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PEACE MONITOR

16 FEBRUARY–15 MAY 2000

The Peace Monitor is a quarterly summary of bilateral, multilateral, regional, and international events affecting the peace process.

BILATERALS

PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI TRACK

Palestinian-Israeli talks, which the Palestinian Authority (PA) had suspended on 2/6, were still on hold at the opening of the quarter (see *Peace Monitor* in *JPS* 115), pending Israel's answers to three questions posed by the PA on 2/7: (1) Given that Israel and the PA had missed the 2/13 deadline for a framework agreement on the permanent status (FAPS), essentially an outline or letter of intent regarding a final status agreement, did Israel want to set a new date for completing the FAPS or did it want to aim directly for a full final status accord by 9/13, as the PA preferred? (2) Would Israel allow the PA to take part in drawing the maps for the third stage of the second further redeployment (FRD), which was to have been completed by 1/20, and of the third FRD, which is required of Israel prior to the final status? (3) When did Israel intend to carry out the third FRD?

U.S. special envoy Dennis Ross returned to the region on 2/21 to try to revive the negotiations. Meeting with Ross that day, Israeli PM Ehud Barak proposed 5/00 as a new target date for a FAPS and said Israel was willing to offer the PA a confidence-building package, including the release of more prisoners, payment of some back taxes owed the PA, and minor changes to the maps of the third stage of the second FRD (albeit still not including any villages in the greater Jerusalem area). Barak, however, repeated Israel's request to delay the third FRD until after a final status agreement is reached. PA head Yasir Arafat expressed disappointment with Barak's offer in his meeting with Ross on 2/22 but did not reject it outright. After a week of talks with PA and Israeli officials and a side trip to Cairo (2/24) to consult with Egyptian FM 'Amr Musa, Ross returned to Washington on 2/28.

On 3/7, the same day that Ross returned to the Middle East, Arafat and Barak met secretly in Tel Aviv. (Ross did not attend.) Barak reportedly informed Arafat that Israel

had identified 10% of the West Bank (including the village of Anata, near Jerusalem) that could qualify for the third stage of the second FRD and that the PA could select the 6.1% for the FRD from that 10%. Following a second meeting in Ramallah on 3/8, this time with Ross, Arafat and Barak announced that they would resume negotiations in Washington after the Id al-Adha holidays ended on 3/20.

In recognition of Egypt's ongoing mediation efforts, Barak and Arafat waited to reveal the details of the understandings they had reached in order to resume talks until their meeting with Pres. Husni Mubarak on 3/9 in Cairo: the FAPS would be concluded by 5/13, Israel would carry out the third stage of the second FRD by 4/00 (with the PA choosing 6.1% from 10% offered), the size of the third FRD would be decided by the end of 6/00, some Palestinian prisoners would be released for the Id, taxes owed the PA would be transferred, and efforts to open the n. safe passage would be stepped up.

Israel implemented the third stage of the second FRD on 3/21, the same day that PA and Israeli negotiating teams, led by Yasir 'Abid Rabbuh and Oded Eran, respectively, began a week of final status talks at Bolling Air Force Base near Washington, under a media blackout. U.S. special envoy Ross and his deputy, Aaron Miller, were on hand to "oversee" talks, and U.S. Secy. of State Madeleine Albright touched base with both teams on 3/27. Although Ross had asked both sides to prepare to discuss their positions on all issues, both sides came empty-handed and without advisers, precluding any negotiating. The State Department described (3/28) the meetings as "extremely collegial" but admitted that the teams merely spent the week-long session "attempting to achieve a better understanding of each other's needs and requirements." The talks recessed on 3/28, with teams agreeing to return to Bolling on 4/6. The teams were asked to be prepared to define points of agreement and disagreement in their baseline demands and to identify points that they did not think could be

agreed upon in the short term (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 114), with the idea that both sides would begin drafting the FAPS at a third round of talks.

The second round began as scheduled on 4/6. The Israeli and PA teams exchanged (4/10) papers listing the headings and sub-headings that each thought should be included in the FAPS but did not agree on a common outline by the close of talks on 4/14. The PA paper reportedly had headings for Jerusalem, settlements, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), refugees, and prisoners, whereas the Israeli paper did not, suggesting that Israel does not think these issues can be agreed upon in the short term. The teams were asked to agree on the headings and subheadings and then to fill in their respective positions, so there would be one document showing points of convergence and divergence (similar to the framework agreement the U.S. drafted for the Syrian track; see Doc. D1 in *JPS* 115).

While the State Dept. did not think it appropriate to step in with an American draft, a day into the second round of Bolling talks, U.S. officials concluded (4/7) that if progress were to be made by the FAPS deadline, particularly on sticky issues such as Jerusalem, Arafat and Barak would have to become directly involved. On short notice, the U.S. announced (4/8) that Arafat and Barak would come to Washington separately to discuss the final status with Pres. Bill Clinton. Barak, who reportedly had to drop preparations for a 4/12 meeting with Chinese pres. Jiang Zemin (see below) to prepare for the visit, arrived in Washington on 4/11, held four hours of talks with Clinton and Albright, and returned to Israel without addressing the press. Despite the brief session, Clinton and Barak reportedly reached four understandings on the Palestinian track: (1) Israel was willing to give the PA contiguous areas in the West Bank (possibly totalling 70–80% of the territory) in return for lands annexed to the State of Israel; (2) Barak would accelerate talks on the Palestinian track in an attempt to finalize the FAPS and the third FRD by 5/13; (3) the U.S. would increase its involvement in the third round of talks; and (4) Israel would contribute money to an international effort to help Palestinian refugees but would not agree to take in any refugees. Clinton, Albright, and Arafat met in Washington on 4/20, but no details of their meeting were released. Afterward, the U.S. announced that the third round of FAPS talks would be

moved to Elat and that, at the request of both parties, the U.S. would take on a “more intensified role.” Albright also announced (4/24) plans to go to the region in 6–8 weeks to try to arrange a summit between Barak and Arafat.

The third round of talks opened in Elat on 4/30 but was delayed for five hours while the PA filed a formal complaint against the Israeli government’s decision a few hours earlier authorizing construction of 174 new housing units in Ma’ale Adumim settlement and expansion of the borders of Mod’in settlement for 1,600 more housing units plus infrastructure. Barak reportedly took the decision to placate settlers before seeking cabinet approval to transfer to full PA control (area A) three Palestinian villages (Abu Dis, Azariyya, and Sawahara al-Sharqiyya) just outside Jerusalem in jointly controlled area B. When word spread of Barak’s intentions, however, there was such protest from coalition MKs, settlers, and opposition figures that Barak shelved the idea.

No movement in the talks was reported until 5/2, when, just before U.S. special envoy Ross arrived and against U.S. recommendations, Israel presented the PA with a map showing its vision of final status: Israel would turn over 66% of the West Bank to the PA; annex 20% around Jerusalem, along two wide swaths linking Israel proper with the Jordan Valley, and along the border with Jordan; and hold 14% along the Jordan Valley for a trial period of several years. The PA’s 66%, which Israel could recognize as a Palestinian state, would be in three large chunks connected by roads, bridges, and tunnels to create “territorial contiguity.” The PA walked out of talks after viewing the maps but agreed to return when Ross joined the session on 5/3. Meetings continued through 5/7, but no progress was made.

At Ross’s urging, Barak and Arafat held a late-night meeting in Ramallah on 5/7. Afterward, Barak announced to the press that he would transfer control of the three West Bank villages outside Jerusalem to PA control within a few weeks or months. The PA viewed (5/7) this as an empty gesture, since it already expected (an expectation Israel did not share) all of area B to be transferred to area A by 6/00 under a third FRD.

The teams held a final, unproductive FAPS meeting on 5/8, before recessing for Israel’s memorial and “independence” day holidays (5/9–10). Ross returned to Washington to brief the U.S. peace team, and the

5/13 FAPS deadline passed with little comment. The State Department declared (5/13), "clearly it was not a hard and fast deadline, and clearly not a moment to stop negotiating because the deadline passes. . . . The deadline . . . now is to get a final status agreement by September 13."

Meanwhile, on 3/25, during the first session of formal final status talks at Bolling, Israel and the PA reportedly held their first meeting in what they hoped to be a series of authorized back-channel contacts to draw up solutions on final status issues. Israel was reportedly represented by Internal Security M Shlomo Ben Ami and Tourism M Amnon Shahak, while the PA delegation comprised senior Arafat advisers and former chief negotiators Ahmad Qurai' and Mahmud Abbas.

