With yesterday's devastating news for all parties in the Middle East over the failure of Hamas to agree to a unity government with Fatah, it appears that top men in the region are now looking elsewhere to try and find a solution to the impasse. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert will be meeting with Saudi officials in the next few weeks to examine their offer for peace, which offers Israel and end to terror in exchange for disengagement from all land captured during the Six Day War.

Quote: *"According to the report, which quotes a senior Israeli source, a preliminary meeting between Olmert and a leading Saudi representative took place in Amman at the end of September, and focused on the Saudi offer. The Israeli official claimed that the Saudi envoy was Prince Bandar bin Sultan, the former ambassador to Washington and one of King Abdullah's closest aides. The Saudi peace initiative calls for an Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders, in exchange for peace agreements and normalization with the Arab countries. According to the Times, Olmert was presented with the Saudi plan, which includes the establishment of a Palestinian state, followed by a formal peace deal between Israel and seven Arab countries: Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, the Emirates, Morocco and Tunisia.*

But I think Olmert will be wasting his breath with this one, seeing a disengagement from East Jerusalem will be completely unacceptable to most Israelis. Israel would also suffer attack after attack until the disengagement process is completed, and even then there is no guarantee that groups like Hamas will be satisfied, whose charter calls for the liberation of all Palestine (including all of Israel and Jordan, if that phrase is being taken at face value). As for Javier Solana, the High Representative for the European Common, Foreign and Security Policy, it seems he also hasn't given up on the idea of a regional peace agreement in the Middle East despite yesterday's disappointment. Solana is personally working towards the release of Corporal Gilad Shalit and the other Israeli soldiers being held by Palestinian terrorist organizations since the summer. The issue of the captured soldiers is one of the main obstacles that is currently hindering Israel and the Palestinians coming to any agreement.

Quote: *"EU Foreign Policy chief Javier Solana said to the families of kidnapped soldiers, Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev, that despite Lebanon's political crisis, he would continue to use any means in his power to receive a sign of life from the captives. Solana, who has met with the families three times since the reservists' kidnapping on July 12, noted that he had spoken to Lebanon's Prime Minister Fuad Saniora prior their meeting. During their conversation, he made clear his demand for information on the soldiers' welfare and their immediate release.*

And for those who don't know why I always use Solana's full title , it's so I don't make

mistakes like this one...

Quote: *"(IsraelNN.com)* ***European Union (EU) Foreign Minister*** *Javier Solana, in a Gaza meeting with PA (Palestinian Authority) Chairman Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) expressed sorrow over the failure of Fatah and Hamas to reach an agreement to establish a coalition government. Solana stated that the EU is not maintaining a dialogue with Haniyeh and his Hamas government.*

...I think Solana wishes he was EU Foreign Minister. Or perhaps I missed something? In Northern Ireland, we have had so many setbacks in regards to peace, we've stopped counting. Israel and the Palestinians may have missed one "deadline", but when it comes to peace processes there is always another opportunity just around the corner. The only question is how soon, and will they take it. In regards to events in the Middle East, Olmert and Solana had better find another opportunity as quickly as possible, for if things are left until March, when Iran goes nuclear, things will be a whole lot more complicated.

Source YNet News , Jerusalem Post , Arutz 7