel the Camp David agreement, but we will follow closely the Israeli violations to it.”

At the same time, another candidate, Abdel Moniem Abu Al-Fotooh, who split from the Muslim Brotherhoods called for a periodical review of the agreement every three years by the Egyptian Parliament, citing an article of the agreement itself that allows for such a review. Despite the fact that he called Israel an “enemy” in the same debate with candidate Amre Musa, he did not call for the cancellation of the agreement, only to periodically review it in order to take tough positions against Israeli violations to the agreement.

Beyond that the spokesman of Al- Noor Salafi Party of Egypt, Yusri Hammad, confirmed to the Israeli Military Radio (Galai Tshal) on December 21, 2011 that his party supports the continuation of Camp David. While the comment was later rescinded it was still voiced.

While the Arab despotic regimes were able to make cold peace with Israel, during this period several wars have been waged in

the region, such as in Lebanon, and against the Palestinians. Now there is an opportunity to move to a real, deep peace between Israel and the new democratically elected governments since democratic states do not initiate wars against each other. In regard to the Islamist, they will change, becoming part of the democratic processes. As elected rulers they have a chance to comply with the rules of international relations and therefore abstain from making dramatic changes in the international relations policies of their countries.

Due to the Arab Spring, the focus of the Arab countries that witnessed changes will be on their internal issues for years to come; therefore these countries will not be interested in creating external crises while they have to handle the demands of internal concerns.

Several analysts have indicated that the public mood in the Arab World after the Arab Spring is not supportive of the agreements made by the Arab despotic regimes with Israel. While they do not want war they do need a new type of peace agreement based mainly on the API as a foundation for a comprehensive peace in the region. A signal to this support for the API’s comprehensive peace can be found in the public opinion poll conducted by the Brookings Institute in 2010 in Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and United Arab Emirates. The poll found that 56% of those questioned

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gave support to the API as a basis for a comprehensive solution.

The Arab people want to move from bi-national peace agreements between despotic regimes and Israel to a comprehensive Middle Eastern peace. The new Islamic ruling groups do not want to cancel the previous agreements with Israel, yet at the same time they are searching for a relationship that is more equitable between their countries and Israel. Also, they have not yet fully established their positions toward everything related to their new state as a ruling power. This means that there are huge opportunities for interaction, engagement, and dialogue with them in all peace and democracy issues. (please see also question No 12)

## **9) Will all the Arab and the Islamic countries normalize with Israel if it withdraws from all the Arab occupied territories?**

The answer is yes for the crucial majority of the Arab and Islamic countries, given the following facts:

The Arab Gulf countries that had diplomatic offices in Israel, mainly Qatar and the Arab Emirates, in the 1990s did so without waiting for peace to be achieved in all tracks. When they froze

their diplomatic relations with Israel in the mid to late 2000s, they did so due to the impasse of the Israeli-Palestinian track. Whenever this track repaired, those countries will revive their diplomatic relations with Israel without waiting for the finalization of the peace agreements with Syria and Lebanon. Morocco, Mauritania, and Tunisia also established diplomatic offices in Israel like the Arab Gulf Countries mentioned, based on the progress in the peace process between the Palestinians and Israelis. They did so without waiting for the other tracks. These countries froze their relations with Israel only due to the stalemate in the peace process between the Palestinians and the Israelis, thus they will be ready to revive them when a breakthrough in this last track occurs based on the previous relations that these countries had with Israel.

Therefore in light of the Arab Spring, the Arab countries will continue to be divided into three categories in regard to the timing of the establishment of normal relations with Israel. The first category consists of those Arab Countries who will normalize with Israel once there is the possibility of an Israeli-Palestinian agreement. Some Gulf countries, Morocco, Mauritania, and Tunisia, and maybe others fit this group. The establishment of normal relations with Israel from those countries will be gradual. First, they will re-open their diplomatic offices in Tel Aviv as soon as the Palestinian-Israeli peace process is resumed. Later they will elevate these offices to embassies the moment that a peace agreement is conducted

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between the Palestinians and the Israelis. The second category consists of the other Arab countries that will not create normal relations with Israel until a comprehensive peace is to be achieved in all tracks. Saudi Arabia will not normalize with Israel until the finalization of the agreements in all tracks. The third category is made up of the Arab countries that are indecisive about when to normalize. The position of the new Libya and Algeria are still in question.