This back channel came to the fore on 5/15, when PA chief negotiator 'Abid Rabbuh announced in a scathing four-page letter published in the Arab press that he had resigned on 5/14 to protest secret final status talks ongoing in Stockholm, to which he had not been invited and of which he had only just learned. 'Abid Rabbuh accused Arafat of treating his negotiators like "toys" and of undermining the authority of the Palestinian Council (PC), Israel of manipulating the negotiations and of attempting to divide and conquer the Palestinians, and the U.S. of pressuring the PA to accept Israel's demands. It is uncertain how long the U.S. had been aware of the secret channel, but, on 5/15, special envoy Ross arrived in Israel from Stockholm with the Israeli and PA teams, who had just completed a round of talks. The Stockholm teams comprised Israel's Ben Ami and lawyer Gilead Sher (Barak's lawyer and his chief negotiator up to the Wye II signing) and the PA's Qurai', PC member Hassan Asfour, and Preventive Security Forces chief Muhammad Dahlan.

No information on the Stockholm meetings has been released, but, according to rumors, Barak is ultimately willing to cede 70-90% of the West Bank and to recognize a Palestinian state in return for PA agreement to postpone indefinitely discussion of Jerusalem, refugees, and borders. If the PA were to force Israel's hand by unilaterally declaring a state in 9/00, as Arafat plans, Israel would recognize it and consider it a de facto permanent arrangement, thereby limiting the "state" to the 40% of areas A and B over which the PA now has control and automatically halting discussion of other final status and even interim issues. Some rumors sug-

gest that Israel seeks a lease-back arrangement for the settlements similar to the Naharayim/Baqura deal with Jordan (see annex 1.B of the 1994 Jordan-Israel treaty in *JPS* 94): Israel would recognize in writing the PA's right to the settlement land, but the PA, at the same time, would agree to lease the land to Israel, perhaps indefinitely.

At the close of the quarter, it was uncertain whether the original final status teams would continue work on the FAPS or if they would be dropped in favor of Stockholm talks on a full final status agreement. Indeed, there were some reports that a permanent arrangement might already have been reached. Moreover, increased tensions between Israelis and Palestinians in the territories (and between Israeli Arabs and Jews inside Israel) made it very possible that the whole track would slow or halt. Daily scuffles between Palestinians commemorating Prisoners' Day (4/17) and the anniversary of the Nakba (5/14-15) and Israelis celebrating memorial and "independence" days (5/9-10) began on 5/7. They escalated out of control on 5/14 and 5/15, when clashes between the IDF and Palestinians, including PA police, spread throughout the West Bank, leaving four Palestinians dead and hundreds injured (see Chronology for details).

Outstanding Interim Issues

Apart from FRDs and prisoners, outstanding interim issues were hardly discussed this quarter and were not cited as impediments holding up the final status talks. The only meetings of the PA-Israeli interim teams reported were held at the end of the quarter (4/25, 5/14). No joint committee met, no effort was made toward opening the northern safe-passage route, and, despite Israeli promises 3/9 (see above), no back taxes were transferred to the PA.

Further Redeployments

As mentioned above, Israel announced on 3/9 that it would implement the third stage of the second FRD by 4/00 (it was to have been completed by 1/20); the PA would have some input in the FRD by being able to choose the 6.1% of land from 10% submitted by Israel. The revelation (3/9) that the 10% included the Palestinian village of Anata, near Jerusalem and already in area B, caused a storm among Israelis, especially since it coincided with a casual remark made (ca. 3/10) by Israeli chief of staff Danny Yatom that Israel might turn over control of the villages of Abu Dis, Azariyya, and al-Ram,

near Jerusalem, in the third FRD. Consequently, right-wing MKs voted against the government in a no-confidence vote on 3/13, even though the vote was on an unrelated matter (see below), and nearly succeeded in passing the motion. Barak removed Anata from the list of possible areas on 3/14. On 3/15, the PA selected areas around Bethlehem, Hebron, and Ramallah totalling the 6.1%.

The transfer of the 6.1% from jointly controlled area B to PA-controlled area A took place on 3/21, the first day of the Bolling talks, leaving the PA with full control of 18.2% of the West Bank and partial control of 21.8%. One Jewish settlement, Negohot, home to 12 families and two bachelors, was left isolated amid PA-controlled territory.

Israel and the PA discussed the third FRD in both the first and second rounds of the Bolling talks but reached no agreements. On 4/9, Barak for the first time stated that Israel would not annex Palestinian villages near Jerusalem but would seek to annex most Jewish settlements in a final agreement. He also said Israel might make a "down payment" on future land transfers, possibly handing over Palestinian villages near Jerusalem. On 5/7, Barak followed through, announcing he would turn over to the PA Abu Dis, Azariyya, and Sawahara al-Sharqiyya. In commenting afterward, Barak stated (5/8), "We must have a third-phase withdrawal that will give [the Palestinians] a great deal of territory. But we want them to focus, instead of on the third phase, on the framework that is comfortable for us." This statement led to speculation that the three-village plan (transferring the villages sooner rather than later) was a diversionary tactic Barak intended to use to put off the third FRD indefinitely and force the PA into accepting his long-standing demand to incorporate the third FRD into a final status agreement. On 5/15, the Israeli cabinet approved the handover of the three villages, but Barak himself said he would not implement it until he received a satisfactory explanation from Arafat regarding the Nakba-related violence in the territories 5/14-15 (see above).

Also of note: In early 3/00, the IDF changed the location of four roadblocks separating Israel and the West Bank, moving the Beit Horon roadblock east, the Yatir roadblock north, the Shaked roadblock south, and eliminating the Har Hebron roadblock, thereby creating direct links between Israel proper and the settlements of Shaked, Hin-

nanit, Tel Menashe, and Reihan. The IDF claimed that the change was made to cause the "minimum disturbance of the maximum of residents." The PA accused Israel of trying to expand its de facto borders.

Prisoner Releases

On 3/15, Israel approved a list of 15 Palestinian prisoners to be released to mark the Id. They were released in two stages before 3/31.

Gaza Port

A French and a Dutch company assigned to construct the Gaza port were to have begun work by the end of 2/00 but did not do so because of a contract dispute with the PA. The problem had been resolved by 4/20, but no work was reported as of 5/15. The port is to be built in two stages: construction of a dock capable of receiving four commercial ships at a time and construction of a second dock to receive oil tankers.

Security Cooperation

Despite difficulties in negotiations, Israel and the PA continued to coordinate security efforts for most of the quarter. Increased tensions between IDF and PA patrols were noted in mid-3/00, but the only lapse in cooperation came in mid-5/00, when Palestinian demonstrations marking the 52d anniversary of the Nakba led to widespread clashes between the IDF and Palestinians, including some exchanges of gunfire between the IDF and PA police.

Israeli security officials announced on 2/23 that Israel and the PA had arrested in recent weeks several Hamas members on charges of plotting to blow up a building in Jerusalem. Some of those arrested were also charged with planning the failed attacks in Natanya (11/7/99) and Hadera (1/17/00). Israeli commandos, acting on information from the PA, raided (3/2) a Hamas safe house in the Israeli Arab village of Taibeh. In the ensuing gunfight, four Hamas members were killed, one was captured, and one commando was injured. In Nablus, the PA also arrested (3/16) two Palestinians suspected of plotting bombings and confiscated 88 lbs. of explosives.

Without explanation, Israel refused (3/20) to renew the VIP card of PC member Wajih Yaghi (independent-Gaza). Other PC members said they would protest by refusing to accept their new VIP cards, which facilitate movement between the West Bank and Gaza.

The IDF ordered (2/22) Palestinians to stop work to turn a dump site in Khan Yunis, Gaza, into a public park on the grounds that the 37-dunam plot was too close to Neve Dekalim settlement.

Miscellaneous Matters

The 3/00 decision by Israel's Education M Yossi Sarid to include five poems by Palestinian nationalist poet Mahmud Darwish in secondary school curricula sparked heated public debate and precipitated a no-confidence motion in the Knesset on 3/13 that the government barely won (47-42, with 3 abstentions). On 3/14, the PA announced it would introduce Israeli authors in Palestinian curricula.

In three incidents on 5/3 and 5/4, Israeli authorities denied use of airspace to passenger flights heading to or from Gaza airport, claiming the planes were using improper flight paths. The PA Civil Aviation Authority said (5/4) that Egypt had imposed new flight routes to reduce flying time; after consultation with Israel, however, the original routes were restored, resolving the conflict. Palestinian Airlines began (3/26) direct service to Larnaca, Cyprus.

