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Can Mideast peace deal happen next year?

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U.S. President Barack Obama (R) greets Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas (L) and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, as leaders gathered to deliver a joint statement on Middle East Peace talks in the East Room of the White House in Washington September 1, 2010. (Xinhua/Reuters Photo)

by Matthew Rusling

WASHINGTON, Sept. 3 (Xinhua) -- The latest round of Middle East peace talks kicked off Thursday, with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton expressing optimism that the decades-long conflict between Israelis and Palestinians may be resolved in a year.

But some experts say that deadline is too ambitious. Previous talks over several decades and during many U.S. administrations have failed to bring a lasting peace, and many say this time

is not different.

Flanked by the Israeli and Palestinian leaders, Clinton Thursday addressed those who harbored doubts about the talks.

"To those who criticize this process, who stand on the sidelines and say 'no,' I ask you to join us in this effort," she said from the State Department in Washington.

"I fervently believe that the two men sitting on either side of me, that you are the leaders that can make this long cherished dream a reality," she added.

Still, many have expressed doubt that such a goal can come to fruition.

"It is difficult to imagine that there is going to be an agreement in a year, or even in two or three years," said Leon T. Hadar, a research fellow in foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute.

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