

\$600 million of the \$900 pledged by the United States to rebuild Gaza will go to the Palestinian Authority to West Bank development

Missoula, March 2 (Al-Masakin)—Acting Deputy Department Spokesman for the U.S. State Department Gordon Duguid at today's daily press briefing that the U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton in Sharm el-Sheik met first with Egyptian Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif and Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit, then Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

During the course of the day the Secretary of State, in addition to attending the plenary session of the International Conference in Support of the Palestinian Economy for the Reconstruction of Gaza, met with French President Nicolas Sarkozy, Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, Bahraini King Hamad. There was an informal Quartet meeting on the sidelines.

The Secretary then met with UAE Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and finally Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal. The Secretary of State also met with Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Store, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, with frequent 'pull-asides with



Moroccan, Algerian, Tunisian, and Libyan foreign ministers. The U.S. Secretary of State reportedly did not meet with her Syrian counterpart.



With respect to the \$900 million pledged by the Secretary, Mr. Duguid said he was awaiting a USAID fact sheet which detailed how that aid would be distributed, but said nevertheless the aid would be distributed in three tranches of \$300, \$200, \$400 million.

The first tranche of \$300 million will be provided by USAID in coordination with the United Nations, USAID grantees, and through the Department of State for the UN agencies, the ICRC, and

other humanitarian organizations

\$200 million will be given to the Palestinian Authority to address the organizations expected \$1.15 billion budget shortfall for 2009.

\$400 million will be used to support the priorities identified in the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan and will help the Palestinian Authority solidify economic and institutional reforms in the West Bank, which will include support for private sector development, essential public infrastructure improvements in the West Bank, and

security sector assistance coordinated by the U.S. Security Coordinator.

Q: So the only bit that's going to Gaza is the – up to 300 million?

A: That is new money that is going to Gaza. That is correct. But there has been funding previously that has been earmarked for Gaza.

Q: How much of that 300 million is actually for reconstruction and – rather than for –

A: I don't have that breakdown for you. That's the breakdown that we're hoping to get by (inaudible).

Q: Right. I think you'll find that the answer is zero when you do get the answer. So –

A: Well, we'll wait and see what answer we get from USAID.

The Spokesman was uncertain whether the proposed \$200 million to address the Palestinian Authority's expected budget shortfall was money already planned for distribution in fiscal year 2009 or whether the money was new money pledged in 2009.

He likewise could not give an estimate as to how much of the \$300 million pledged to aid Gaza would actually be used for reconstruction and could not give a breakdown between aid pledged for food and medicine and aid pledged for reconstruction

Q: Okay. If you could find out, and if it does turn out that, in fact, the reconstruction part of the 300 million is zero, can you explain why that is?

A: We'll always explain why, Matt.

In a similar fashion the Acting Deputy Spokesman could not comment on either the demolition of two homes in Jerusalem or an Israeli army radio report that West Bank settlements are set to double

“What we do have to say we have said many times from this podium, that we call on both sides not to do – take any actions that exacerbate tensions in the region. But I don't have any particular information on this report that you mention,” Mr Duguid said this morning.

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