Based on prior relations between these countries and Israel, the process toward normal relations will be gradual and it will start during the process of negotiations. Given the centrality of the Palestinian issues to the Arabs, many Arab countries will fully normalize with Israel when a deal will be concluded between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Other Arab countries will wait until peace is reached with Syria and Lebanon. The moment that these other Arab countries normalize, the Islamic countries will follow them, creating a situation where Hizbullah and Hamas cannot stand against an Arab-Islamic consensus.

Reaching that point is very difficult because it requires, among other things, removing the obstacles to achieving a Lebanese-Israeli agreement as a prerequisite for such collective normal relations process. This will require bringing back 7 villages from Israel to Lebanon that were annexed to Israel in 1948, per Lebanon's continued request.

Solving the Israeli Palestinian conflict might lead to a partial implementation of the normal relations part of the API. The full implementation of this part will require peace in all tracks. This conclusion is good news for Israelis who say that Israel cannot strike deals with all the tracks at once, while at the same time they look for assurance from the Arabs that the Arabs are sincere by normalizing gradually with Israel. Such a process as described will give them such assurances.

## **10) What are the roles of the Arab League, the Arab follow-up committee, and Egypt and Jordan in the promotion of the API? What do they do in this regard?**

Based on article 7 of the API, the Arab League created a committee to follow-up the API. This committee consists of 12 Arab States in addition to the General Secretary of the Arab League. These 12 states are: Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Qatar, Egypt, Morocco, Bahrain, Yemen, Tunisia, and Sudan. This committee meets periodically to follow the promotion of the API with the international community. So far the committee was able to include the API in the Road Map plan for peace of 2003, UN Security Council resolutions 1850 and 1860, and in the Quartet resolution. Additionally, the Arab

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League asked Jordan and Egypt to be in regular contact with Israel about the API. The Jordanians and the Egyptians presented it several times in letters to all the Israeli Knesset Members, discussed it with the successive Israeli governments and invited Israelis from different groups to conferences and meetings with the decision makers.

Other Arab States have tried to promote the API to the Israelis. For instance, the Saudi Prince Bandar Ben Sultan met the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in the 2006 Amman summit in order to discuss the API. The Prince of Saudi Arabia, Al-Faisal, discussed the API with Israelis during a thorough meeting organized by the Oxford Research Group in London in 2008. Saudi businessman Adnan Khashukji carried a letter from the Israeli peace movements to the Royal Court in Riyadh in support of the API in 2007.

In order to encourage Israel to accept the API and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, Qatar, The Arab Emirates, Morocco, Mauritania, and Tunisia opened diplomatic offices in Tel Aviv when the Israeli-Palestinian peace process was ongoing. Also, those countries are still inviting Israelis to meetings and conferences today despite the impasse in the peace process. There are also some economic projects between these countries and Israel. The Palestinian Authority (PA) has made several initiatives to promote the API with the Israelis. For instance the PA, published the API in the Israeli

newspapers in Hebrew in 2008. In the same year they also distributed posters in the main streets of the Israeli cities that included the API. Finally, the current General Secretary of the Arab League Dr Nabil Al-Arabi, met a delegation of the Israeli Peace Initiative (IPI) in Cairo in 2010, to discuss how to promote a comprehensive peace in the region.

Despite the fact that only Egypt and Jordan were asked to communicate with Israel about the API from the Arab League, the PA, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, The Arab Emirates, Morocco, Tunisia, and the Arab League itself, have all contributed to the promotion of the API to the Israelis.

## **11) The API promises of normal relations, how will these be implemented? Will there be normalization during the process or only after the full withdrawal?**

Many Israelis fear that the API might be a way to mislead Israel. While Israel is promised normal relations if it withdraws, they fear that normalization will not come after that withdrawal. Therefore the Israelis want the process to normal relations to be gradual.

