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Secretary Rice Announces Launch of US-Palestinian Public Private Partnership to Benefit Palestinian People

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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Washington, D.C., December 3 — Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice today announced the launch of the U.S. Palestinian Public-Private Partnership promoting economic and educational opportunities for the Palestinian People with the goal of improving the Palestinian economy, building institutions and helping to educate Palestinian youth in good governance and good citizenship.

The Public-Private Partnership, introduced by Secretary Rice at the Aspen Institute will focus on sustainable economic development, job creation and training, and youth education and leadership development. Walter Isaacson, President and CEO of the Aspen Institute will chair the partnership with co-chairs Sandy Weill, Chairman Emeritus of Citigroup; Lester Crown, Chairman of Material Service Corporation; Jean Case, CEO of the Case Foundation and Ziad Asali, MD, President of the American Task Force on Palestine.

Following Secretary Rice's speech, Chairman Isaacson and Co-Chairs Weill, Crown, Case and Asali were invited to the White House where they held an hour-long meeting in the Roosevelt Room with President George W. Bush and Palestinian Minister of Youth Tahani Abu Dakka.

During the meeting President Bush reiterated his commitment to a Palestinian state, reinforcing Palestinian institutions and strengthening the Palestinian economy. "Private participation to help the Palestinians develop a civil society....," said President Bush, "is a key part of making sure that the vision of two states living side by side in peace becomes a reality.

Secretary Rice, Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson, Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez,

National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley, Undersecretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen Hughes, Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) President Robert Mosbacher and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Administrator Henrietta Fore also attended the meeting.

Dr. Ziad Asali, President of the American Task Force on Palestine said "I am deeply honored and humbled to serve along such a distinguished group of fellow Americans in this Partnership. I believe this is a serious effort to improve the lives of the Palestinian people and to bring them closer to their goal of an independent and viable state."

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