Thanks to all who sent news while I was on holiday. I won't get a chance to look through it all, I'm just trying to get caught up with what has been transpiring over the Christmas period. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and President Abbas of the Palestinian Authority met for talks two days before Christmas. Both politicians had announced they were ready for the talks after meeting with European leaders earlier in the month.

Quote: *"During a two-hour meeting at his official residence, Olmert promised to transfer frozen tax revenue directly to Abbas's office to ease the Palestinian economic crisis. Olmert also agreed to allow forces loyal to Abbas to deploy in the Gaza Strip, a move that would strengthen the Palestinian leader in an area dominated by the rival Hamas movement. "The two leaders believe that this meeting will be the first step toward rebuilding mutual trust and fruitful cooperation," Olmert's office said in a statement released after the meeting, the first formal session between the two sides in nearly two years.*

President Abbas had asked Olmert to release hundreds of Palestinian terrorists from Israeli jails, but no agreement has so far been reached on this concession. The Israeli Prime Minister has also agreed to remove dozens of checkpoints in the West Bank, a move which the IDF state will make it much easier for terrorist organizations to mount attacks on Israelis, with currently sixty percent of terror attacks being thwarted at military checkpoints.

Quote: *"At a meeting yesterday, Olmert told the heads of Israel's major security services he hopes the checkpoints will be dismantled by the Muslim holiday of Id al-Adha, which takes place next week. "My hope is that by the Id al-Adha holiday, the Palestinian population will feel a significant improvement in the fabric of their lives," Olmert said at the meeting. The Israeli security establishment largely opposes the roadblock removals, saying their dismantlement will likely lead to an increase in terror attacks.*

But will the Palestinians thank Israel for this improvement in the fabric of their lives? I doubt it. Most likely Hamas will get the credit for driving the Israelis out, as was seen last year after the disengagement from Gaza. Former Prime Minister Sharon had also promised that disengagement would satisfy the Palestinian terrorist organizations.

Source Washington Post , WorldNetDaily