EU ministers are due to meet ministers from the new Palestinian Authority government for the first time. European Union envoy to the Middle East, Marc Otte, is due to meet with the PA Financial Minister Ziad Abu Amr later today. Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt is also due to meet Palestinian ministers this weekend. These meetings end a year-long political boycott of the Palestinian Authority, following the election of Hamas into the government early last year.

Quote: *"BRUSSELS (AFX) - The European Union has made its first official contact with a member of the new Palestinian unity government, EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana's spokeswoman confirmed. She said that the EU's Middle East envoy, Marc Otte, held talks in Gaza City with Palestinian foreign minister Ziad Abu Amr, who is an independent member of the cabinet, grouping Western-backed moderates and Islamic radicals. The spokeswoman gave no details about their meeting.*

The European Union has stated that they will meet with ministers of the government that are not members of the terrorist organization Hamas, but I personally doubt that promise will be kept considering British officials have already been holding secret talks with the terrorist group. In fact Norwegian Deputy Foreign Minister Raymond Johansen met with Hamas-member Prime Minister Ismael Haniyeh yesterday, despite Hamas' refusal to abide by the principles laid down by the Quartet.

Quote: *"Norway became the first European country to lift the boycott of the Palestinian Unity Government, and Raymond Johansen met with Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh and President Mahmoud Abbas in Gaza on Monday. NRK correspondent Odd Karsten Tveit says the cancellation of the meetings is to show the Israeli government's displeasure with Norway's decision, and to discourage other countries from doing the same.*

So the financial *and* political boycott against Hamas will soon be lifted, despite the group's defiance of the international community, its recent affirmation that it is working towards the liberation of all Palestine, and that it will use "all forms of resistance" to achieve that goal...

Quote: *"The platform makes some rhetorical bows toward satisfying the demands, but also refers to resistance "in all forms" to Israeli occupation. Israeli officials read that as a coded endorsement of suicide bombings or other violence. "I'm not going to try to interpret what the right of resistance means," Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Monday after a meeting with European diplomats. "But I'll tell you it doesn't sound very good to me when one talks about 'all forms' of resistance."*

It's a shame the US Secretary of State was unable to declare what the rest of us already know. We need some bold-faced politicians in this Middle East peace process that are willing to call terrorism for what it is, stop deceiving the people and stop appeasing "militant" Islam. The reason why we are in this situation in the first place is because of Western pressure on Israel to permit Hamas to take part in the elections. And Western nations will be the ones to pay the price for rewarding Israel's enemies. Russia , which is currently pressing for the lifting of the economic boycott against the Palestinian Authority, is reeling from three separate disasters that occurred across the country within the last few days, claiming hundreds of lives.

Quote: *"PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin ordered yesterday a special Kremlin inquiry into the three tragedies to hit Russia* ***since the weekend*** *, as he sought to show leadership in a moment of national grief. A plane crash, mine disaster and retirement home fire have claimed nearly 200 lives at three separate locations across the country in a matter of days, highlighting the country's lax safety standards and strained emergency services. Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov will lead the high-level probe into the incidents and see if any lessons can be drawn from them.*

Source III , Jerusalem Post , Norway Post , Brunei Times