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Diplomacy:

US President Barack Obama is set to give his next political speech at 6pm Thursday. According to a draft of the speech, Obama is expected to urge Israel to return to the 1967 lines while negating the PA planned unilateral bid for statehood in September. He is also likely to stress Israel must cease any settlement expansion in the West Bank and further avoid any act which could be construed as changing the status quo on the ground. (Yedioth Ahronoth)

Obama will meet on Tuesday Jordan's King Abdullah II. "We are to not only talk about our bilateral relations and the challenges that we face in the Middle East, but also this Arab Spring," Abdullah said Monday. (AFP)

Obama will also meet Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu this week. (AFP)

A senior Israeli political source said that Netanyahu will tell Obama the Palestinians will be able to receive a state equivalent in its size to the 1967 territories, with territory exchanges, and that returning to the 1967 borders would be impossible. (Israel Radio)

France is trying to initiate a meeting in Paris between PM Netanyahu and President Abbas. French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe will be arriving in the region today to invite the two to meet at the conference of donor states to the Palestinian Authority to take place next month. Juppe will visit Ramallah on Tuesday. On Wednesday he is scheduled to meet Israeli President Shimon Peres, PM Binyamin Netanyahu and FM Avigdor Lieberman. (Israel Radio)

Netanyahu said on Monday that the Palestinians have to recognize Israel as a Jewish state, solve the refugee problem outside Israel and accept a permanent Israeli army presence in a demilitarized Palestinian state in parts of the West Bank that does not include Jerusalem. (Haaretz)

In response, Palestinian presidential spokesman Nabil Abu Rdeineh said that Netanyahu's statements "are unacceptable pre-conditions," and that "any peace deal means that East Jerusalem will be the capital of the state of Palestine and all permanent status issues should be resolved at the negotiations table according to international resolutions and the road map." (Haaretz)

US State Department spokesperson Mark Toner also responded to Netanyahu's statements, expressing frustration in the stalled peace talks. "Obviously, there are tremendous challenges in the peace process moving forward. We obviously took a hit last week with Senator Mitchell resigning. But that process continues, and Senator Mitchell

has created a strong team, and they are going to continue to work to move this process forward," he said. (Jerusalem Post)

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas writes in New York Times: "We go to the UN now to secure the right to live free in the remaining 22 percent of our historic homeland because we have been negotiating with Israel for 20 years without coming any closer to realizing a state of our own. We cannot wait indefinitely while Israel continues to send more settlers to the occupied West Bank and denies Palestinians access to most of our land and holy places, particularly in Jerusalem. Neither political pressure nor promises of rewards by the US have stopped Israel's settlement program."

Palestinian Internal Affairs:

Talks between Hamas and Fatah to hammer out details of a joint Palestinian government began in Cairo on Monday. (Reuters)

Home Demolitions:

Israel's policy of demolishing Palestinian homes has displaced 149 children in the West Bank so far this year, figures from UNRWA show. Between January and April, Israel destroyed at least 193 Palestinian structures, including 78 residential units, forcibly displacing 333 Palestinians, UNRWA said. The figures show a sharp rise from with the same period in 2010, when 142 Palestinians, including 61 children, were forcibly displaced (Maan News)

Nakba Day:

Israel and Lebanon filed rival protests to the United Nations over deadly clashes involving thousands of Palestinian demonstrators who converged on Israel's borders, diplomats said Monday. (AFP)

The UN condemned on Monday Israel's "disproportionate, deadly force" against demonstrators mourning the anniversary of Al-Nakba. "I am shocked by the number of the deaths and the use of disproportionate, deadly force by the Israeli Defense Forces against apparently unarmed demonstrators, which I condemn," UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon Michael Williams said.

"I strongly reiterate the need for all sides to exercise maximum restraint, to prevent the recurrence of such violence and to strictly adhere to resolution 1701," added Williams. (Reuters)

UN Humanitarian chief Valerie Amos said that the fatalities are innocent civilians, and called for an investigation into the event. (Israel Radio)

A man identifying himself as a Syrian civil servant said on Monday he hitch-hiked and rode a bus alongside Israeli soldiers to Tel Aviv after pushing through a fence with Palestinian demonstrators in the occupied Golan on Sunday. "It was my dream to reach Jaffa," Hassan Hijazi, 28, said. Hijazi later surrendered to Israeli police. (Israel Channel 10, Reuters)

The White House accused Syria on Monday of stoking protests in the Golan as a "distraction" from its repression of anti-government protests and warned that "such behavior is unacceptable." (AFP)

Syria:

Syrian villagers pulled 13 bodies from a mass grave near the southern city of Deraa on Monday, and tanks pushed into a rural border area in the latest crackdown on protests against President Bashar al-Assad. (Reuters)

At least 16 people _ eight of them members of the same family _ have been killed in recent days in Talkalakh, a town of about 70,000 residents near the border with Lebanon, witnesses and activists say. (AP)

Hundreds of Syrian refugees continued to flood into northern Lebanon Monday, as at least 15 Syrian tanks pushed overnight into a rural area near the Lebanese border and the military crackdown on anti-regime protests intensified. (Daily Star, Lebanon)

Egypt:

Suzanne Mubarak, the wife of ousted Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, has returned some of her assets to the state, after anti-graft officials ordered her detention. The former first lady returned a villa in Cairo, and transferred the power of attorney on Monday for authorities to withdraw up to \$3.4m held in two of her bank accounts. (MENA, Egypt)

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