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**Subject:** Fw: The Media Line MidEast Daily

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**Subject:** The Media Line MidEast Daily



## Arab League Endorses UN Route, but UN Says Security Council First for Palestinian Initiative

Plans to achieve Palestinian statehood through the United Nations received approval from a key committee of the Arab League on Saturday, but might had nevertheless hit a roadblock when the president of the General Assembly said on Friday that recognition of the new state must begin with a resolution in the Security Council where President Obama has indicated he would veto the measure. Addressing the Arab League in Doha, Palestinian Authority head Mahmoud 'Abbas warned of the financial consequences the statehood decision would entail and asked Arab nations to fill in the fiscal gap. In New York on Friday, General Assembly President Joseph Deiss of Switzerland (seen in photo with Secretary General Ban Ki-moon) explained that "the General Assembly cannot take the initiative" in launching the Palestinian state, but expressed support, saying that "we are ready to do our work as soon as a recommendation of the Security Council would be addressed." The Palestinians and those who support the U.N. path to statehood are not giving up hope. It remains to be seen whether the incoming U.N. leadership will find a way to reverse Deiss's reading of the U.N. Charter. In September, Qatar will replace Switzerland in the General Assembly presidency and Lebanon's representative will become chairman of the Security Council.

## Opening of Gaza Crossing by Egypt Ends Israel's Blockade

It was a festive atmosphere on Saturday when the Rafah crossing point between the Gaza Strip and Egypt was reopened by Egyptian authorities after being closed for 4 years.

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The blockade had been imposed by Israel in response to the Hamas take-over of the Gaza Strip in order to prevent weapons and terrorists from entering the area. Egyptian cooperation under ousted President Hosni Mubarak was a sore point in relations with the Palestinians and with the Arab world, but American administrations agreed that an open border was dangerous. Notwithstanding many human interest stories relating to individuals crossing into Egypt on Saturday, the Israelis fear that the new situation will make it impossible to stem the flow of sophisticated weapons to Hamas which managed to find their way into Hamas hands even during the blockade. A larger question the re-opening begs is whether security cooperation between Israel and Egypt will survive Mubarak's demise. Since his ouster, there has been frequent talk of challenging the historic 1979 peace treaty between Israel and Egypt; and Islamist groups are rapidly gaining in strength.

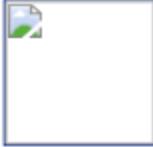
### **G-8 Plans Gifts to Development Banks to Fund "Arab Spring" Nations**

Members of the G-8 nations meeting in Deauville, France, deferred making specific decisions about supporting nations caught up in the so-called "Arab Spring," but each nation committed to contributing to development banks that will in turn provide funding to individual states pursuant to details to be decided later. The fund is seen as incentive for the Middle Eastern nations hit by the unrest to move toward democratization. Egypt and Tunisia received the bulk of the gifts already earmarked. The World Bank designated \$4.5 billion for Egypt over two years and \$1.5 billion for Tunisia over the same period. The United States last week announced it would offer Egypt \$1 billion in debt relief and another billion dollars in loan guarantees. The G-8 nations insist that the recipient nations will have to demonstrate actual reforms and transparency. French President Nicolas Sarkozy said the total fund will ultimately be boosted by another \$10 billion from the G-8 nations and \$10 billion from Arab governments.

### **Protestors Return to Cairo's Tahrir Square: This Time in Opposition to New Government**

The scene was the same but the target of the demonstrators different when thousands of Egyptians filled Tahrir Square – the epicenter of the movement that overthrew Hosni Mubarak – on Saturday in protest of the policies of the military council that replaced Mubarak. Thousands of protestors demanded that the pace of reforms be increased; insisting that "the revolution is not over." The demonstration was opposed by the Muslim Brotherhood, one of the big winners of the movement to oust Mubarak. Banned by the previous government, it is now the best-organized and largest political force, standing to take significant power following elections. In Syria, government forces again opened live-fire on

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demonstrators killing at least 12 in the eastern city of Deir Al-Zor, one of several cities that held night-time demonstrations on Saturday.

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The Media Line (TML) is an American non-profit news organization established to enhance and balance media coverage in the Middle East, promote independent reporting in the region, and break down barriers to understanding in the Arab and Israeli journalism communities.

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