Yesterday Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert stated that he was opposed Spain's offer on the basis that the initiative was not supported by the wider international community, but today, two more nations have signalled their readiness to work with the EU on the Middle East peace process. It seems unless Israel is willing to see things the way the EU does, they may soon find themselves standing on their own. Lebanese Prime Minister Siniora has said that he welcomes the new EU peace initiative, which aims to do in Gaza what the UN did in Lebanon a few months ago.

Quote: *"Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora said that his country "welcomes" France and Spain's joint peace initiative to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. According to Siniora, the initiative is important because it proves the importance of the Palestinian issue. Siniora added that "the international community must work as soon as possible to establish peace and stability in a future Palestinian state, and to reach a withdrawal from the rest of the occupied Arab territories."*

Yesterday the Palestinian Authority praised Spain's peace imitative, and stated the Israeli rejection of the plan shows Israel is not interested in peace in the region. Usually the situation is the other way around, with the Palestinians rejecting peace, and not the Israelis. In this case I have to agree with Haniyeh's assessment of the situation, not that Israel doesn't want peace, but that Olmert still thinks he can do things his own way without any help.

Quote: *"Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh said Friday that the European peace initiative contained "Good points" that should be studied further. Israel's rejection of the proposal, he said, "Is proof that Israel doesn't want any form of stability or quiet in the region."*

According to Spanish Foreign Minister Moratinos, the Europeans were expecting a negative reaction from Israel, but that he is confident the initiative will go through. The plan has already been reviewed by Javier Solana , the High Representative for the European Common, Foreign and Security Policy...

Quote: *"According to Moratinos, European Union and American officials at the highest levels have been made aware of the initiative. "We discussed with [EU foreign policy chief Javier] Solana and I discussed it this morning with the Americans, but the Americans have the Quartet," Moratinos said, referring to the foursome of the U.S., United Nations, Russia and the EU, who play a joint role in efforts to end the conflict.*

In other news, even Iran it seems, is coming around to the Roman way of thinking. The Iranian President Ahmadinejad has sent Italian Prime Minister a letter, stating he is interested in resolving problems in the Middle East. While we all know how Iran intends to do that (by wiping Israel off the face of the map), there is no doubt Europe will see this as a positive development...

Quote: *"Italy's Prime Minister Romano Prodi has received a letter from Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad saying he is willing to consult with Rome on resolving problems in the Middle East, a spokesman for Prodi said on Friday. The letter was a follow-up to Prodi and Ahmadinejad's talks at the UN in New York in September, said the spokesman, adding that an Ansa news agency report that Iran had said in the letter it would cooperate with the international community was wrong.*

How long will Olmert's will hold up under this intense diplomatic pressure from Europe? I don't think it will be very long, for if Israel's enemies are "seen" to be in favour of peace and Israel isn't, then Israel will be seen as obstructing the peace and Europe will intervene, as Solana said before, "whether they like it or not".

Source YNet News , YNet News , Haaretz , YNet News