

Obama in final push to avert UN showdown

Set to meet Israeli, Palestinian leaders

AFP, United Nations

President Barack Obama was to meet Israeli and Palestinian leaders Wednesday as diplomats scrambled to persuade Mahmud Abbas to drop a bid for UN membership of a Palestinian state.

Both the United States and the Europeans appeared to be working to buy more time to avert the looming clash, with Abbas determined to press ahead with plans to submit a formal application to UN chief Ban Ki-moon on Friday.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu arrived in New York just hours ahead of his talks with Obama, with Israeli officials renewing an offer of talks here with Abbas.

"We believe the Palestinian bid at the UN is a mistake and it will not advance peace nor advance the establishment of a real Palestinian state," Netanyahu's spokesman, Mark Regev, told AFP as the Israeli delegation arrived.

"Unfortunately, the Palestinian drive at the UN could hurt the

chances of reaching a negotiated solution between Israeli and the Palestinians.

"We hope the Palestinians change track and prime minister Netanyahu's offer to start this week in New York direct peace talk stands. He is ready to meet with Palestinian President Abbas."

Obama will meet later Wednesday around 6:00pm with Abbas, as the US leads the diplomatic drive to steer the Palestinians off their course.

"The president will be able to say, very directly, why he believes that an action at the United Nations is not a way to achieve a Palestinian state," national security advisor Ben Rhodes said Tuesday.

Obama and French President Nicolas Sarkozy were also both set to address the opening session of the UN General Assembly, with French sources



Mahmud Abbas



Benjamin Netanyahu

saying Sarkozy could unveil a breakthrough in the standoff.

Obama has already called for negotiations to resume using the 1967 lines -- encompassing the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip -- as a starting point for the contours of an eventual Palestinian state.

European diplomats and the Middle East Quartet -- comprising the European Union, the United States, the United Nations and Russia -- were all seeking to head off the confrontation.

Sources close to the negotiations who asked to remain anonymous said the focus was on trying to buy time to allow a broader path towards resuming the direct Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, which last collapsed in September 2010.

One possibility was that Ban would not hand over Abbas's letter

straight away to the Security Council, a European source told AFP, adding there were other "diplomatic airbags" that could be used to defuse tensions.

Several diplomats said the aim was to find a plan that would satisfy both sides while also avoiding an escalation of violence in the volatile region.

The Palestinians need nine votes out of the 15 Security Council members for their bid for UN statehood to proceed.

If they fail to attract enough support, then the bid will fail without the need for a US veto, which the US administration has threatened to use.

The Middle East Quartet was seeking to draw up a statement that would coax Israel and the Palestinians back to talks, but British Foreign Secretary William Hague, who met Abbas Tuesday, said it had made "no progress."

The Palestinians have been buoyed by about 120 countries that have unilaterally recognized a state of Palestine or backed such a position.

US lawmakers torn on Palestinian aid

AFP, Washington

Key US lawmakers warned Tuesday they would seek to reevaluate the value of aid to the Palestinians if they pursue their drive for full UN membership, but stopped short of threatening a full cut-off.

"There do have to be consequences for the Palestinian Authority for taking these actions," Democratic Senator Chris Coons said as the divided US Congress wrestled with the appropriate response to the high-stakes Palestinian gambit.

"The Palestinian Authority leadership, in what they've declared that they intend to do, is turning away from what we believe to be the most constructive and clear pathway to peace. And when folks turn away from the pathway to peace then we need to reevaluate our ongoing relationship and partnership," he said.

But Coons and others in Washington feared that cutting off the Palestinian Authority, notably from security and development aid credited here with tamping down extremist violence against Israel,

could be dangerously counterproductive.

"I would really hate to see us turn away from this constructive partnership, and I would hate to see us take action that might potential strengthen Hamas," the militant group in control of Gaza, said Coons.

"You've got to keep that aid going, we need it

to work for us.' Israeli leaders have told me that privately," said Democratic Senator Patrick Leahy, who heads the committee that administers overseas aid.

Talk of ending aid to the Palestinians is "premature, because we want to see how his unfolds," said Democratic Senator Bob Menendez, who has declared he will "rethink" his support for such assistance if

the UN drive continues.

"This is not a path to peace," said Menendez, who stressed that "if, at the end of the day, our resources and our assistance aren't achieving those goals, then of course we'd have to reevaluate."

The United States provides slightly more than \$500 million a year to the Palestinian Authority. Of that, \$200 million goes straight into the Palestinian \$1.3 billion budget.