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The API comes several decades after Egypt and Jordan established normal relations with Israel. With the launching of the API, the Arab League did not ask these two countries to freeze their relations with Israel until the latter complies with the demand of full withdrawal. On the contrary, the Arab summit asked Egypt and Jordan, the two countries that have normal relations with Israel, to use the benefits of those relations in order to promote the API in Israel.

Several other Arab countries established diplomatic offices in Tel Aviv (Morocco, Tunisia, Qatar, Mauritania, and the Arab Emirates) during the peace process without waiting for the finalization of peace in all tracks.

Given the centrality of the Palestinian issue to the Arabs and Muslims, it is expected that upon an Israeli-Palestinian agreement many Arab Islamic countries beyond those who had diplomatic offices in Tel Aviv will establish normal relations with Israel without waiting for the other tracks.

Therefore the Israeli fear of possible deception is unfounded. During the process there be opportunities for establishing more normal relations. With its finalization, most of the Arab and Islamic countries will normalize with Israel.

## **12) What are the positions of Hamas and the Islamic groups in the region toward the API?**

Hamas has made several statements since 2006 saying that they have reservations toward the API mainly due to the recognition of Israel and the API's failure to provide for the right of return (see for instance Hamas leader Salah Al- Bardawil's interview with Bitterlemons published in Bitterlemons electronically published Guide to the API, page 33, May 18, 2011). However, Hamas said that regardless of their reservations on the API they will not act against anything that the Arabs have consensus about. Therefore, Hamas will not act against the API if it will be implemented. Hamas is not an obstacle in the face of the implementation of the API especially after the signing of the Mecca Agreement in 2007. (Fattah, Hassan M.)

In regard to the new ruling Islamic groups in the region, no direct statements have been made by them about the API. The Salafi groups and the Muslim Brotherhoods of Egypt said both that they will not cancel the Camp David accords signed with Israel in 1978(see earlier).

The Muslim Brotherhoods of Syria stated that they support peace with Israel.

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Most important, beyond these statements, is the fact that the transformation of the Islamic groups from their previous opposition work that was conducted secretly to current practices that create an opportunity for them to expand and widen their approaches to democracy, peace, and positive international relations. Therefore an intensive engagement with them on these issues might help in accelerating this process of transformation. An active Israeli policy to engage with Islamic groups might help with the establishment of agreements with them on peace promotion issues. The American Administration's intensive engagement with the Muslim Brotherhoods of Egypt over the last few decades is no longer a secret, and much was achieved through that engagement leading to an active role of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhoods leading Hamas toward more moderate positions.

The Muslim Brotherhoods is becoming a crucial ruling party in Egypt, and could later do the same in Syria and Jordan, two countries neighboring Israel. This will lead them to develop a strategy for their actions in the region for the coming decade at least. Such a strategy will include more advanced answers to the questions of democracy, peace, and international relations.

Hamas, as part of the Muslim Brotherhoods, will not continue to look at its role with Palestinian lenses only, but more with regional and global views. Khalid Mashal with regional and global perspectives started to look at Hamas activities with

these lenses and saw how they must fit with and serve the regional and the global agenda of the Muslim Brotherhoods. He called for long term calm with Israel, and the adoption of the nonviolence struggle, while he coordinates his positions more and more with the region leaders, and with the global leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood.

### **13) What does the API say about the Palestinian refugees?**

The API talked about a “just solution to the Palestinian refugees’ problem to be agreed upon between the parties in accordance with the UN resolution 194.” Since it refers to the UN Resolution 194, some Israelis understand this as a call for the right of return for the Palestinian refugees to reside inside Israel.

