European leaders are planning to gather for a summit in Brussels next week, to decide in what form the failed EU Constitution should be resurrected. EU Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso has warned Britain and Poland to compromise their positions on the treaty, so that a common way forward can be found. Poland believes the new system of voting, based on population size, will mean the state will become less influential within the EU. Britain feels that any constitutional changes to EU law will need to be passed by a referendum in the UK, and with a population that is largely Euro-sceptic in outlook, this is unlikely to happen. For this reason Prime Minister Tony Blair is seeking a remodelled "constitution" in the form of a new " treaty ", replacing the old treaties the European Union was founded on, with constitutional issues in the new treaty forming part of a separate document. But many European states have already ratified the constitution in its original form, and are pressing for as much of it as possible to be preserved.

Quote: *"European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso said there would be "very negative implications" for the EU's single trade market, solidarity among member states and economic cohesion if a summit next week failed to agree on a replacement for the constitution rejected by French and Dutch voters in 2005. "In the end we need political leadership, and I think the message that comes out of this is a strong plea to member states to work in a sprit of compromise," he told a conference of European and national parliaments.*

And as European influence in the Middle East conflict continues to grow - as prophesied in Scripture and predicted by believers for hundreds of years - I came across this commentary, written by an interfaith "Peace Chaplain" in Massachusetts. Analysing conflict resolution in Europe following the two world wars, and the 30 year conflict in my own country of Northern Ireland, Wayne-Daniel Berard suggests that Europe may hold the key to resolution of the Middle East conflict. Berard believes that a European-style union of Israel and "Palestine", ruled by governing bodies made up of politicians from both sides, could bring peace to the region. As with Europe, state borders would become increasingly irrelevant, as all citizens would be members of the union, and could live and work in any part of Israel or the territories without compromising their political ideologies.

Quote: *"An IPU, an Israeli/Palestinian Union -- an impossible dream? Too much hatred ingrained, too much blood spilled between Palestinians and Israelis for it to be anything else? Consider this story, which I heard from an Irish native: A man stands on a Belfast street corner late at night, seeking a taxi. Suddenly, he feels a pistol in his back and hears a voice ask, "Are you Catholic or are you Protestant?" Thinking fast, the man replies, "I'm a Jew." As the*

hammer clicks back and the trigger's pulled, the voice behind him says, "And I'm the luckiest Arab in all Belfast." A hopeless bit of theater on the reality of violence as way of life? But today, Ian Paisley is First Minister and Martin McGuinness Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland, where those of different faiths had been killing each other, not for fifty-nine, but for over three hundred years. Or put another way: Imagine my father at nineteen, crawling his way over the bodies of his mates, his brothers. He stares up at the cliffs of Omaha Beach, higher and more deadly than any wall, and comes away convinced that Europe was and could never be anything but a 400,000 square-mile excuse for mass murder. Yet, in this same man's lifetime, on that same continent, victories in which no one is defeated are being achieved. They are the only kind that can endure. For Ireland, for Europe. For Israel, for Palestine.

And we know according to Scripture that the European Union - the Revived Roman Empire - will play a significant role in establishing a peace agreement in the Middle East. While in Europe and in Northern Ireland, we are thankful for a measure of peace, our friend's analysis of the Middle East conflict leaves out one thing - surprising for an "interfaith Peace Chaplain" to miss - a spiritual dimension. There are many differences between the situation in Northern Ireland and that of Israel. The conflict in Northern Ireland was mostly political and criminal in nature, while in the Middle East, it is largely religious. Sure, Protestants killed Catholics and Catholics killed Protestants, but none were compelled to do so by their own religion. This hatred of others who are different than us is instilled in our youth through intolerance and bigotry. But Jews ruling over Muslims in the heart of an Islamic region is in violation of the prophecies of the Qur'an, which state that Muslims will conquer the world in the name of Allah. The Qur'an also enjoins Muslims to kill infidels - particularly Jews, in the name of Allah. It is this hatred of God's people and ultimately of Jesus Christ, inspired by Satan himself, not only through Islam but through many religions and political systems, that is at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict today.

Source Reuters , Mid East Web , New York Times