Who Recognises Palestine

| Global Entities | Yes | No |
|--|---|---------------------------------|
| Permanent Security Council members | China Russia | France UK US |
| Non-permanent Security Council members | Bosnia, Brazil, Gabon, Nigeria, Lebanon, India, S Africa | Colombia Germany Portugal |
| All General Assembly members | 122 | 71 |

Source: UN, Foreign ministries

Al-Jazeera head resigns

AFP, Doha

Al-Jazeera's top executive, Wadah Khanfar, resigned Tuesday after eight years as the head of the satellite news channel and was replaced by a member of the Qatari ruling family, the company said.

"For some time I have been discussing my desire to step down with the chairman of the board," Khanfar wrote on Al-Jazeera's website. "He has accepted my decision."

Khanfar was appointed managing director in 2003 and was later promoted to director general.

Khanfar's resignation came amidst a WikiLeaks controversy in which the whistle-blowing website leaked a US government cable that suggests the Al-Jazeera executive agreed to alter the content of the channel's website after a US request to do so.

Nato extends Libya mission by 90 days

NTC claims key victory, pledges new govt

AFP, Brussels

Nato allies yesterday agreed to extend their air campaign in Libya by another 90 days, diplomats said, as forces loyal to ousted strongman Muammar Gaddafi maintain resistance.

"Nato agreed to extend (the) mandate for (the) Libya operation," the US ambassador to Nato, Ivo Daalder, wrote on Twitter. The mission "will continue for as long as necessary; end as soon as possible."

The new mandate was accepted "without any disagreements," the diplomat said, adding that Nato military authorities would provide an update on the situation on the ground every month.

The current 90-day mandate was due to expire on September 27, but Western leaders have made clear their intention to continue flying Nato warplanes as long as Gaddafi forces harm civilians.

Libya's interim prime minister Mahmud

Jibril unveiled the timeline for a new administration on Tuesday.

"I expect the government to be announced within a week, 10 days maximum from now," said the number two official in the National Transitional Council, the rebel body whose forces ousted Gaddafi.

Libya's National Transitional Council took control of Tripoli last month, but Gaddafi forces still control some towns, putting up a fierce resistance in the deposed despot's hometown of Sirte after seven months of fighting.

The new rulers declared victory in the battle for the key southern desert city of Sabha yesterday.

But anti-Gaddafi forces have taken heavy losses in the battle for Sirte. Medics say at least 45 NTC fighters have been killed and more than 200 wounded since they launched an offensive last week.



Hundreds of Palestinians attend a demonstration in support of Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas' bid for statehood recognition at the United Nations yesterday in the West Bank city of Bethlehem.

NEWS IN brief

Kenyan deputy premier at war crimes court

AFP, The Hague

Kenyan Deputy Prime Minister Uhuru Kenyatta arrived yesterday at the International Criminal Court for a pre-trial hearing on crimes against humanity charges against him and two others.

Potential presidential candidate in 2012 Uhuru Kenyatta, 49, is the son of Kenya's founding father Jomo Kenyatta.

Kenyatta's group, all supporters of Kibaki's Party of National Unity (PNU) are suspected of devising and implementing a "common plan" to attack supporters of then opponent and now Prime Minister Raila Odinga's party in the violence following Kenya's contested December 2007 polls.

Thai flood toll reaches 130

AFP, Bangkok

Almost two months of severe flooding in Thailand have left at least 130 people dead, the government said yesterday as it stepped up efforts to protect the low-lying capital.

Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra ordered army and naval boats to be deployed with their engines running while stationary on the Chao Phraya River in the hope that the motion from the propellers speeds up the flow.

The floods, which began in the north, have hit a total of 56 provinces, with 24 still waterlogged. The homes and livelihoods of 1.9 million people have been affected, according to the government.

India orders cull to tackle bird flu outbreak

AFP, New Delhi

India has ordered the immediate culling of chickens in an eastern part of the country in a bid to contain an outbreak of bird flu.

Outbreaks were confirmed in two villages in West Bengal, which has been severely hit by the virus in previous years, a government statement said late Tuesday.

All chickens will be culled within a three kilometre radius of the focal point of the infection, the statement said, without giving numbers. Eggs and chicken feed will also be destroyed to control the further spread of the disease.

Iran frees jailed US 'spy' hikers

AFP, Tehran

Two US hikers jailed for spying and illegal entry were on their way to the airport to fly home yesterday after Iran released them on bail, months after handing them hefty jail terms.

The release of Josh Fattal and Shane Bauer, both 29, who had been in custody for more than two years in a case that poisoned already difficult relations between Tehran and Washington, came as President Mahmud Ahmadinejad was in New York for the UN General Assembly.

