Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni has met with her Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov today, to discuss the situation in the Middle East. Topics on the agenda included Iran's nuclear programme, Russian arms to Syria and the peacekeeping force in Lebanon. Italian Foreign Minister D'Alema was also visiting the Middle East this week, and spoke with Livni on Iran and Gaza. He gave Iran one day to respond to the UN Security Council resolution, calling on Iran to halt all Uranium enrichment. Javier Solana, the High Representative for the European Common, Foreign and Security Policy, is meeting Iranian nuclear negotiator Larijani tomorrow on this issue. D'Alema also called on Israel to restart peace talks with President Abbas. Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres has said that Israel is ready for such negotiations.

Quote: *""We urge the Palestinians and Israel to end the aggression and the cycle of violence sweeping across the Palestinian territories, especially after the kidnapping of (IDF soldier Cpl. Gilad) Shalit, and to restart direct dialogue between the parties," d'Alema told reporters before boarding a flight to the West Bank.*

Russia on the other hand, is calling for an international peace summit to be held to address all these issues between Israel, Lebanon, Syria and Iran. Last year, President Putin expressed his desire that Russia would get more involved in the Middle East peace process, most likely in order to secure its own interests in the region.

Quote: *"While Livni discussed the need for Israel to meet immediately with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas without preconditions, the Russian foreign minister insisted on an international summit to discuss various aspects of the Mideast conflict and advance solutions. "There is some disagreement between us regarding the Israeli foreign minister's claim that an international summit would only complicate processes. All sides involved must meet and speak," Lavrov said. Livni said that as of now, an international summit is not a solution. “We are not enthused by the Arab League's initiative. In the past, such summits were launched with a bang but ended in disappointment,” she said. With that she added, "An immediate meeting with Abbas is necessary so we can hear about the problems in the PA from him. This doesn't mean there will be peace by tomorrow morning, but we need to examine what is needed in order to discuss the future."*

I've never known a time when so many countries have been pushing for some sort of agreement in the Middle East. Arabs, Jews, Europe, Russia and the UN all seem to be pushing towards some sort of goal by the end of this year, and it seems the international community permitted the conflict with Hizbullah to occur in order to get more involved in the region. I guess more than ever before, Israel and Jerusalem have become a "burdensome stone" and a "cup of trembling" for all nations.

Zechariah 12:3
And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.

Source YNet News , Jerusalem Post , YNet News