After only three days of a Palestinian unity government agreement being on the table, already Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert is caving in to Hamas. Yesterday Olmert stated that Israel neither accepted nor rejected the deal signed in Mecca between the two parties last weekend. Other world leaders took a similar stance, and EU leaders are meeting today to examine the agreement to see whether it complied with the demands of the Quartet (EU, US, UN, Russia) that Hamas recognize Israel's right to exist, renounce violence and accept previous agreements made with the Jewish state.
Today Olmert has stated that Israel's stance could change towards the Palestinian Authority if a deal on the release of kidnapped IDF soldier Gilad Shalit can be worked out...

Quote: *"Olmert's decision to stop criticizing the accord stemmed from the Quartet's announcement that it continues to demand that any Palestinian government abide by the conditions it laid down last year: recognizing Israel, renouncing terror and accepting previous Israeli-Palestinian agreements, as well as the road map. In light of this statement by the Quartet, whose members include the U.S., European Union, United Nations and Russia, Olmert opted to lower the profile of his response, so as not to appear rejectionist.*

Olmert's words may cast him in a good light with the Palestinians, but I believe he is playing with fire. For if Israel takes a softer stance on Hamas, the international community will not see the need to ensure Hamas complies with the three principles. The result will be similar to what Israel has experienced in Gaza. The disengagement from Gaza was supposed to provide Palestinians with a sense of sovereignty and convince them to halt the terror, but in fact emboldened them when they realized the violence appeared to be working. Olmert may "accept" the Palestinian unity government in return for Shalit's release and a long term truce, but for Hamas this will just be another indicator that their strategy is working and that the end goal is in sight, the destruction of Israel.

Source Haaretz