President Abbas of the Palestinian Authority has signalled that he may be willing to recommence indirect talks with Israel. The announcement comes over one year following the breakdown of the Annapolis negotiations, which were suspended due to political tensions in the region. The talks ceased following the expiration of the Hamas 'temporary calm' in December 2008, which in turn triggered a massive Israeli response to try and end more than 8 years of incessant Palestinian rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip. Israeli and American elections also hindered the recommencement of the talks, due to a hardening of US foreign policy against Israel. The US demand that Israel halt all construction work, even in their own capital city, was echoed by the EU and the international community, and Abbas turned it into a precondition for the recommencement of the talks. As I commented not so long ago, efforts by the EU to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state, along with announcements by the EU , US and Palestinian Authority to work towards the establishment of a state within a two year timeframe, served to strengthen the hand of the PA and undermine the case for a negotiated settlement. But now it seems the international community has recognized its error in unduly criticizing Israel as the 'obstacle to peace' in the region, and is now pressing the Palestinian Authority to return to the negotiating table.

Quote: *"The talks are expected to begin on February 20, a senior Palestinian official told AFP on Monday. "These contacts will be aimed at creating a better climate and reaching an understanding on the borders of the Palestinian state, and they will begin on February 20," the official said on condition of anonymity. "They will last three months, with the Americans negotiating directly with the two sides after determining a timetable and agreed-upon mechanisms for implementation."*

And it seems the timetable for establishing a Palestinian state is fast becoming the priority for this process. As I said before, Obama and Abbas want a Palestinian state established within two years. And EU leaders believe the negotiations should not go on for longer than one year .

Quote: *""Europe must push for a peaceful solution of two states for two people as soon as possible. A year is the maximum timeframe," he said in an interview to a German newspaper. Moratinos met Saturday with Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad and said that his country would work to resume the talks between Israel and the Palestinians "as soon as possible." The Spanish minister said that "it's important that both sides meet," but noted that "they will decide when and how."*

The EU is by far the largest contributor to the Palestinian economy, donating in total over 1 billion euros per annum to the Palestinian Authority. Despite the Arab world being fixated with the Middle East conflict and heaping scorn on Israel at every opportunity, ironically it was European states that had to call on the Arab world to fulfill the pledges they made for the creation of a Palestinian state at the
Palestinian Donors Conference
in France two years ago. In this current climate of recession, EU states are desirous to see their money isn't being squandered, and are now calling for a
deadline
for a peace agreement.

Quote: *""As long as there is hope that [a Palestinian] state will be formed, we are happy to do so [contribute], and we know that once it is established we will give more for security and to develop the economy. But now in Europe – in parliament and among taxpayers – people are asking how long we will do this," he said. The official said that for this reason once negotiations begin, there must be a "time horizon." "We can't continue to pay for the creation of a state, when the state is not coming," he said.*

The prophecy of Zechariah speaks of a time when the issue of Jerusalem would become a burdensome stone and a cup of trembling for the entire world (Zechariah 12:2, 3). It predicts that the nations would be literally cutting themselves in pieces in trying to resolve it. We are now witnessing this ancient prophecy coming to pass before our eyes. This did not happen in any other generation. The prophecy of Zechariah also foretells the division of Jerusalem during the time of the end (Zechariah 14:2). The fact that the nations are now calling for a 'time horizon', a deadline by which the status of Jerusalem should be resolved, shows us just how close we must be to the return of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament prophets proclaimed that, "when the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory", Psalm 102:16. Notice the verse says that it is the Lord who will build up Zion. Not man. He was the one who brought His people back to their land (Zephaniah 3:19-20). The regathering of the Jewish people to their original homeland from over 100 countries of the world after nearly 20 centuries of exile? The revival of Hebrew as a first language? Man could not have achieved this. Today the nation of Israel is being rebuilt, and the appearance of the Lord in His glory is therefore at hand. But do you know the one of whom the prophets foretold would do all this?

Isaiah 45:13
I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts.

His name is Jesus Christ. He is the one that was raised up in righteousness. He is the one of whom Pilate could say, "I find no fault in Him at all", John 18:38. He was the one who could claim, " the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him ", John 8:29. He is the one who was able to proclaim liberty to those that are held captive by sin (Isaiah 61:1), not for price nor reward, but through the sacrifice of Himself (1st Peter 2:24). He died for you, so that your sins might be forgiven. Trust in Him for salvation today.

John 1:12
But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

Source Haaretz , YNet News , Jerusalem Post