What is forgotten in the discussion is that the resolution 194 is not about the right of return; such a right is not included in that resolution. Article Number 11 of resolution 194 framed the return of the refugees to their country as a free individual option, conditioned with “living in peace with their neighbors.” This condition means that: A) the return is an individual choice. B) Those who elect to return, should accept not to return to the same house of pre-1948 war. If this house is not there anymore, in case it is resided in by others, a peaceful agreement should be achieved leading to those others leaving

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the house or paying an agreed upon compensation to the returnee. C) Accept Israeli Citizenship or residency in Israel and abide with the prevailing laws in both cases. Therefore, the 194 resolution does not call for a collective return to all refugees to inside Israel, as those who do wish to return will require Israeli approval.

Article number 11 of the 194 resolution stated “that the refugees wishing to return to their homes, and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable dates, and the compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss or damage to property which under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the governments or authorities responsible.”

It “instructs the conciliation commission to facilitate repatriation, resettlement, and economic and social rehabilitation, and the payment of compensation.” This text talks about the return to the homes and not about the right of return. Also, it is conditioned with living in peace with the neighbors. Additionally, the conciliation commission is not instructed to only facilitate repatriation but to also facilitate resettlement, compensation, and economic and social rehabilitation.

The API spoke about an “agreed upon solution,” which means that an agreement with Israel is required regarding the numbers to be allowed to go to Israel. Israel has the right to be part of all

the negotiations until reaching an agreed upon solution to the issue. When the Arab League wrote it that way they took into consideration the negotiations about the mechanisms of implementation of the 194 resolution that took place before the API’s release. Those Palestinian-Israeli negotiations occurred at Camp David in 2000 and in Taba, Egypt in January 2001, one month prior to the elections that led to a governmental change in Israel. In these negotiations 5 points were developed as mechanisms to implement 194, these included the return of an agreed upon symbolic number of refugees to inside Israel, the return to the Palestinian state, staying in the host countries, or going to a third country, and accepting compensation.

When the API was released in 2002, it took into consideration these 2000 and 2001 negotiations. Moreover, since the API is not a “take it or leave it” proposal it leaves issues such as the Palestinian refugees issue to negotiations between the concerned parties.

## **14) Why does the API reject resettlement (Patriation “Tawtin”) of the Palestinian refugees?**

The API article on this was presented to the Israeli public as another signal that the API leaves the refugees with only the option of return since it rejects their resettlement (patriation).

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The API text included the rejection of patriation as much as it contradicted with the “special circumstances of the Arab host countries.” The last phrase was requested by Lebanon in the 2002 Arab summit, based on the well-known Lebanese sensitivity toward changing the demographic balance in Lebanon. Lebanon has a balance of power divided between Christians, and Muslim Sunnis and Shi’as. If Palestinians were settled in Lebanon then the balance would be disrupted

However, the Palestinian refugees’ rejection of patriation in Lebanon (and probably also the rejection of patriation in Jordan and Syria) does not mean that the other only option left to the refugees is the return to inside Israel. As indicated in the previous answer, the five options were presented to the Palestinian refugees. The majority will go back to the Palestinian state, stay in the current host countries (subject to the sovereign decisions of these countries), or go to third countries (subject also to the acceptance of those countries). This all clarifies that the rejection of the patriation by the API is not presented to be at the expense of Israel.

## **15) What withdrawal is included in the API? And how does it fit with other agreements in this regard?**

In regard to Syria and Palestine the API discusses the Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Golan Heights and the occupied

Palestinian territories to 1967 borders. Beyond that, the same article of the API speaks about the Israeli withdrawal from the Lebanese territories that are still occupied without specifying a year of that occupation. This means that Lebanon will ask Israel to withdraw not only from the 1967 Lebanese occupied territories (Sheba Farms), but also from those territories annexed to Israel in 1948 consisting of 7 villages.

This is what is said in the text of the API, but in practice it is something else. For example in the Israeli-Palestinian track, the idea of border modifications and swaps were presented in the Taba negotiations of 2001. The Arab summits did not condemn the Palestinian acceptance of swaps. Rather, the Arab summits’ resolutions before and after the launching of the API all showed support to the Palestinian negotiator. Once again the API presented the general principles while leaving the detailed agreements to the parties. In this regard it is also worth mentioning that when the Palestinians accepted the idea of a swap they insisted on an exchange of territories that are equal both quantitatively and qualitatively, which means getting back an area that is fully equal to the 1967 occupied territories. In this case the Palestinians are not deviating from the principle confirmed by the API about the withdrawal to 1967, but implementing it creatively. This is perhaps the reason why the Arab summit supported their acceptance of the swaps idea.

