Sorry, had hectic day today. Long story, but have been very busy...

This link from my friend Darrell...

EU Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner has warned that unless the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians was solved soon, the crisis between Fatah and Hamas could broaden into civil war . Her comments came shortly before the Quartet (EU, US, UN, Russia) gathered for a meeting to discuss the conflict in the Middle East, and the possibility of speeding up the implementation of the "Roadmap to peace" document. The Quartet called for an end to the violence in the region and for dialogue to proceed on the establishment of a Palestinian state . US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stated that now is the time to discuss final status issues, such as Jerusalem, Palestinian borders and the right of return for refugees - in the hope of giving the Palestinians a political horizon to work towards. The members of the Quartet refused to water down their conditions that Hamas recognize Israel's right to exist, renounce violence and abide by Palestinian Authority agreements made with Israel, although Russia disagrees on how compliance should be brought about.

Quote: *"Russia has differed with the US and EU over how to deal with Hamas. Lavrov said the policy of isolating the Hamas would not achieve success. 'We are convinced that it is necessary to work with Hamas to try to influence their position so that Hamas would accept those principles that were formulated by the quartet,' Lavrov said.*

... Russia was of course one of the first nations to officially recognize the Hamas government, much to the distain of Israel. In regards to the Quartet, it seems the European Union is still taking on the issue of the Middle East conflict. German Chancellor Angela Merkel began a four day tour of the region yesterday. She is expected to visit Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait. Officials were downplaying any hope of a breakthrough, but stated this is a first

step towards finding a solution to the conflict.

Quote: *""The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the central theme of the chancellor's visit," said a senior official who spoke on condition of anonymity. He added that Merkel was seeking maximum support from Egypt and Saudi Arabia for the revival of the so-called Quartet, which consists of the United States, the European Union, the United Nations and Russia and which is trying to pursue a common approach to the conflict.*

Meanwhile, some Israeli MKs are calling for the European Union to do much more than just mediate between Israel and the Palestinians. MK Shlomo Breznitz believes that the dispute over borders and the failure of the Palestinians to form a unity government could be bypassed by allowing the European Union to take the Gaza Strip and the West Bank into a trusteeship until there was a government capable of taking proper control of the region.

Quote: *"What is needed is a central authority in Palestine that will make it possible for Israel to withdraw without prejudice to its security. In the absence of such authority the various attempts to negotiate between the parties will inevitably fail. That means some kind of trusteeship for Palestine, as articulated by Martin Indyk in a 2003 Foreign Affairs article. At that time, the US might have been a natural choice to serve this function; but in the current political environment it is, unfortunately, unrealistic. On the other hand, the EU, which has a paramount strategic interest in resolving the conflict in our region, is better suited to this role. With large Muslim minorities residing in Europe, the Israel-Palestinian problem further fuels discontent and extremism in these countries. Consequently, Europe could serve its interests - and the region's - by providing a political incubator for Palestine and, as in the case of Bosnia, prepare it for full independence.*

Who would have thought just a few years ago, that not only would the EU be in the driving seat as regards the Middle East peace process, but that

Israeli politicians would be begging the EU to intervene for them? The EU is the Palestinian's biggest aid donor, the region's biggest trade partner, is training and equipping the Palestinian police force, has thousands of troops keeping the peace in Lebanon and is trusted by both Israel and the Palestinians. The Lord has shown us all this would come to pass. Everything is falling into place just like the Bible says.