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France joins US in blaming Israel for lack of peace

French President Nicolas Sarkozy reportedly told Israeli President Shimon Peres when the two met in Paris two weeks ago that the current failure of the Middle East peace process is almost entirely the fault of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Senior Israeli officials were briefed on the meeting recently, and told *Ha'aretz* under condition of anonymity that it was a "very difficult" encounter for Peres.

Sarkozy reportedly spent the first 15 minutes of the meeting railing against Netanyahu.

"I'm disappointed with him," the French president reportedly said.. "With the friendship, sympathy and commitment we have toward Israel, we still can't accept this foot-dragging. I don't understand where Netanyahu is going or what he wants."

Sarkozy's increasingly hostile position mirrors that of the Obama Administration, which has made clear that it sees Netanyahu and the right-wing elements in his government as the reason the peace process is not moving forward.

That despite the fact that Netanyahu has already gone against his election platform by publicly accepting the idea of a Palestinian state, has frozen Jewish building in Judea and Samaria and has repeatedly stated that he is ready to immediately restart direct bilateral negotiations with the Palestinians.

That Palestinian leaders outright refuse to sit with Netanyahu and discuss these issues has been almost completely ignored in Western capitals.

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