16 November 1997-15 February 1998

This section is part fifty-seven of a chronology begun in JPS 13, no. 3 (Spring 1984). Chronology dates reflect Eastern Standard Time. For more detail on events related to the peace process, see the Peace Monitor in this issue.

16 NOVEMBER

Doha economic summit opens. Only 6 Arab countries (Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Tunisia, Yemen) are among the 66 countries attending. U.S. Secy. of State Madeleine Albright, who originally planned to stay for the whole 3-day conference, attends a few hrs. of the mtg., then leaves for Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia to discuss Iraq's failure to adhere to UN inspections requirements. (WT 11/16; al-Dustur, SATN 11/16, JT, Radio Qatar, SA 11/17 in WNC 11/19; CSIM, MM, NYT, WP 11/17; WT 11/18, 11/19; JT 11/19 in WNC 11/21; MEI 11/21; WT 11/23; JP 11/29; Star 12/4 in WNC 12/9)

Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu arrives in Indiana to attend mtg. of the General Assembly of Jewish Federations in Indianapolis, then heads to California for function honoring actor Kirk Douglas. (MM, NYT, WP, WT 11/17; MM 11/18)

In Cairo, Palestinian Authority (PA) leader Yasir Arafat briefs Egyptian pres. Husni Mubarak on his talks with U.S. Secy. of State Albright 11/15. (RE 11/16 in WNC 11/19)

Egypt returns its amb. to Qatar. (MENA 11/16 in WNC 11/19) (see 11/7)

Iraq offers to allow American UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) inspectors expelled 11/13 to return, provided UN experts fr. other nations are given equal authority. (NYT, WP, WT 11/17)

150 Palestinians clash with Israel Defense Force (IDF) troops following funeral for boy who was severely injured by IDF 11/11 and died 11/15. (WP 11/17)

17 NOVEMBER

At the Doha summit, U.S. Undersecy. of State for Economic Affairs Stuart Eizenstat says that the administration will seek funding fr. Congress for the Middle East Development Bank in the FY 1999 budget, MEDB operations can begin within 4 mos. of receiving funding, bank mbrs. have already started selecting projects (concentrating on cross-border infrastructure projects) to fund. The U.S. also signs a protocol for a new $60 m. equity fund to promote U.S. private investment in the West Bank/Gaza, Jordan. (MM 11/17)

Settlers begin construction of 6 new housing units in Hebron's Jewish quarter. (ITV 11/17 in WNC 11/21)

In Luxor, Egypt, gunmen aligned with the Islamic Group open fire on tourists in the Valley of the Kings, killing 58 foreigners, 3 Egyptians, wounding 24 foreigners. Police take chase, kill 6 gunmen. (ITV 11/17 in WNC 11/21; CSIM, MM, NYT, WP, WT 11/18; MM, WT 11/19; MM 11/20; MEI, MM 11/21)

Secy. of State Albright ends 2-day tour of the Gulf to discuss latest standoff btwn. Iraq, the UN. Finding no support fr. Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia for military action, U.S. agrees to try to reach negotiated settlement. U.S., UK present France, Russia with position paper, offering to allow Iraq to buy more goods with oil proceeds if it cooperates fully with UN inspection teams. Russia offers to lead mediation. (CSIM, NYT, WP, WT 11/18; MEI 11/21) (see 11/13)

Russia expels Iranian accused of trying to buy missile technology. (WP 11/18) (see Peace Monitor in JPS 106)

18 NOVEMBER


Doha economic summit ends. All participants sign final communiqué, including Israel, which unsuccessfully tried to block section stressing that Oslo negotiations are based on land for peace. 2 major Jordanian, Qatari investment companies sign $25-m. partnership, industrial investment agmt. (MM

At the end of a 3-wk. evaluation following a sharp rise in casualties in s. Lebanon, top IDF officials unanimously reaffirm decision to stay in s. Lebanon until an agmt. on redeployment is achieved with Lebanon, Syria. (MM 11/19; YA 11/19 in WNC 11/21)

Knesset threatens Israeli banks with prosecution if they persist in refusing to identify owners of dormant Nazi-era accounts holding an estimated total of $57 m. (WT 11/19)

In Bethlehem, a Palestinian boy is shot dead by IDF sniper guarding DM Yitzhak Mordechai on visit to Rachel's Tomb. (MEI 12/5)

IDF demolishes Palestinian home, shop in al-Ram, n. of Jerusalem. (PR 11/21)

Employing a “dual-track” strategy of military and diplomatic pressure, Russian FM Yevgeny Primakov opens talks in Moscow with Iraqi Dep. PM Tariq ‘Aziz, while U.S. Pres. Bill Clinton sends 12 additional military aircraft to the Gulf, authorizes cmdrs. to deploy 30 more if they deem it necessary. (MM 11/18; CSM, MM, WP, WT 11/19; ITV 11/19 in WNC 11/21; MEI 11/21) (see 11/17)

19 NOVEMBER

Arafat says he is healthy despite the uncontrollable trembling of his lower lip, which an Israeli doctor has said may be a sign of Parkinson’s disease. (WP 11/20; MEI 11/21, 11/30 in WNC 12/9)

Israel agrees to allow 250 civilian PLO employees to take up permanent residence in the West Bank/Gaza. (al-Dustur 11/19 in WNC 11/21; PR 11/21)

Israel court jails for 5 yrs. a PA Preventive Security Force (PSF) officer convicted of abducting an Arab informer for Israel fr. Jerusalem, taking him to Jericho, torturing him. (WP 11/20)

Israel places Gaza resident Ashraf Atta Ahmad Kandil under administrative detention. (PCHR 1/15)

Russia’s minister of science and technology arrives in Israel for mtg. of the joint Russian-Israeli Economic Comm. to discuss ways of increasing cooperation. (Globes [Internet] 11/19 in WNC 11/21)

Facing the erosion of its efforts to isolate Iran economically, U.S. announces new policy of pushing for a “Eurasian transportation corridor” (fr. Azerbaijan to Turkey) to bring Caspian oil to the West; pressuring Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan to shelve proposals for pipeline through Iran to the Gulf. U.S. Energy Secy. Federico Peña says U.S. has no plans to help finance the Eurasian corridor project. (NYT, WP, WT 11/20; MM 11/26)

Hizballah detonates roadside bomb in s. Lebanon, injuring 1 South Lebanon Army (SLA) mbr. (VOL 11/19 in WNC 11/21)

20 NOVEMBER

In East Jerusalem, unidentified gunmen fire on 2 rabbinical students, killing 1, seriously injuring the other. (MM, NYT 11/20; MM, NYT, WP, WT 11/21; WJW 11/27; PR 11/28; JP 11/29)

Citing lack of evidence to convict, Israel's State Attorney's Office, IDF decide not to prosecute the 3 PA policemen arrested 7/14. They will be held as administrative detainees. (IDF Radio 11/20 in WNC 11/25)

Following talks with Russia, Iraq announces it will allow UNSCOM inspectors to resume their search for weapons of mass destruction. Pres. Clinton says he will “wait and see whether [Saddam Hussein] does, in fact, comply.” Russia promises Iraq it will push for easing of sanctions. (MM, WP 11/20; CSM, MM, NYT, WP, WT 11/21; al-Dustur 11/21 in WNC 11/27) (see 11/18)

21 NOVEMBER


Iraqi Dep. PM ‘Aziz makes unexpected visit to Syria, marking 1st trip by top Iraqi official since Baghdad, Damascus severed ties 17 yrs. ago; proposes reopening Iraq’s oil pipeline to Syria. (WP 11/22; SATN 11/22, al-Dustur; Saudi Arabian Television 11/23, SA 11/24 in WNC 11/26; MM 11/24, 12/1; WT 1/8)

UNSCOM inspectors return to Iraq. (CSM 11/21; NYT, WT 11/22) (see 11/20)

22 NOVEMBER

Arafat discusses peace process with Egyptian FM ‘Amr Musa in Cairo on his way home fr. India. (MENA 11/22, 11/23 in WNC 11/26)

Families of 17 Jordanian prisoners still held in Israeli custody stage sit-in outside Jordanian PM’s office, calling for government action. (JT 11/23 in WNC 11/26)

IDF searches the West Bank town of Rafah after a Palestinian chemistry teacher
dies in an explosion. IDF believe he was making a bomb. (WP 11/23; JP 11/29)

In East Jerusalem, an unidentified attacker stabs an Israeli rabbinical student, wounding him, prompting scuffle btw. Arab, Jewish youths. (NYT, WP 11/23; JP 11/29) (see 11/20)

Outside Bethlehem, Israeli police fire on a car whose driver allegedly ignored signals to stop for a checkpoint, killing a Palestinian passenger. Police find nothing suspicious in the car. (NYT, WP 11/23; LAW 11/24)

In s. Lebanon, 4 Hizballah mbrs. are killed in skirmish with IDF. (NYT, WP 11/24)

23 NOVEMBER
U.S. officials say government is pushing Israel to come up with a “serious and credible” plan for further redeployment (FRD) fr. 10–15% of the West Bank so that talks with the Palestinians in 12/97 can show progress, may present its own position on FRD if necessary. (NYT 11/24; MM 11/25)

Netanyahu accepts resignation of dir. gen. of the Prime Minister's Office, Avidgor Lieberman, who, during the Likud convention 11/9–11, led the campaign to change the party primary process, which almost split the party. (MM, NYT, WP 11/24; Globes [Internet], ITV 11/24 in WNC 11/26; WP, WT 11/25; MEI 12/5) (see 4/15)

Iraq insists that UNSCOM inspectors avoid 63 sensitive sites, including 8 “presidential palaces.” (NYT, WP 11/24; MM 11/26)

Syrian FM Faruq al-Shara’ makes unexpected trip to Riyadh reportedly to discuss Iraq with Saudi Arabia’s King Fahd. (MM 11/24; SA 11/24 in WNC 11/26; VIRC 11/24 in WNC 11/27; MM 12/1) (see 11/21)

Hizballah, Amal clash with IDF nr. Bayt Lif village in s. Lebanon. 7 civilians are killed; 6 civilians, 2 IDF soldiers are wounded. Several rockets land in n. Israel, causing no injuries or damage. (RL, VOL 11/23, VOL 11/24 in WNC 11/26; NYT, WP 11/24; al-Safir 11/28 in WNC 12/9)

24 NOVEMBER


In Brussels, European Union (EU), Jordan sign long-awaited association agmt., giving Jordanian products preferential status. (RJ 11/24 in WNC 11/26)

Arafat adviser Mahmoud Abbas meets with MK Meir Shitreet, Shas leader MK Arye Deri to discuss holding regular mtgs. bwn. Fr. PM Netanyahu on the mtg. (YA 11/27 in WNC 12/9)

In an Atlanta jail, Israeli MK Yuli Edelstein meets with convicted spy for Israel Jonathan Pollard, hands him letter fr. PM Netanyahu, saying that he “is committed to bringing about your release.” (MA 11/24 in WNC 11/26)

4 Amal mbrs. are killed in clash with IDF in s. Lebanon. (RL, VOL 11/24 in WNC 11/26; WP 11/25; RL 11/25 in WNC 11/27)

25 NOVEMBER

EU special envoy Miguel Moratinos arrives in Lebanon for talks with PM Rafiq Hariri, FM Faris Buwayz. (VOL 11/25 in WNC 12/9)

Jordanian, Israeli naval search and rescue teams hold joint exercises in the Gulf of Aqaba. (IGPO 11/25)

