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September 16, 2011

Middle East News: World Press Roundup

NEWS: The Council on Foreign Relations interviews ATFP President Dr. Ziad J. Asali on a potential Palestinian UN initiative. The Israeli government calls for more international aid to the PA and the Palestinians. Palestinians rebuff appeals to forgo any UN initiative, and a confrontation appears increasingly possible. European diplomats say they have made ?meaningful progress? in negotiating compromise language. PM Netanyahu says Israel would agree to an upgrade in Palestinian status of the UN as long as it is not declared a ?state.? Pres. Abbas meets with senior US officials, and is reportedly working on a compromise. Palestinian officials say Jews would be welcome in a Palestinian state. Jordanians hold a rally against Israeli policies, but it is sparsely attended. An Israeli soldier describes to the Independent how occupation forces suppress nonviolent Palestinian protests.

COMMENTARY: Hussein Ibish and Yossi Klein Halevi answer reader questions in an online Q&A web chat hosted by the Guardian and the Forward. Shibley Telhami and Joshua Goldstein say Palestinian statehood should be decided at the UN. Matt Spetalnick says the Palestinian UN initiative has put Pres. Obama on the defensive. Aluf Benn says PM Netanyahu's strategy, at home and abroad, is digging in. Avi Issacharoff and Amos Harel say Israel is facing unprecedented diplomatic challenges. Uri Savir says, in its own interests, Israel should vote yes on Palestinian statehood. So does Isaac Herzog. The Media Line interviews FM Al-Malki. Patrick Seale profiles Egyptian presidential candidate Amr Mousa, who is putting the issue of Palestine at the forefront of his campaign. Martti Ahtisaari and Javier Solana list 10 reasons why Europe should vote yes on Palestinian statehood at the UN. Robert Danin says any UN initiative is an unnecessary gamble for the Palestinians. Bloomberg says continued cooperation and aid to the Palestinians is the key to managing the fallout from a confrontation at the UN. Ian Bomberg says by working on day-to-day issues the parties can turn a confrontation into a win-win scenario.

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Avoiding an Israeli-Palestinian 'Train Wreck'

Article Author(s): Bernard Gwertzman

Media Outlet: Council On Foreign Relations

Article Type: Interview

Date: September 16, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.cfr.org/middle-east/avoiding-israeli-palestinian-train-wreck/p25881> [6]

Though Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas plans to seek Palestinian statehood status at the UN General Assembly meeting next week, efforts are underway by the United States, Israel, and the Palestinians to avoid a major collision on the issue, says Ziad J. Asali, president of the American Task Force on Palestine.

Israel calls for continuing aid for Palestinians

Article Author(s): Susan Cornwell

Media Outlet: Alertnet

Article Type: Analysis

Date: September 16, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.trust.org/alertnet/news/israel-calls-for-continuing-aid-for-palestini...> [7]

WASHINGTON, Sept 15 (Reuters) - Israel is urging the international community to continue aid to the Palestinians just as U.S. lawmakers are contemplating an aid cutoff if the Palestinians press for statehood at the United Nations.

An Israeli government website on Thursday carried a report saying the Palestinian Authority already faced economic and fiscal woes, in part due to a decline in donor aid.

Palestinians Resist Appeals to Halt U.N. Statehood Bid

Article Author(s): Ethan Bronner

Media Outlet: The New York Times

Article Type: Analysis

Date: September 15, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/16/world/middleeast/palestinians-resist-appeals-t...> [8]

JERUSALEM ? Senior American and European diplomats tried without success on Thursday to persuade the Palestinian leaders to skip or modify their planned United Nations membership bid, officials involved said.

Riad Malki, the Palestinian foreign minister, told foreign journalists in Ramallah that the Palestinians would continue to listen to suggestions but that barring something very persuasive, President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority would submit a full membership application to the United Nations Security Council next Friday.

Israelis, Palestinians headed toward U.N. showdown

Article Author(s): Edmund Sanders

Media Outlet: The Los Angeles Times

Article Type: Analysis

Date: September 15, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-palestinians-statehood-20110...> [9]

Reporting from Ramallah, West Bank? Rebuffing international pressure to soften their positions and return to the negotiating table, Israelis and Palestinians announced separately Thursday that they were moving forward with an expected diplomatic battle next week at the United Nations.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas will address the U.N. General Assembly on Sept. 23, after which he will submit a formal application to admit Palestine into the international body as a state, according to his foreign minister, Riad Malki.

"Progress" in Euro-diplomacy for limited UN upgrade

Media Outlet: Ma'an News Agency

Article Type: Analysis

Date: September 16, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=420696> [10]

BETHLEHEM (Ma'an) -- European diplomats trying to persuade Palestinian leaders to seek an upgrade of their UN status without full membership have had "meaningful progress," Israeli media said.

