

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.

Obama Admin takes aim at Jerusalem mayor

Senior Obama Administration officials on Tuesday expressed frustration and anger over criticism leveled against them by Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat in a series of interview with American media.

Barkat is currently in Washington for meetings and interviews set up for him by top congressional leaders. During the interviews, he has constantly referred to US pressure on Israel to halt Jewish construction in eastern Jerusalem as "illegal," and has suggested that Obama is anti-Israel.

Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak is also in Washington, and during meetings with top administration officials, he has been pressed to reign in Barkat and halt what they called his unproductive behavior.

Some American media referred to Barkat as a possible future prime ministerial candidate.

European envoys reportedly attend Palestinian civil disobedience summit

Contradicting their own public position that Israel and the Palestinians should negotiating their differences, European ambassadors and envoys last week reportedly attended a Palestinian conference aimed at encouraging "popular resistance" as a means of further defaming Israel and pressuring it to meet Arab demands.

The conference was held in the Palestinian village of Bil'in under the banner of the Bil'in Popular Struggle Committee, and was addressed by Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Salam Fayyad.

Bil'in has become a flash point of tension in recent years after Israel placed part of its new security barrier between it and neighboring Jewish towns. Popular Struggle Committee members and other Palestinians purportedly committed to non-violent means of protest hold a weekly demonstration there against the barrier.

However, despite their claims of non-violence, the demonstrations almost always include acts of stone throwing and damaging of property. Israeli security forces respond with gas canisters and rubber bullets.

In an interview with *The Jerusalem Post*, Rami Burnat, one of the committee's leading activists, acknowledged that while the veneer of non-violent protest has lured international support, he and other Palestinians taking this path are not embracing non-violence as a philosophy or way of life. They are not the new Gandhis or Martin Luther Kings.

Burnat called the decision to focus on non-violence popular resistance a strategical one. "It's about seeing benefits," Burnat said. "If we don't see them, it's up to us to decide what kind of resistance we would then use

next."

But even that is going too far for most Palestinians, evidenced by the fact that the popular resistance movement simply isn't very popular among most Palestinians, who public opinion polls continue to show favor the use of terrorist violence against Israeli Jews as a means of achieving their goals.

Israeli officials reveal unofficial Jerusalem building freeze

While publicly rejecting US President Barack Obama's demand that Jews stop building in parts of Jerusalem claimed by the Palestinians, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has implemented an unofficial Jewish building freeze in the capital.

That according to Jerusalem municipal officials who have spoken to various foreign media outlets. Jerusalem Councilman Meir Margalit confirmed for Israel National News that "the committees that deal with [building projects] are not even meeting anymore."

An Interior Ministry spokeswoman attempted to clarify by pointing out the new measures are not a "building freeze," but rather "bureaucracy."

Netanyahu has repeatedly stated that Jews have a right to build in all parts of Jerusalem, as do Arabs. Officially accepting the US demands regarding Jewish construction in the city would essentially be an acknowledgement of Palestinian claims to half the city.

Some believe the unofficial freeze was actually worked out between Netanyahu and Obama as a means of placating the Americans while publicly maintaining Israel's original position. If that is the case, it is unlikely to work, as the Palestinians have made clear they will accept nothing short of Israel officially and publicly surrendering its right to and control over the eastern half of Jerusalem and emptying all Jewish neighborhoods located there of their residents.

Palestinian youth was 'sent to kill Jews'

A 17-year-old Palestinian boy turned himself in to police in the northern town of Afula early Monday morning after confessing that he had been sent by his Palestinian handlers to "kill Jews."

The boy arrived at the Afula police station carrying a plastic bag containing a large knife. The guard at the station asked the boy what he was doing, and the Palestinian did not hesitate to confess the purpose of his visit.

He was immediately arrested and taken in for questioning.

Police officials believe the boy was afraid to carry out his mission, and instead turned himself in. They are trying to determine who exactly sent the youth.