

RELEASE IN PART B6

From: Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>
Sent: Monday, September 19, 2011 9:18 PM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Jerusalem Post - Netanyahu invites Abbas to open peace talks in New York Clips for 8:00 PM Monday, September 19, 2011

Fyi

From: Nuland, Victoria J
Sent: Monday, September 19, 2011 09:13 PM
To: Sullivan, Jacob J
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From: Edwards, Harry G (PACE) [mailto:EdwardsHg@state.gov]
Sent: Monday, September 19, 2011 06:57 PM
To: Hammer, Michael A; Nuland, Victoria J; (U) Toner, Mark C (PACE); Smith, Dana S; Lalley, Jonathan P; Lieberman, Dean; Zieseniss, Mireille L; Howard, Ariel N; NEA-Press-DL
Subject: Jerusalem Post - Netanyahu invites Abbas to open peace talks in New York Clips for 8:00 PM Monday, September 19, 2011

Netanyahu invites Abbas to open peace talks in New York

By HERB KEINON
Jerusalem Post
20/09/2011

Israeli officials say Israel will not give up on Palestinian recognition of the Jewish state; Quartet envoys set to meet for second time in two days to formulate plan to restart peace process.

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu - who is scheduled to fly to the US Tuesday evening - said Monday night that he would like to meet with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas in New York.

"I call on the PA chair to open direct negotiations in New York, that will continue in Jerusalem and Ramallah," Netanyahu said.

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The prime minister invited Abbas to begin negotiations in order to advance efforts towards achieving peace, instead of "wasting time with unilateral moves," adding that the Palestinian statehood bid at the United Nations would not bring a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

Netanyahu's comments came in response to a filmed statement Abbas made on his plane to New York, saying "I'm ready to meet with [Netanyahu] at any time."

No Netanyahu-Abbas meeting is currently scheduled during Netanyahu's five day trip to New York.

Earlier, senior Israeli officials said that Israel has no intention of compromising on its demand that any future parameters for negotiations include a Palestinian recognition of Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people.

These comments came as Quartet envoys were scheduled to meet for a second time in two days in New York Monday night to try and hammer out a formula for a return to Israeli-Palestinian negotiations that would prevent Palestinian Authority Mahmoud Abbas from announcing a statehood bid at the UN during his General Assembly address there on Friday.

The Quartet envoys are reportedly still working on a formula that would essentially have Israel agree, albeit with reservations, to enter talks on the basis of the 1967 lines with mutual swaps, while the Palestinians would agree to a formula that makes mention of Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people.

While the Palestinians have reportedly objected to any formulation of Israel as a Jewish state, Israel -- which originally was adamantly opposed to mentioning the 1967 lines -- has moderated its position on that matter, willing to agree to enter talks on that basis if it made clear that it had "reservations." On the Jewish state issue, however, the senior officials said there was no room for flexibility.

According to the officials, a Palestinian recognition of Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people was critical not only because it would signal that descendants of Palestinian refugees would return to a future Palestinian state, not to Israel, but also because it would rule out any possible future irredentist claims by Israeli-Arabs to link up with a future Palestinian state.

Israeli officials said the concern was that once there was a Palestinian state, Beduins in the South or Israeli-Arabs in the Galilee would possibly start movements to link up with the new state. Accepting Israel as a Jewish state would not only put to rest the dreams of Palestinian refugee return, but any possible future irredentist claims as well.

Quartet envoy Tony Blair related to this issue in an ABC interview on Sunday, saying that "everybody knows that you can't have a situation in which a state of Israel - you've got to be Jewish to live in the state of Israel. There's no intention of doing that. On the other hand, what the Israelis want to know is, if there is an agreement between the Palestinians and the Israelis, that's it, that's the end of all claims and the essential character of the state of Israel is preserved." Diplomatic officials said that a sign the Quartet was making progress would be if their meetings moved from lower-level envoys, to the level of principals: US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, and the UN's Ban.

The discussions among the envoys of the Quartet continued even though Abbas, who met UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on Monday in New York, informed him of the Palestinian intention to apply for UN membership.

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, who is scheduled to fly to New York late Tuesday evening, is slated to meet with Ban on Wednesday, a few hours after Netanyahu meets with US President Barack Obama on the sidelines of the General Assembly meeting. Monday night he called on Abbas to begin negotiations with him in New York, that would continue in Jerusalem and Ramallah.

Meanwhile, US ambassador Dan Shapiro said Monday at a lecture to haredi students at the Lander Institute in Jerusalem that the US believes that negotiations between the sides is the only solution to two states for two people: a Jewish state

and a Palestinian state "that will live side by side in peace and security." Shapiro said that the difficulty in getting the sides back to negotiations stems from the deep distrust between the sides. He said that negotiations can only succeed if there is an understanding of the framework of the negotiations, something the US and the Quartet were currently working on. He said that these efforts would continue, even if there was a vote at the UN.

Shapiro said that the US was opposed to unilateral steps from either side, including an Israeli halt to the transfer of tax revenues to the PA, a move advocated by some in the government. Shapiro said this money paid the salaries of PA personnel who ensure normal life in the PA, and added that three days ago at the donor's conference in New York Israel supported providing funds to the PA. The security cooperation between Israel and the PA was important and should continue, he said.

Blair, meanwhile, alluded to the kind of language that was being worked on in the Quartet when he said in the ABC interview that what was being sought was "a way of putting together something that allows their claims and legitimate aspirations for statehood to be recognized whilst actually renewing the only thing that's going to produce a state, which is a negotiation directly between the two sides." He said that the Quartet was working on a statement that would serve as a "framework of reference for the negotiations" that would set out "where we want to go on issues like borders" and "all the main issues to be negotiated." Blair said a timeline was an important element of this statement. A timeframe for the negotiations has indeed been a long-standing Palestinian demand. While at first Netanyahu was opposed to any deadlines, already last year he said publicly on a number of occasions that he felt negotiations could be completed within a year.

Blair said that a Quartet document agreed to by both sides would take the sting out of a UN resolution since it would be clear that the agreement would have to be negotiated.

Meanwhile, at a special session of the Knesset on Monday that dealt with the events in the United Nations, opposition leader Tzipi Livni blamed the Palestinians' unilateral pursuit of a state on Netanyahu.

"Friends of Israel no longer understand Israel's policies or what it wants," Livni said. "The prime minister is not believed. This government's diplomatic stupidity is putting the US in a corner.

America is making sure we won't be isolated but what is our government doing? The time has come for the prime minister to stop preventing a diplomatic process. If it does, a vote in the UN won't be necessary and we will be able to remain a Jewish, democratic state. Netanyahu can still make decisions to prevent the vote in the UN. It's still not too late." Public Diplomacy Minister Yuli Edelstein responded that Livni should consider behaving with more national responsibility.

"When I need an expert doctor, I make sure that all his patients haven't died," Edelstein said. "Here comes Livni, who backed the disengagement and said it would make the world love us, and now she wants to give us advice. She Livni failed at negotiations and didn't achieve anything and now she wants to tell us what to do."

Gil Hoffman and Jpost.com staff contributed to this report.

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