16 NOVEMBER

In Jerusalem, U.S. special envoy Dennis Ross meets with Israeli FM David Levy to discuss progress on final status talks. Although they discuss differences bwn. Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA) delaying the 2d stage of the 2d further redeployment (FRD) outlined in Wye II, Ross says the problem should be worked out bwn. the 2 sides. Later in the day, Ross meets with PA head Yasir Arafat. (MM 11/16; WP 11/17; MEI 11/26)

In Amman, the PA-Jordanian Joint Technical Comm. ends a 2-day mtg. on bilateral trade and economic ties. (al-Quds 11/16 in WNC 11/22)

Algeria says it will agree to establish diplomatic relations with Israel as soon as it withdraws fr. the Golan Heights, s. