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**From:** Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>  
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**From:** Withers, Anne M  
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**Subject:** (CNN) Fayyad: Peace talks may need stronger U.S. mediation role

Washington (CNN) -- The United States may have to expand its role from Middle East peace talks facilitator to become a broker on specific core issues, Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad said on December 12. Appearing on the ABC program "This Week," Fayyad indicated that progress toward a peace settlement could occur in the short-term despite Israel's refusal to halt construction of new settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. However, Israel must provide specifics about its position on core issues such as what a Palestinian state would entail, the status of Jerusalem and the return of refugees, Fayyad said, adding that the lack of a new settlement freeze erodes trust in the process.

Asked if the United States would need to offer so-called "bridging" proposals on specific issues to try to stimulate negotiations, Fayyad said that "may be necessary." "It may be unavoidable, actually, for the United States, acting as a broker at some point, to come in with bridging proposals so we make this happen," he said. The interview, which included Israeli opposition leader and former Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, took place two days after U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton outlined a direction for the peace process after giving up on trying to persuade Israel to again freeze settlement construction as a condition for the direct talks to resume.

<http://edition.cnn.com/2010/US/12/12/mideast.talks/>