

Blair, Solana to head to Israel tomorrow

Written by Chris Perver
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Tony Blair is due to travel to the Middle East tomorrow, on what will be his [first visit](#) to the region as Special Envoy for the Quartet (EU, US, UN, Russia). He has received strong backing in his new role from the United States, when it was announced that Secretary of State

[Condoleezza Rice](#)

would be aiding him in his dealings with the Palestinian Authority. Previously US diplomats had stated that Blair would not be involved in mediating a covenant between Israel and the Palestinians, and that this role would remain the sole domain of the Secretary of State. Javier Solana, the High Representative for the European Common, Foreign and Security Policy, had also

[objected](#)

to Tony Blair's new role, fearing it would detract from his own efforts in the region. Perhaps that is the reason why Solana will accompany Blair on his trip to the region this Wednesday.

Quote: *"On Solana's trip to the region, he will hold talks with Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. On Thursday, he plans to travel to Portugal for a meeting of senior officials from the EU, United Nations, Russia and United States - the powers that make up the Quartet of would-be Middle East peacemakers. "We are going into a very critical and decisive phase there," said Portuguese Foreign Minister Luis Amado, whose country holds the EU's rotating presidency. Amado told a panel of the European Parliament that he hoped the Lisbon meeting would "give a new boost to the peace process."*

Blair's mission to the Middle East will be officially launched in Lisbon on Thursday, following a meeting of the Quartet to discuss recent developments in the region - namely, the release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners by Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, money transfers to the new Palestinian Authority government, the situation in the Gaza Strip and the election of Shimon Peres as President. [Blair](#) is intending to spend much of his time in the Middle East, and knowing Blair, I believe this may give a significant boost to the peace process in the region.

Quote: *"Blair said he would stay in the region for one week every month. He has appointed as his chief of staff Nick Banner, who worked with Sir Nigel Sheinwald, Blair's foreign policy adviser in Downing Street. He intends to add staff members from the USAID agency, the United Nations, the European Union and Russia. A suitable building for Blair's office in Jerusalem has not yet been found due to high real estate prices.*

I thought the last quote was interesting. It reminds me of the passage which states that

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Jerusalem will become the base of the Antichrist during the tribulation period.

Daniel 11:45

And he (Antichrist) shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.

Zechariah 8:3

Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain.

Source [International Herald Tribune](#) , [Haaretz](#)