In a few days time, Spain, France and Italy are to submit their proposals for a Middle East peace plan to the rest of the European Union at a mid-December summit. The plan which was announced by Spanish Prime Minister Zapatero last month has five major elements - an immediate ceasefire, the formation of a Palestinian unity government that would be able to receive international recognition, prisoner exchange between Israel and the PA (including the three kidnapped Israeli soldiers), talks between the Israeli prime minister and his Palestinian counterpart, and an international force that will deploy in Gaza and reinforce the ceasefire.

Quote: *"Blair will have left his position as prime minister before the next Labour Party conference in September next year. He is keen to use his remaining time in office to ensure his political legacy. In particular he hopes it may be possible for him to be remembered for helping to bring about a lasting solution to the Palestine-Israel conflict. He plans to visit the Middle East before Christmas, as a follow up to his visit in September. However, Britain was not consulted over the Spanish, French and Italian plan for Israel-Palestine peace, announced on November 17. Indeed, Blair is said to have first learned of it from a BBC report. The plan, which Israel has rejected, will be presented to the forthcoming EU summit in mid-December. Blair's potential role as a mediator in the Israel-Palestine conflict has been damaged by his position during the Israel-Lebanon war, when he stuck closely to the policy of the US administration and refused to call for an immediate ceasefire, damaged Britain's credibility in the Arab and Muslim worlds.*

Prime Minister Tony Blair's tour of the Middle East begins next week , when he will arrive in Ramallah for talks with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas. Prime Minister Olmert initially rejected the peace plan as "Spanish ideas", on the basis that Israel was never notified of the initiative. But he has since then changed his mind about the EU force in Gaza and a ceasefire is already in force in the Gaza Strip, so he may be more willing to accept the EU's mediation on the prisoner issue, which he has up until now been unable to solve. So it seems Blair may not be the man to solve the Middle East conflict. What we need is a slick politician, who is seen as neither pro-Israel nor pro-Palestinian and who enjoys the confidence of the Islamic world. Any guesses?

Source Daral Hayat , YNet News