

War looms as negotiations get underway

Contributed by Ezra Waldman
Wednesday, 12 December 2007

Escalation in Gaza Strip threatens peace talks
War seems imminent in the Gaza strip.

While preliminary negotiations are about to start about a final settlement solution between Israel and representatives of the Arab populace of the West bank and Gaza, war is about to break out. The Annapolis summit held two weeks ago dictated that formal talks start today no matter what. The realities on the ground have made these initial negotiations very difficult to say the least. Israel yesterday entered the southern part of the strip in a slightly surprise incursion to distance rocket attacks on its border towns. Six soldiers fighting Israeli forces were killed in the incursion. In a clear reprisal over 20 rockets were fired into Israel trying to show that incursions of this kind only increase rocket attacks not diminish them.

The Israeli cabinet is to meet today to discuss a possible escalation if not a massive incursion into the strip. This comes as members of a especially hard hit town petition the Israeli supreme court to force the Israeli government to fortify their homes or fund their evacuation. These border towns have been the victims of rocket attacks for the past 7 years. Israel hoped that the disengagement plan that removed all Israeli presence in the strip would stop attacks of this kind. That clearly has not happened as Arabs from Gaza continue to claim that Israel is still the occupier in the strip and elsewhere.

It's not clear how these negotiations can convene and advance under almost impossible conditions.

They won't.