

Bush to visit Middle East

Contributed by Branko Gold
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next week amid stalled talks.

Peace Talks in Middle East stalled. President George Bush is set to visit Israel next week in an attempt to somehow propel peace talks forward. This will not be an easy task. The peace talks that were initiated in a much publicized summit in Annapolis Maryland have not moved forward to issues of substance. The Israelis are accusing the Palestinians of failing to reign in rogue militia members of the Fatah, their own political party. This accusation comes on the heels of a double murder of two off duty Israeli soldiers. The Palestinians for their part claim Israel is continuing to build and expand settlements in East Jerusalem and elsewhere in the west bank. Israel also announced it would not take down any roadblocks in the West bank as it claims are vital to thwart terrorist threats. It is unclear how Mr. Bushes short visit of a day or two could possibly bring the sides together to try to achieve some tangible progress. His exact itinerary has not been announced for security reasons and it's unclear whether he will even visit the Palestinian authority. The secret service is said to be very against such a visit. It probably won't happen. Many fear the backlash of a complete breakdown of negotiations. This backlash could push Israel to enter the Gaza Strip and jumpstart another intifada from the Arab side. The President understands this very well and will try to avoid a breakdown at all costs. A former President, Bill Clinton was in a similar situation at the end of his presidency and understood very well the consequences of failed talks. The Summit he pushed forward between Yassar Arafat and former Israeli Prime minister Ehud Barak ended in complete failure. That prompted an unprecedented cycle of violence known as the Intifada El-Aksa.

The Middle East is sitting on a powder Keg there is little even the President of the United States can do about it