The Palestinian Jerusalem Governate Electricity Company (JGEC) complained (4/6) that the Israeli Energy Min. was pressuring it to exclude from its concession areas covering the new settlements of Har Homa/Jabal Abu Ghunaym and Ras al-Amud. JGEC director Hanna Nasir said, "We rejected their request, but I am sure they will separate those areas anyway. In the past they disconnected the networks unilaterally."

On 3/13, work began on a Jewish settlements-Palestinian villages sewage project in Wadi Qana, West Bank. The project, which aims to contain ground water contamination, is the first joint environmental project between settlers and Palestinians.

The PA accused (4/29) Israel of attempting to undermine foreign investment in the Palestinian economy by refusing to grant visas or reentry permits to the administrative, technical, and professional staff of Egyptian firms working on contracts in the West Bank and Gaza.

Israeli and PA trade Ms held a ceremony on 2/20 to mark the groundbreaking for the Jinin industrial park, located in area B on land transferred to the PA in the 1/5 FRD.

PA Supply M 'Abd al-'Aziz Shahin announced (3/12) plans to confiscate products made in Jewish settlements from Palestinian markets.

Palestinian Authority

The PA, still smarting from the anticorruption petitions of last quarter, continued to crack down on Palestinian critics. On 2/18, the PA police, acting on Arafat's orders, arrested al-Najah University professor 'Abd al-Sattar Qasim, considered by the PA to be the organizer of the 11/99 Petition of the 20 (see Doc. B1 in *JPS* 115). The PA High Court ordered Qasim released on 4/3, but he was still being held without charge at the end of the quarter. PA police called Palestinian journalist Khaled Amayreh for questioning twice during the week of 2/16 and again on 3/21 regarding his new weekly newspaper, *Hebron Times*, which is critical of the PA.

Palestinian teachers went on strike on 2/17 to protest low salaries. Arafat had promised pay raises as part of the civil service law, but the increases were not included in the FY 2000 budget (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 115). By 2/22, the PA had begun either firing teachers, transferring them to distant school systems, or deducting pay for every day they participated in the strike; on 2/19, it shut Hebron's Nawras TV for one week on charges of incitement for covering the strike. Under these pressures, many teachers returned to work, but the strike was not officially halted until mid-4/00. The PA had promised to look into the salary requests on 2/28, but when nothing had been done by 5/2, teachers resumed their strike. PA police arrested Omar Assaf, head of the teacher's union, on 5/5 and closed Peace and Love Radio 5/5-10 for interviewing him.

On 2/26, French PM Lionel Jospin, coming from a meeting with PM Barak (2/24) in which he characterized Hizballah attacks on the IDF in s. Lebanon as terrorism, arrived in Ramallah for a meeting with Arafat to be confronted by rock-throwing protesters at Birzeit University. The PA arrested at least 69 students and closed Birzeit until 2/29. Thousands of Palestinians in Ramallah and Hebron demonstrated (2/27) against the arrests and Jospin's statements. The PC Political Committee called on the PA (2/28) to release the students to the university's disciplinary committee. Instead the PA police declared (2/28) all demonstrations and public meetings illegal without its prior authorization. On 3/2, the first day of class after the closure, Birzeit students and teachers suspended classes indefinitely. The police released all students by 3/5, and the PA High Court suspended the order requiring police authorization for public assemblies on 5/3.

PA Social Affairs M Intisar al-Wazir submitted (3/13) her resignation in protest over the PA's handling of the teachers strike and its decision to cut her budget for stipends to families of Palestinians killed by Israeli forces or jailed in Israel. Arafat rejected (3/13) her resignation and appointed a panel to investigate ways of meeting these budgetary needs, but nothing had been done by the end of the quarter.

In Ramallah on 4/2, PC member Qaddura Faris, a member of the new PC Monitoring and Human Rights Committee, was beaten by guards when he attempted to enter Arafat's office for a committee meeting regarding the teachers strike. Although Arafat ordered his guards arrested, Faris quit the committee in protest but rescinded his resignation after meeting with Arafat on 4/11.

Also on 4/2 in Ramallah, five armed men broke into the office of PA Environmental M Yusuf Abu Safiyya and beat him severely. The assault capped a long-running feud between Abu Safiyya and the director general of his ministry, an Arafat appointee who had demanded increased benefits. The director general and five suspects were arrested on 4/2 and sentenced to jail on 4/23.

The Acting Council of the Palestinian Bar Association notified (5/9) 37 Palestinian lawyers working for human rights and nongovernmental organizations in the West Bank and Gaza that, effective immediately, their accreditation had been revoked, meaning they could not appear before PA courts or practice legally. The council's leadership was appointed by Arafat in 1997 and, by a PA law passed in 1999, was to have held elections for new officials by 5/9. The 37 lawyers cited have frequently criticized the PA for human rights violations. A 38th lawyer had his accreditation revoked on 5/17.

Arafat chaired (2/22) the first meeting of the PA Higher Council for Development (HCD; see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 115). Participants began work toward consolidating PA departments for improved financial accounting, formed a group to promote foreign investment, and agreed to draft a working paper on a privatization strategy.

INTRA-PALESTINIAN COORDINATION

PLO Executive Committee (PLOEC) member Zakariyya al-Agha announced (4/3) that in keeping with the resolution of the 2/00 PLO Central Committee (PLOCC) session (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 115), the PLOEC had formed a joint committee comprising the

Palestine National Council (PNC) speaker, PLOEC members, and Palestinian personalities to discuss the mechanism for forming a new PNC. The new PNC would then elect a new PLOEC and PLOCC.

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) announced (2/17) that it would resume full participation in PLO institutions, including the PLOEC and PLOCC, which it had boycotted since the signing of the 1993 Oslo Accord. At the party's congress in Damascus (4/37), George Habash announced his retirement as head of the organization. He is expected to be replaced by Abu Ali Mustafa, who was permitted by Israel to return to the West Bank from Damascus after 32 years in exile.

PALESTINIAN OPINION

The following data are excerpted from two polls conducted by the Nablus-based Center for Palestine Research and Studies (CPRS). Questions 1-3 are taken from poll 47, conducted on 24-26 February. Results are based on a survey of 1,318 men and women from the West Bank and Gaza. Questions 4-5 are taken from poll 48, conducted on 30 March-1 April. Results are based on a survey of 1,307 men and women from the West Bank and Gaza. The polls were made available by CPRS's office in Nablus.

1. In general, how would you evaluate the impact of donors' support on Palestinian conditions?

	West Bank & Gaza	West Bank	Gaza
a. Very positive	6.6%	5.0%	9.1%
b. Positive	39.2%	37.1%	42.3%
c. In between	29.6%	29.8%	29.3%
d. Bad	11.4%	12.1%	10.3%
e. Very bad	5.1%	5.9%	3.9%
f. No opinion	8.1%	10.1%	5.2%

2. Do you have a . . .

	West Bank & Gaza	West Bank	Gaza
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telephone at home?

a. Yes	51.6%	54.5%	47.2%
b. No	48.4%	45.5%	52.8%

mobile phone at home?

a. Yes	39.5%	49.5%	24.1%
b. No	60.5%	50.5%	75.9%

	West Bank & Gaza	West Bank	Gaza
computer at home?			
a. Yes	12.9%	13.4%	12.2%
b. No	87.1%	86.6%	87.8%
subscription to the Internet at home?			
a. Yes	6.2%	6.5%	5.3%
b. No	93.8%	93.5%	94.7%
subscription to the Internet at work?			
a. Yes	5.2%	6.2%	3.8%
b. No	94.8%	93.8%	96.2%
satellite dish at home?			
a. Yes	44.3%	40.2%	50.8%
b. No	55.7%	59.8%	49.2%
3. Which satellite TV station do you watch most? (excerpts)			

	West Bank & Gaza	West Bank	Gaza
a. al-Jazira	46.6%	45.8%	47.6%
b. MBC	16.5%	20.9%	11.3%
c. LBC	4.7%	6.7%	2.5%
d. ART	6.8%	4.3%	9.7%
e. Egypt	10.7%	4.9%	17.7%
f. CNN	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%
g. EU stations	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%

4. Following the peace process and the implementation of autonomy, your economic situation and standard of living have become . . .			
	West Bank & Gaza	West Bank	Gaza
a. Better	8.6%	7.1%	10.9%
b. Worse	53.1%	48.3%	60.2%
c. Stayed the same	37.9%	44.4%	28.1%
d. No opinion	0.4%	0.2%	0.7%
5. In your opinion, can people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip criticize the Palestinian Authority without fear?			
	West Bank & Gaza	West Bank	Gaza
a. Yes	28.7%	28.9%	28.3%
b. No	64.8%	63.9%	66.0%
c. No opinion	6.6%	7.1%	5.7%

JORDANIAN-ISRAELI TRACK

Continuing the trend of recent months, Jordan and Israel maintained cordial ties but kept contacts to a minimum this quarter. Indeed, in light of the suspension of Israeli-Palestinian talks and of Israel's air strikes on Lebanon's civilian infrastructure at the end of last quarter (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 115), King Abdallah canceled (2/18) plans for his first visit to Israel as head of state, which he had already postponed twice. Former crown prince Hassan also canceled (3/13) a visit to an Israeli university to receive an honorary degree. On 4/23, Abdallah finally went to Israel to meet with Barak, but the trip was very low key: Abdallah sailed in and out of Elat on his private yacht for a meeting lasting only a few hours that focused on economic cooperation, not the peace process. At the urging of the palace, most Jordanian media ignored the trip.

