

Bush and Peres discussed the Egypt-Jordanian truce plan

Plan differently reflected by the Palestinian and Israeli Government

Jerusalem - Israel's Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and President Bush met in Washington on Thursday. They discussed the truce plan proposed by Egypt and Jordan, though no agreement between Israelis and Palestinians appeared imminent.

In Pretoria, South Africa, Yasser Arafat said in a speech to Non-Aligned-Movement nations on Thursday, that he is fully committed to the Egyptian-Jordanian plan.

The Israeli government has said, that several proposals are one-sided. The plan calls for Israel to withdraw its forces from the edge of Palestinian towns and remove travel restrictions, but it does not explicitly call for the Palestinians to stop attacks.

After meeting Bush, Peres commented the different points of view towards Arafat and his responsibility for the outbreak of violence. The background is a statement released on Thursday by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's office, saying "the present attacks are a result of strategic decision of Arafat." "The organizations subject to Arafat, including Fatah, and also other organizations such as Hamas and Hezbollah understand that they have a 'green light' for continuation of the attacks against Israel" the statement added.

Arafat leads the Fatah movement, while the other three groups are Islamic organizations, that are not under his control and have consistently opposed the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations.

Arafat's Palestinian Authority released dozen of militants from prison after the Palestinian uprisings began last fall. Israel claims that former inmates, including members of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, are taking part in attacks.

While on Tuesday Peres said that "some dissident groups and some forces under Arafat participated in the killings (of Israelis) without the knowledge of Arafat", on Thursday he said too, that he had no disagreement with Sharon and held Arafat responsible for the violence against Israeli targets. "I said at first perhaps Arafat did not know about the terror attacks in advance", Peres was quoted as saying by Israeli television. "Israel demands that he assumes responsibility and come out publicly against terrorism."

Sharon and Peres have for decades taken sharply different approaches to dealing with the Palestinians, but have been working together in Israel's unity government the past two months. While Peres often speaks of the need to resume peace talks, Sharon insists there will be no negotiations until violence ends.

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