Hebrew-daily Yedioth Ahronoth quoted a senior Israeli source on Thursday saying Palestinians' acceptance of this proposal will improve their UN standing, while allowing Israel to coexist with the new status.

EU seeks limited upgrade of Palestinians' UN status

Article Author(s): Justyna Pawlak

Media Outlet: Alertnet

Article Type: Analysis

Date: September 16, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.trust.org/alertnet/news/eu-seeks-limited-upgrade-of-palestinians-un-s...> [11]

BRUSSELS, Sept 15 (Reuters) - - The European Union hopes to persuade Palestinian leaders to drop plans for full United Nations membership this month in return for a nuanced upgrading of their U.N. observer status, EU diplomats said on Thursday.

The EU's foreign policy chief, Catherine Ashton, went to the Middle East this week to mediate between Israel and the Palestinians with the aim of reviving peace talks and averting a Palestinian statehood bid at the U.N. General Assembly, which begins its annual gathering on Sept. 21.

Netanyahu: Israel will agree to upgrade of Palestinian status, not statehood

Article Author(s): Barak Ravid

Media Outlet: Haaretz

Article Type: Analysis

Date: September 16, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/netanyahu-israel-will-agree-to-upgrade...> [12]

Israel would agree to upgrade the Palestinian Authority's status at the United Nations as long as it is not declared a state, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in talks with Catherine Ashton, the European Union's foreign policy chief, over the past few days.

On Thursday Netanyahu decided to address the UN General Assembly next Friday, the day the Palestinians will submit their statehood bid.

Meanwhile, the Foreign ministry summoned the ambassadors of five key EU members Thursday to rebuke them over their countries' policy on the Palestinians' bid for UN recognition as a state.

Abbas to meet U.S. envoy Thursday

Media Outlet: Xinhua

Article Type: Analysis

Date: September 15, 2011

Source Link(s): http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/world/2011-09/15/c_131141164.htm
[13]

RAMALLAH, Sept. 15 (Xinhua) -- Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas will meet U.S. Middle East envoy David Hale Thursday to discuss renewing peace talks with Israel, an official from Abbas' office said.

Hale is in the region to try to reach a compromise allowing the negotiations to resume and avoid a Palestinian bid for United Nations membership later this month.

"Abbas is still open to study any serious ideas from U.S. officials regarding the launching of a meaningful peace process," the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

'Abbas working on deal with EU, US to avoid statehood bid'

Article Author(s): Herb Keinon

Media Outlet: The Jerusalem Post

Article Type: Analysis

Date: September 16, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=238220> [14]

London based Arabic daily Al Hayat on Friday reported that Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas was meeting with European Union and American officials to try and come to an agreement that would avoid bringing Palestinian unilateral statehood before the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council next week.

According to the report, of the 20 paragraphs in the proposal, four of them had been agreed upon at the time of publication.

Palestinian officials foresee secular, pluralistic state

Article Author(s): Oren Dorell

Media Outlet: USA Today

Article Type: Analysis

Date: September 16, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/story/2011-09-15/palestinians-foresee-secular...>

[15]

Palestinian leaders say a future Palestinian state would be secular and open to all religions ? even Jews ? if they are willing to follow their laws as Palestinian citizens. The Palestinians say they'll seek a vote on Palestinian statehood in the United Nations this month.

In Jordan, low turnout for anti-Israel march

Article Author(s): Joel Greenberg

Media Outlet: The Washington Post

Article Type: Analysis

Date: September 15, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/israel-clears-embassy-staff-ahead...> [16]

AMMAN, Jordan ? About 200 protesters ringed by scores of police officers demanded the expulsion of the Israeli ambassador here Thursday, but what was billed by organizers as a ?million-man? march on the embassy drew a far smaller crowd, which was kept well away from the building by a tight security cordon.

Concerned about a repeat of last week?s storming by protesters of Israel?s embassy in Cairo, the Israeli government brought its ambassador and his staff members home from Amman on Wednesday night for their weekend leave, a day earlier than usual.

Military whistleblower tells of 'indiscriminate' Israeli attacks

Article Author(s): Donald MacIntyre

Media Outlet: The Independent

Article Type: Analysis

Date: September 16, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/military-whistleblower-tells...> [17]

Israeli troops fired tear gas indiscriminately and sometimes dangerously to enforce a daytime curfew inside a West Bank village to stop Palestinians holding a peaceful demonstration on their own land, a military whistleblower has told The Independent.

The soldier's insight into the methods of troops comes as the Israeli military prepares for demonstrations predicted when the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas submits an application for the recognition of statehood to the UN next week.

