

From the Clinton Parameters

December 23, 2000

Refugees

- * I sense that the differences are more relating to formulations and less to what will happen on a practical level.
- * I believe that Israel is prepared to acknowledge the moral and material suffering caused to the Palestinian people as a result of the 1948 war and the need to assist the international community in addressing the problem.
- * An international commission should be established to implement all the aspects that flow from your agreement: compensation, resettlement, rehabilitation, etc. The U[nited] S[tates] is prepared to lead an international effort to help the refugees.
- * The fundamental gap is on how to handle the concept of the right of return. I know the history of the issue and how hard it will be for the Palestinian leadership to appear to be abandoning this principle.
- * The Israeli side could not accept any reference to a right of return that would imply a right to immigrate to Israel in defiance of Israel's sovereign policies and admission or that would threaten the Jewish character of the state.
- * Any solution must address both needs. The solution will have to be consistent with the two-state approach that both sides have accepted as a way to end the Palestinian-Israeli conflict: the state of Palestine as the homeland of the Palestinian people and the state of Israel as the homeland of the Jewish people.
- * Under the two-state solution, the guiding principle should be that the Palestinian state would be the focal point for Palestinians who choose to return to the area without ruling out that Israel will accept some of these refugees.
- * I believe that we need to adopt a formulation on the right of return that will make clear that there is no specific right of return to Israel itself but that does not negate the aspiration of the Palestinian people to return to the area.
- * In light of the above, I propose two alternatives:
 1. Both sides recognize the right of Palestinian refugees to return to historic Palestine, or,
 2. Both sides recognize the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland.
- * The agreement will define the implementation of this general right in a way that is consistent with the two-state solution. It would list the five possible homes for the refugees:
 - 1- The state of Palestine.
 - 2- Areas in Israel being transferred to Palestine in the land swap.
 - 3- Rehabilitation in host country.
 - 4- Resettlement in third country.
 - 5- Admission to Israel.
- * In listing these options, the agreement will make clear that the return to the West Bank, [the] Gaza Strip, and areas acquired in the land swap would be the right

of all Palestinian refugees, while rehabilitation in host countries, resettlement in third countries and absorption into Israel will depend upon the policies of those countries.

* Israel could indicate in the agreement that it intends to establish a policy so that some of the refugees would be absorbed into Israel consistent with Israel's sovereign decision.

* I believe that priority should be given to the refugee population in Lebanon.

* The parties would agree that this implements [R]esolution 194.

See <http://www.ipcri.org/files/clinton-parameters.html>