

## Hamas denounces U.S.-led peace talks

by UPI

RAMALLAH, Gaza -- A senior Hamas official told a British newspaper that next month's U.S.-led Middle East peace talks are a tool to help U.S. Republicans' popularity. Muhammad Nazal made the claim to the London-published Arabic newspaper Al Quds al Arabi, and went on to say it paved the way for Republicans' future plans, the publication said in an article published Monday. "The purpose of the Annapolis peace conference is not the Palestinians but drafting support for a strike on Iran," Nazal said. He also claimed Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, the leader of the rival Fatah party, was turning his back on his own people. "Israel is initiating an agreement which breaches the rights of the Palestinian people," Nazal said. He also denied U.S. and Israeli intelligence warnings of a large Hamas offensive once the agenda had been announced, the Jerusalem Post reported. "In our view, the conference is not worthy of any military activity by Hamas," he said. "The seeds of its failure have already been planted." A date has yet to be set for the summit in Annapolis, Md., although Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni called Monday for the creation of a panel to deal with post-summit negotiations, Haaretz reported.

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