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## **16)What are the impacts of API implementation on Jerusalem?**

The API accepts West Jerusalem as part of Israel. At the same time the API calls for an Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders, which includes the Israeli withdrawal from East Jerusalem. Beyond these two clear issues presented by the API, there are conclusions that can be drawn from the API text about Jerusalem and there are others that the API left to the Palestinian and the Israeli negotiators.

The issues that can be concluded are those that are relevant to the Jewish settlements in East Jerusalem. Since the text of the API is clear that East Jerusalem is a Palestinian territory, it can be concluded that all these settlements should be removed according to the API. The logic here is very simple: If Israel wants West Jerusalem it can take it, but it cannot share East Jerusalem and divide it with the Palestinians. Therefore East Jerusalem will have continuity and can become the capital of the future Palestinian state.

This API position is shared by the Palestinians, who concluded after their bitter experiences in Camp David (2000) and Taba (2001) that East Jerusalem could not be divided between the two sides. The Jewish settlements of 2010 and 2011 in East Jerusalem have expanded in the last 10 years. They hurt the continuity and the unity of the Palestinian neighborhoods. Thus

the Palestinians cannot accept the continuation of the Israeli settlements the way that they are now in East Jerusalem in any future agreement about the city.

The API left all the other issues regarding Jerusalem to the negotiations between the two sides including: the issue of open borders or closed ones between East and West Jerusalem, the issue of the agreement on the freedom of access to the holy places of the three monolithic religions, and the issue of the rights of the Palestinian refugees in West Jerusalem which will depend on the details of the agreed upon solution that the two sides will reach on the refugees issue, and it will also depend on article 5 of the Oslo agreement which considers all Jerusalem to be the subject of negotiations, not East Jerusalem only. Israel will be allowed to keep sovereignty of the Wailing Wall with no limits to the number of visitors.

In conclusion, sharing Jerusalem as a whole is the message of the API, including dividing it between the two states.

## **17)Will the Arab league cancel the API if it will not be accepted by Israeli?**

After 10 years of the launching the API, it is not likely that the Arab league will cancel it any more for the following reasons:

First: The Arabs will continue to be interested in peace as a strategic option as it is presented in the API. For that that

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reason they have supported the API for ten years. Confirming it for those many years already will make it also difficult to reverse the track by cancelling it. In other words it seems that the time when it was possible to withdraw the API is already passed.

Second: In the aftermath of the Arab spring, Libya reversed the Qadhafi regime's reservations of the API. While the new ruling forces in the Arab countries have not said they will cancel it or make reservations on it, the new powers of the country have more pressing internal issues to focus on making another external crisis unfavorable to them.

Third: The API was not canceled when the Israeli forces re-occupied the West Bank when it was released in 2002. It was also not cancelled during the war with Lebanon in 2006. If Arabs were to cancel it, they might have done so during such times of escalation but they did not.

Fourth: In light of the impasse in the peace process some Arab voices were raised in 2009 calling for withdrawing the API, such as that from the Kuwaiti parliament. The Arab League did not accept these calls and the API was confirmed in Sirte, Libya at the 2010 summit.

Also some Arab regimes called for threatening to withdraw the API if Israel will not accept it, but these threats also passed.

Sixth: The API is no longer an Arab plan. It is an initiative of the Islamic countries and it is also included in the Road Map, the Quartet state, and UN Security Council resolutions. It has become an internationally recognized document. Based on that, the Arabs cannot unilaterally cancel it. Even if they tried to rescind the API it could not be done because it is already included in UN Security Council resolutions that cannot be canceled.

