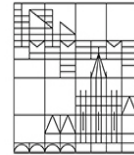




# MES 2009

## Middle East Simulation

Universität  
Konstanz



### Middle East Simulation

University of Konstanz, June 11-14, 2009

The Arab-Israel conflict has witnessed decades of peace talks, international summits and resolutions to try to help resolve it. Pessimists will tell you the conflict continues to deteriorate. Some will term this an inevitable “Clash of Civilisations”. It is tempting to make such general assertions and claim that past failures will shape and determine the future process. Tempting, but wrong. In my view, history of past conflicts around the world should teach us that only when one overcomes the habit of *looking back*, and makes the difficult and conscious decision to *look forward* to possible solutions, can such conflicts be resolved.

I am committed to this forward looking approach in my work as the Special Envoy of the Quartet on the Middle East. Such a perspective does not ignore past suffering or the depth and complexity of the challenges we face, but rather attempts to realise that only in addressing the core issues of the conflict in innovative ways, together with a focus on universal values and principles shared by the international community, can it be brought to an end.

I see the University of Konstanz’s Middle East Simulation, entirely run by students, as a further opportunity to foster such a future-oriented point of view. It is the role of young people, directly and indirectly involved in the conflict, to compose and refine the necessary peace building strategies. I am encouraged by the fact that a deliberate effort is being made to avoid the possibility of bias, particularly in including participants from all interested nations. Further, in order to ensure a unique experience, challenging discussions and broadened horizons, participants will be assigned the roles of state and non-state actors different from those that they would typically represent.

I am confident that the Middle East Simulation will play its own part in furthering peace, in the interests of the international community as a whole. I expect the participants to develop their own initiatives and make full use of an opportunity to promote a new approach to reshaping the political reality of the region, drawing on the Arab Peace Initiative and other resolutions as starting points for their discussion.

I conclude by expressing my support for the organisational team and for the young and motivated participants coming from Europe, Israel and Palestine. They dare to try again where others have chosen to give up. I commend the Middle East Simulation to you.

Tony Blair  
Special Envoy of the Quartet on the Middle East