Only a few bilateral meetings were held this quarter. Trade Ms met in Amman on 2/21 for talks on door-to-door shipping between Jordan and the PA areas and on the long-delayed Aqaba peace airport project, and a joint committee on combating crime and drug trafficking met around 4/6. At the 2/21 meeting, Israel agreed to allow 200 Jordanians to enter Elat each day to work. Israel and Jordan signed (5/12) a letter of intent to complete the airport project within a year, but Israeli environmentalists vowed to continue blocking work. On 5/11, Israel began allowing Jordanian trucks direct access to the PA areas, but continued to require Palestinian trucks to switch haulers at the Jordanian border. Palestinian trucks were supposed to be allowed to enter Jordan as of 3/13/94, according to the 1994 Paris Economic Protocol, but Israel has never implemented the clause.

Antinormalization efforts tapered off this quarter. The Jordan Bar Association called (3/27) on all MPs to boycott a meeting (4/30-5/6) of the International Parliamentary Union, hosted by Amman, in which an Israeli delegation took part. Some protests were held outside the convention, but meetings were not disrupted. King Abdallah addressed the opening session and met with the Israeli delegation. Two Jordanian MPs, Ahmad Oweidi Abbadi and Salih Jabur, announced (4/8) that they had accepted an invitation from the Israeli government to give a series of lectures in Israel.

SYRIAN-ISRAELI TRACK

Although negotiations remained suspended this quarter, contacts between Israel and Syria continued behind the scenes without interruption. From mid-2/00 to mid-3/00, there were almost daily rumors of secret meetings and progress in back-channel talks.

On 2/27, PM Barak asserted to his cabinet that four past PMs (Yitzhak Shamir, Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres, and Benjamin Netanyahu) had effectively agreed to withdraw from the Golan Heights to the 6/4/67 border. Although Barak said he would not "erase the past," he did not expressly admit to the existence of a "Rabin deposit," as Syria claims. Barak's statement was made in a closed session but was leaked immediately to all media outlets by his office, suggesting it was a gesture to Syria. Syria welcomed (2/27) the statement as a step forward: in the words of Information M Muhammad Salman, "Barak has opened the door a little. He must now open it wide."

On 3/20, Pres. Clinton announced plans to meet with Syrian pres. Hafiz al-Asad in Geneva on 3/26 in an effort to restart the Syrian-Israeli talks. Rumors of a Geneva meeting had been circulating since late 2/00, when Swiss FM Joseph Deiss had traveled to Damascus to meet with Asad, and intensified on 3/13, when Israeli FM David Levy met Deiss in Bern. Optimism for the meeting's success increased following two high-level meetings between Barak and U.S. Ambassador to Israel Martin Indyk in mid-3/00 and a statement by Egyptian pres. Mubarak on 3/21 that Syria and Israel had neared a peace agreement in behind-the-scenes talks through "special envoys."

But the 3/26 Clinton-Asad meeting was a failure. Asad, who had been told that Clinton had "good news" to convey at the meeting, had concluded that Barak had finally endorsed the Rabin/Peres commitment of withdrawal to the 6/4/67 lines. Instead, Clinton brought two entirely new Israeli demands: "mastery of all the water" (which Asad took to mean not only of Lake Tiberias but also of the tributaries of the Jordan), and control of a zone hundreds of meters east of Lake Tiberias (of which Syria had held the north-east corner in 1967), pushing the border to the foot of the Golan escarpment. In exchange, Israel would give Syria an equal amount of territory in the al-Himmah area south of the lake along the Yarmuk River that had been part of Mandatory Palestine. In fact, however, this land was already within

the 6/4/67 lines on which Syria insisted, having been held by Syria from 1948 until the 1967 war. Some reports suggested that Barak put forward these proposals in the context of a peace accord in which Israel would formally recognize Syria's rights to the Golan up to the 1967 line, but Syria would "forgo" access to the lake. Asad rejected the proposal outright.

While Clinton, arriving in Geneva with Secy. of State Albright, had been prepared to continue talks through 3/27 and to dispatch Albright to Israel from Geneva to brief Barak, the meeting ended in three hours, without a press conference, and Clinton and Albright returned to Washington immediately. Clinton was reportedly furious at his peace team for miscalculating Syria's reaction. He told reporters (3/28) that "the ball is in [Asad's] court," concluding (3/29) that Israel had offered to withdraw from a "significant" portion of the Golan and that if Syria rejected the offer, it was incumbent upon Damascus to come up with an alternative.

Syria conveyed its formal response to the U.S. orally the first week of 4/00. According to FM Faruq al-Shara' (4/8), Syria told the U.S. it would not give up any of its land, denied that the ball was in its court, and emphasized the flexibility it had shown in Shepherdstown on the issues of normalization, water, and security (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 115). Shara' said Syria was willing to discuss cooperation on water issues in the framework of international law, but this did not mean it was willing to give up sovereignty over the shoreline. After being briefed by the U.S., Israel termed (4/10) Syria's response "very negative" and lifted (4/10) its Golan Heights construction freeze.

Although there were no further public initiatives during the quarter, and Israel appeared to shift its focus to the Palestinian negotiations (see above) and withdrawal from Lebanon (see below), Syria and Israel remained in indirect contact. Both Levy (4/16) and Shara' (4/25) made low-key visits to Paris thought to be related to the track. Britain's Lord Michael Levy, who has previously been identified as a go-between, traveled to Egypt, Israel, and Syria in early 5/00. Israeli MK Azmi Bishara flew (4/25) to Damascus for talks at Asad's request. Two Russian envoys shuttled between Israel and Syria (ca. 4/28, 5/9-10).

In addition, some preparations for the postpeace environment were underway. As of mid-3/00, EU countries were reportedly

trying to put together a massive (possibly \$1.-b.) development package for Syria that would be granted after an accord is signed. Around 3/13, Israeli military intelligence chief Amos Malka traveled to Washington to discuss gaining direct access to U.S. satellite photos of Syrian military movements as part of a peace deal with Damascus, but the Pentagon balked at the idea, because it would require sharing highly sensitive technology with Israel.

Complicating matters, the Knesset, including many MKs in Barak's governing coalition, had approved (60-53) on 3/1 the first reading of a bill designed to block withdrawal from the Golan by requiring that a referendum on a peace accord with Syria win support of 61 of 120 MKs and 62.5% of all eligible voters, whether or not they actually vote. Justice M Yossi Beilin denounced the bill as racist, since it would neutralize the votes of Israeli Arabs, who make up just over 10% of the electorate. Analysts unanimously viewed the vote as a warning to Barak and did not think the bill would pass the three readings required to become law.

LEBANESE-ISRAELI TRACK

At the opening of the quarter, tensions between Israel and Lebanon were still very high following Israel's air strikes on Lebanon last quarter (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 115). Although the fighting had abated, Israel stepped up threats (2/16, 2/21, 2/23, 2/24) of severe reprisals against civilian targets if Hizballah inflicted casualties on IDF troops in s. Lebanon or fired across the border into n. Israel. Barak also authorized (2/16) a three-man team (himself, FM Levy, and Transportation M Yitzhak Mordechai) to order immediate reprisals for attacks on IDF soldiers. In Beirut, thousands of Lebanese staged anti-Israeli and anti-U.S. demonstrations in protest (2/16-18). On 2/23, FM Levy (supported by Barak on 2/24) vowed that the IDF would retaliate "blood for blood, soul for soul, child for child" if attacked.

