This link from my friend Darrell. A group of 10 EU Foreign Ministers have sent a letter to Quartet Middle East envoy Tony Blair , expressing their views that the "Roadmap to Peace" is dead and urged him to call for an international conference as soon as possible. The former British Prime Minister was appointed the new Middle East envoy for the Quartet (EU, US, UN, Russia) last Wednesday. The letter was signed by the foreign ministers of France, Italy, Spain, Greece, Portugal, Bulgaria, Romania, Cyprus, Slovenia and Malta. Israeli Foreign Minister Mark Regev has pointed out that the "Roadmap to Peace" already calls for an international conference, and hopes that the new Palestinian government formed by President Abbas will have a greater chance of securing a peace agreement between the two peoples.

Quote: *"A senior official in Jerusalem noted that the letter did not constitute a change in policy of either the EU or the Quartet, and both bodies remain officially committed to the road map. The official also noted that individual European foreign ministers would sometimes state opinions on Middle East issues that actually contradicted the policy of the governments in which they serve.*

The news came as the former Prime Minister is seeking to broaden the scope of his role in the Middle East peace process. The Quartet had agreed that Blair's new role would be restricted to that of rebuilding the Palestinian institutions, rather than a mediator between Israel and the Palestinians. Russia opposed Blair being named Quartet envoy, possibly due to his close links to President Bush. Javier Solana, the High Representative for the European Common, Foreign and Security Policy, had also opposed his role, fearing Blair's efforts in the region might detract from his own.

Quote: *""He is talking to leaders about what he wants to do. He has made clear the capacity-building mandate is not enough," said one senior Western diplomat familiar with the discussions. "He doesn't see himself bound to that. He wants a political role." A senior European diplomat in Jerusalem involved in the discussions said Blair has delivered a similar message to Quartet members. "As far as Blair is concerned, his mandate has not been finalized the diplomat said.*

I don't think Blair will be satisfied with a peripheral role in the Middle East. As we saw in Northern Ireland, his political ambition is too great. Just days before he left power he was still trying to create his "legacy", signing the new European Constitution and handing

yet more of our sovereignty over to Brussels. It certainly is interesting days.

Source Jerusalem Post , Reuters