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## September 23, 2009

### Middle East News: World Press Roundup

President Obama expresses frustration with both the Israeli and Palestinian sides and stresses "urgency" at the UN meeting. US administration shifts focus from settlements to permanent status talks. A Washington Post editorial examines the high expectations set by the Obama administration while speculation continues over the President's ability to restart negotiations. Haaretz looks at the relationship between President Obama's demands and the position of the PA. Prime Minister Fayyad claims he has won broad international support for his plan for "de facto statehood." Hussein Ibish argues that President Obama has doubled down and not backed down on Middle East peace.

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### In Mideast Peace Bid, Obama Pivots in His Demands

**Article Author(s):** Mark Landler

**Media Outlet:** The New York Times

**Date:** September 22, 2009

**Source Link(s):**

[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/23/world/middleeast/23prexy.html?\\_r=1&ref=middlee...](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/23/world/middleeast/23prexy.html?_r=1&ref=middlee...) [6]

President Obama, who has met immovable resistance from Israel over his demand for a full freeze on settlements in the West Bank, is largely setting that issue aside as a first step toward restarting Middle East peace talks.

## Obama Presses Mideast Leaders To Broaden Talks

**Article Author(s):** Glenn Kessler

**Date:** September 23, 2009

**Source Link(s):** <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/09/22/AR2009092201458....> [7]

President Obama's meetings Tuesday with the leaders of Israel and the Palestinian Authority signaled his impatience with months of stalemate in the quest for Middle East peace, as well as his desire to move beyond talks about settlement construction and straight to negotiations on the final shape of the region.

## A Middle East Handshake

**Media Outlet:** The Washington Post

**Article Type:** Editorial

**Date:** September 23, 2009

**Source Link(s):** <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/09/22/AR2009092203474....> [8]

The Summit President Obama convened Tuesday with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas fell well short of the administration's hopes. Mr. Obama had wanted to announce agreement on the opening of talks on the creation of a Palestinian state, with a deadline of two years. He wanted to outline agreements on how those negotiations would proceed and some of the principles that would underpin them.

## President Obama enters the Mideast fray

**Article Author(s):** Paul Richter

**Media Outlet:** The Los Angeles Times

**Date:** September 23, 2009

**Source Link(s):** <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-obama-mideast23-2009sep23,0,...> [9]

President Obama, exasperated by the disappointing course of Mideast peace efforts, urged

Israelis and Palestinians on Tuesday to reapply themselves, even though eight months of intensive American engagement has failed to return the parties to the negotiating table.

Obama met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas at a New York hotel ahead of a United Nations session, stepping personally into the process and offering an unusually blunt message.

## **Failure to advance Middle East peace a setback for Obama**

**Article Author(s):** Howard Lafranchi

**Media Outlet:** The Christian Science Monitor

**Date:** September 22, 2009

**Source Link(s):** <http://www.csmonitor.com/2009/0923/p02s04-usfp.html> <sup>[10]</sup>

Unbowed by the failure to reach an accord to restart Mideast peace talks, President Obama told Israeli and Palestinian leaders he met Tuesday that he would keep up his administration's diplomatic efforts until negotiations are relaunched.

He then directed top foreign policy aides, including Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and special Mideast envoy George Mitchell, to continue the intense contacts with Israeli and Palestinian officials the US has pursued since Obama took office.

## **Peace talks begin with little Palestinian or Israeli support**

**Media Outlet:** Ma'an News Agency

**Date:** September 23, 2009

**Source Link(s):** <http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=227251> <sup>[11]</sup>

An inglorious beginning to peace talks was kicked off with what some described as a 'civil' meeting between President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday.

The two leaders reportedly stated their previous positions of stalemate, while the US diplomatic machine put its gears into drive and arranged for US special envoy George Mitchell to return to the region after he failed to convince sides to sit down in New York. Teams of Israeli and Palestinian negotiators will also travel to Washington for a resumption of efforts.

## **Source: Obama strongly expressed his impatience to Netanyahu and Abbas**

**Article Author(s):** Natasha Mozgovaya

**Media Outlet:** Haaretz

**Date:** September 23, 2009

**Source Link(s):** <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1116353.html> <sup>[12]</sup>

President Barack Obama told Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas Tuesday that he was dissatisfied with their recent foot-dragging on getting Israeli-Palestinian talks restarted.

A senior U.S. administration source Tuesday told Haaretz that "during the tripartite meeting Obama strongly expressed his impatience."

The source said the meeting was "businesslike" but not cordial. Netanyahu and Abbas voiced their opinions but did not attack.

## **Akiva Eldar / So what if Obama wants to move peace process forward?**

**Article Author(s):** Akiva Eldar

**Media Outlet:** Haaretz

**Article Type:** Opinion

**Date:** September 23, 2009

**Source Link(s):** <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1116336.html> <sup>[13]</sup>

When Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sat opposite U.S. President Barack Obama Tuesday, perhaps he was overcome by the sullen recollection from the days when he served as deputy foreign minister under David Levy. Even then, 17 years ago, there was an American president who entertained the idea of resolving the Israeli-Arab conflict and thought that this concept was incompatible with the expansion of settlements.