## **18) What will the negotiations for comprehensive peace look like in light of the API?**

The API text itself does not clarify how negotiations will look, but several Arab summit resolutions suggested starting by holding an international conference for peace in the Middle East, which will be the launching event for the bilateral negotiations in the three tracks.

The proposal to begin with an international conference for comprehensive peace in the Middle East became an international proposal in the Road Map of 2003 and also when it was called for by the Quartet Moscow meeting of March 2010. At the meeting that was held in the Ministerial level of the Quartet, the API was included in the meeting resolutions as a basis for the comprehensive peace to be achieved.

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The content of said Quartet resolution means resuming negotiations in the three tracks directly after the conference. Now the question will be: if the three tracks will start the negotiations simultaneously, should they also finish the negotiations at the same time? Should each track abstain from signing the agreed upon accord till the other tracks finalize their agreements?

The Quartet meetings and the Road Map plan tell that none of the tracks have to wait for the other tracks. If a deal is reached in one track, then it should be signed right away without delay. Beyond this, there are some questions about the process that have yet to be fully answered. These questions include what will be the role of the international conference? What is its agenda? Who are the countries that should be invited to it? And what mechanisms of follow-up will the international conference create for the bilateral tracks of negotiations?

The other set of questions has to do with the multilateral groups track and if it will be revived parallel to the three bilateral tracks for negotiations. These multilateral groups were created in 1992, including groups on economic development, refugees, environment, disarmament, water, child health, health, labor development and others, but were frozen in 1997 due to the lack of progress in the bilateral negotiations.

In regard to the set of questions on the international conference, their importance comes from the fact that what is

needed is not a ceremonial international conference, of just photo opportunities that will yield no results. In order to avoid that, the international conference needs to clearly put forth the terms of the bilateral negotiations. Also it needs to develop a mechanism of follow-up to the bilateral negotiations. One of the suggestions made for such a mechanism for follow-up is that it be through the creation of a follow-up committee that includes the international Quartet in addition to representatives of the Arab countries and Israel. This point still needs more thorough discussion in the international Quartet, the Arab League, and with Israel in order to come to agreed upon, detailed terms of reference for such follow-up committee composition and tasks.

As far as those who might be invited to the international conference, the proposal is to make it open to all the countries concerned the world over. Care must be taken to make sure that all the Arab countries, Israel, and Palestine are present without an abstention of any of them, along with the big Islamic countries such as Turkey, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Pakistan in order to give an Islamic legitimacy to the process that will be created by the conference. Finally Iran should be present for two reasons: First, the API was approved by the OIC at the 2003 conference held in Tehran. Secondly, so as to contain Iran inside the process as a way to avoid the damaging role that it will play if kept outside.

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Already the USA included Iran in meetings held about Afghanistan and Iraq in the last few years. By the same thinking Iran can be included again in a conference about the Middle East peace process. This might also help contain any damaging actions by Hizbullah. Also Russia and Iran might help by using their relationship with Hamas to make sure the latter exercises self-restraint and does not spoil the process.

Five tracks are proposed to take place after the international conference: One track is Lebanon-Israel. The second is the Syrian Opposition Israel (which might be held secretly until the regime of Bashar Al-Asad collapses). Third is a track with the PA aiming to discuss the Palestinian state establishment and its future relations with Israel. The Fourth track will be Israeli-Palestinian-Egyptian with indirect PA and Egyptian contact with Hamas about the development of Gaza and creating the link between it and the West Bank. Finally, the fifth track will be the follow-up committee of all the tracks that will also discuss the intertwined issues between them including those of refugees, Jerusalem, water, and security agreements (see more details in the coming answer).

The multilateral groups that helped during the 1990s to establish levels of normal relations between some Arab Counties and Israel also helped create a joint Arab-Israeli economic project. There are some independent ideas, but still it is important to accept what is included in the Road Map plan for

the peace as an official internationally binding document which calls for holding an international peace conference in the second stage of it. Parallel to the peace conference, the Road Map includes a call for the revival of the multilaterals. Still in order to hold the international conference and revive the multilaterals in the second stage of the Road Map plan the task falls to the Israelis and the Palestinians to fulfill their obligations according to the first stage. This includes asking the Palestinians to stop military acts, while it asks Israel to fulfill several demands including the dismantling of the settlement outposts, freezing the settlements' expansion, reopening the Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem, creating a free passage between the West Bank and Gaza, and others. It is then required to fulfill these obligations as a prerequisite to hold the international conference.