Q&A on Palestinian statehood at the UN

Article Author(s): Yossi Klein Halevi
Hussein Ibish

Media Outlet: The Guardian

Article Type: Interview

Date: September 15, 2011

Source Link(s):

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2011/sep/15/palestinian-terri...> [18]

The Palestinians are set to appeal to the United Nations in September for recognition of statehood. Despite opposition from Israel and the United States, a UN vote now looks inevitable. The Guardian and the Forward have brought together two experts to take part in an online Q&A to answer your questions about what may prove a game-changing development in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Why Palestinian statehood is a question for the U.N.

Article Author(s): Joshua Goldstein
Shibley Telhami

Media Outlet: The Washington Post

Article Type: Opinion

Date: September 15, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/why-palestinian-statehood-is-a-question-f...> [19]

As the Palestinians seek U.N. support for a state of their own, Washington has advanced two arguments to dissuade them: first, that taking the issue of statehood to the United Nations is a unilateral move away from negotiations with Israel; and second, that the effort will be counterproductive because the United States will veto any such U.N. Security Council resolution.

Palestinian UN bid puts Obama on defensive

Article Author(s): Matt Spetalnick

Media Outlet: Alertnet

Article Type: Analysis

Date: September 15, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.trust.org/alertnet/news/analysis-palestinian-un-bid-puts-obama-on-def...> [20]

WASHINGTON, Sept 15 (Reuters) - When President Barack Obama brokered the relaunch of

Israeli-Palestinian peace talks last September and set a one-year goal for reaching a deal, few thought he would succeed where so many others had failed.

But hardly anyone could have predicted that Obama would now be facing one of the sharpest blows to U.S. prestige in decades of Middle East diplomacy -- a Palestinian threat to defy him and push for statehood at the United Nations next week.

Digging in, the essence of Netanyahu's foreign policy

Article Author(s): Aluf Benn

Media Outlet: Haaretz

Article Type: Analysis

Date: September 16, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.haaretz.com/weekend/week-s-end/digging-in-the-essence-of-netanyahu-s-...> [21]

The years-long diplomatic effort to integrate Israel as an accepted neighbor in the Middle East collapsed this week, with the expulsion of the Israeli ambassadors from Ankara and Cairo, and the rushed evacuation of the embassy staff from Amman. This is the lowest point in Israeli foreign policy since the groundbreaking visit to Jerusalem by Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1977. The region is spewing out the Jewish state, which is increasingly shutting itself off behind fortified walls, under a leadership that refuses any change, movement or reform and is dealing with debacle after debacle.

Diplomatic maelstrom

Article Author(s): Amos Harel
Avi Issacharoff

Media Outlet: Haaretz

Article Type: Analysis

Date: September 16, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.haaretz.com/weekend/week-s-end/diplomatic-maelstrom-1.384826> [22]

The cabinet ministers' diagnosis last week that Israel is facing its most complex strategic situation in decades is turning out to be correct. Even before the focus shifts to the Palestinian arena, with the bid by the Palestinian Authority to have the United Nations recognize it as a state, Israel has had to deal with the return home of senior envoys from three of the region's most important countries.

Israel - ?Yes?

Article Author(s): Uri Savir

Media Outlet: The Jerusalem Post

Article Type: Opinion

Date: September 15, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Columnists/Article.aspx?id=238143> [23]

On November 29, 1947, the people of the future Israel were glued to the radio, listening to the United Nations vote on the partition of Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state. We can still hear in our collective memory the speaker announce ? ?Soviet Union ? Yes, United States ? Yes? and then the majority affirmative vote.

Why Israel Should Vote for Palestinian Independence

Article Author(s): Isaac Herzog

Media Outlet: Foreign Affairs

Article Type: Opinion

Date: September 16, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/68271/isaac-herzog/why-israel-should-vote...> [24]

This coming week, the Palestinian Authority intends to ask the United Nations to vote for Palestinian statehood during the annual session of the General Assembly. The Palestinian bid represents Israel?s greatest political challenge in years. Although the United States has promised to veto the resolution in the Security Council, it is likely that more than 140 countries in the General Assembly will vote in favor and grant the Palestinians the status of non-member state in the UN.

Al-Malki, PA Officials Paint US Loser in Palestinian UN Gambit

Article Author(s): Felice Friedson

Media Outlet: The Media Line

Article Type: Opinion

Date: September 16, 2011

Source Link(s): http://www.themedialine.org/news/news_detail.asp?NewsID=33251 [25]

Questions of procedure and outcome of the Palestinian UN gambit remain rife with only a week before Mahmoud ?Abbas stands before the U.N. General Assembly on September 23 and, according to Minister Dr. Riad Al-Malki, ?presents the official request for the state of Palestine to be granted full membership? to Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. Al-Malki said it

had been decided to bring the issue of statehood to the Security Council, seemingly daring the US to cast its promised veto and face international isolation. Not certain is whether the U.S.

