In a secret meeting between the Israeli Prime Minister and US President Bush on Monday, it is reported that Ehud Olmert has offered to give up large swathes of the West Bank in exchange for a 10 or 15 year peace agreement with the Palestinians. Olmert previously commented that President Abbas of the Palestinian Authority would be " surprised what Israel had to offer". His "offer" comes despite the disengagement from Gaza - which was supposed to improve Israel's security situation - which has instead resulted in the region becoming a base from which terrorist organizations such as Hamas and Fatah can launch attacks against Israel. After the Israeli elections, the Prime Minister said he believed Kadima was elected with a mandate to carry out his "unilateral" disengagement plan, even though most Israelis, Palestinians and the international community are opposed to the idea.

Quote: *""The big difference now is that Hamas is in power. And some of the Israeli officials who are examining this idea are realizing that what the Hamas offers in terms for a 10- or 15-year ceasefire is really not very different from what the (internationally brokered peace plan) Roadmap describes in its interim phase - it is just another name for a Palestinian state with provisional borders," said Khatib, who served under the previous Palestinian Authority government as labour minister. "There is an exchange of views happening because some people believe there is potential here."*

Yesterday, the Israeli Prime Minister rejected Spain, France and Italy's proposed peace plan as "Spanish ideas", and stated that Israel preferred to negotiate with the Palestinians directly.

Quote: *""The European Union initiative is not supported by the international community as a whole," the officials explained Israel's rejection of the plan. In addition Israel prefers direct dialogue with the Palestinians over mediation by foreign elements "that will only complicate matters."*

But I am of the opinion the EU will not let Olmert press on with his own ideas, which have so far failed to bring any peace or security to Israel.

Source Toronto Star , YNet News