Leaders of the Arab League gathered in Tripoli today to discuss French President Nicholas Sarkozy's proposal for the establishment of a Mediterranean Union . The formal announcement declaring the formation of a Mediterranean Union is scheduled for next Monday, but several Arab states have expressed concern about the idea. Some states fear that the new bloc will be dominated by the more wealthy European nations, while others dislike the term 'union', fearing that this will imply a normalization of relations with certain undesirables amongst them. But the main problem seems to be the inclusion of Israel in the bloc. Arab leaders fear that Israel's membership of the Mediterranean Union will mean they will be forced to normalize their relations with the Jewish state. According to the Arab League Initiative, Israel must hand back all territory captured during the Arab-initiated Six Day War and absorb an influx of millions of Arabs, in return for peace and a normalization of relations with neighbouring states. The European Union
officially endorses the Arab League Initiative, but Israel has repeatedly rejected the plan, fearing it would result in the demographic annihilation of the Jewish state. Even if Israel was to accept the Initiative, there is no guarantee that Israel's relations would improve with their neighbours, who have only shown a hostile intent towards the Jewish state. Today's summit was organized by Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, who has repeatedly refused to recognize Israel's existence
, never mind it's right to exist.

Quote: *""They will forge a common stand on participation," an Arab diplomat said. "The only worry is the idea that Israel might join without needing to make any tangible concessions in peace talks with the Palestinians and Syrians." The union was originally proposed by France as a way of boosting ties with the European Union's southern neighbors and improving trade and security cooperation. "The most serious aspect (in the proposed union) is that it establishes a union with Israel before we Arabs unite," Libyan official Ahmed Qaddaf al-Dam told the London-based daily Al-Sharq al-Awsat."*

Meanwhile, the Arab League is pressing for assurances from the European Union and the United States that a Palestinian state will indeed be established before the end of this year, as promised at the Annapolis peace conference last year. Arab League Secretary General Amr Mussa made the comments during a two day state visit to Slovenia, which currently holds the presidency of the EU.

Quote: *""I trust there will be a serious discussion about the prospects of peace in the Middle East, and on whether it will be possible as promised to have a Palestinian state by the end of the year," Mussa told a joint news conference with Slovenian foreign minister Dimitrij Rupel. Mussa arrived Sunday on a two-day visit to Slovenia, which currently holds the*

EU's rotating presidency. US President George W. Bush is scheduled to meet European Commission chief Jose Manuel Barroso in Ljubljana on Tuesday. "We hope... there will be a viable real state by the end of the year. This is a question that should be addressed to him (president Bush), an appeal that should be expressed," Mussa said.

As we can see from today's news, it seems that the expected announcement of the establishment of a Mediterranean Union may act as a catalyst to speed progress in the Middle East peace process. The Arab League will not be willing to partake in any project that legitimises Israel's right to exist, but the European Union will not want to see the project fail either. They are seeking to counteract Iran's influence in the region, which has so far brought Lebanon to the brink of civil war, carnage to Iraq, missiles to southern Israel and spurred a nuclear arms race in the Middle East. The EU will either have to water down the project, or else force through a Middle East peace agreement by the end of this year, in accordance with Arab demands.

It's interesting that this Mediterranean Union should come into being now, just a few months before the latest deadline expires for the establishment of a Palestinian state. Daniel 9:27 states that the Antichrist will strengthen a covenant between many nations in the Middle East for a period of seven years. Now the Bible doesn't explicitly state what this covenant will entail, but it seems that it will guarantee Israel peace and security and enable the Jewish people to rebuild their Temple (Daniel 9:27, 2nd Thessalonians 2:4). Some have speculated this seven year covenant between the Antichrist, Israel and the Arab nations may already exist in the form of Javier Solana's European Neighbourhood Policy. This Mediterranean Union will effectively be an extension of that policy. That may be part of the puzzle. But I believe that the seven year period mentioned in Daniel will follow the Jewish calendar. The next seven year period begins on October 1st, 2008. The Bible doesn't specifically say that a Palestinian state will be created, but Judea and east Jerusalem will be handed over to the Gentiles following the breaking of the Antichrist's covenant (Zechariah 11:2, Revelation 12:2). If 2008 sees the beginning of Daniel's seventieth week, we should be expecting some sort of agreement between Israel and the Palestinians to be signed before October 1st. Whether or not this happens may depend on the Arab response to the Mediterranean Union project. Whether 2008 sees the beginning of the Daniel's seventieth week or not, we are assuredly heading towards the fulfilment of this prophecy.

The Lord said that conditions that would characterize His Second Coming would be similar to those that characterized the days of Noah and Lot (Luke 17:26-30). In both these cases God's judgement fell in one day, and came as a complete surprise to the unbelieving world. But His judgement did not fall without prior warning. In the days of Noah, God gave men 120 years to repent (Genesis 6:3). The Bible describes Noah as a "preacher of righteousness" (2nd Peter 2:5), who's preaching condemned the world because of their unwillingness to

believe God. The world's response to God's message was to tell Him to depart from them (Job 22:15-17). Only Noah and his family believed God. They entered the ark seven days before the rain came (Genesis 7:4), and they were lifted high when God's judgement fell. Abraham petitioned the Lord to spare the city Sodom for the sake of the righteous in it, but as in Noah's day, none were found to be righteous. The Bible describes Lot as a man who " vexed his righteous soul " from day to day with all the abominations of Sodom (2nd Peter 2:8). Lot warned his family of the impending judgment, but they did not take the warning seriously (Genesis 19:14). Only Lot and his family believed the message, and were warned by the angels to seek higher ground to escape God's judgment (Genesis 19:17). Today we warn you of God's impending judgement on this world. God's ark of salvation is found in the Person of Jesus Christ. He bore God's punishment for your sins upon the cross, and all who believe on Him for salvation shall not perish but will have everlasting life (John 3:16). Do not be like those in Noah's day, who told God to depart from them. Do not be like those in Lot's day, who disbelieved the warning. Escape to Calvary's mountain! Trust in Jesus Christ for salvation today.

Genesis 19:17
And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.

Source Haaretz , EU Business