Abbas Says Won't Announce Dismantling of PA at UN Speech

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Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said in conversation with a number of European diplomats last week that he does not intend to announce the dismantling of the Palestinian Authority or the cancellation of the Oslo Accords during his upcoming speech at the United Nations General Assembly, a senior Israeli official told Haaretz.

According to the senior Israeli official, the European diplomats asked Abbas for clarifications following reports in the Palestinian and Arab media of his intended announcements in his September 30th speech.

Abbas, who just a few days ago said he was going to [“drop a bombshell”](http://www.haaretz.com/news/middle-east/.premium-1.674963) in the speech, told the diplomats that he had no intention of taking steps like ending security cooperation with Israel. The senior Israeli official said that although Abbas had not asked them to do so, some of the diplomats updated the government in Jerusalem on Abbas’ statements.

However, people around Abbas continue to convey the opposite message. The senior Israeli official said that a close associate of Abbas, Saeb Erekat, said recently in conversations with European diplomats that Abbas was going to announce the dismantling of the PA and was going to “return the keys to Israel.”

Erekat leads the extreme line in the Palestinian leadership on the diplomatic conflict with Israel. His remarks were interpreted by many of those with whom he met as an attempt to pressure the international community. Erekat told his interlocutors that Abbas would meet early next week in New York with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry before his speech at the UN.

Erekat said Abbas wanted to hear clearly from Kerry what the Obama administration’s policy is toward the freeze in the peace process and whether the United States intended to take concrete steps. “Erekat told a number of officials that according to what Abbas heard from Kerry he would decide how far to go in his speech,” the senior Israeli official said.

On Sunday, Abbas arrived in Paris for a three-day visit during which he is to meet with President Francois Hollande and Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius. France had declared its intention to move ahead a Security Council resolution on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict but backtracked after it realized that Abbas opposed the move at this time.

Instead, the French are moving ahead an idea to establish an international group to support the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. The group would consist of the Quartet – the United States, Russia, the European Union and the United Nations – as well as prominent Arab countries. On the margins of the General Assembly, the first meeting is expected to take place between the Quartet and the foreign ministers of Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia to discuss the stalled peace process.