

Israel to make security demands

by UPI

JERUSALEM -- Israel will ask the Bush administration to safeguard its security interests and demands in any final-state agreements regarding the Palestinian territories. Israel will seek an understanding with the U.S. government preserving Israel's security interests and supporting its security demands before a settlement is reached in any Israeli-Palestinian arrangement, Haaretz said Thursday. The Israelis want to retain autonomy in their counter-terrorism activities in the West Bank and establish limitations on the defense capabilities of any future Palestinian state. Israeli officials said they should maintain military superiority in the West Bank and Gaza Strip during on-going peace negotiations. "It is inconceivable that we would be prevented from continuing the extraordinary achievement against terror in the West Bank," an anonymous source said in the newspaper. Israel alluded to welcoming an international force deployed in the West Bank but wants to impose limitations on the future Palestinian state's sovereignty, including Israeli over-flight rights and border patrols. "In most of the issues involving the agreement with the Palestinians, Israel is the one being asked to give tangible things. The only area in which we have real demands from the Palestinians is that of security arrangements," the Haaretz source said. U.S. President George Bush is to visit Israel next week.

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