

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, Obama 'Share' Quest for Peace in Middle East

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu responded positively to U.S. President Barack Obama's address from Cairo to the Muslim world on Thursday, voicing hope that the speech would foster reconciliation between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

"The government of Israel expresses hope that President Obama's important speech will lead to a new period of reconciliation between the Arab and Muslim world, and Israel. We share Obama's hope that the American effort will bring about an end to the conflict and to pan-Arab recognition of Israel as the Jewish state," the prime minister's office said in a statement.

"Israel is obligated to peace and will do as much as possible to help expand the circle of peace, while taking into consideration our national interests, the foremost of which is security," the statement concluded.

President Shimon Peres also praised Obama's speech as one "filled with a vision." Defense Minister Ehud Barak added, "We praise the president's commitment to the existence and safety of Israel, as well as his clear call for Israel's integration in the region." But right-wing cabinet minister Daniel Herschkowitz insisted that Israel is not "America's lackey."

"The relations with the Americans are based on friendship and not submission, and therefore Israel must tell Obama that stopping natural growth in the settlements is a red line," Herschkowitz said.

Compiled by International Christian Embassy Jerusalem ()