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# ATFP President Emphasizes Convergence Between Diplomacy, State-Building at Senate Hearing

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## Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact Information: [Hussein Ibish](#)

[2] March 4, 2010 - 12:00am

Washington, DC, March 4 – Convergence between diplomatic negotiations and the institution-building efforts being undertaken by the Palestinian Authority “will result in a mutually reinforcing dynamic towards peace”, Dr. Ziad J. Asali, President of the American Task Force on Palestine (ATFP) told a Senate Hearing today.



Dr. Asali spoke at a March 4 Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

hearing entitled “Middle East Peace: Ground Truths, Challenges Ahead” along with fellow panelists the Hon. Daniel Kurtzer, Dr. Robert Malley, and Mr. David Makovsky. Committee Chair Senator John Kerry (D-MA) presided over the hearing.

Dr. Asali emphasized the need to resume negotiations expeditiously, noting the robust efforts of Special Envoy George Mitchell in this regard, and the necessity to work with the Palestinian

Authority to build the institutional and economic foundations of a future Palestinian state. He noted that “The Palestinians are taking up the responsibilities of self-government as they continue to insist on the right of self-determination”, and pointed to improved conditions in areas under PA control “despite the harsh realities of daily life under the occupation”. He stressed, however, that “institution building is not a substitute for diplomacy” and that a “Palestinian state can only be established through a negotiated agreement”. He called on Congress to support these efforts.

He placed special emphasis on the need to address the humanitarian and reconstruction needs of the Gaza Strip, noting that “Israel’s blockade has produced a humanitarian tragedy without weakening Hamas control”. He strongly recommended that “reconstruction commence soon and the legal and orderly operation of the crossings be resumed.” He drew specific attention to the “mystifying and counterproductive pattern of Israel’s preventing Gaza students from traveling to study abroad.”



Chairman Kerry noted that “a two-state solution remains

the only workable solution, and the only just solution” and that “nothing would undermine extremists and rejectionists than real progress towards peace.” This sentiment was also reflected in the opening remarks of Sen. Richard Lugar, who expressed his support for the “Administration’s efforts toward this end.”

After the testimony, Dr. Asali said “The bi-partisan leadership of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, working closely with the Administration, sets an example for how Middle East peace can be advanced. Ending the Palestinian-Israeli conflict through the establishment of a Palestinian state living side by side with the state of Israel in peace and security is a US national security goal that requires the concerted efforts of the Administration and Congress and deserves the support of all Americans.”

The full text of Dr. Asali’s oral testimony is online at:

[http://www.americantaskforce.org/verbal\\_testimony\\_dr\\_ziad\\_j\\_asali\\_us\\_sen...](http://www.americantaskforce.org/verbal_testimony_dr_ziad_j_asali_us_sen...) [3]

The full text of ATFP’s written testimony is online at:

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## Statements

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Senator John Kerry

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Senator Richard Lugar

## Witnesses

### **The Honorable Daniel Kurtzer**

Lecturer and S. Daniel Abraham Professor in Middle Eastern Policy Studies  
Princeton, University  
Former U.S. Ambassador to Israel and Egypt  
Washington, DC

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### **Dr. Robert Malley**

Director of Middle East/North Africa Program  
International Crisis Group  
Washington, DC

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### **Dr. Ziad Asali**

President  
American Task Force on Palestine  
Washington, DC

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### **Mr. David Makovsky**

Ziegler Distinguished Fellow and Director  
Project on the Middle East Peace Process  
Washington Institute of Near East Policy  
Washington, DC

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