"Immediately after their release, the two American nationals left for Mehrabad airport," the official IRNA news agency reported.

"The Swiss ambassador to Tehran and a delegation from Oman were present when the two American prisoners were released," the report added.

Fattal and Bauer were released into the custody of the Swiss embassy as Washington has no diplomatic relations with Tehran and its interests are looked after by the Swiss.

Oman, a US Gulf ally which has good relations with Iran, agreed to pay the two men's bail which was set at five billion rials (\$400,000) each.

Oman paid bail of a similar amount for the release of a third US hiker, Sarah Shourd, 32, last year.

Ahmadinejad told US media last week that the pair, who have been held since being arrested near the mountainous border with Iraq on July 31, 2009, would be released imminently.

Fresh clashes erupt as Yemen truce collapses

AFP, Sanaa

Three civilians were killed in crossfire during clashes between rival military units that rocked Yemen's capital for a fourth straight day yesterday, medics said, as a day-old truce lay in tatters.

The violence came as tens of thousands of protesters flooded the streets of Sanaa for the funerals of 30 of the 76 people killed in the bloodiest days since mass anti-regime protests erupted in January.

The fighting had receded on Tuesday night after the defence ministry said Hadi had given "strict orders for a rapid ceasefire in the capital and that government forces were obeying."

It was not immediately clear what sparked yesterday's resumption of hostilities, which comes amid warnings the improv-

erished Arabian Peninsula, buffeted by a rebellion in the north and a growing Al-Qaeda threat, is sliding towards collapse.

Witnesses said the rival forces traded artillery rounds and bursts of automatic gunfire yesterday morning in Eshrin street, opposite the residence of Vice President Abdrabuh Mansur Hadi, and the nearby Hael street.

The gunfire gained intensity after it began sporadically, while shells smashed into buildings where snipers had taken up positions, according to the witnesses.

Residents remained holed up in their homes while businesses and banks in the neighbourhood were shut, witnesses said.

An initial toll was put at three civilians killed in the crossfire but there was no immediate indication of casualties among the soldiers.

S Korea tops in net speed

AFP, Washington

South Korea has the world's top Internet download speeds followed by Romania, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Latvia, according to a study released on Tuesday.

The United States placed just 26th in the analysis of the speed of worldwide Internet connections conducted by Pando Networks.

The average download speed in the United States was 606 KBps, slightly better than the worldwide average of 580 KBps, Pando said.

The slowest average download speed was recorded in the Democratic Republic of Congo at 13 KBps, followed by the Central African Republic at 14 KBps and the Comoros at 23 KBps.

ROW OVER HACKING CONNECTION UK police seek to drop Guardian charges

AFP, London

London's police force admitted yesterday it was wrong to invoke a harsh secrecy law to force The Guardian newspaper to reveal the source for its reports on the British phone hacking scandal.

The Metropolitan Police Service announced on Tuesday that it had dropped an application for a court order against The Guardian, which broke the story of hacking at Rupert Murdoch's now-closed News of the World.

"The view I came to when I looked at the matter was that the Official Secrets Act was not an appropriate element of the applica-

tion, and that was the basis of the decision to withdraw the application at this time," Deputy Assistant Commissioner Mark Simmons told the BBC.

Guardian editor Alan Rusbridger welcomed the decision to drop the application, but criticised police for saying that they would still pursue the investigation into the alleged leaks by police staff.

"They should just stop that," Rusbridger told the BBC. "These are reporters who are just doing their ordinary business. If you are going to criminalise reporters who talk to public officials on an unauthorised basis, you would be blocking up most journalists in Britain."



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| SL. No. | Description of items | Quantity |
|---------|----------------------|----------|
| Lot- 01 | Instruments | 04 items |
| Lot- 02 | Chemicals | 03 items |

Interested bidders may collect schedules of tender from the Finance & Accounts Department of the NSU from 10:00a.m. to 4:00p.m. Sunday through Thursday on all working days till October 09, 2011 by paying non refundable taka 500.00(Five Hundred) only in cash for each schedule.

The bidders must submit **earnest money @ 2.5%** of quoted price in the form of pay order issued from any scheduled bank drawn in favor of North South University along with their offer. The sealed offer must be submitted on or before October 10, 2011 at 01.00p.m. at the office of the undersigned. Bidders can bid for all or any of the Lot. The offers will be opened at 01:15p.m. on the same day. Representatives of the participating bidders may remain present at the time of opening the bids. NSU authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without showing any reason.

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