

Palestinian leadership refuses recent Israeli overtures

President Obama reportedly disappointed with PA intransigence

The Times of Israel, By ELHANAN MILLER June 7, 2012.

The Palestinian leadership recently rejected an Israeli proposal to renew bilateral negotiations under Jordanian auspices, the London-based daily Al-Quds Al-Arabi reported Thursday.

The report claims that after the Kadima party joined Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition in May, the new Israeli government attempted to reopen exploratory negotiation channels with Mahmoud Abbas. Netanyahu's special envoy Yitzhak Molcho met with Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat in Amman in January, but the meeting led to no consensus.

On Tuesday, US President Barack Obama told Orthodox Jewish leaders that Abbas may be too weak politically to deliver a peace deal. Unnamed Palestinian sources told Al-Quds Al-Arabi that Obama's statements followed the Palestinians' refusal to resume negotiations with Israel as long as building continues in settlements beyond the 1967 Green Line.

Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat told the daily on Wednesday that negotiations between the sides were indeed impossible until Israel halted settlement construction, recognized the principle of a Palestinian state with 1967 borders, and released Palestinian prisoners.