In conclusion to this question it should be said that while the API left the details of the process of implementation to the negotiators, the Road Map, and the Quartet, the Israelis and the Palestinians need to fulfill certain obligations. Then the international conference can be held, followed by reviving the negotiations in all three tracks while also reviving the multilaterals track. This will ensure normalization during the process and not postpone it to the period after its realization. The Arab League recognized the right of the negotiators to develop the detailed plans for negotiations leading to the API's implementation.

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## **19) In light of the API, what will Palestinian-Israeli negotiations with regional perspective look alike?**

The 1990s Palestinian-Israeli negotiations included bilateral, regional, and international tracks. The regional tracks were implemented through the “Quartet Committee Regarding the 1967 Displaced Persons” and included Jordan, Egypt, Palestine, and Israel. The multilateral groups’ track ensured both regional and international participation in the solution of crucial issues such as the issue of the Palestinian refugees that was part of the multilateral tracks.

After the year 2000, the issues of 1967 displaced persons came to be considered a sovereign issue of the upcoming Palestinian state. Therefore the Quartet Committee on them stopped, but two new regional aspects have grown since the election of Abu Mazan as a president in 2005. One of these is the growing role requested by Abu Mazen himself of the API follow-up committee on making decisions about the upcoming Palestinian steps. Abu Mazen get their approval on the exploratory meetings with the Israeli side held in Amman in 2012, also he gets their approval for his UN bid of 2011.

The second regional aspect was through the role played by Egypt as a mediator between Hamas and Israel on the issues

of calmness around Gaza, as well as their (and also Saudi Arabia’s and Qatar’s) mediation between Fateh and Hamas.

What can the API add in the level of regionalization of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations? What will be the added value of such regionalization?

The API can provide additional value in several levels to the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations:

First: When the bilateral negotiations re-launch after the international conference, it will be more difficult for Hamas to reject this comprehensive process in all the tracks than it can if the negotiations will be Israeli-Palestinian only.

Second: Hamas also will be calmed down by the creation of a systematic, well-followed track for the development of Gaza that will accompany the ongoing negotiations. This track will include coordination with Hamas via Egypt. Such a track will go beyond the current one run also by Egypt which is confined to conflict management between Hamas and Israel.

Third: The process of the implementation of the API will require Palestinian coordination with the Arab countries that are hosting Palestinian refugees on the issue. Also required are: a Palestinian coordination with Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the Islamic Countries about Jerusalem, a Palestinian coordination with Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan on the water issues, and with

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Jordan on the borders issue, and with all Arab countries on the security arrangements issue. Beyond that if the international conference will create a follow-up committee to the bilateral tracks then such a committee with the Arabs participating in it will help facilitate the Palestinian-Israeli agreements on the refugees, Jerusalem, water, and security issues. Therefore the API has an added value in containing Hamas in the process, and also giving Abu Mazen an Arab legitimacy and support to his agreements with Israel on refugees, Jerusalem water, and security arrangement issues.

## **20) How can the security element of the API be understood? What is the link between the API and creation of a Middle East that is free from weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)?**

The API is about providing security for all states of the region. It does not say providing security only to Israel.

Security should be provided reciprocally. The Arab countries will ensure Israeli security and will not initiate wars against it. Israel is also expected not to initiate wars and to provide the region with security as well.