IDF reports that a new settlement, Kfar Oranim, is under construction in the West Bank nr. the settlement of Modi’in. 100 houses are being built, 500 are planned; 5 families moved in over the last few days. DMin. says it is unaware of the construction, thinks it is a private initiative. (IDF Radio 11/25 in WNC 11/27)

26 NOVEMBER
Netanyahu holds talks with his cabinet about negotiations with the PA, discusses proposals for moving the peace process in 2 directions: (1) toward resolving outstanding issues, which would require the PA to fulfill a set of requirements (mostly on “terrorism”) within several mos.; and Israel to implement 1 FRD; (2) toward accelerated final status negotiations. No agmts. are reached among the cabinet Ms. Talks will resume 11/30. (MM 11/26; MM, WT 11/27; NYT 11/28)

In Cairo, French FM Vedrine discusses peace process with Egyptian FM Musa. (RMC 11/27 in WNC 12/9)
Chronology

Egyptian amb. to Israel Muhammad Basyuni, PA chief negotiator Local Government M Saeb Erakat discuss coordinating positions on FRD issue. (ITV 11/26 in WNC 12/9)

PA releases Fathi Subuh, a professor at al-Azhar's Gaza campus who was arrested 7/2 for putting questions on PA, al-Azhar corruption on his final exam. Charges were never filed against him, though he was informally accused of espionage, lewd behavior. He is forced to pay $7,100 bail, report to PA police daily. (PCHR 11/26; NYT 12/3; JP 12/6)

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)—comprising Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE—holds ministerial mg. on Iraq-UN conflict. Members' positions differ, but all agree that military solution is unacceptable. (MM 11/27, 11/28) (see 11/21)

27 NOVEMBER

Netanyahu proposes that the 3 stages of FRD outlined in Oslo II should be combined into 1, carried out after 5 mos. “on the condition that there be concrete Palestinian activity against terrorism” and that the PA agree to immediate negotiations on final status. (NYT, WT 11/28; WP 12/1; CSM 12/8)

28 NOVEMBER

At Ben-Gurion airport, Israeli security forces arrest Stefan Josef Smyrek, a German, on suspicion of planning to carry out a suicide attack on behalf of Hizballah. (ITV 12/24, RMC 12/25, YA 12/26 in WNC 12/29; WP 12/25; WT 12/26; NYT 12/27; WJW 1/1; JP 1/3; PR 1/16; Focus [Munich] 2/2 in WNC 2/4)

29 NOVEMBER

King Hussein gives speech inaugurating Jordan's new parliament in which he reaffirms support for the Palestinians, including their right to have the capital of a Palestinian state “in Jerusalem.” Jordanian opposition parties criticize the phrase as an acceptance of partition. (JTV 11/29 in WNC 12/7; MM 12/17) (see Doc. B1)

Across the West Bank, Palestinians hold demonstrations to mark the 50th anniversary of the UN partition res., which created Israel. In Bethlehem, the IDF opens fire with rubber bullets on 5,000 Palestinians marching to demand Israel release Palestinian prisoners, injuring 40 (including a PA policeman), making today the worst single day of Palestinian-Israeli clashes in mos. In contrast, few Israelis celebrate the anniversary. (NYT, WP, WT 11/30; WP 12/1; MIEI 12/5)

In s. Lebanon, Hizballah detonates roadside bombs, killing 3 SIA mbrs., wounding 5 IDF soldiers. (RL 11/29 in WNC 12/9; WP 11/30)

30 NOVEMBER

Israeli cabinet agrees in principle to carry out a single FRD, insists that Netanyahu specify the areas Israel will retain under a final settlement before details of FRD can be discussed, forms ministerial team (comprising PM Netanyahu, FM Levy, DM Mordechai, Trade M Natan Sharansky, and Infrastructures M Ariel Sharon) to draw up FRD plans, lists security prerequisites that the PA would have to fulfill. (CSM, MM, NYT, WP, WT 12/1; MA, YA 12/1, YA 12/2 in WNC 12/9; NYT 12/3; MIEI 12/5; WT 12/7)

Moshe Leon, Netanyahu's economic adviser, is approved as the new dir. gen. of the PM's Office, replacing Lieberman, who is appointed by the pres. of Moldova as Moldova's honorary consul in Israel, with full diplomatic status. (Globes [Internet] 11/30 in WNC 12/9; ITV 12/8, YA 12/9 in WNC 12/17) (see 11/23)

1 DECEMBER

Netanyahu sends top aides to brief Arafat, Clinton. Egyptian pres. Mubarak on 11/30 cabinet decision. Arafat sends PA Planning M Nabil Shaath to Cairo to brief Mubarak on the PA's view of the decision. (IDF Radio, MENA, QY, RE 12/1 in WNC 12/9; MM 12/2; NYT 12/3; MIEI 12/5)

In Amman, Austrian chancellor Viktor Klima, Jordanian PM ‘Abd al-Salam Majali discuss peace process, bilateral relations. (JTV, RJ 12/1, JT 12/2 in WNC 12/9)

Israeli cabinet approves construction of 900 housing units in the West Bank settlement of Alfe Menashe. (CSM 12/2)

2 DECEMBER

In Ramallah, Arafat discusses peace process, 11/30 Israeli cabinet decision with Jordanian PM al-Majali. (al-Dustur, al-Quds, VOA 12/3 in WNC 12/9; MIEI 12/5; al-Majd 12/8 in WNC 12/17)

In Jerusalem, Orient House head Faisal Husseinei meets with French FM Vedrine. (al-Safir 12/3 in WNC 12/9)

EU special envoy Moratinos holds talks in Lebanon with PM Hariri, FM Buwayz,
Chamber Speaker Nabih Birri. (RL 12/2 in WNC 12/9)

After talks with Syrian pres. Hafiz al-Asad in Damascus, Austrian chancellor Klima says that Israel must implement FRDs, halt settlement construction, resume talks on the Golan Heights; “delaying tactics” are no longer acceptable. (Oesterreich Eins Radio Network [Vienna], SATN 12/2 in WNC 12/9)

Israel announces plans to increase the number of Palestinian laborers allowed into Israel fr. 52,000 to 140,000 within 5 yrs. to replace foreign workers. (WT 12/3)

Hizballah detonates roadside bomb in s. Lebanon, wounding 2 SLA mbrs. (VOL 12/2 in WNC 12/9)

3 DECEMBER

Multilateral Refugee Working Group opens 2-day mtg. in Aqaba. (JT 12/4, 12/6 in WNC 12/9) (see Peace Monitor)

Netanyahu and ministerial team on FRD created by the cabinet 11/30 hold their 1st mtg., begin discussions on areas to be retained in final settlement. (MM, NYT 12/3; IDF Radio, ITV 12/3 in WNC 12/9; MM 12/4; YA 12/4 in WNC 12/9, 12/17; WT 12/5; PR 12/12)

Russian special envoy Viktor Posuvalyuk arrives in Jordan to discuss the peace process. Posuvalyuk is following up on tour (10/24–30) of FM Yevgeny Primakov. (ITAR-TASS, RJ 12/3, JT, RJ 12/4 in WNC 12/9)

700,000 Israeli workers observe general strike called by Histadrut labor federation to protest government labor policies, including controversial pension deal. (MM 12/3)

The group Jews for an Exclusively Jewish State and Rule, which is associated with Kach, sends death threats to 3 Arab MKs. (MA 12/5 in WNC 12/9)

4 DECEMBER

Netanyahu, ministerial team continue FRD discussions begun 12/3. (MM 12/4; WT 12/5; YA 12/5 in WNC 12/9)

Netanyahu arrives in Germany on 1st leg of European tour, meets with Chancellor Kohl. (MM 12/5, LCI Television [Paris] 12/5 in WNC 12/8; YA 12/7 in WNC 12/9; QY 12/12 in WNC 12/16)

Russian special envoy Posuvalyuk, Syrian FM Shara’ meet in Damascus. (ITAR-TASS 12/5 in WNC 12/8; SATN 12/4 in WNC 12/9)

Israel’s Peace Now says that in 1996, there were 4,700 births to settler families while the overall settler population grew by 13,000, meaning that almost 66% of settlement growth was “unnatural.” (NYT 12/5)

5 DECEMBER

Secy. of State Albright meets with Netanyahu in Paris on her way to Africa to discuss his 11/27 FRD proposal. Netanyahu holds separate mtg. with French PM Lionel Jospin, FM Vedrine; stresses that EU must take back seat to U.S. for the peace process to succeed. (MM 12/5; HA, IDF Radio, LCI Television [Paris] 12/5 in WNC 12/8; IDF Radio 12/5 in WNC 12/17; NYT, WP 12/6; HA, IDF Radio 12/7, YA 12/8 in WNC 12/9; WT 12/8; MM 12/9; JP 12/13; PR 12/19) (see Peace Monitor)

Mossad officer Yehuda Gil admits relaying false information on Syria to the government for at least 6 of his 20 years at the agency. (MM 12/5; WP 12/6; ITV 12/6, IDF Radio, ITV 12/7 in WNC 12/9; NYT, WP, WT 12/7; al-Bahr [Damascus] 12/7 in WNC 12/17; MM, WT 12/8; JP 12/13; see also MM 12/4) (see Peace Monitor)


In Gaza, IDF opens fire on Palestinian demonstrators, critically injuring a toddler, wounding 5. (WP 12/6)

A day after the UN renews the old oil-for-food deal for 6 mos., Iraq stops pumping oil through its main pipeline to Turkey, says flow will resume when UN approves new plan for distribution of humanitarian goods bought with oil revenues; blames U.S. for blocking contracts to buy goods. (WP, WT 12/6)

In s. Lebanon, 3 Lebanese civilians are killed, 1 is wounded by IDF land mines. Hizballah responds by shelling IDF posts. (RL, VOL 12/5 in WNC 12/8; MEI 12/19)

In Beirut, unidentified gunman open fire on car of Higher Islamic Shiite Council (HISC) head Imam Muhammad Mahdi Shams al-Din, wounding 1 bodyguard. HISC, Lebanese security claim incident was not an assassination attempt. (MENA, RL, VOL 12/5 in WNC 12/8; VOL 12/6 in WNC 12/9)
6 DECEMBER

Albright meets with Arafat in Geneva, then flies back to Paris for 2d mtg. with Netanyahu. (NYT, WP, WT 12/7; IDF Radio, MA, MENA, YA 12/7, YA 12/8 in WNC 12/9; CSM 12/8, MM 12/9)

In Paris, French pres. Jacques Chirac meets with Netanyahu, blames Israel for the deteriorating peace process. (YA 12/12 in WNC 12/16)

Hizballah attacks IDF compound in s. Lebanon. 2 Hizballah mbrs. are killed, 1 IDF officer is wounded. Elsewhere in s. Lebanon, a civilian is injured by an IDF mine. (RI, VOL 12/6, 12/7 in WNC 12/9; MEI 12/19)

7 DECEMBER

Netanyahu discusses FRD informally with ministerial team. Cabinet puts off for at least 1 wk. discussion of extent, timing of FRD. (ITV 12/7 in WNC 12/9; WP, WT 12/8)

In Cairo, Arafat briefly meets Pres. Mubarak on his mtg. (12/6) with Secy. of State Albright. (MENA 12/7 in WNC 12/9)