Despite Israel's posturing, Barak won (3/5) unanimous approval of his cabinet to pull the IDF out of Lebanon by 7/7, even without an accord with Syria. Lebanon welcomed (3/6) the decision but said (3/6, 3/8) it could guarantee security along the border only as part of a comprehensive Middle East peace that solves the Golan and Palestinian refugee issues. Israel also promised (3/5) to "honor its commitments"—thus far undefined—to its proxy militia, the South Lebanon Army (SLA).

Although Israel had for months stated its intention to pull out of s. Lebanon, this quarter marked the first time it openly discussed to what line it would withdraw. The IDF presented (3/12) Barak with a proposal called Morning Twilight, under which, in the absence of an accord with Syria, the IDF would make a "border adjustment," withdrawing from all but eight strategic sites in s. Lebanon, some of which are several miles into Lebanese territory. Barak was skeptical from the start about maintaining posts so far inside Lebanon, but, until 4/11, he was reportedly considering holding three posts marking the old international border plus four posts "a few dozen meters" inside Lebanon, with the idea that these seven posts could be discussed if negotiations with Lebanon were ever held.

Lebanon, Syria, and the international community were unanimous that anything less than total withdrawal, including from Lebanon's sea and airspace, would be an invitation to violence. They demanded full withdrawal to the 1923 border, in keeping with UN Res. 425 and 426, but even this line, like Syria's 6/4/67 border, has never been fully agreed. (An Israeli DMin. intelligence team reportedly made a secret visit to Washington ca. 4/3 to work on defining the border.) When Clinton met with Barak in Washington on 4/11, he reportedly demanded that Barak abandon ideas of holding border areas inside Lebanon if he wanted international backing for the withdrawal. At all events, Barak put to rest (4/12) any discussion of Morning Twilight upon his return to Israel and vowed the IDF would evacuate all outposts in Lebanon.

Logistical preparations for a withdrawal got underway in early 4/00, when Israel formally notified (4/4, 4/7) the UN of its intention to withdraw. Once this had taken place, UN Secy.-Gen. Kofi Annan could initiate (4/19) preparations in the UN Security Council (UNSC) to enable the UN to carry out its responsibilities under UN Res. 425 and 426 to prevent a deterioration of the situation in Lebanon during a pullout.

Annan immediately dispatched his special envoy Terje Larsen to the region to strike a workable arrangement among Israel, Lebanon, and the UN and sponsors of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), all with different priorities. Israel's aim was to leave Lebanon in one movement, at the time of its choice, so as not to give Hizballah an opportunity to plan an attack. Out of obligation, it

agreed to coordinate with UNIFIL (though it did not define to what extent) and to take in some 3,000–4,000 SLA members and relatives in the process. Its main concern was receiving international approval for its withdrawal.

Lebanon's primary worry was that instead of consolidating Lebanon's sovereignty over its territory, an IDF withdrawal would spark violence and chaos for which it would be held responsible in the form of further Israeli attacks on its infrastructure, Israeli reoccupation, or, in a worst-case scenario, renewed civil war. In a 4/6 letter to the UN (see Doc. B4), Lebanon reiterated that it could not guarantee security of the south in the absence of a comprehensive regional peace and formulated a list of provocative rhetorical questions underlining its fears.

The UNIFIL sponsors, most notably France, which the UN hoped would be a major contributor to an expanded UNIFIL force (Annan was considering a request that the UNSC increase UNIFIL from 4,500 to 8,000 troops), were primarily concerned with the safety of their soldiers and the success of their peacekeeping mission. They wanted a defined border, so there would be no debate on whether or not a withdrawal was complete, and guarantees for the safety of civilians, SLA members, and UNIFIL troops who remained in Lebanon. Some wanted an expanded mandate that would give troops the right to retaliate if attacked, not just to observe and verify. Most importantly, they wanted a coordinated, peaceful withdrawal with no surprises.

From at least 4/25 to 5/9, Larsen shuttled among Egypt, France, Israel, Lebanon, and Syria. Although no details were released, the talks apparently focused on border demarcation. On 5/8, Larsen stated that the UN was planning to use the 1923 international border, with mutually agreed alterations, as its baseline to certify compliance and that there was "no fundamental disagreement" on the line. Meanwhile, in early 4/00, Lebanon had put forward a claim (providing documentation on 5/4) that a 10 mi.² area on the western slopes of Mount Hermon called Shaba' Farms was part of Lebanese territory, having been ceded to Lebanon by Syria in 1951. Syria reportedly said it would not dispute Lebanon's assertion but did not affirm it. By the end of the quarter, the UN had not issued its position on the claim.

In order to help ensure a peaceful transition, Larsen asked (ca. 4/25 or 4/27) Israel to take heavy armaments away from the SLA

before withdrawing, but Israel reportedly would make no promises. He also requested (5/4) that Lebanon (1) agree to participate in a tripartite military committee with Israel and the UN; (2) agree to the deployment of an expanded UNIFIL and to turn the south into a UN operational area pending verification of a full Israeli withdrawal; (3) make a clear declaration regarding the safety of residents of the border zone and of the SLA; and (4) guarantee the security of UNIFIL forces. Lebanon expressed (5/4) its commitment to the safety of peacekeepers but said that issues of Lebanese citizens are an internal affair and that the UNIFIL operational zone should be expanded only after certified withdrawal.

Before Larsen could nail down any common understandings on the withdrawal, the situation in s. Lebanon began to deteriorate. On 5/3, an Israeli air force plane "accidentally" flew out of the self-declared security zone and dropped a 660-lb. bomb on the home of Amal regional commander Abbas Hallal, injuring his mother, six children, and eight other adults. The same day, two other Lebanese civilians were killed in a separate, allegedly unauthorized SLA attack on a village inside the zone. In retaliation, Hizballah shelled (5/4) northern Israel, killing an IDF soldier and injuring 28 civilians. Israel responded (5/5) with air strikes on Lebanese power stations (repaired a week before) and the Beirut–Damascus highway, before the U.S. demanded that all parties immediately de-escalate the situation.

In the wake of these clashes, Israel announced (5/8) that it might make its withdrawal from Lebanon well before 7/7. The UN, which already thought the 7/7 date imposed a tight schedule, strongly emphasized the need for UNIFIL to be prepared well in advance and asked Israel to notify it confidentially at least one week before a pullout. On 5/15, Israel turned over its Taybiyya post to the SLA, saying it planned to turn over forward positions near villages inhabited predominantly by SLA members so they would be able to "defend themselves" after its pullout.

As the IDF withdrawal neared, fears of instability were heightened by increasing calls for Syria to withdraw its 30,000 troops from Lebanon as well. The Lebanese mass-circulation daily *al-Nahar* published (3/23) a front-page editorial calling for a Syrian pullout. The Lebanese Forces and the Free National Trend (loyal to exiled Christian leader Michel Aoun) issued (3/28) a statement from Paris

calling for a Syrian withdrawal. Hundreds of pro-Aoun students held anti-Syrian demonstrations in Beirut 4/16–25, sometimes clashing with Lebanese police. In the most serious incident (4/2), a group calling itself Citizens for a Free and Independent Lebanon took responsibility for a series of explosions in a shantytown near Sidon housing Syrian migrant workers.

Meanwhile, in the Palestinian camps, Col. Munir Maqdash, commander of the pro-Arafat Fatah faction in Lebanon, claimed (4/7) that Fatah was recruiting and training new fighters in preparation for an IDF withdrawal and vowing (4/18) that his men would take over the fight against Israel if Hizballah laid down its arms after an IDF withdrawal. Fatah's top official in Lebanon, Sultan Abu al-'Aynayn, denied (4/8) Maqdash's statement on training fighters, and Maqdash issued a retraction on 4/9. Such incidents played into the Lebanese government's worst fears and were among the reasons that Pres. Emile Lahoud made a seven-nation tour to build support for Lebanon in advance of an IDF withdrawal, stopping in Saudi Arabia (4/15), Kuwait (4/17), the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Iran (4/19), and Egypt. During his meetings he accused Palestinian refugees in Lebanon of taking part in civil disturbances and repeated his frequently uttered call that they be disarmed and returned to their homeland.

