

Blair to press US to move on Middle East peace

Written by Chris Perver
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British Prime Minister Tony Blair will be [meeting](#) with US diplomats tomorrow, where he is expected to press them to increase their efforts to find a lasting peace in the Middle East. The Prime Minister stated a [few months ago](#), that solving the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians could have a positive influence on other conflicts in the region.

Quote: *"Mr Blair will be in Washington the day after the bipartisan Baker-Hamilton commission publishes its long-awaited report on US policy in Iraq. Mr Blair has given evidence to the commission by video link, urging it to recognise that Palestine is a sore that is worsening the violence in Iraq. The 10-strong commission is expected to propose US re-engagement with the issue of Israel and Palestine, as well as the possibility of strengthening diplomatic relations with Iran and Syria, previously seen as pariah states by Washington.*

Downing Street has announced that the Prime Minister still intends to visit the region before Christmas, despite little progress being made on the Palestinian unity government. In other news, German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier arrived in [Damascus](#) today, urging President Bashar Assad to make positive contributions to peace in the wider region.

Quote: *"Meanwhile, the German top diplomat also urged Syria to exert influence on the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), which also enjoys Syria's support, to help promote the Middle East peace process. "Syria is an important player in the region but it needs to play a constructive role to ensure German involvement," Steinmeier said.*

Source [Guardian](#), [People's Daily](#)