## **ANALYSIS / Obama's rebuke is contrary to Palestinian position**

**Article Author(s):** Avi Issacharoff

**Media Outlet:** Haaretz

**Article Type:** Analysis

**Date:** September 23, 2009

**Source Link(s):** <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1116338.html> <sup>[14]</sup>

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas said Tuesday night that the renewal of negotiations "depends on a definition of the negotiating process." His remarks came at end of his summit meeting with U.S. President Barack Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in New York intended to jump-start talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

Abbas said "that means basing [the talks] on recognizing the need to withdraw to the 1967 borders."

## **Abbas says Israel must keep 2008 word**

**Article Author(s):** Ali Waked

**Media Outlet:** Reuters

**Date:** September 23, 2009

**Source Link(s):** <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3780525,00.html> [15]

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said on Tuesday that Israel must honor agreements on borders and Jerusalem which he says its government made in 2008 talks with the Palestinians if stalled peace negotiations are to resume.

Speaking after talks with US President Barack Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Abbas also repeated Palestinian insistence that Israel halt settlement building in the territories, including east Jerusalem.

## **Obama on peace talks: Stop talking about talking, and start talking**

**Article Author(s):** Ron Kampeas

**Media Outlet:** Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA)

**Date:** September 23, 2009

**Source Link(s):** <http://jta.org/news/article/2009/09/22/1008058/obamas-message-stop-talking-about...> [16]

The meetings ran overtime, and Mahmoud Abbas wouldn't stop arguing even after he stepped into a room full of cameras.

Reporters could not make out exactly what was exercising the Palestinian Authority president in his exchange with President Obama, but fist pounding isn't usually a sign of things going well.

## Obama calls for Mid-East urgency

**Media Outlet:** BBC News

**Date:** September 23, 2009

**Source Link(s):** [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/8268095.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8268095.stm) [17]

Mr Obama spoke after hosting the first meeting between leaders from both sides since he took office.

US Middle-East envoy George Mitchell later said the US did not see any issue as a precondition for talks.

The US has been pressuring Israel to comply with Palestinian demands for all building in settlements in the occupied West Bank to end before talks restart.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas shook hands in front of the cameras during what was their first encounter since Mr Netanyahu came to office in March.

## A reluctant handshake - but no deal as Middle East plan falters

**Article Author(s):** Ian Black  
Ewen Macaskill

**Media Outlet:** The Guardian

**Date:** September 23, 2009

**Source Link(s):** <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/sep/22/netanyahu-abbas-obama-talks-united-n...> [18]

Barack Obama failed to achieve a hoped-for breakthrough aimed at the resumption of Middle East negotiations yesterday -during a three-way meeting with the Israeli and Palestinian leaders in New York.

The president had only one success to show for months of effort: a tentative handshake between the Israeli prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, and the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, who met for the first time since the Israeli leader took office in March.

The two appeared reluctant to shake hands, smiling hesitantly and having to be coaxed by Obama.

## Obama may have lost some face in the Middle East, but don't write him off yet

**Article Author(s):** Jonathan Freedland

**Media Outlet:** The Guardian

**Article Type:** Opinion

**Date:** September 23, 2009

**Source Link(s):** <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/sep/22/obama-netanyahu-abbas-israel...> [19]

There was something wrong with that picture. Of course all the best politicians are skilled actors, so they did their best to hide the reality. But, despite the smiles and the handshake, Barack Obama, Mahmoud Abbas and Binyamin Netanyahu could not quite conceal the weirdness at the centre of their photo-op in New York today. What the image should have conveyed was the gratitude of the leaders of two minor states, happy to be basking in the sunlight radiated by the global emperor.

## Obama hosts Middle East peace talks

**Article Author(s):** Sharmila Devi

**Media Outlet:** The National

**Date:** September 23, 2009

**Source Link(s):**

<http://www.thenational.ae/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090923/FOREIGN/709229813/...> [20]

The US president Barack Obama yesterday acknowledged the long road to Middle East peace after he directly entered the diplomatic process and brought the current Israeli and Palestinian leaders together for the first time.

As expected, there was no breakthrough, but Mr Obama reiterated his commitment to resuming peace talks and announced that Israeli and Palestinian negotiators would meet George Mitchell, US Middle East envoy, next week.

## A Mideastern farewell photo at the UN?

**Article Author(s):** Zahi Khouri

**Media Outlet:** The Daily Star

**Article Type:** Opinion

**Date:** September 23, 2009

**Source Link(s):**

[http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition\\_id=10&categ\\_id=5&article\\_id=1066...](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=10&categ_id=5&article_id=1066...) [21]

No concrete results were expected from Tuesday's meeting at the United Nations that brought together US President Barack Obama, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas. The gathering marked the end of the first phase of Obama's intriguing foray into Arab-Israeli peace-making.

# Obama is doubling down, not backing down, on Middle East peace

**Article Author(s):** Hussein Ibish

**Media Outlet:** Ibishblog

**Article Type:** Blog

**Date:** September 23, 2009

**Source Link(s):**

[http://www.ibishblog.com/blog/hibish/2009/09/23/obama\\_doubling\\_down\\_not\\_backing\\_down...](http://www.ibishblog.com/blog/hibish/2009/09/23/obama_doubling_down_not_backing_down...) [22]

Most reactions to the tripartite meeting at the UN yesterday between Pres. Obama and Prime Minister Netanyahu and Pres. Abbas were negative, and this is entirely understandable since no one had anything particularly new to say. Reaction in the Arab world was particularly agitated, with many commentators arguing that Obama has "capitulated" to Israel's position on settlements, and some even throwing up their hands entirely about any possibility of progress under this president.

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