President Mahmoud Abbas has cautiously welcomed a proposal put forward by the French Foreign Minister to hold an international peace conference in France next month with the aim of reviving the stalled Middle East peace process. The Palestinian Authority are planning to bring the issue of of a Palestinian state before the United Nations in September, a deadline originally set out by the E U , US and the Palestinian Authority for the establishment of a state. But direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians broke down following the cessation of the Hamas ceasefire in 2009, and Obama's insistence that Israel end construction beyond the Green Line only served to harden the Palestinian stance and hindered a return to talks.

Spurred on by almost universal acceptance of the 1949 Armistice Lines as the bona fide 'borders' of a future Palestinian state, the PA have been reluctant to enter talks with Israel in the knowledge that they can get a much better deal from the international community. But some in the international community are now realizing that rather than bringing about peace in the Middle East, a Palestinian declaration of independence in the territories now claimed by Israel can only lead to war. President Obama hoped that by presenting his own thoughts on Middle East peace, he could somehow bridge the gaps and encourage the Palestinians to come back to the negotiating table before September. But his proposal, that a future agreement must be based on the 1949 Armistice Lines, albeit with mutually agreed exchanges of territory, only served to alienate Israel. Now in a last ditch attempt at kick-starting the talks, the US is offering Turkey the role of mediator in future talks, if they will reconcile their differences with Israel. That is another disaster just waiting to happen.

The US is hoping that a vote on the establishment of a Palestinian state will not go before the UN General Assembly in September, and are planning to use their veto in the Security Council to ensure that it doesn't. But even if it doesn't happen, there is no doubt Israel is in for a difficult time ahead.

I can't help getting the feeling that somehow the US is still not prepared to relinquish control of the Middle East peace process to the Europeans. Just a few months ago, Britain, France and Germany were proposing that the European Union draw up an agreement with the United Nations in a bid to resolve the impasse in the peace process. No sooner had they suggested it

than the American administration announced European efforts had failed, and that they were taking control of the proceedings again. Will the US let the French meeting go ahead this time? I don't know. But it is almost as if the time is not yet right for the EU to get involved. The Bible indicates that this conflict will not be resolved in the immediate future, but that it awaits the arrival of a man. Daniel's prophecy identifies this man with region we now know as the European Union. Daniel 9:26 predicted that the people of this "
prince that shall come
" would destroy the city (Jerusalem) and the sanctuary (Temple). In 70AD the armies of Titus laid siege to Jerusalem and the Temple was destroyed. According to Daniel's prophecy, this coming prince will be the one who will strengthen a covenant between Israel and many nations. It will be this prince who will divide the land of Israel for gain (Daniel 11:39). And it will be this prince who will preside over the redivision of Jerusalem (Zechariah 12:2, 14:2, Revelation 11:2).

As you can see, the fact that European nations are now seeking to become actively involved in the Middle East peace process shows us just how close we may be to the coming of the Lord. For these signs point to His return to Earth as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, so how much closer must His coming be for those who have believed on Him (John 14:6)? Praise God that He is coming again, and that "profane and wicked prince" shall be destroyed (Ezekiel 21:25). And He shall come "
whose right it is
", and "
He shall bear the glory
" (Zechariah 6:13). He once wore a crown of thorns for you. Men set Him at nought, but "
Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins
", Acts 5:31. Will you not trust Him as your Saviour? He died for you so that you could have your sins forgiven. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation today.

Zechariah 6:12-13
And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.

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