

# MEMMO

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## With Israel Committed to Peace, the Arab States and Palestinian Leadership Must Take Decisive Steps

**As the United States, Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA) prepare for a U.S.-hosted meeting in Annapolis later this year, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert continues to reiterate Israel's strong desire for peace. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has announced important reform measures and has rejected violence, but for real progress to be made, the PA must vigorously combat terrorism. The Arab states also have a vital role to play in encouraging peace efforts by recognizing Israel, rejecting terror and providing strong backing to Abbas so he can join Israeli leaders in making the necessary historic compromises required for peace.**

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Olmert has consistently reiterated Israel's commitment to advancing the peace process and to making difficult political decisions despite threats.

- In a major speech Nov. 4 to the Saban Forum in Jerusalem, Olmert said the upcoming Annapolis meeting is a "landmark ... on the path to negotiations and of the genuine effort to achieve the realization of the vision of two nations: the State of Israel – the nation of the Jewish people; and the Palestinian state – the nation of the Palestinian people."
- Olmert said that at the Annapolis meeting he will "extend my hand in friendship and goodwill to all those who come to the meeting" and that "all the historic questions which are pertinent to the disagreement between us and the Palestinians are on the agenda."
- Olmert also said that Israel would meet its commitments under the Roadmap, saying: "We will not avoid fulfilling our own obligations to the letter. Some of them are difficult, some will create considerable political hardships – and I have no intention, no matter how difficult it is, of attempting to escape the obligations imposed on the State of Israel."
- As the talks between Israeli and Palestinian leaders have intensified, Israeli security forces continue to uncover and prevent suicide attacks on a regular basis, while terrorists in Gaza have fired more than 1,000 rockets and mortars since June, including a longer-range and more sophisticated Katyusha rocket.



**The United States and Israel are committed to pursuing peace with a PA opposed to terror.**

The new Palestinian government has taken important steps but can and must do more to ensure peace efforts have a chance to succeed.

- Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad have taken initial steps toward isolating Hamas and forming a government committed to peace with Israel, including closing down Hamas charities and institutions, cracking down on incitement in mosques and beginning security reforms.
- Abbas' government needs to increase its efforts to fight terrorism and dismantle the terrorist infrastructure, key requirements of the first phase of the Roadmap.
- The PA also must continue with its policy of rejecting an accommodation with an unreconstructed Hamas that opposes peace with Israel.
- Because Hamas rules Gaza, Israel faces enormous difficulty in negotiating peace with a PA that does not control a significant percentage of the population it claims to represent. The PA will need to demonstrate that it controls the security situation on the ground in the West Bank.
- The international community, working together with Israelis and Palestinians, also will need to devise a practical plan of action that will reunite Gaza with the West Bank under a Palestinian leadership committed to peace with Israel.
- Upholding strict accountability and full transparency in the use of foreign assistance also would mark an important demonstration of the PA's commitment to reform and making peace with Israel.

The Arab states have an important role in supporting Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts.

- Arab states should attend the upcoming Annapolis meeting and provide Abbas with the political support he will need to make the tough compromises necessary to reach an agreement with Israel and to fight terror.
- If the Arab states are truly committed to the creation of a Palestinian state, they must back up their public support for the moderate Palestinian leadership with tangible financial support to help bolster the Palestinian economy.
- To facilitate peace efforts between Palestinians and Israelis, Arab states must begin to prepare their own people to recognize Israel's right to exist, end their economic boycott and support a peace agreement with the Jewish state. Unfortunately, 14 Arab nations attended a November meeting of the Arab League boycott.
- The Arab states must take responsibility for supporting peace by rejecting the extremism of terrorist groups such as Hamas and Hizballah and ending anti-Israel incitement in their media.