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## PA: Abbas, Clinton discuss upcoming Quartet meet

Ma'an News Agency

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<http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=470016> <sup>[1]</sup>

March 22, 2012

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RAMALLAH (Ma'an) -- US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton phoned President Mahmoud Abbas on Wednesday ahead of a meeting of the international Quartet scheduled for next month, state media reported.

Clinton's call to Abbas was to follow up on discussions between Abbas and Obama a day earlier, the official Palestinian Authority news agency Wafa reported Wednesday.

According to the report, Clinton said a group of US officials will arrive to the region soon. Abbas told Obama on Monday he would return to negotiations if Israel committed to Quartet requirements.

Obama's call to Abbas, their first conversation since meeting in New York as the US vetoed Abbas' bid for Palestinian statehood at the UN, was to assure him of the US commitment to Middle East peace, a PLO official said.

Abbas told Obama that Palestine would return to talks if Israel submitted its proposal on borders and security, negotiator Saeb Erekat said in comments to the PA's official radio Voice of Palestine.

Israeli and Palestinian delegates met for five rounds of exploratory talks in Jordan during January, after the Quartet of international negotiators -- the US, UN, Russia and EU -- called for proposals by the end of the month.

Palestinian envoys said they gave their briefs in early January, but Israel had not presented a serious proposal during the talks.

They also refer to Israel's continued expansion of Jewish-only settlements on land needed for

a viable Palestinian state.

After talks ended without agreement, Abbas is preparing to send a letter to Israel and the international community outlining the basis for a Palestinian state and reiterating demands that Israel stop settlement building.

Erekat said Abbas briefed Obama on the letter, which will outline his position that Israel is responsible for the failure of the peace process.

The Israeli daily Haaretz reported on Tuesday that Obama urged Abbas not to include a threat to dismantle the Palestinian Authority in the communique.

Abbas also discussed the deal reached with Hamas in Doha last month to establish an interim government to oversee new elections. The agreement has since stalled amid criticism from Hamas' Gaza-based leadership.

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