On a positive note, Israel's High Court ruled (4/12) in the case of 15 Lebanese detainees that the government's detention of the men as hostages for more than a decade was illegal, concluding that a 1979 emergency law did not authorize the taking of hostages who pose no threat to Israel's national security. Based on the ruling, the Israeli prison authority released and returned to Lebanon (4/19) the 13 Lebanese it had detained without charge or held after the expiry of their sentences. A 14th detainee had already been released on 4/5. The IDF, however, refused to free two captives it has never charged or tried, Shaykh 'Abd al-Karim Obeid, a Hizballah spiritual leader kidnapped in 1989, and Mustafa al-Dirani, a former Amal security chief kidnapped in 1994. Israel is still detaining without charge some 20 other Lebanese not included in the suit. The SLA still holds 150 Lebanese without charge in s. Lebanon.

MULTILATERAL TALKS

At the opening of the quarter (mid-2/00 to early 3/00), preparations continued for

multilateral talks in Oman (water, 4/11–12), Jordan (economic development, 5/8–11), Canada (refugees, 5/16–18), and Tunisia (environment, 5/31–6/1), as agreed in steering committee talks in Russia 2/1 (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 115). All preparations ceased, however, with the Arab League meeting on 3/12 (see below), when the Arab states agreed to postpone multilateral meetings until Israel made progress in its negotiations with Lebanon, the PA, and Syria.

Egypt, which refused last quarter to convene the arms control group unless Israel opened its nuclear sites to international inspection, this quarter led an initiative to have Israel singled out for its failure to join the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) at the NPT review conference at the UN beginning 4/25. According to U.S. and UN diplomats (4/29), the U.S. and Egypt had reached an understanding that the U.S. would not block the initiative, as it has done in the past. Israel declined to attend the conference for the first time in years and informed Egypt (5/8) that it was ready to discuss the nuclear issue, in hopes that talks would allow the arms control working group meetings to resume. Egypt said (5/15) that it would welcome such talks if they were serious.

REGIONAL AFFAIRS

REFUGEES

There was a groundswell of Palestinian grass-roots activity in support of refugee rights this quarter—inside Israel, in the West Bank and Gaza, and in the diaspora—likely due to the narrowing of official avenues of negotiation (bilateral, quadripartite, and multilateral) and Israel's impending unilateral withdrawal from s. Lebanon. The most significant diaspora event was a refugee conference in Boston on 4/8 aimed at developing an international action plan to support Palestinians' right of return. Hundreds of activists, students, and scholars from around the world attended the conference; hundreds of others were turned away for lack of space. The National Committee for the Defense of the Rights of the Internally Displaced sponsored a rally in Nazareth (3/11) in support of the right of return attended by 850 Israeli Arabs. Some 100 prominent Palestinian diaspora figures issued (3/4) a statement emphasizing the need for the Israeli and PA negotiating teams to put the refugee issue back on the agenda and to take diaspora Palestinians' concerns into consideration. Nu-

merous petitions supporting the right of return were circulated via the Internet and signed by thousands of individuals (see Doc. B1).

To mark the anniversary of the Nakba, Palestinian refugees in the territories and "internally displaced" Palestinians in Israel for the first time coordinated "right of return marches," walking from their present homes to the sites of their destroyed villages. On 5/10, Israel's "independence" day, 5,000 Israeli Arabs marched from the village of Kabul in the Galilee to the site of the village of al-Damun, near Haifa, and another 1,000 marched to the site of Umm al-Zaynat. On 5/14, more than 150 Palestinians from Dahaysha, Aida, and Azza camps near Bethlehem marched to the sites of their destroyed villages near Bethlehem: Bayt Nattif, Zakriyya, and Bayt Jibrin.

On the official level, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and the PA held a technical committee meeting on displaced persons in Cairo on 5/4. (The meeting was originally supposed to take place on 2/20 in Tel Aviv; see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 115.) Talks focused on the scope of the right of return, with Israel arguing that negotiations should deal only with the original Palestinians made refugees in 1967, and the Arab states arguing that their families should be included. No agreement was reached. Afterward, PA Planning M Nabil Shaath announced that he and the FMs of Egypt and Jordan would hold a follow-up tri-lateral meeting in Cairo in mid-5/00 and hopefully a quadripartite meeting with Israeli FM Levy soon after. According to Shaath, plans made last quarter (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 115) to hold the quadripartite technical meeting in Tel Aviv 2/20 and a four-way FMs meeting 5/3 had been derailed by Levy, who has thus far refused to meet.

The UNRWA held (2/19-20) a workshop to discuss the fate of the agency following a final status agreement (see Doc. A1). Participants agreed that while it is difficult to prepare for a transition to final status without knowing the outcome of the refugee issue, the agency should consider various refugee settlement scenarios (from full implementation of the right of return to Israel's acceptance of a token return only).

RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL

Israel's contacts with Arab states remained relatively low this quarter, but there were also fewer antinormalization events. For instance, a global water conference held

at the Hague on 3/21 was attended by ministers from Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen. Arab and Iranian delegations stayed for the presentation by Israel's former PM and Regional Cooperation M Shimon Peres rather than walking out, as they have done in past years. All of the delegations agreed on a final statement calling for a solution of the economic and water problems of the Middle East parallel to a solution of the diplomatic issues.

Israeli and Egyptian officials held talks in Cairo (3/13) on bilateral cooperation in energy and electricity, particularly the possibility of Egypt selling natural gas to Israel. The sides agreed to encourage private gas firms to strike deals with each other, but Egypt said that other joint projects would depend on progress in the peace process. In Cairo, Egyptian and Israeli peace groups held (5/30) a joint workshop on advancing regional peace efforts and the future of a postpeace Middle East. Egyptian FM Musa met with both delegations.

A visit to Yemen by a group of 14 Israelis—12 of Yemeni descent (who are allowed to visit relatives in Yemen if they arrive on Yemeni travel documents) and two journalists—went awry (3/27) when they tried to approach the Yemeni speaker of parliament with political questions and videotaped a heated exchange with his aide. Citing the incident, Yemen's top religious leader issued (5/9) a *fatwa* banning normalization with Israel. At least three other Israeli groups, totalling 34 Israelis, have recently traveled to Yemen without incident. In a meeting with Yemeni pres. Ali Abdallah Salih (4/4), Pres. Clinton praised Yemen's easing of restrictions on Israeli tourists and urged Yemen to normalize relations with Israel further. Also in 3/00, Israel's El Al requested permission to use Yemeni airspace for overflights to the Far East but was refused.

Kuwaiti opposition MP Abdallah Nibari convened (4/10) his newly created Gulf Popular Conference for Resisting Normalization with Israel. Prior to this meeting, Kuwait stated (4/4) that it would not establish ties with Israel before "other concerned Arab countries, especially Syria and Lebanon."

The Arab branch of the International Archives Council announced (5/9) that its members would boycott the council's next conference, which is slated to be hosted by Israel in Jerusalem in 2001. The branch called on other Muslim states with members

to the council to boycott as well and urged the council to cancel the event.

A five-member Knesset delegation made the first official Israeli visit to Mauritania (4/4-8) to promote bilateral parliamentary cooperation (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 115).

In mid-3/00, a newspaper in Algeria, which does not have diplomatic relations with Israel, ran a prominent interview with PM Barak, including a large front-page photo.

Also of note: Sudanese pres. Omar Hassan Bashir stated (late 2/00) that he had refused an offer from the U.S. to improve relations with Khartoum if it recognized Israel.

INTER-ARAB HIGHLIGHTS

Israel's air strikes on Lebanon at the end of last quarter spurred the Arab states to greater inter-Arab coordination. The most important show of unity came with the Arab League's decision (2/24) to convene its regular FMs meeting 3/11-12 in Beirut, rather than Cairo, to show solidarity with Lebanon "in the face of ongoing Israel aggression." The meeting's final statement (see Doc. B3) supported Lebanon's right to resist occupation, called on Israel to withdraw from all occupied Arab territory to the 1967 lines, and ordered a halt to multilateral talks and normalization until progress on the peace process is achieved. Israel denounced (3/12) the statement and, apparently in response, shelled (3/13) Amal, Fatah-Uprising, Hizballah Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, and Lebanese army targets north of its self-declared security zone and near the Lebanese-Syrian border.

Prior to the Arab League session, Egyptian pres. Mubarak made a landmark trip to Beirut on 2/19 (the first by an Egyptian pres. since 1952) to show solidarity with Lebanon in the wake of Israeli air strikes and to affirm Hizballah's right to "confront the Israeli occupation until liberation." PLO political affairs head Faruq al-Qaddumi (ca. 2/24), Jordanian FM 'Abd al-Ilah Khatib (late 2/00), Kuwaiti FM Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah (2/22), and Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Abdallah (3/2) made similar trips.