In Tehran, 2-day mtg. of the FMs of the 55 Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) states to prepare the agenda of the upcoming OIC session closes. FMs agree on draft resolution calling for halt to normalization with Israel (including closing interest offices, halting military cooperation) to punish it for “reinstating an atmosphere of war.” FMs attending include Egypt’s Musa, Syria’s Shara’, Lebanon’s Buwayz. (IRNA, ITV 12/7 in WNC 12/9; WT 12/8)

Under pressure fr. the public, Histadrut calls an end to its 5-day-old strike. (MM 12/8, 12/23) (see 12/3)

8 DECEMBER

PA, Israel joint comm. on the Gaza port convenes. (al-Ayyam 12/9 in WNC 12/17)

Al-Najah University holds student council elections. Of 81 seats, Hamas wins 40, Fatah 35. (al-Najah Students Union Council press release 12/9)

Israel’s DM Mordechai arrives in Ankara to discuss upcoming naval maneuvers with Turkey, the U.S., military coordination. (Bayrak Radio [Nicosia] 12/4 in WNC 12/9; MENA 12/9 in WNC 12/17; NYT 12/12, JT 12/17 in WNC 12/19) (see Peace Monitor)

Iraq executes 4 Jordanian students for smuggling auto parts. Iraq has recently rounded up 523 Jordanians suspected of “economic crimes.” (MM 12/10, 12/11; RJ 12/16 in WNC 12/18; MM 1/6; MEI 1/16; MM 1/20)

9 DECEMBER

3-day OIC conference opens in Tehran. Egypt’s Mubarak, Jordan’s King Hussein, Morocco’s King Hassan stay away under U.S. pressure; Egypt sends delegation headed by FM Musa. Other attendees include Jordan’s Crown Prince Hasan; Syria’s Pres. Asad; Lebanon’s PM Hariri and Pres. Ilyas Hrawi; PA’s Arafat attend; Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince ‘Abdullah; Iraq’s VP Ramadan. (MM 12/9; MM, WT 12/10, JTV 12/11 in WNC 12/15, MEI 12/19)

10 DECEMBER

PA Central Bureau of Statistics begins its 1st census of the West Bank, Gaza, expected to last 15 days. After determining that existing legislation did not prevent PA census taking in East Jerusalem, Israel quickly pushes legislation through Knesset banning any Palestinian “activity in East Jerusalem bearing a governmental and political character and which is inconsistent with the sovereignty of the state of Israel,” arrests at least 1 census taker. (MM 12/10; CSM, NYT, WP, WT 12/11; PR 12/12; MA 12/12 in WNC 12/10; MEI, PR 12/19; IDF Radio 12/29 in WNC 1/1)

In Jerusalem, Arafat adviser Abbas discusses final status scenarios with Likud MK Dan Meridor. (YA 12/12 in WNC 12/15)

Turkey’s Pres. Suleyman Demirel leaves OIC summit a day early in protest of other mbrs.’ calls for halt to normalization with Israel, failure to pass 2 pro-Turkish resolutions on Cyprus, Greece. (NYT 12/12)

Following executions 12/8, Jordan recalls its chargé d’affaires from Iraq, gives 7 Iraqi diplomats a wk. to leave the country, vows to close its border with Iraq if it goes through with the execution of a 5th student. (MM 12/11; SA 12/12 in WNC 12/15; NYT 12/14; JT 12/15 in WNC 12/16; MEI 1/16)

11 DECEMBER

Israeli ministerial team on FRD meets. (MM 12/11; YA 12/12 in WNC 12/15) (see 12/7)

OIC summit closes, issues final statement calling for solidarity with the Palestinian people; denouncing Israeli “state terrorism,” stating that “the killing of innocent people is forbidden by Islam.” Iran releases 2 Jordanian POWs fr. the 1980–88 Iran-Iraq war into Crown Prince Hasan’s custody as
thanks for attending the conference. (MM 12/11; WT 12/12; MENA 12/12, JT 12/15 in WNC 12/16; MEI, PR 12/19)

12 DECEMBER

Asst. Secy. of State Martin Indyk arrives in Israel on 1st leg of regional tour, meets with DM Mordechai. (YA 12/12 in WNC 12/15; NYT 12/14; QY 12/15 in WNC 12/16)

Egypt, Saudi Arabia end 1 wk. of naval maneuvers in the Red Sea. (MENA 12/12 in WNC 12/15)

As part of new campaign to win the American's release, Israel's Labor M Eli Ishai sends letter to convicted spy for Israel Pollard, praising his "divine devotion" to Israeli security; plans to visit Pollard 12/16. This is the 1st time Israel has officially acknowledged Pollard's spy activities. (WT 12/13) (see 11/24)

One Hizballah mbr. is killed during an attack on an IDF post in s. Lebanon. (VOL 12/12 in WNC 12/15; MEI 12/19)

13 DECEMBER

Jordan announces that it will release 140 Palestinian prisoners, including 1 sentenced to death. (NYT 12/14; al-Dustur, JT 12/14, al-Dustur 12/15 in WNC 12/16) (see 12/10)

14 DECEMBER

Donor's 2-day Consultative Group mtg. opens in Paris, reviews PA's Palestinian Development Program for 1998-2000. (PR 12/19, 1/2) (see Peace Monitor)

The Israeli cabinet begins debate on ministerial team proposals for size of area to be retained by Israel in a final agmt., reaches no conclusion. Netanyahu criticizes EU, U.S. for pressuring Israel on FRD issue. During the cabinet session, 100s of West Bank settlers protest government willingness to discuss FRD. (ITV 12/14 in WNC 12/16; CSM, MM, NYT 12/15)

Asst. Secy. of State Indyk meets with PM Netanyahu; holds 2d mtg. with Israeli DM Mordechai, focuses on Iran's missile development program; then heads to Jordan, meets with Crown Prince Hasan. (RJ 12/14, QY 12/15 in WNC 12/16; MA 12/15 in WNC 12/17)

Iranian pres. Muhammad Khatami calls for dialogue with the U.S. (MM, NYT, WP, WT 12/15; MA, QY, YA 12/15 in WNC 12/16; MEI 12/19)

As part of a bid to win Pollard's release, Netanyahu sends letter of support to Pollard, stating "the entire nation is concerned by your continued imprisonment." Some senior Israeli FMin. officials reportedly disapprove of the "festival of ministerial visits" to Pollard. (WP, WT 12/15; WJW 12/18) (see 12/12)

15 DECEMBER


In Assira, West Bank, IDF demolishes 2 homes, seals 2 homes belonging to relatives of 4 of the 5 /'73/0, 9/4 suicide bombers. Palestinians attempting to block the demolitions clash with troops. IDF locks 7 Palestinian journalists in a vacant house for 32 hrs. to prevent their coverage of the demolitions. (WP 12/16; WT 12/17; PR 12/19)

In Cairo, Pres. Mubarak, al-Azhar Grand Imam Shaykh Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi receives Israel's Chief Rabbi Yisrael Lau. (MENA 12/15 in WNC 12/16; RMC 12/15, MA 12/16 in WNC 12/18; SA 12/18 in WNC 12/20; MENA 12/23 in WNC 12/29)

16 DECEMBER

Israeli cabinet continues debate on FRD limitations. (MM 12/16; ITV 12/16 in WNC 12/19; CSM, WT 12/17; NYT, WP 12/18)

Israel's Public Security M Avigdor Kahalani, PA Local Government M Erakat discuss thefts of Israeli cars, safe passage. (ITV 12/16 in WNC 12/18)

In Beirut, Asst. Secy. of State Indyk meets with Lebanese pres. Hrawi. (RL 12/17 in WNC 12/19; al-Safa'r 12/17 in WNC 12/20)

Egypt, Turkey open military cooperation talks in Cairo. (MENA 12/16 in WNC 12/18; MENA 12/18 in WNC 12/20)

17 DECEMBER

After a 3d inconclusive Israeli cabinet session on FRD, Netanyahu leaves for mtg. with Secy. of State Albright in Paris, promising Infrastructures M Sharon that he will not present Albright with any new maps, plans; all he will take with him is a list of conditions for the PA. As a result, FM Levy, who has insisted that Israel present Albright with a concrete proposal, refuses to accompany the PM to Paris. (IDF Radio 12/17 in WNC 12/19; NYT, WJW, WP 12/18)

Israel, PA military cmdrs. initial agmt. on new 16-pt. memorandum of understanding
(MOU) on security. (NYT 12/18; MA 12/18 in WNC 12/20; WP 12/19; YA 12/21 in WNC 12/23; MM 12/22; WP 1/3; al-Dustur 12/23, YA 12/24 in WNC 12/29; WJW 12/25) (see Peace Monitor)

18 DECEMBER

Secy. of State Albright meets Netanyahu in Paris, then flies to London to meet with Arafat. After mtgs., she announces that Clinton will meet separately with both men in Washington in 1/98. (MM 12/18; ITV 12/18 in WNC 12/20; CSM, MM, NYT, WP, WT 12/19; JP 1/3)

PA-Israel joint subcomm. on economic affairs meets. (ITV 12/18 in WNC 1/20)

In light of new Iraqi obstacles (see 11/23, 12/5), UN Security Council (UNSC) debates how to gain unrestricted access for UNSCOM inspectors. U.S. calls for tough approach, possible military action. Russia suggests conciliatory gestures. (NYT, WP 12/19)

1 SLA soldier is killed when large explosive device is detonated in Jazzin in s. Lebanon. In Qabrikha, IDF shelling damages 7 Lebanese homes, wounds 1 civilian. (IDF Radio, RL 12/18 in WNC 12/20)

19 DECEMBER

Arafat arrives in Cairo for 2 days of mtgs. on the peace process with Mubarak. (MENA 12/29 in WNC 12/23)

China’s Fm Qian Qichen arrives in Lebanon on 1st leg of regional tour to discuss peace process, bilateral relations. (VOL, Xinhua [Beijing] 12/19 in WNC 12/22)

2 Jordanian parliamentary mbrs., Muhammad Rafat, Hamada al-Far'ina make controversial private 4-day visit to Israel, meet with Israeli Mks. (al-Majad, JT 12/26 in WNC 12/29) (see Peace Monitor)

With Israeli approval, Lebanese army reopens Kafir Falus crossing point bwn. Sidon, SLA-controlled Jazzin in s. Lebanon. By opening the crossing, which has been closed since 1985, the army hopes to prove to Israel that it is capable of reestablishing authority over all of s. Lebanon. The army tried to reopen the crossing in 8/97 but was shelled by IDF, SLA. (VOL 12/19 in WNC 12/22; WT 12/20)

20 DECEMBER

A group of Israelis accosts 2 Jordanian embassy employees outside their Tel Aviv apartment. (al-Rai 12/29 in WNC 1/1)

GCC states end 3-day summit by appealing to Iran to enter “a new era” of cooperation. (NYT 12/21; WP 12/22; WP, WT 12/23; MEI 1/16)

21 DECEMBER

In Gaza, Arafat receives Israeli maj. gen. Ya’aqov Or, coordinator of government activities in the occupied territories, to discuss employment of Palestinians in Israel, other economic issues. (MA 12/22 in WNC 12/23)

Chinese Fm Qichen arrives in Israel for talks with FM Levy. (Xinhua [Beijing] 12/21 in WNC 12/23)

22 DECEMBER

Despite the Shin Bet’s approval, Netanyahu cancels 12/17 MOU on security. (MM 12/23; NYT 12/24; IDF Radio, YA 12/24 in WNC 12/29; WJW 12/25, 1/1; MM 1/6; SA 1/8 in WNC 1/11) (see Peace Monitor)

In Amman, PA Local Government M Erakat briefs Jordanian PM Majali on the peace process. (ITV 12/22 in WNC 12/29)

The 33rd World Zionist Congress opens in Jerusalem. (JP 1/3)

23 DECEMBER

Palestinian Council (PC) suspends its session, gives Arafat 1 wk. to carry out reforms, cabinet reshuffle called for in PC’s 5-mo.-old corruption report. (NYT, WP 12/30; CSM 1/2; JP 1/10) (see Peace Monitor in JPS 105)

Netanyahu, several Ms tour the West Bank to study security problems related to FRD. (MM 12/23)

Jordan, Israel hold talks on Jordanian-Israeli-PA economic relations. (RJ 12/23, JT 12/26 in WNC 12/29; WT 12/24; RJ 12/27 in WNC 1/1)

Chinese Fm Qichen spends day in PA self-rule areas; meets with Arafat, Planning M Shaath; reaffirms China’s support for creation of Palestinian state. (Xinhua [Beijing] 12/24 in WNC 12/29)

24 DECEMBER


In response to a Hizballah attack in s. Lebanon, IDF shells villages just north of the self-declared security zone, killing 1 ci-
villian, wounding 2, damaging several homes. (RL, VOL 12/24 in WNC 12/29)

25 DECEMBER

In Ramallah, Jordanian-PA joint ministerial comm. ends 2 days of talks on trade exchange and border-related issues. (JT, RJ 12/25 in WNC 12/29; al-Dustur 12/26, RJ 12/27, al-Ra'i 12/29 in WNC 1/1; TTJ 1/2 in WNC 1/7) (see Peace Monitor)

In Tel Aviv, a group of Israelis attack a diplomatic car belonging to the Jordanian embassy. (al-Ra'i 12/29 in WNC 1/1; YA 12/31 in WNC 1/2)

2 settlers are arrested for shooting at a Palestinian in the West Bank village of Arif. (ITV 12/25 in WNC 12/29)

26 DECEMBER

Israeli Peace Bloc runs ad signed by 68 prominent Israelis, calling on Israelis to boycott products made in settlements so as to promote peace, remind Israelis that the settlements are not part of Israel. (PR 1/2)

In Jerusalem, Israeli police arrest 3 Jewish extremists planning to catapult a pig’s head into the al-Aqsa Mosque courtyard during a Ramadan prayer service. Ramadan begins later this mo. (WT 12/27; ITV 12/28 in WNC 1/1; JP 1/3)

27 DECEMBER

In Cairo, Damascus Declaration states (6 GCC states plus Egypt, Syria) open 2-day mtg. on formation of an Arab common market, creation of free trade zone among mbr. states. (MENA, RE 12/28 in WNC 1/1)

28 DECEMBER

Israeli Infrastructures M Sharon takes Netanyahu, 7 cabinet mbrs., on a tour of the West Bank to underscore need for Israel to retain security zones after FRD. (IDF Radio 12/28, al-Quds 1/29 in WNC 1/1; WT 12/29; JP 1/10) (see 12/23)

Saying that Pollard “has paid a heavier price than any other person convicted of a similar crime” in the U.S., PM Netanyahu orders the formation of a special ministerial team (PM, DM, FM, atty. gen., MKs Limor Livnat and Yuli Edelstein) to lobby for Pollard’s release. (YA 12/29 in WNC 1/1; JP 1/3) (see 12/14)

Azerbaijan announces support for plan, hacked by U.S., to transport Caspian oil, gas through Turkey. Meanwhile, Iran, Turkey, Turkmenistan sign agmt. opposed by U.S. to construct gas pipeline fr. Turkmenistan, through Iran and Turkey, to Europe. (Interfax [Moscow], IRNA, ITAR-TASS 12/28 in WNC 1/1) (see 11/19)

29 DECEMBER

5 mos. after it was submitted, Arafat accepts the Executive Authority’s (EA) resignation. No date for appointment of new cabinet is set. (NYT, WP, WT 12/30; CSM 1/2; JP 1/10) (see 12/23, Peace Monitor)

Israeli Infrastructures M Sharon again tours West Bank, this time presenting his FRD plan to local settlers’ group. (ITV 12/29 in WNC 1/1) (see 12/28)

Jordan’s State Security Court sentences 4 Jordanians linked with the Islamist group Bay’at al-Imam, to terms ranging from 10 to 15 yrs. of hard labor for plotting attacks on Israel. A 5th suspect is still being tried in a separate court. (JT 12/30 in WNC 1/1) (see 8/8)

Jordan, Iraq sign oil cooperation accord. (RJ 12/29, al-Ra'i 12/30 in WNC 1/1; MM 1/5) (see Peace Monitor)

Bomb explodes in Balalbek, Lebanon, killing 1 woman, wounding her husband, child. (VOL 12/30 in WNC 1/1)

30 DECEMBER

In Cairo, reps. fr. the Arab League, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, the OIC, the PA, Syria end wk-long mtg. on Israeli policies toward the Palestinians, peace process. (JT 12/31 in WNC 1/2) (see Peace Monitor)

In Cairo, PA Planning M Shaath briefs Egyptian FM Musa, Mubarak adviser Osama Baz on the peace process. (MENA 12/30 in WNC 1/1)

Jordan says that the experimental stage during which Israeli planes use the Aqaba airport is proceeding well, both sides are satisfied with results. (al-Dustur 12/30 in WNC 1/1)

Ramadan begins. (WP, WT 12/31)

31 DECEMBER

Arab League announces Arab free trade zone will go into effect 1/1/98, in keeping with a 1981 trade facilitation agmt. (RE 12/31 in WNC 1/2) (see Peace Monitor)

Israeli DM Mordechai attends groundbreaking ceremony for new 130-unit settlement called Ma’oz Tsur nr. Beit El settlement in the West Bank. (NYT 1/1; JP 1/10)
Netanyahu spokesman David Bar-Ilan confirms Associated Press report that visits to 65 of 144 West Bank settlements found more than 7,500 apartments, houses being built—enough to increase the settler population by at least 30,000 (or 20%) over the next 2 yrs. 1,000s more units are planned. (WT 12/31; MM 1/8)

1 JANUARY

Israeli FM Levy threatens to resign in a dispute over budget allocations, threatening the stability of Netanyahu’s government. During the past wk. of budget negotiations, Netanyahu has promised right-wing coalition mbrs. tens of millions of dollars for settlements, new bypass roads. (NYT 1/1; CSM, WP, WT 1/2)

Unidentified assailants shoot, wound Israeli woman in the West Bank. Israel imposes curfew on nearby Palestinian villages of Adik, Bruqin. (WP 1/2; JP 1/10)

Nr. Khan Yunis in Gaza, IDF soldiers open fire on a PA police patrol that comes “too close” to their position. In retaliation PA police open fire at 3 Israeli checkpoints in the area. No casualties are reported. (PR 1/9)

2 JANUARY

Israeli DM Mordechai says that Israel accepts UN Res. 425 of 1978, which orders Israel to withdraw from Lebanon; claims Res. 425 does not require unconditional withdrawal, allows Israel to insist that any pullout be accompanied by security guarantees. Despite qualification, this marks the 1st time an Israeli government rep. has publicly and officially accepted Res. 425. (al-Watan al-Arabi 1/2; ITV 1/3 in WNC 1/6; YA 1/4 in WNC 1/7; WT 1/7; RE 1/7 in WNC 1/10; JP 1/10; MM 1/13; RMC 1/15 in WNC 1/20; MEI 1/6)

Unidentified assailants throw 2 pipe bombs at a school in the Jewish area of Hebron causing no injuries but sparking clashes b/wn. settlers, Palestinians. (WJW 1/8)

3 JANUARY

In Amman, a gunman fires at Rahim Taahir Ahmad al-Sudani, the Iraqi embassy’s trade adviser, hitting his car but leaving him unhurt. At least 9 Iraqis are arrested in the attack, but the motive is unclear. (INA, JTV, RJ 1/3 in WNC 1/6; JT 1/13 in WNC 1/14; NYT 1/19)

In Amman, Crown Prince Hassan, Arafat adviser Abbas end 2 days of talks on Israeli Infrastructures M Sharon’s FRD plan, agree to reject it. (SA 1/6 in WNC 1/7; MENA 1/7 in WNC 1/10)

4 JANUARY

Israeli cabinet decides that Netanyahu cannot leave for 1/20 mtg. with Clinton without a FRD decision approved by the entire government. Cabinet mbrs. also discuss 12-page document drafted by the PM’s Office listing new conditions the PA must meet for redeployment to take place. (NYT 1/5; MM 1/7; PR 1/9) (see Doc. C)

Israeli FM Levy resigns. (ITV, MA 1/4, al-Ra'i, YA 1/5 in WNC 1/6; CSM, MM, NYT, WP, WT 1/5; WP 1/6; MM 1/8; PR 1/9; JP 1/10; MEI 1/16) (see 1/1, Peace Monitor)

Israeli Cabinet Scy. Dani Nave, Netanyahu’s military attaché Shimon Shapira reportedly hold “secret” talks with Jordanian officials in Amman. No details are reported. (JT 1/10 in WNC 1/13)

Israel announces that it has arrested an American of Lebanese extraction for acting on behalf of a “Lebanese terrorist group.” The man is married to an Israeli woman. The couple had been visiting family in Acre. (WP 1/5; ITV 1/7 in WNC 1/10; JP 1/17)

Around 30 Jewish settlers temporarily move into empty buildings in Hebron to protest what they consider inadequate IDF security measures to protect them. (WJW 1/8; JP 1/17) (see 1/2)

5 JANUARY

Knesset passes (58-52) Netanyahu’s budget, including a 20% increase relative to FY 1997 in the allotment for land, real estate purchases in East Jerusalem. (IDF Radio 1/5 in WNC 1/6; CSM, MM, NYT, WP, WT 1/6; Globes [Internet] 1/11 in WNC 1/13)

Officers fr. Turkey, U.S. arrive in Israel to plan drills for joint naval maneuvers. (JT, JTV 1/5 in WNC 1/6; Tishrin 1/5 in WNC 1/10; MM, WP, WT 1/6; IDF Radio 1/6 in WNC 1/7; al-Raya'ah [Doha] 1/8 in WNC 1/11; MEI 1/16) (see Peace Monitor)

Interior Ms fr. 22 Arab League states end 2-day mtg. in Tunis; approve preliminary draft agrmt. (to be presented to 4/98 Arab League session), calling on foreign states to cooperate with Arab security services, legal bodies to prevent “terrorism.” (NYT, WP 1/6; MM 1/7)
In s. Lebanon, 1 civilian is wounded during IDF-Hizballah clash. (RL, VOL 1/5 in WNC 1/6)

6 JANUARY

Israeli ministerial team on FRD meets again, without Levy. (MM 1/6) (see 1/4)

U.S. special envoy Dennis Ross arrives in the Middle East, meets separately with Arafat, Netanyahu to prepare for individual mtgs. each will have with Pres. Clinton in Washington later this mo. (MM 1/6; IDF Radio 1/6 in WNC 1/7; CSM, MM, WP, WT 1/7; ITV 1/8 in WNC 1/11; JP 1/17)

In Paris, Pres. Chirac, PM Lionel Jospin, FM Vedrine discuss the peace process with Syrian VP ‘Abd al-Halim Khaddam, FM Sharar. (SANA 1/6 in WNC 1/7; Israel Television Network 1/8 in WNC 1/12; MM 1/16)

Smithsonian removes cosponsor of its upcoming lecture series on Israel’s 50th anniversary under pressure fr. conservative American Jewish groups (such as the American Jewish Comm., the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, the Zionist Organization of America) and Congressman Michael Forbes (R-NY), who claim that the tentative schedule (including speeches by 2 Likud reps.) reflects only the “biased,” anti-Likud views of the series cosponsor, the New Israel Fund, a liberal philanthropic organization that supports reconciliation bwn. Arabs, Jews. (NYT, WP, WT 1/7; WJW 1/8; MEI 1/16)

7 JANUARY

U.S. special envoy Ross meets with PM Netanyahu. (ITV 1/7 in WNC 1/11; WP 1/8; ITV 1/8 in WNC 1/11; RE 1/9 in WNC 1/12; JP 1/17)

In Amman, King Hussein meets with Labor Chmn. Barak. No details of mtg. are released. (JT 1/10 in WNC 1/13) (see 1/4)

Israel approves construction of 574 new housing units in Efrat settlement, 94 units in Elkana settlement, both in the West Bank. (ITV 1/7 in WNC 1/10; MM, WP 1/8; ITV 1/8 in WNC 1/11; WP 1/9; al-Dustur 1/9 in WNC 1/12; MEI, PR 1/16)

Israel, Turkey. U.S. begin naval maneuvers in the Mediterranean, which will last until 1/9. Jordan is the only country to accept Turkey’s invitation to send an observer. (RL, SANA 1/7 in WNC 1/10; MM, NYT, WP, WT 1/8; MA, YA 1/8 in WNC 1/11; MENA 1/9 in WNC 1/12; MEI 1/16) (see 1/5)

Iranian pres. Khatami uses CNN interview to address the U.S. people, urging them to break down the “wall of mistrust between us.” He calls for cultural exchange with the U.S., expresses regret for 1979 hostage-taking but criticizes U.S. policies, says there is no need for political ties. State Dept. responds by proposing direct talks. Khatami also calls Israel a “racist terrorist state,” denounces terrorism (which harms innocents) but expresses support for “peoples who fight for the liberation of their land.” (MM, NYT, WP 1/8; MM 1/9; MEI 1/16)

8 JANUARY

U.S. special envoy Ross spends 3d day shuttling bwn. Israel, PA in search of formula to bridge gap bwn. them. PM Netanyahu says that any FRD would be implemented only after the PA fulfills all of its obligations under Oslo, comes up with “more effective” security measures. (MM 1/8; ITV 1/8 in WNC 1/11; NYT, WP 1/9; MEI 1/16; JP 1/17)

In Amman, King Hussein meets with Israeli Knesset Speaker Dan Tichon, Labor MK Salah Tarif. No details of mtg. are released. (JT 1/10 in WNC 1/13) (see 1/7)

In s. Lebanon, Hizballah detonates a roadside bomb as an IDF-SLA patrol passes, wounding 4 IDF soldiers, 2 SLA mbrs., 1 cameraman. In separate incident, 1 civilian is wounded by IDF shelling. (RL, RMC 1/8 in WNC 1/11; WP 1/9; JP 1/17)

9 JANUARY

After mtgs. with Israeli DM Mordechai, Infrastructures M Sharon, U.S. special envoy Ross returns to Washington having made no progress. Ignoring U.S. pressure to curb settlements, speed up FRD, Israeli Housing Min. confirms plans to build 30,000 new homes in the West Bank, with a capacity to double the settler population, by 2020; Netanyahu says that U.S. cannot expect Israel to keep its commitment to make 3 FRDs when PA allegedly has not kept its commitments, again proposes 1 limited FRD. (MM 1/9; MA, YA 1/9 in WNC 1/12; ITV 1/9, ITV, SA 1/10, JT 1/11 in WNC 1/13; WT 1/10; MM 1/12; MEI 1/16; PR 1/23)

10 JANUARY

In Hebron, 400 Palestinians protesting Israeli settlement policy announced 1/9 clash with IDF troops for several hrs., stopping occasionally to let pedestrians pass. 7 protes-
ters, 1 soldier are injured. (ITV 1/10 in WNC 1/13; WT 1/11; PR 1/16)

Turkey, Iran name new ambs., ending 11-mo.-old diplomatic rift over Iran’s alleged support of Turkish Islamists. (VIRI 1/10 in WNC 1/13) (see 9/22/97)

11 JANUARY

French FM Vedrine arrives in Lebanon to discuss the Lebanese-Israeli track of the peace process, Israeli statements regarding UN Res. 425 (see 1/2); calls for unconditional Israeli withdrawal fr. the south; brings no French initiatives. (RFI 1/11, VOL 1/12 in WNC 1/13; MM 1/13; RMC 1/15 in WNC 1/20; MM 1/16)

Iraq criticizes composition of new UNSCOM team, saying it is unbalanced in favor of the U.S., UK. New team is made up of 9 Americans, 5 British, 1 Russian, 1 Australian. (NYT, WP 1/12) (see 12/18)

12 JANUARY

Arafat briefs EU special envoy Moratinos on the status of the peace process, urges EU to put more pressure on Israel. (PR 1/16)

French FM Vedrine arrives in Jordan, meets with King Hussein, then heads to Damascus. (RFI, RJ 1/12 in WNC 1/13; JT, RFI 1/12 in WNC 1/14)

Shin Bet extends for 3 mos. permission for interrogators to use “moderate physical pressure” (including shaking, sleep deprivations, noise exposure, hooding) when questioning Hamas suspects. (PCHR 1/15)

In Nablus, Israeli, PA security teams raid alleged Hamas bomb factory, seize 300 kg. of explosives. (MM 1/13; WP, WT 1/14; PR 1/23)

Israel-Lebanon Monitoring Group (ILMG) holds 1st mtg. of the year to discuss 3 Lebanese, 3 Israeli complaints; urges greater caution to protect civilians. ILMG held 25 mtgs. in 1997. During 1997, 40 Lebanese were killed, 120 Lebanese and 1 Israeli were wounded in violations of the 4/96 understanding. (VOL 1/12 in WNC 1/13; RL 1/13 in WNC 1/14)

13 JANUARY

In preparation for Netanyahu’s mtg. with Clinton 1/20, the Israeli cabinet agrees not to carry out any FRD until the PA meets 12-page list of conditions (see 1/4), including extraditing PA prisoners; sets up interministerial comm. to monitor PA compliance with these demands. PA accuses Israel of stalling. (IDF Radio 1/13 in WNC 1/14; CSM, MM, NYT, WP 1/14; MA 1/14 in WNC 1/15; MM, WJW 1/15)

Arafat arrives in Amman for 2-day visit; discusses Ross visit, Arab positions on the peace process with King Hussein. (RF 1/13 in WNC 1/14; JTV 1/13, RJ 1/14 in WNC 1/15; PR 1/16)

In Damascus, French FM Vedrine meets with Pres. Asad. (RFI 1/12 in WNC 1/14; SARR, SATN 1/13, RMC 1/14 in WNC 1/15)

Jordanian team led by FM Fayiz Tarawneh leaves for U.S. for talks on the 1999 economic, military aid package to the kingdom. (JT 1/14 in WNC 1/15; al-Aswaq 1/18 in WNC 1/21)

Iraq again blocks UNSCOM inspection team. (NYT, WP, WT 1/14) (see 1/11)

14 JANUARY

Israeli cabinet approves 8 loosely defined zones, locations in the West Bank as areas of “vital national interest” that will not be returned under any deal with the PA. (MM 1/14; JTV 1/14 in WNC 1/15; NYT, WP, WT 1/15; SA 1/15 in WNC 1/20) (see Peace Monitor)

Egyptian pres. Mubarak makes unscheduled trip to Damascus to discuss peace process, regional issues with Pres. Asad. (MENA 1/14 in WNC 1/15; MENA, SATN 1/14 in WNC 1/20; Tishrin 1/15 in WNC 1/21; NYT 1/16; al-Ittihad al-Usbu’i [Abu Dhabi] 1/16 in WNC 1/23; al-Dammam al-Yawm 1/25 in WNC 2/2) (see Peace Monitor)

In Amman, Shas leader Deri discusses peace process with King Hussein. Later the king meets with the board of the American Israel Public Affairs Comm. (AIPAC), stresses importance of Israeli adherence to Oslo agmts. (ITV, JTV 1/14 in WNC 1/20; MM 1/15; JT 1/17 in WNC 1/21) (see 1/8)


Arab Parliamentary Union ends session in Luxor, Egypt; issues statement condemning “terrorism” in all its forms, affirms a people’s right to national struggle to liberate occupied territory and regain national rights. (ESC Television [Cairo] 1/14 in WNC 1/15; RE 1/15 in WNC 1/20)

In Amman, Jordanian-Palestinian Transportation Comm. agrees on procedures for moving goods across the border.
In Tel Aviv, 30,000 Israelis, many bussed in fr. West Bank settlements, demonstrate against any FRD. (MM, WP 1/15)

U.S. Supreme Court begins to hear Akins vs. Federal Election Commission (FEC) case, culminating a 9-yr.-old battle in which a group of Washingtonians led by frm. U.S. Amb. to Saudi Arabia James Akins has tried to convince the FEC that AIPAC should be regulated as a political action commun., subjecting it to strict campaign finance laws. (WJW 1/15; WJW 1/22)

15 JANUARY

PA rejects Israel’s 12-page list of preconditions (see 1/4) for FRD, says list of violations is full of “allegations, distortions, and half-truths.” (NYT 1/16) (see 1/13)

U.S. officials—including Secy. of State Albright, special envoy Ross, National Security Adviser Samuel Berger—hold mtg. on upcoming visits by Arafat, Netanyahu; say that they do not expect a final agmt. to emerge fr. the visits, the 2 leaders to meet. (NYT 1/16)

IDF troops, PA police train assault rifles on each other in 2-hr. standoff during antisettlement protest by 300 Palestinians outside Gush Qatif settlement in Gaza. (CSM, NYT, WP, WT 1/16)

IDF troops shoot at a Palestinian taxi, wounding passenger. (WT 1/16)

16 JANUARY

U.S. State Dept. says that Israel’s 12-page list of conditions for FRD are its own interpretation, U.S. does not recognize it as binding. (WT 1/18) (see 1/15)

U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum officials reject Arafat’s request to make official visit to the museum during his visit to Washington 1/22, say he can come “but as no more than a common tourist” forced to stand in line to wait for a ticket. (NYT, WP 1/17; NYT 1/18; MM 1/19; MEI 1/30)

EU Commissioner Manuel Maris issues a 23-page report, adopted unanimously by EU mbrs., calling on EU, as largest donor to the PA, to take a more active role in the peace process, blaming Israel for strangling Palestinian economy. (MEI 1/30; IGPO 1/19) (see Doc. A3)

Turkey’s Constitutional Court bans the Islamist Refah party, ruling that it harbors a subversive agenda, is working to replace the nation’s secular order; bans 7 party leaders, including frm. PM Necmettin Erbakan, fr. participating in politics for 5 yrs. (NYT 1/17; MA 1/20 in WNC 1/21)

17 JANUARY

PA Civil Service informs Palestinian chief justice and pres. of the High Court, Qusay al-Abadla, that he must retire. (LAW 1/23; PCHR 1/25) (see Peace Monitor)

In Amman, unidentified assailants murder 8 persons, including top Iraqi diplomat Hikmat al-Hajou, his wife, several Iraqi businessmen. (NYT 1/19; JT 1/19; SA 1/20 in WNC 1/21; MM 1/20; MEI 1/30; JP 1/31) (see 1/3)

2 Hizballah mbrs. are killed in clash with IDF in s. Lebanon. (RL 1/23 in WNC 1/27)

18 JANUARY

Israeli cabinet decides not to set a figure for the percentage of land to be included in the next FRD before PM Netanyahu’s visit to Washington. (MM, NYT, WT 1/19)

Iraq releases 92 of some 160 Jordanian prisoners. (INA, RMC 1/19 in WNC 1/21; MM 1/20; RJ 1/21 in WNC 1/23; Shihan 1/24, JT 1/26 in WNC 1/27; MEI 1/30)

19 JANUARY

PM Netanyahu arrives in Washington, holds separate mtgs. with American Jewish groups, Christian Coalition founder Pat Robertson, House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-GA). Moral Majority leader Jerry Falwell, gives speech to Voice United for Israel, a coalition dominated by Christian fundamentalists. Falwell tells Netanyahu that he will mobilize evangelical churches to oppose any FRD. (MM, WP, WT 1/20; IDF Radio 1/20 in WNC 1/21; ITV 1/20 in WNC 1/23; NYT, WP, WT 1/21; MM, WT 1/26; MEI 1/30)

Israel receives fr. the U.S. 1st 2 of 25 F-15I aircraft, which have a 2,400-mi. range—enough to hit Iran, Iraq, Libya without refueling—and ability to carry 11 tons of weapons. (Der Standaard [Groot-Bijgaarden] 1/20 in WNC 1/21; MENA 1/21 in WNC 1/23; MEI 1/30; JP 1/31)

In advance of his mtg. with Clinton 1/22, Arafat arrives in Cairo for 2 days of talks on the peace process with Mubarak. (MENA 1/19, 1/20 in WNC 1/21; PR 1/23)

In under 3 hrs., PA security court tries, sentences to 15 yrs. 2 Hamas mbrs. on
charges of masterminding the 7/30, 9/4 suicide bombings, Jassir Samara, Nasim Abu Rus were arrested in a raid in Nablus 1/12. (LAW 1/19; WP, WT 1/20)

At the start of 3 days of mtgs. in Bucharest, Syria, Romania sign 4 cooperation agmts. on transportation, trade, health and the environment, youth and sports. (Rompres [Bucharest] 1/19, Radio Romania Network [Bucharest] 1/20 in WNC 1/21)

20 JANUARY

Netanyahu, Clinton meet in Washington. Clinton presents U.S. proposal for a 3-stage second FRD fr. at least 10% of the West Bank. Secy. of State Albright also holds 2 mtgs. with Netanyahu during the day to discuss “appropriate elements for a further redeployment.” Netanyahu does not agree to anything. (NYT, WP, WT 1/20; IDF Radio, MA 1/20 in WNC 1/21; ITV 1/20, IDF Radio, MENA, RE 1/21, JT 1/22 in WNC 1/23; MM, WP, WT 1/21; CSM, MM, WJW 1/22; Tishrin 1/22, YA 1/26 in WNC 1/27; CSM, NYT 1/23; MM 1/26; MEI 1/30) (see Peace Monitor)

In Paris, PA’s Arafat, fmr. Israeli PM Peres sign agmt. with the World Bank that will create a new Peace Technology Fund for investment in the West Bank, Gaza. Arafat also meets with Pres. Chirac. (NYT 1/21; PR 1/23; JP 1/31) (see Peace Monitor)

Reversing its 1/16 decision in the face of public outcry, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum invites Arafat to make official visit 1/23. Arafat says he will do so if time permits. (WP 1/20; MM, NYT, WT 1/21; WJW, WP 1/22; MM 1/26, 1/27; MEI 1/30)

Israeli politician Yossi Sarid of Meretz calls on Pres. Clinton to recognize the Palestinians’ right to their own state now if he hopes to rescue the peace process. (WT 1/21)

Israeli extremist group Kach distributes leaflets in Hebron, warning that if American Christians living in the city do not leave Israel, their lives will be endangered. (IDF Radio 1/20 in WNC 1/21)

54 mbrs. of the Catholic hierarchy send letter to Pres. Clinton, calling for end to sanctions on Iraq. 3 Catholic bishops also begin hunger strike. (WP 1/21)

21 JANUARY

Arafat arrives in Washington, meets with Secy. of State Albright, calls on U.S. to pressure Israel to fulfill FRD agmts. as outlined in Oslo accords. (MM, NYT, WP, WT 1/22)

American Jewish leaders (e.g., fr. American Jewish Congress, Anti-Defamation League) criticize Netanyahu for courting Christian Right. Netanyahu gives interview to Pat Robertson’s Christian Broadcasting Network. (WP 1/22; MM 1/26) (see 1/19)

In Mecca, Jordan’s King Hussein, Saudi Arabia’s King Fahd discuss joint efforts to support the peace process. King Hussein is in Saudi Arabia to perform the lesser pilgrimage (al-’Umra). (RJ 1/21 in WNC 1/23; ’Uskaz [Jiddah] 1/22 in WNC 1/27)


World Bank secures financing for first export-oriented industrial estate at al-Muntar, Gaza. (World Bank press release 1/21) (see Peace Monitor)

IDF begins bulldozing Palestinian land nr. Neve Dalim settlement in Gaza as 1st step to expanding the settlement. (PCHR 1/24)

Jordan receives last installment of U.S. military equipment under the $1-m. 1996 draw-down agmt. (JTV 1/21 in WNC 1/23; al-Ra’i 1/26 in WNC 1/27)

22 JANUARY

In Washington, Clinton meets with Arafat, encourages him to accept U.S. FRD proposal (see 1/20). Arafat refuses proposal but agrees to renegotiate the 12/17 MOU on security; gives Clinton 2 letters: one, requested by the U.S., spelling out which of the 33 articles of the 1968 PLO charter were annulled in 1996; the other saying that a “time-out” on Israeli settlement construction should extend to all West Bank areas further than 50 meters fr. an existing settlement structure. After mtg., Clinton says that he hopes that land for peace will prevail in the Middle East, that “the Palestinians can realize their aspirations to live as a free people.” (NYT, WP, WT 1/23; ITV, MENA 1/23, JT, RE 1/24 in WNC 1/27; MM, WT 1/26; MEI 1/30; MA 2/3 in WNC 2/4)

CIA Dir. George Tenet meets with Arafat at his hotel to discuss security issues, 12/17 MOU on security. (NYT, WP 1/23)

Israeli Interior Min. approves 2 building plans for the Palestinian neighborhood of Ras al-Amud in Jerusalem: an “Arab sector” plan and a “Jewish sector” plan. (IGPO 2/4; MM, NYT 2/5) (see 9/14/97) (see Settlement Monitor)

U.S. orders deportation of Hani al-Sayigh, a Saudi Arabian suspected of in-
volvement in the 6/96 bombing of the U.S. barracks at al-Khobar. Sayigh fled Saudi Arabia for Canada (3/97), which then extruded him to the U.S. (6/97) at Washington’s request to provide testimony linking Iran with the bombing. Sayigh failed to provide such information, and the U.S. was forced to drop charges of collusion against him for lack of evidence. He faces possible execution if he is sent back to Saudi Arabia. (NYT, WP) (see 9/9)

IDF opens fire with rubber bullets, live ammunition, tear gas, percussion grenades on Palestinians protesting bulldozing of land nr. Neve Dalim settlement, injuring 4. (PCHR 1/24) (see 1/21)

Israel launches Ofek-4 satellite to spy on Iran, Iraq, Syria, but it disintegrates before entering orbit. (ITV 1/23 in WNC 1/27; WT 1/24; MM 1/26; JP 2/7)

23 JANUARY

Arafat says he is unable to visit the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, will go next time he is in Washington. Instead, he meets with Jordanian FM Tarawnah to discuss Arafat-Clinton mtg. (NYT, WT 1/24; MM 1/27; WJJW 1/29; JT 1/26 in WNC 1/30; MEI 1/30)

Palestinians resume demonstrations nr. Neve Dalim settlement. IDF again opens fire on them, injuring 5. (PCHR 1/24) (see 1/22)

2 IDF soldiers are wounded in clash with Hizballah in s. Lebanon. (VOL 1/23 in WNC 1/27)

24 JANUARY

Hizballah announces it has formally ousted its fmr. chief, Shaykh Subhi Tufayli, fr. the organization. Tufayli, who is supported by 1,000s of Lebanese in the Ba’albek area, split fr. Hizballah to protest the group’s participation in the 1992, 1996 elections and has led a nonviolent protest against government economic policies since last summer (see 7/4) but has recently started threatening to harm government officials. (VOL 1/24 in WNC 1/27; WT 2/1; MEI 2/13)

25 JANUARY

Jordan’s King Hussein makes brief visit to Cairo to discuss latest developments in the peace process with Pres. Mubarak. (ESC Television [Cairo], MENA, RJ 1/25; RE 1/26 in WNC 1/27; JT 1/28 in WNC 2/2)

In Tel Aviv, Israel, Jordan open 2-day mtg. to revise air transport accord. (JT 1/28 in WNC 1/27 [dates as printed]) (see Peace Monitor)

26 JANUARY

Following phone conversation with Secy. of State Albright 1/25 regarding her talks with Arafat, PM Netanyahu tells coalition mnrs. that he now supports U.S. proposal for staged FRD based on the principle of reciprocity, says that Israel cannot “rule out the possibility of an interim terrace.” (ITV 1/26 in WNC 1/27; MM 1/27; IDF Radio 1/27 in WNC 1/30)

After mtg. with UK PM Tony Blair in London, Arafat calls for an Arab summit to discuss the peace process. (MM, WT 1/27; RE, RMC, YA 1/27 in WNC 1/30)

Israeli DM Mordechai meets with Jordan’s King Hussein in Amman to brief the king on Netanyahu’s trip to Washington, discuss the need to continue the peace process, strengthen security cooperation. (JT 1/26 in WNC 1/27; IGPO, MM 1/27)

EU FMs mtg. is held in Brussels. Participants agree to become more involved in resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict, Middle Eastern politics. (MM 1/27)

Israel arrests 2 Israeli-Arab bedouin for planning a suicide attack. Israeli Internal Security M Avigdor Kahalani praises PA for its cooperation, but PM Netanyahu objects that PA assistance came “at the end of the road, not the beginning.” (MM 1/27; MA 1/28 in WNC 2/2; WT 2/7)

Jordan’s Supreme Court suspends controversial press law, saying parliament should have been given time to debate the draft law before it was put into effect by the government, allowing to reopen 13 papers that had been forced to close. Parliament will begin debate on the measure when it reconvenes in 2/98. (RJ 1/26 in WNC 1/27; JT 1/27 in WNC 1/30; JT 2/5 in WNC 2/6) (see 5/17/97, 9/27/97)

27 JANUARY

In Cairo, Arafat briefs Pres. Mubarak on his recent mtg. with Pres. Clinton. (MENA, RE, RMC 1/27 in WNC 1/30)

UK PM Blair says that Jewish settlements are “illegal”; redeployments should be substantial, credible, “implemented without preconditions”; Israel should withdraw unconditionally fr. Lebanon; peace process will be UK’s priority during its current presidency of the EU. (MM 1/27) (see Doc. A4)
In Amman, PM Majali receives Israeli Arab delegation. (RJ 1/27 in WNC 1/30)

Israeli Housing Min. confirms plans for construction of 15,000 new settlement units over the next 2 yrs. 60% of these will be in East Jerusalem, surrounding area. (PR 2/13)

Israeli schools get special textbook to commemorate the country’s 50th anniversary, but book makes almost no mention of Palestinians. Authors say that they “had too many other subjects to cover.” (WT 1/28)

In s. Lebanon, 1 civilian is killed by a roadside bomb. In separate incident, 1 Lebanese girl is killed by IDF shelling. (VOL 1/27 in WNC 1/30)

28 JANUARY

Sect. of State Albright leaves for tour of Europe and the Middle East to build support for U.S. military attack on Iraq if it does not comply with UN inspections. State Dept. says that U.S. Defense Secy. William Cohen, Amb. to the UN Bill Richardson will also travel abroad. (WT 1/28; MM 1/29) (see 1/13)

In Washington, Israeli Finance M Yaakov Neeman discusses with House Appropriations Comm. mbrs. phasing out the $1.2 b. in U.S. economic aid to Israel. (NYT, WJW, WP 1/29; Global [Internet] 1/29 in WNC 2/3; WJW 2/5; JP 2/7; MEI 2/13) (see Peace Monitor)

29 JANUARY

Israeli ministerial team on FRD meets to prepare response to U.S. FRD proposal (see 1/26) for upcoming Netanyahu-Albright mtg. 1/31. (IDF Radio 1/29 in WNC 2/2; MM 1/30)

Israel, U.S. inaugurate 1st hot line linking Israeli DM, the U.S. secy. of defense by phone in case of security emergency. (ITV 1/29 in WNC 2/2)

Pres. Clinton sends televised greetings to Iranian people on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr, marking the end of Ramadan; endorses Pres. Khatami’s 1/7 call for cultural exchanges bwn. Iran, the U.S.; says U.S. regrets its estrangement fr. Iran. (MM 1/29; NYT, WP 1/30; MM 2/2)

Iraq’s Dep. PM ‘Aziz departs on tour of Russia, France, Syria, Egypt as part of an Iraqi diplomatic campaign to counter U.S. mobilization of support for a strike on Iraq. (SA 1/29 in WNC 2/2) (see 1/28)

30 JANUARY

Palestinian prisoner, Nidal Abu Srour, dies fr. injuries received while in Israeli custody at the Russian Compound jail in Jerusalem. He was arrested without charge 1/16.

Death sparks clash bwn. Palestinians, IDF at entrance to Bethlehem, Abu Srour’s home town. (LAW 1/30)

In Ba’albeck, fm. Hizballah chief Shaykh Tufayli, 30 armed followers seize Hizballah-run school. Lebanese army storms school, sparking fierce clashes which last past midnight. (MBC, RL, Vol 1/30 in WNC 2/3; VOL 1/30 in WNC 2/4; NYT, WT 1/31; WT 2/1; MEI 2/13)

In Madrid, Secty. of State Albright, Russian FM Primakov discuss Iraq situation. Russia says diplomatic process has only just begun, Russia is still against military action. Separately, French pres. Chirac says all options should remain open; Turkey says its bases may not be used for staging an attack; Jordan says that no country may use its airspace or land to attack Iraq. (ITV 1/30 in WNC 2/3; WT 1/31; al-Ra’i 2/2 in WNC 2/4) (see 1/29)

31 JANUARY

After mtg. with Secty. of State Albright, UK FM Robin Cook says Britain is urging the UNSC to find Iraq in violation of its obligations to the council, saying such a res. would provide legal, international support for U.S. attack; says the UN also should consider quadrupling the oil-for-food program to demonstrate that UN is not trying to punish ordinary Iraqis. (NYT 2/1) (see 1/30)

Secty. of State Albright arrives in Israel for dinner mtg. with PM Netanyahu to follow up on 1/20 Netanyahu-Clinton mtg.; says that she is frustrated both sides’ failure to make tough decisions, that U.S. is likely to abandon mediation if Israel “continues to display a stubborn and uncompromising attitude toward the Palestinians.” (NYT 2/1; NYT, WP 2/2; HA, YA 2/2 in WNC 2/4; CSM, MM, NYT 2/3; MEI 2/13)

PLO Exec. Comm. passes by voice vote the list of PLO charter clauses that have been rescinded as given to U.S. Pres. Clinton 1/22, UK PM Blair 1/26. Israel says voice vote is not “sufficient.” (ITV 1/31, IDF Radio 2/1 in WNC 2/4; MM 2/2, 2/4)

Lebanese army operation against Tufayli (see 1/30) carries into the early morning hours. At dawn, Tufayli and his men flee the school, take refuge in the nearby village of Britel. The army seals the town to search for Tufayli, allowing residents to leave but no one to enter. The 2 days of clashes leave 4 Tufayli supporters, 3 soldiers,
1 civilian dead; at least 50 wounded. By the end of the day, Tufayli escapes, but 14 of his men are arrested. Government says Tufayli faces charges of endangering the country, killing soldiers and civilians, forming an armed group. (RL, RMC, VOL 1/31, RL 2/1 in WNC 2/4; NYT, WT 2/1; MM 2/2; MEI 2/13)

1 FEBRUARY

Secy. of State Albright meets with Arafat to follow up on 1/22 mtg. with Clinton, urges him to consider the U.S. FRD proposal. After mtg., Albright announces that Arafat, Netanyahu have agreed to send envoys to Washington in 1 wk. to try to break impasse. (MM, NYT, WP, WT 2/2, CSM, NYT 2/3; MEI 2/13)

Netanyahu asks Secy. of State Albright for 2–3 days advance warning of a U.S. attack on Iraq, immediate defensive measures against an Iraqi biological attack. Albright probes Israel's intentions on the matter, scale of its reprisal should Iraq strike Israel. (WP 2/2; MM 2/3; WT 2/5)

After mtg. with Arafat, Netanyahu, Secy. of State Albright heads to Kuwait, Saudi Arabia to gauge support for strike on Iraq. Kuwait supports use of force as last resort. Saudi Arabia says that U.S. may not stage attack on Iraq fr. its territory but will consider allowing U.S. planes to use its airspace. Arab League, France, Jordan, PA, Russia, Turkey send envoys to Iraq to persuade Saddam Hussein to abandon opposition to UNSCOM inspection of palaces. Egypt, Iran, Qatar, Syria warn attack would increase regional tensions. (NYT, WT 2/2; MM, WT 2/3; WP 2/4)

At entrance to Bethlehem, Palestinians clash with IDF for 3d straight day, leaving 6 Palestinians injured. During clash, IDF troops, PA police train weapons on each other but do not fire. (WT 2/2) (see 1/30)

Lebanese army eases siege on Brittel to allow 10,000 Lebanese to hold refinery for Shaykh Khudr Tlays, Tufayli's right-hand man who was killed in clash 1/30. Tufayli is still on the run. (MM, WT 2/2; MM 2/9; MEI 2/13)

3 civilians are wounded during IDF bombardment of Mashghara village in s. Lebanon. (RL 2/2 in WNC 2/4)

2 FEBRUARY

In Cairo, Mubarak adviser Baz is briefed by Israeli cabinet secy. Nave, Netanyahu adviser Uzi Arad on Netanyahu's mtg. with Secy. of State Albright and, separately, by PA Local Government M Erakat on Arafat's mtg. with Albright. Erakat then heads to Amman to brief Jordanian FM Tarawneh. (JTV, MENA, RE 2/2 in WNC 2/4; IGPO 2/3)

In Damascus, EU special envoy Moratinos, Syrian FM Shara'a discuss peace process. (SATN 2/2 in WNC 2/4)

Palestinian Nasir al-Hurub dies in PA custody just hours after his arrest. He is at least the 16th Palestinian to die in PA custody. (LAW 2/3; WT 2/4; MEI, PR 2/13)

Palestinian clashes with IDF continue at entrance to Bethlehem. (NYT 2/3)

After 7 hrs. of talks with Secy. of State Albright, Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Abdullah agrees only to say that if the U.S. strikes Iraq, it would be Saddam Hussein's fault. (MM, NYT, WP 2/3; MEI 2/13)

UN Secy. Gen. Annan asks the UNSC to raise to $5.2 b. fr. $2 b. the amount of oil Iraq is allowed to sell in the next 6 mos. of the oil-for-food program. (NYT 2/8) (see 1/31)

UN extends mandate of UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for 6 mos. (RL 2/2 in WNC 2/4)

3 FEBRUARY

Secy. of State Albright travels to Bahrain, Egypt to discuss Iraq issue. Bahrain agrees to allow U.S. forces to stage strikes fr. its air bases if necessary. Both Bahrain, Egypt call for diplomatic solution but agree to U.S. phrasing that if the U.S. attacks Iraq it would be Saddam Hussein's fault. (MM 2/3; MENA 2/3 in WNC 2/4, 2/6; MM, WP, WT 2/4; MEI 2/13) (see 2/2)

Turkey's army chief Gen. Hussein Kizrigoğlu begins 4-day visit to Israel to discuss military cooperation. (WT 2/4; see also MM 1/12)

Iran's Majles speaker Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri arrives in Syria for 3-day visit, discusses developing economic, commercial ties. (IRNA, SATN 2/3 in WNC 2/4; IRNA 2/3, IRNA, SATN 2/4, IRNA 2/5 in WNC 2/6; IRNA 2/5 in WNC 2/6)

To mark end of Ramadan, PA grants pardons or early releases to 31 Palestinian prisoners, including 2 convicted in connection with the 1/22/95 Beit Lid bombing that killed 21 Israelis. Israeli similarly releases 23 Palestinian prisoners. (WP 2/4; JP 2/7)

In the West Bank, Palestinians protest Israel's plans to confiscate land for expansion of Modi'in settlement. (PR 2/15)
4 FEBRUARY

EU special envoy Moratinos discusses peace process with PA Local Government M Erakat. (al-Ra'i 2/5 in WNC 2/11)

Arafat arrives in Spain for 2-day visit, to be followed by trip to the Netherlands. (PALDEV Digest [Internet] 2/4)

In Cairo, Egypt, PA sign custom exemption agmt. (MENA 2/4 in WNC 2/6) (see Peace Monitor)

Netanyahu spokesman Bar-Ilan says that government will override Interior Min.'s 1/22 approval of "Jewish sector" construction plans for Ras al-Amud. (MM, NYT, WP 2/5)

Palestinians living nr. Efrat settlement protest Israeli plans to confiscate their land to build road for local settlers. (PR 2/13)

Jordan's Interior Min. announces it has approved establishment of new Jordan Labor Party, which advocates building relations btwn. Jordanian, Israeli peoples but opposes policies of current Likud government. (JT 2/4 in WNC 2/6; JT 2/10 in WNC 2/11)

Congress debates resolution allowing Pres. Clinton to launch attack on Iraq.

White House prefers diplomatic solution with resort to targeted attack on military facilities, sites of suspected violations if there is no progress. Mbrs. of Joint Chiefs of Staff say list of targets belies lack of strategy, White House is only interested in "putting on a show"; recommend concentrated attacks on Republican Guard, facilities housing security details, mbrs. of Saddam Hussein's inner circle. Conservative lawmakers—including Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-MS), Rep. Steven Solarz (D-NY)—say attack should aim to remove Saddam Hussein fr. power. (WT 2/4; NYT, WP, WT 2/5)

5 FEBRUARY

In Cairo, Egyptian FM Musa, PA Planning M Shaath discuss peace process, Mubarak mtg. with Albright 2/3. (MENA 2/5 in WNC 2/6)

Irish Majles speaker Nateq-Nuri arrives in Lebanon for 2-day visit, talks on cultivating trade ties. (RL 2/5 in WNC 2/6; IRNA 2/5, RL 2/6 in WNC 2/10)

Saying that it "retains its right to self-defense and will operate according to its security interests," Israel rebuffs U.S. request to not retaliate against Iraq should it target Israel as a result of U.S. air strikes. (MM 2/5; MM, WP 2/6; WJW 2/12)

Iraqi pres. Saddam Hussein orders release of all 1,200-1,300 Arab prisoners in apparent move to win sympathy in his dispute with the U.S. (NYT, WP 2/6; al-Aswaq [Amman], MENA 2/12 in WNC 2/15)

13 mbrs. of the Israeli Islamic Movement hold quiet demonstration against potential U.S. attack on Iraq in front of the U.S. embassy in Tel Aviv. (IDF Radio 2/5 in WNC 2/6)

SLA mbrs. block road in s. Lebanon in attempt to prevent French delegation fr. reaching ILMG mtg. UNIFIL intervenes, reopens road. (RL 2/5 in WNC 2/6; RL 2/6 in WNC 2/10)

6 FEBRUARY

On his 1st official visit since he assumed his position 3 yrs. ago, EU Pres. Jacques Santer arrives in Egypt on 1st leg of 7-day tour that also will take him to Israel, the PA self-rule areas, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon. The trip is meant to underline the EU decision taken 1/26 to play a more forceful political role in the Middle East. (MENA, RE 2/6 in WNC 2/10; MEI 2/13)

In s. Lebanon, Hizballah detonates roadside explosive as SLA patrol passes, killing 2 SLA mbrs., wounding 2. (IDF Radio 2/6 in WNC 2/10)

7 FEBRUARY

Lebanon, Syria agree to reduce customs by 25%/yr. beginning 1/1/99, abolishing all customs tariffs in 2002. (SATN, VOL 2/7 in WNC 2/11)

In Bethlehem, 300 Palestinians march in support of Iraq. IDF fires rubber bullets, tear gas at marchers, injuring 3 PA policemen, 3 reporters, 8 demonstrators. Fatah denounces demonstration. (NYT 2/8; WP 2/10)

IDF soldier is killed, 7 others are wounded in clash with Hizballah in s. Lebanon. In separate incident, Hizballah fires mortars at n. Israel, causing no damage or injuries. (ITV, RL 2/7 in WNC 2/11; NYT 2/11; JP 2/14)

8 FEBRUARY

EU Pres. Santer discusses peace process with PM Netanyahu. (ITV 2/8 in WNC 2/11)

Almost 1 yr. after the 3/15/97 shooting of 14 Israeli schoolgirls by a Jordanian solider, Jordan's King Hussein sends Israel's Pres. Weizman a personal check for $1 m. for compensation to the girls' families. (IGPO 2/8; IGPO, MM 2/9; SA 2/9 in WNC 2/11;
al-Quds al-‘Arabi 2/11 in WNC 2/12; IGPO 2/12

Syrian pres. Asad issues decree firing his brother Rifat al-Asad as 1 of 3 VPs. No explanation is given. (RJ 2/8, al-Ba’th 2/9, SA 2/10 in WNC 2/11; MM, WP 2/9; WP 2/11; YA 2/12 in WNC 2/15; MM 2/13)

Israeli DM Mordechai travels to Munich on short notice to discuss Iraq crisis with U.S. Defense Secy. Cohen, who says U.S. will give Israel early warning before striking Iraq. U.S. also agrees to airlift Patriot missiles, chemical detectors, vaccines, other medications to Israel next wk. as a precaution. (IGPO 2/8; JTV 2/8 in WNC 2/11; MM 2/9)

After Saudi Arabia says it opposes military action to force Iraq to comply with UN sanctions, U.S. Defense Secy. Cohen says the U.S. will not ask to use Saudi bases to stage an attack. (NYT, WT 2/9)

9 FEBRUARY

In Jinin, 1,000-2,000 Palestinians march in support of Iraq. 150 Palestinians do the same in Ramallah. (NYT, WP 2/10)

Turkey moves 7,000 troops into n. Iraq (MM 2/9)

10 FEBRUARY

In Washington, Israeli, PA teams hold separate follow-up talks on the peace process with State Dept. Dep. Special Coordinator for Arab-Israeli Negotiations Aaron Miller, special envoy Ross. No progress is made. Israeli team is led by Cabinet Secy. Nave, Netanyahu foreign policy advisor Uzi Arad. PA team is led by Local Government M Erakat. PLO Washington rep. Hassan ‘Abd al-Rahman also attends. (JT 2/10 in WNC 2/12; WP 2/10; MM, WJW 2/12; PR 2/13)

In Amman, EU Pres. Santer discusses peace process with Jordanian PM Majali. (RJ 2/10 in WNC 2/11)

In Amman, PA, Jordan open 3 days of talks on expanding cooperation in health-related fields. (JT 2/10 in WNC 2/11; JT 2/11 in WNC 2/12)

Russian special envoy Posuvalyuk delivers message to Israeli PM Netanyahu fr. Iraqi pres. Saddam Hussein, saying that Iraq has “neither the intention nor the ability” to attack Israel. (WT 2/11; CSM 2/18)

After PM Netanyahu demands halt to Palestinian pro-Iraq demonstrations, PA’s Gaza police chief Brig. Gen. Ghazi Jabali issues order preventing all marches, protests, flag burnings in area A. (LAW 2/10; IDF Radio, JTV 2/10 in WNC 2/11; NYT 2/11; PR 2/13)

Jordan bans all demonstrations “for any reason,” citing preservation of national security given the “delicate” regional situation. (JTV 2/10 in WNC 2/11; JTV 2/11, JT 2/12 in WNC 2/15; JTV 2/12 in WNC 2/17)

Defense Secy. Cohen says that Oman has given the U.S. permission to station support planes in Oman for an attack on Iraq; combat units will be stationed in Bahrain, Kuwait, Germany, Spain, Diego Garcia. (MM 2/10; CSM, MM 2/11)

11 FEBRUARY

EU Pres. Santer arrives in Damascus for 2 days of talks on the peace process, meets with Syrian pres. Asad. (SANA 2/11 in WNC 2/12; SATN 2/11 in WNC 2/15)

IDF demolishes 2 Palestinian homes nr. Hebron to make way for expansion of Israeli quarries. (LAW 2/17)

Ultraorthodox Jew is stabbed to death in East Jerusalem. Israel suspects Palestinian militants. (NYT, WP 2/12, PR 2/20)

In Amman, Jordanian police arrest youth attempting to throw molotov cocktail at British embassy to protest potential military strike on Iraq. (RJ 2/11 in WNC 2/12; MM 2/12; JT, SA 2/12 in WNC 2/15)

Iraq offers U.S. a Russia-brokered compromise for inspections at 8 presidential palaces over 2-mo. period. U.S. rejects plan, saying it is not up to Iraq to set conditions for inspections, Iraq must agree to inspections of all sites for indefinite period. (MM 2/11; WP 2/12; JTV 2/12 in WNC 2/17)

In Kuwait, GCC states hold emergency mtg. on Iraq crisis, say they prefer diplomatic to military solution. (U.S. Defense Secy. Cohen, who is in Bahrain today, says that all 6 states have agreed that Saddam Hussein should bear all responsibility for an attack if he does not fully comply with UN requirements.) (MM 2/11, 2/12)

12 FEBRUARY

Coinciding with the opening of Israel’s 50th anniversary celebrations, Arafat threatens to “cross out” the peace agreements, declare a Palestinian state next yr. if the deadlock in negotiations continues. (JTV 2/12 in WNC 2/15; WP, WT 2/13)

In Cairo, Arafat adviser Abbas briefs Egyptian FM Musa on latest round of follow-
up talks taking place in Washington. (MENA 2/12 in WNC 2/15)

EU Pres. Santer arrives in Lebanon for 2-day stay, meets with PM Hariri. (VOL 2/12 in WNC 2/15; RL 2/13 in WNC 2/17)

In Amman, PM Majali discusses status of peace process with Israeli FM. Dir. Gen. Eytan Bentzur, urges Israel to implement Oslo agmts. (RJ 2/12 in WNC 2/15)

In Gaza, PA police try to tear down fence erected by Jewish settlers on disputed land outside Neve Dalim settlement. IDF troops intervene, scuffle with PA police, leaving 1 soldier injured. PA police cmdrs. arrive, break up fight. (WT 2/13) (see 1/23)

Despite 2/10 ban, 300 Palestinians in Hebron, 1,500 in Nablus stage rallies against attack on Iraq. (WT 2/13)

In mtg. with Defense Secy. Cohen in Moscow, Russian DM Igor Sergeyev strongly criticizes U.S.'s "uncompromising" stand on Iraq, warns against hasty judgment, short-lived military victories; expresses "deep concern" regarding U.S.-Russia relations if the U.S. strikes Iraq. (WP, WT 2/13)

13 FEBRUARY

In Washington, Israeli Trade M Sharan-sky meets with U.S. VP Al Gore, asks Gore what can be done to commute Pollard's sentence for spying (see 12/28), raises concern over Russian aid to Iran. (IDF Radio 2/13 in WNC 2/17)

Ignoring 2/10 ban, 300 Palestinian youths in Hebron hold demonstration against attack on Iraq. (IDF Radio 2/12 in WNC 2/15)

IDF demolishes home of Lebanese civilian in s. Lebanon, damaging 2 houses nearby. (RL 2/13 in WNC 2/17)

14 FEBRUARY

PA Information Min. orders all television, radio stations to halt broadcasts of commentary, analysis on the Iraq crisis. (LAW 2/14)

15 FEBRUARY

In Jerusalem, Israeli police raid, shut down 2 Palestinian offices that provide private investigation and security services, claiming they are PA-affiliated. (PR 2/20)

Mortars fired fr. s. Lebanon fall in n. Israel, causing no injuries or damage. (WP 2/16)

Chronology Source Abbreviations

CSM (Christian Science Monitor, Boston)
HA (Ha'Aretz, Tel Aviv)
IGPO (Israeli Government Press Office, Jerusalem)
INA (Iraqi News Agency, Baghdad)
IRNA (Islamic Republic News Agency, Tehran)
ITV (Israel Television Network, Jerusalem)
JT (Jordan Times, Amman)
JTV (Jordan Television Network, Amman)
LAW (Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment, Jerusalem)
MA (Ma'ariv, Tel Aviv)
MBC (Middle East Broadcasting Centre, London)
MEI (Middle East International, London)
MENA (Middle East News Agency, Cairo)
MM (Mideast Mirror, London)
NYT (New York Times, New York)
PCHR (Palestine Center for Human Rights, Gaza)
PR (Palestine Report, Jerusalem)
QY (Qol Yisra'el Radio, Tel Aviv)
RE (Republic of Egypt Radio, Cairo)
RFI (Radio France Internationale, Paris)
RJ (Radio Jordan, Amman)
RL (Radio Lebanon, Beirut)
RMC (Radio Monte Carlo, Paris)
SA (al-Sharq al-Awsat, London)
SANA (Syrian Arab News Agency, Damascus)
SARR (Syrian Arab Republic Radio, Damascus)
SATN (Syrian Arab Television Network, Damascus)
Prime Minister Netanyahu meets with Reverend Jerry Falwell in Washington, 19 January. (Paul Hosefros/NYT Pictures)