Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has stated that US President Bush hopes to see the vision of two states - Israel and Palestine - realized by the time he leaves office, in January of 2009. His comments come following a visit to Washington on Tuesday, made shortly after Hamas took military control of the Gaza Strip. Israeli and Palestinians officials are expected to meet with their Egyptian and Jordanian counterparts for a regional summit on Monday, in an attempt to strengthen Abbas' new Palestinian Authority government, and further isolating Hamas.

Quote: *""I'll be meeting with President Mubarak, King Abdullah and Abu Mazen on Monday, and together we'll try to create a fresh start for us and for the Palestinians," he said. "We'll have the hand of the US guiding us. President Bush wants to see the vision of a Palestinian state co-existing peacefully alongside Israel realized before he leaves his presidency. "The United States is Israel's dearest friend and is committed to our security... the visit to Washington has resulted, among other things, in increased US aid to Israel over the next ten years," added Olmert.*

The US has promised to increase aid to Israel, and has lifted the economic embargo on the new Palestinian government. President Bush is also planning to send yet more weapons to Fatah, despite previous arms shipments destined for Abbas ending up in the hands of Hamas terrorists. During the takeover of Gaza, Hamas seized some 16 armoured personnel carriers, rocket propelled grenades, ammunition, machine guns and mortars. The group also obtained intelligence information on Israel and the PA's dealings with other nations.

Quote: *"Hamas has captured the intelligence files of the Palestinian Authority, which include evidence of significant cooperation with Israel, the United States and Arab countries. Hamas hauled away the files from the two leading security agencies under the control of PA President Mahmoud Abbas. "If these files are thorough, then Hamas will know just about every secret," a Palestinian security source told the Middle East Newsline. "That means, the requests of foreign nations, funding, meetings, joint operations, you name it." With the capture of Abbas's security headquarters, Hamas was believed to have obtained at least 14 years of intelligence files. Hamas will undoubtedly share these files with its chief allies, Iran and Syria.*

Egypt's Foreign Minister Ahmed Abul Gheit has already laid the blame of the Hamas' coup at the feet of the Iranian President . And with financial and logistical support for Hamas coming from both Teheran and Damascus, the Hamas victory in Gaza represents a significant step towards their ultimate goal - the destruction of the "Zionist regime". Hamas' strategy has proved extremely successful - daily rocket attacks against Israeli towns, pushing for democratic dominance in Gaza following disengagement, smuggling arms to gain strength militarily, and finally staging a coup to take ultimate control.

Quote: "*Egypt's Foreign Minister Ahmed Abul Gheit accused Iran of having encouraged Hamas to seize Gaza. "Iran's policies encouraged Hamas to do what it has done in Gaza and this represents a threat for Egypt's national security because Gaza is a stone's throw from Egypt," the minister said in comments carried by the Al-Masri Al-Yom newspaper. "The Iranian influence in Iraq also represents a threat for Egyptian and Arab national security. This obliges Cairo to restrict its relations with Tehran," he said.*

All this leaves Israel in a perilous position. Israeli Prime Minister Olmert will not intervene to change the situation in Gaza. If he does so, he may at best be accused of destabilizing the peace process in the region, and at worst risking a regional war with Syria and Iran. The only option available to him is to leave Hamas "in power" in Gaza, and hope that the terrorist organization can be "contained" through international efforts. And we know, according to the Scriptures, what the end result of that will be.

Source YNet News , The Bulletin , The Age