As in previous quarters, Egypt was most active in trying to keep the peace process afloat. Aside from spearheading the Arab League meeting in Beirut, Mubarak organized a two-day meeting of the Egyptian, Saudi, and Syrian FMs in Palmyra, Syria, (5/3-4) to coordinate stands on the peace

process and prepare for Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon. The FMs agreed to try to convene a summit of the Damascus Declaration states (the six Gulf states, plus Egypt and Syria) for talks on the peace process. Syrian pres. Asad flew to Cairo on 5/8 to coordinate positions with Mubarak on Israel's planned withdrawal from Lebanon, as well as on the Palestinian and Syrian tracks.

Other Egyptian contacts in support of the peace process included Mubarak with the PA's Arafat (2/17, 2/27, 3/6, 3/22, 4/9, 4/19, 4/22), Israel's Barak (2/16, 3/6, 3/28, 4/10, 4/25), Syria's Asad (3/31), Jordan's King Abdallah (4/16), Lebanon's Lahoud (4/20), U.S. Pres. Clinton (3/28), Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Abdallah (2/29-31), Israeli Justice M Beilin (2/27), Russian FM Igor Ivanov (3/4), Jordanian PM 'Abd al-Rauf Rawabda (2/19), and Kuwaiti FM Shaykh Sabah (2/21); FM Musa with Syrian FM Shara' (3/28), Israeli chief of staff Yatom (2/20), Orient House head Faisal Hussein (2/23), Jordanian PM Rawabda (2/17), and EU special envoy Miguel Moratinos (5/7); and Mubarak adviser Osama Baz with Barak (2/29, 5/8). The PA also coordinated directly with Jordan in meetings between Arafat and King Abdallah (2/16, 3/14, 4/25) and between PA interim affairs negotiator Saeb Erakat and Jordanian FM Khatib (5/9). Saudi crown prince Abdallah held talks on the peace process with Pres. Asad in Damascus on 3/1.

Arafat reportedly requested (ca. 4/4) to visit Lebanon but had not received a response. Arafat has not been to Lebanon since PLO forces were evacuated in 1982.

Syria reportedly released and repatriated (ca. 3/15) 17 Jordanian prisoners as a gesture aimed at further improving bilateral relations.

Kuwait announced (3/14) that it had started accepting job applications from Jordanians, Palestinians, and Yemenis for the first time since the 1990-91 Gulf conflict.

The Egyptian-Jordanian Higher Committee met (2/17-19) in Cairo for talks on boosting bilateral relations in the areas of trade, media, health, social affairs, education, and culture. Egypt also held talks with Morocco on bilateral relations (3/1) and with Tunisia on political and economic relations (3/12-13, 3/22-23).

INTERNATIONAL

UNITED STATES

Despite some bilateral tensions this quarter, U.S.-Israeli relations remained as strong

as ever going into the U.S. presidential election season. Through the end of 3/00, U.S. and Israeli officials continued revising Israel's proposed \$17-b. military aid package that the U.S. would give Israel in exchange for signing a peace agreement with Syria (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 115). Between mid-2/00 and 4/00, according to U.S. Secy. of Defense William Cohen (4/3), the aid package was expanded into a full-scale bilateral defense pact, the details of which have not been revealed. (Israel and the U.S. discussed forging a defense treaty in 1967, but Israel thought it would limit its margin of maneuver. The matter was brought up again in 1982, but the U.S. and Israel settled on a less comprehensive memorandum of understanding, or MOU. The issue has resurfaced repeatedly since Oslo, but to date Israel and the U.S. have only signed an updated MOU, called the Memorandum of Agreement, at Wye in 1998; see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 110.) On 4/3, following the Clinton-Asad meeting in Geneva, the U.S. said that plans for the pact had been put on hold, since a deal with Syria did not appear likely. The U.S. also warned (e.g., 4/3, 4/6, 4/11) that if Israel went ahead with plans to sell China a Phalcon airborne surveillance system, which is based on sophisticated U.S.-developed AWACS technology, it could jeopardize the future implementation of the pact and even existing aid.

Although Israel said (2/16) it could fund its withdrawal from s. Lebanon without additional foreign assistance, U.S. administration officials confirmed (5/12) that the U.S. had offered to help Israel absorb the estimated \$250-m. cost. The U.S.'s \$50-m. contribution would be funded out of existing military aid to Israel and would not require new appropriations from Congress. The move was meant as a symbolic stamp of approval for the pullout. Israel could also use the money to relocate civilians from border communities that might be considered unsafe after withdrawal.

On 4/6, an Israeli short-range missile splashed down in the eastern Mediterranean near a U.S. Navy Aegis cruiser, causing momentary fear that the ship was under attack. The U.S. Defense Department said (4/6) that the incident marked the third time in two years that Israel had conducted a no-notice missile test in the vicinity of U.S. forces, noting that "even the Russians and Chinese give notice," leading the department to conclude that Israel is trying to prevent U.S. monitoring of other military exercises.

First Lady Hillary Clinton, who is running for a U.S. Senate seat in New York, pulled her endorsement from a charity dinner sponsored by the Mosaic Foundation to benefit Save the Children, saying she would not serve as honorary chair (as she has done for the past two years) unless representatives from the Israeli embassy were invited to attend. Mosaic, which was founded by the wives of 17 Arab ambassadors to the U.S., said (4/22) it had no plans to invite Israelis to its events until there is peace in the Middle East.

In Jerusalem, Israeli and U.S. energy officials signed (2/22) an agreement to expand cooperation in energy, technology, science, and nuclear arms control.

EUROPEAN UNION

On 3/2, the PA complained to EU consuls that it had recently perceived a change in EU policy concerning meetings with Palestinians at East Jerusalem sites, such as Orient House or al-Maqassid hospital, that could be considered an official PLO or PA office. Portuguese FM Jamie Gama (the current rotating EU president), EU Commissioner Romano Prodi, EU parliamentary president Nicole Fontaine, and EU foreign policy director Javier Solana turned down (ca. 2/21) requests to meet with Orient House head and PA Jerusalem Affairs M Hussein at Orient House; Fontaine agreed to meet him at St. Anne Church in East Jerusalem instead. French PM Jospin met with Israeli PM Barak in Jerusalem on 2/24 but only agreed to meet with PA officials in Ramallah. German pres. Johannes Rau did not even meet with PA representatives when he visited Israel on 2/16. When EU Commissioner for External Affairs Chris Patten visited the region, he met with PC member Hanan Ashrawi in East Jerusalem (4/5) but refused to participate in a ceremony marking the Dayr Yasin massacre, protesting that the PA was "trying to use me for political gain." Israel hailed (2/21) these moves as a turnaround in EU policy, marking warmer relations with Israel. The EU itself had no official explanation.

UNITED NATIONS

On 2/26, the U.S. unilaterally announced that Spain had dropped its objections to letting Israel join the UN's Western Europe and Other Group (WEOG). Spain said only that Washington and Madrid had reached an agreement on the issue during the king and queen's visit to the U.S. the week before, fol-

lowing weeks of "intensive consultations." On 4/24, all 26 WEOG members agreed to grant Israel full but temporary membership in their regional group while it continues to work for admission to the Asian group, which includes the Middle Eastern nations opposing Israel's participation in the absence of comprehensive regional peace. In two years, Israel would have to report its progress to the other WEOG members, and, in four years, the permanent WEOG members would reassess the situation. Israel would also have to pledge to accept exclusion from the current seats where WEOG has a rotation, including the Security Council, and agree not to run for any office for two years. The agreement would also be limited to the UN in New York. Israel was reportedly not happy with this last restriction, since Geneva is the seat of the Human Rights Committee, and by the end of the quarter had not decided whether it would accept the offer.

The UN Commission on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP) held an international conference in Paris (4/26-27) on Palestinian refugees, their present situation, the possibility of finding a just solution, and the UN's future role. The conference was attended by prominent personalities, high-level officials, experts, scholars, and the media. The session was a precursor to CEIRPP's annual meeting of NGOs on the question of Palestine, which was held in Paris 4/28-29. CEIRPP also held an Asian meeting on the Palestinian question in Hanoi (3/1-3), which reaffirmed the Palestinians' right to establish an independent and sovereign state.

In New York on 3/2, the UN Economic and Social Council's Commission on the Status of Women passed a resolution (36-1) regarding the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women that cited the Israeli occupation as a major obstacle to the advancement of Palestinian women. The U.S. voted against it.

VATICAN

Pope John Paul II made a historic tour of the Middle East (3/20-26), visiting religious sites in Jordan (3/20-21), Israel (3/21, 3/23-25), the West Bank (3/22), and Jerusalem (3/26). The theme of his statements throughout his stay was the importance of reaching a just and lasting peace in the Middle East and promoting Christian-Jewish-Muslim understanding. In addition to holding numerous public masses and meeting with

religious and political leaders, the pope also visited (3/22) Dahaysha refugee camp, where he was warmly greeted by Palestinians (see Doc. A2). The PA imposed tight security on the camp for the pope's visit, which sparked clashes between Palestinian police and civilians after the pope left.

Prior to his Middle East tour, the pope made a separate trip to Egypt (2/24-26), where he met with Pres. Mubarak and called for unity and tolerance among all religious groups.

IRAN

Iran continued to build relations with Arab states this quarter despite its preoccupation with domestic matters surrounding parliamentary elections on 2/18 and 5/5 (see Chronology). Iran held talks with Bahrain on Gulf economic cooperation (4/3); with Egypt on expanding commercial ties (3/4); with Jordan on increasing bilateral trade (2/23, 5/6) and cooperation on social and welfare issues (4/18); with Kuwait on cultural affairs (5/15); with Lebanon on aiding reconstruction efforts following Israel's air strikes (3/4); with Oman on economic cooperation (2/27), expanding security ties (ca. 4/4), and cultural affairs (4/12); with Qatar on expanding trade and economic ties (5/1); with Saudi Arabia on scientific cooperation (2/16), hajj cooperation (2/19), and bilateral military cooperation and Gulf security (ca. 4/4); with Syria on cultural relations (5/2); with the UAE on media coordination (3/4); and with Yemen on cooperation in culture and information (4/2). Iran freed (4/10-12) some 2,479 Iraqi POWs from their 1980-88 war. Iraq freed 480 Iranian POWs on 5/4.

Iran also held talks with Turkey on expanding bilateral trade, economic ties, and tourism (3/7, 5/9-13) and on security cooperation along their common border (4/11-12). Iran and Turkey signed a customs and crossborder transportation agreement on 5/13.

The trial of 13 Iranian Jews accused of spying for Israel opened in Shiraz on 5/1. The U.S. had said (3/17) that it would "look to the procedures and the results of [the trial] as a barometer of U.S.-Iran relations."

TURKEY

King Abdallah of Jordan made an official visit to Ankara (3/7-8), where he held talks with Pres. Suleyman Demirel on improving bilateral relations. On the sidelines, Jordanian officials explored purchasing water from Tur-

key and expressed interest in including Turkey in the Israeli-Jordanian-U.S. qualified industrial zone (QIZ) agreement, under which goods jointly produced by Israeli and Jordanian firms in areas designated as QIZs receive duty-free entry into the U.S. Turkey discussed with the U.S. (3/29) the idea of establishing a QIZ in southeastern Anatolia to promote Turkish-Israeli private-sector joint ventures. Jordan and Turkey also signed (4/12) a protocol on agricultural cooperation.

An Israeli FMin. delegation went to Ankara (ca. 4/15) to hold talks with Turkish FMin. officials. Israeli naval commander Adm. Yedidia Yaari toured (3/29-30) Turkey's naval command. Turkey reached (3/20) a preliminary agreement with Israel on a \$250-m. contract for Israeli Military Industries to upgrade 170 tanks. Turkey was not pleased, however, with statements (4/24) by Israel's Education M Sarid promising to include the study of the 1915-16 Armenian massacres by Turks in the national curriculum.

For the first time in 12 years, Turkey and Syria convened Joint Economic Commission (JEC) talks in Damascus 5/8-10. At the same time, Turkey sponsored a trade fair in Damascus, and private-sector businessmen from both countries discussed possible ventures. At the close of the JEC session, Turkey and Syria signed a protocol on developing commercial and economic relations. The two countries also held (3/6-8) follow-up meetings on bilateral relations and security coordination stemming from their 10/20/98 Adana agreement and discussed water issues.

OTHER

Czechoslovakia announced (3/10) plans to open a permanent mission to the PA in Ramallah in the coming months.

The 176 members of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) met in Geneva on 4/13 to discuss adopting a third emblem, probably a red diamond, as a way to allow Israel to join the international group. They granted the Israeli relief agency Magen David Adom observer status until a final decision is made. For 50 years, Israel has rejected the traditional red cross or the red crescent used by some Islamic countries, and the ICRC has refused to recognize Israel's red Star of David emblem. This year, the American Red Cross withheld its \$5 m. in dues, saying it would not pay membership until a compromise is found to include Israel in the ICRC. The ICRC said (5/11) it hoped to

complete the adoption of a new symbol by 11/14.

Pres. Glafcos Clerides of Cyprus was in Israel 3/29-31, marking the first official visit by a Cypriot head of state (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 115). He held talks with PM Barak, Pres. Ezer Weizman, and Jerusalem mayor Ehud Olmert on expanding bilateral relations, possibly including military cooperation, and promoting regional development. During his visit, Cyprus and Israel signed a customs agreement and a protocol on cultural cooperation. Israel sent (2/21-24) a commerce and industry delegation to Cyprus to explore business opportunities. The countries held talks on telecommunications cooperation in Nicosia on 4/17.

Greek pres. Kostas Stephanopoulos visited Israel (5/14-18) on a trip he hoped would herald a "new era" in Greek-Israeli relations. Talks with Pres. Barak centered on increasing bilateral military and economic relations. He also met with Arafat in Ramallah (ca. 5/18) and PA officials in Bethlehem, but he refused to meet with PA officials in East Jerusalem.

Chinese pres. Zemin made an official visit to Israel (4/12-18) during which China and Israel signed agreements on education and industrial technology. Zemin also made stops in the PA areas (4/15), Egypt (4/17), and Turkey (4/18-20) for talks on expanding bilateral ties. The trade Ms of Israel and China also discussed (2/29-3/2) expanding trade and economic cooperation, especially in the fields of agriculture, medicine, and information technology. China also held talks with Jordan (3/26) on information technology and environmental protection.

Pres. Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan held (4/3) separate talks on bilateral political and economic relations with Israel's Weizman and the PA's Arafat. During his meeting with Weizman, Nazarbayev expressed interest in cooperating with Israel on counterterrorism, citing a mutual threat from Islamists.

After two years of negotiations, Israel and Mexico signed (3/6) a free trade agreement.

Israeli and Croatian military delegations agreed (3/7) to increase bilateral cooperation. Israel offered to upgrade Croatia's fleet of MiG-21s.

DONORS

During his visit to Washington on 4/20, Arafat met with World Bank pres. James Wolfensohn, who said that the donor com-

munity is aware that any permanent arrangement between Israel and the PA would require large amounts of aid and that the more time the donor community has to prepare, the better. With the 9/13 deadline approaching, Wolfensohn recommended that the PA immediately draft a three-year and a long-term strategic plan outlining its developmental needs and priorities during a "transitional phase" to "a future political solution" (i.e., a state). PA Planning M Shaath expected (5/4) the plan to be ready in time for the next Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC) meeting, scheduled for 6/7 or 6/8 in Lisbon. The PA planned to hold preparatory meetings with Egypt (6/00), the EU (5/12-22), the Euro-Mediterranean countries (5/26), France (6/00), Germany (5/8-12), Japan (5/16-19), and the U.S. (6/00).

The donors' Joint Liaison Committee (JLC) and Local Aid Coordination Committee (LACC) both met in Gaza on 4/5 to discuss PA public administration, Israeli-PA coordination, and the PA's reform agenda under the

HCD (see above) and to prepare for the upcoming AHLC meeting. Donors hope to hold another JLC meeting before the AHLC session, but no date has been set. In Paris on 5/3, members of the HCD briefed select donor representatives on their reform efforts. Several sector working group (SWG) meetings were also held this quarter in Gaza: the rule of law sub-SWG met on 4/13, the health SWG met on 4/27, and the wastewater sub-SWG met on 5/2.

There are currently only tentative plans to convene the highest ranking donor group, the Consultative Group (CG), which has not met since 2/99, when it held a pledging round for new aid to the PA as called for under the 10/98 Wye River Memorandum. Donors originally (1/00) had hoped the CG would meet in 5/00 or 6/00, then targeted summer 2000, but by the end of the quarter were saying it may not convene until 2001. Before the Oslo interim period officially ran out in 5/99, the CG met annually.

Compiled by Michele L. Kjørlien



PA security officers keep a cordon around the pope as he tours Dahaysha refugee camp on 3/22. (NYT/Rina Castelnuovo)