

Abbas: We deal with US, not Israel

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05/30/2010 04:23



Photo by: NAssociated Press

PA president says Israelis are "no longer peace partners."

The Palestinian Authority considers the US administration, and not Israel, as its peace partner, PA President Mahmoud Abbas was quoted as saying over the weekend.

Abbas told US special envoy George Mitchell that the Palestinians don't believe that the government of Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu is a real peace partner, according to Abbas Zaki, member of the Fatah Central Committee.

"President Abbas told Mitchell that the Israelis are no longer peace partners as much as the Americans are," Zaki told the London-based *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* newspaper.

Zaki added that Abbas asked Mitchell to present Washington's views about peace and not to wait for Israeli proposals.

"The Palestinian Authority is negotiating with Washington and not with Tel Aviv," he said.

Abbas to brief Fatah, PLO on results

Zaki, the former Palestinian representative to Lebanon, said that the proximity talks have so far dealt with the issues of security and borders only. Abbas is expected this week to brief Fatah and PLO leaders on the results of the negotiations, he added.

Abbas is also scheduled to brief the PLO and Fatah leaders on his upcoming visit to Washington, where he will hold talks with President Barack Obama on June 9.

Chief PA negotiator Saeb Erekat said that the proximity talks were aimed at reaching agreement over final-status issues such as Jerusalem, borders, water, security, settlements and prisoners.