

RELEASE IN PART B5

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**From:** Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 16, 2010 5:15 PM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** FW: (AP) Fate of Mideast talks in hands of polarizing rabbi

Worth reading. 

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**From:** Larkins, Neal B  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 16, 2010 5:12 PM  
**To:** NEWS-Mahogany  
**Cc:** SES-O\_OS; SES-O\_Shift-III  
**Subject:** (AP) Fate of Mideast talks in hands of polarizing rabbi

JERUSALEM (AP) - The future of the Mideast peace process could rest in the hands of one very undiplomatic man: an outspoken 90-year-old rabbi who recently sparked an uproar by saying the Palestinian president should "perish from the world." The ultra-Orthodox Shas Party is expected to hold the swing vote when Cabinet ministers decide on a U.S. proposal to resume Mideast peace talks. The two Shas ministers participating in the decision are waiting for instructions from the party's spiritual leader, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef. "All decisions go through the rabbi," said Roi Lachmanovitch, a spokesman for the Shas interior minister. The drama has once again turned the enigmatic rabbi, who has managed to offend Arabs, secular Jews, Holocaust survivors, women and gays with fiery comments over the years, into the familiar role of kingmaker. Politicians from outside his party, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, are now lobbying for his support. Officials in Netanyahu's office said his 15-member Security Cabinet - a group of senior government ministers - remains closely divided, with the outcome of the vote hinging on the two Shas members. Amid the uncertainty, Israeli officials said a planned vote for November 17 had been put on hold.