Beyond this fair to all phraseology of the API on the security issue, the question is still about the link between the API and the creation of a Middle East that is free from WMD. Since the API did not include the details of how the reciprocal nature of security will be put into practice it can be expected that the API, when implemented, will lead the Arab countries to ask for sustainable guarantees for this peace. Such guarantees will include, as the General Secretary of the Arab league indicated several times, the creation of a Middle East that is free from WMD. This will entail dismantling the Israeli and Iranian nuclear projects, as well as any other similar projects that might exist in order to alleviate fears from each other in the region and remove the possibility of a war in which WMD will be used to cause catastrophic destruction.

How will the Middle East common security issue be followed? The answer comes from previous negotiations experiences, in which security and disarmament were concerns of the multilateral track. This group might be revived when the peace negotiations resume, If this is successful it

The Hamilton Barker report of 2006 gave policy recommendations towards the creation of peaceful Middle East These policy recommendations are called “API plus” by this booklet because they can help create sustainable security that will allow the peace agreement to endure.

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## Other questions

There are other questions raised that are either less important or can be concluded from the answers included hereinafter.

Some of the questions that their answers can be concluded from the text are questions such as:

- 1) Are the API and the Road Map Plan for peace contradictory in theory or practice? Can they be integrated?
- 2) Is the API position about creating normal relations only after the full Israeli withdrawal an absolute position?
- 3) Is there a possibility for a gradual implementation of the API, including gradual processes to normal relations between Israel and the Arab countries?
- 4) How does the API envision the relationship between the bilateral, and the multilateral tracks towards peace?
- 5) What will be the results of the implementation of the API politically, economically and in terms of security?
- 6) Given the well known saying that Israel cannot sign three peace agreements in the three tracks with Syria, Lebanon and Palestine at the same time; does the API process of implementation through negotiations require such signature of the agreements with the three tracks simultaneously?

7) Will the API provide Israel with an answer for its existential security concern about the continuation of Israel while providing the other countries of the region with security from Israeli initiated wars and attacks?

Please go through the pamphlet, and then come back to these seven questions, and you will find that the answers to them are included there.

Beyond these we skipped questions such as:

- 1) What was achieved in the pre-negotiations in each of the three tracks? What is still to be achieved in order to reach a deal in each one of them? Such a question was skipped because it has no direct link to the clarification of the API in which this pamphlet is interested. Another long pamphlet would be needed in order to answer such a question. There are also already many published reports about what each track already achieved that we might distribute in a separate publication later.
- 2) What are the kinds of triggering events needed in order to promote the API? This often is raised by the Israelis asking Arab Kings and Presidents to visit Israel like what Anwar Sadat did in order to promote the API to Israel. This question was skipped here because it is not a question about the API but a question about the actions to be taken in order to promote the API. This will be included in the action plan that we will publish

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soon. In the mean time, the following should be said in this regard:

Sadat visited Israel and talked in the Knesset in 1977 after he was guaranteed that Sinai would be brought back to Egypt through the secret negotiations that took place between his representative Tuhami and Moshe Dayan that took place in Morocco prior to the Sadat visit. If Sadat was not guaranteed Sinai, he would not have visited Israel in 1977.

By the same token, none of the Arab Leaders will visit Israel and talk in the Knesset before getting Israeli assurance in advance that he will get something concrete in return.

Beyond these kinds of triggering events, less dramatic ones will be possible such as Arab Leaders hosting Israeli peace activists who support comprehensive peace in the region, or addressing the Israeli public through the media, etc.

3) What are civil society's roles in promoting the API? This question also will be answered in the action plan.

Beyond these questions we also did not delve into the controversies of the API. Some controversies include concerns that the Arabs are not serious, that they aim to delegitimize Israel through the API, that normal economic relations with the Arab world is a threat more than an opportunity to Israel (Schueftan, Dan), that security cooperation is risky for Israel

(Inbar, Efraim), etc. Please see the previous pamphlet to see that the Arabs are serious. Previous parts show that they want to legitimize Israel. Economic part-refer to other question. Security- refer to other security part.

It is the conviction of the initiators of this project and this pamphlet that the API should not be used as a tool to create more controversies but it should be used constructively in order to further peace and peace relations in all the Middle East. With its implementation a new Middle East will emerge with changes to the political, economic, and in the security aspects of life.

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