Mousa envisions vigorous and peaceful Middle East

Article Author(s): Patrick Seale

Media Outlet: Gulf News

Article Type: Opinion

Date: September 16, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://gulfnews.com/opinions/columnists/mousa-envisions-vigorous-and-peaceful-mi...> [26]

Amr Mousa, 74, the front-runner in the contest for the presidency of post-revolution Egypt, has called for a renegotiation of the military annexes to the Egyptian-Israel Peace Treaty of 1979. 'The Treaty will continue to exist,' he told me in an exclusive interview on September 10, 'but Egypt needs forces in Sinai. The security situation requires it. Israel must understand that the restrictions imposed by the Treaty have to be reviewed.'

Ten Reasons for a European 'Yes'

Article Author(s): Martti Ahtisaari

Javier Solana

Media Outlet: The New York Times

Article Type: Opinion

Date: September 16, 2011

Source Link(s): http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/17/opinion/17iht-edahtisaari17.html?_r=1 [27]

It is not often that Europe has the chance to play a pivotal role on the world stage. But as the Palestinians push for recognition as a state at the United Nations later this month, the European Union is finding itself courted by each side, and therefore more influential on the Middle East process than at any time since the Oslo Accords.

As ever, the biggest challenge facing the E.U.'s 27 member states is presenting a unified front. There are 10 compelling reasons for them to coalesce around a 'yes' vote and keep the two-state approach to Middle East peace alive.

The UN Vote and Palestinian Statehood

Article Author(s): Robert Danin

Media Outlet: Foreign Affairs

Article Type: Opinion

Date: September 14, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/68262/robert-m-danin/the-un-vote-and-pale...> [28]

The Palestinians' effort to attain international statehood recognition at the United Nations in September is aimed at enhancing their leverage in future negotiations with Israel. In a candid May 16 op-ed in the New York Times, Mahmoud Abbas, the president of the Palestinian Authority (PA) and chair of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), acknowledged as much. "Palestine would be negotiating from the position of one United Nations member whose territory is militarily occupied by another," he said, "and not as a vanquished people."

Cooperation Could Limit Damage After UN Palestinian Vote: View

Media Outlet: Bloomberg

Article Type: Editorial

Date: September 15, 2011

Source Link(s): <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-09-16/cooperation-could-limit-damage-after-un...> [29]

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is like a boat sailing at full speed toward a waterfall, with the whole world watching from the shore and afraid to intervene. Western governments must act now to minimize the damage.

Palestinians seem determined to push for a resolution in the United Nations General Assembly that recognizes an independent Palestinian state. In our view, this is a tragic mistake that could end up hurting Palestinian and Israeli interests, set back efforts to restart negotiations and endanger an already unstable region.

Moving Middle East Peace Forward After the U.N. General Assembly

Article Author(s): Ian Bomberg

Media Outlet: Center for American Progress

Article Type: Analysis

Date: September 15, 2011

Source Link(s):

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/09/moving_me_peace_forward.html [30]

The Palestinians' bid for statehood at the United Nations will not improve daily life in the West Bank or Gaza. Instead, tensions between Israelis and Palestinians will increase, potentially leading to violence. As a result, the Palestinian state-building program, which is developing

sustainable Palestinian institutions, will remain an essential tool for addressing these challenges. All parties involved, including the international community, will need to overcome a desire for punitive actions by working together on the state-building program in order to resolve shared day-to-day problems.

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- [13] http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/world/2011-09/15/c_131141164.htm
- [14] <http://www.jpost.com/DiplomacyAndPolitics/Article.aspx?id=238220>
- [15] <http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/story/2011-09-15/palestinians-foresee-secular-state/50419552/1>
- [16] http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/israel-clears-embassy-staff-ahead-of-jordan-protest/2011/09/15/gIQA75LwTK_story.html
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- [18] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2011/sep/15/palestinian-territories-israel/print>
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- [22] <http://www.haaretz.com/weekend/week-s-end/diplomatic-maelstrom-1.384826>
- [23] <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Columnists/Article.aspx?id=238143>
- [24] <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/68271/isaac-herzog/why-israel-should-vote-for-palestinian-independence>
- [25] http://www.themedialine.org/news/news_detail.asp?NewsID=33251
- [26] <http://gulffnews.com/opinions/columnists/mousa-envisions-vigorous-and-peaceful-middle-east-1.867366>
- [27] http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/17/opinion/17iht-edahtisaari17.html?_r=1
- [28] <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/68262/robert-m-danin/the-un-vote-and-palestinian-statehood>
- [29] <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-09-16/cooperation-could-limit-damage-after-united-nations->

palestinian-vote-view.html#1_undefined,0_

[30] http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/09/moving_me_peace_forward.html