The European Union has agreed to support any peace agreement that emerges as a result of the international peace conference, to be held in Annapolis, Maryland within the next week or so. EU Foreign Ministers endorsed a report, written by High Representative for the European Common, Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, and EU External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner, at a meeting in Brussels today. The endorsement comes as Quartet Special Envoy Tony Blair published some of his own initiatives to help create a viable Palestinian economy, to boost the prospects of peace in the region.

Quote: *"The report makes clear EU aid will be made available to boost the Palestinian police force, health, education and judiciary departments. Also, the EU stands ready to provide broad economic assistance while continuing humanitarian aid in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Ferrero-Waldner told reporters. "We are happy that Annapolis seems to be taking place," Ferrero-Waldner told reporters. She said post-Annapolis aid measures would benefit the Palestinian economy and, in turn, meet Israel's long-standing demand for security guarantees. "We know that Israel always fears for the security of its population," said Ferrero-Waldner. She said if the Palestinian economy can be revived, "there will be hope again" for peace. In 2007, aid to the Palestinians from the EU and its member states will total about €1 billion (US$1.47 billion).*

And as the Annapolis conference looms, the Israeli and Palestinian negotiating teams are continuing to work on a joint declaration that will be read out at the international peace conference. It had previously been reported that Israel and the Palestinians had all but given up hope that a joint statement could be formulated. The Israeli Prime Minister's Office denied that report, although Israeli and Palestinian officials admitted the negotiations were in deadlock.

Quote: *"Israeli officials say they are envision a statement that would frame the core issues - which include security arrangements, borders, the status of Jerusalem and the fate of the Palestinian refugees - without spelling out solutions. The Palestinian side had originally wanted a more detailed document with a timeline for solving the conflict.*

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has been trying to shore up Arab support for Palestinian Authority President Abbas. Today Israel released 441 Palestinian prisoners as part of a "good will" gesture to ahead of the Annapolis conference. Olmert has also announced he intends to end the construction of new settlements in Judea and Samaria and remove illegal settlements in the territory, stating that Israel was obligated to abide by the

principles laid down in the "Roadmap to Peace" document. It is difficult to know what will come of this peace initiative. In any case, steps are being made towards the fulfilment of end time prophecy. As was said in a recent news article, by agreeing to end the construction of new settlements, Olmert has given the signal that Israel's presence in Judea and Samaria is only temporary.

Matthew 24:15-17
When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Source IHT , BBC , New York Times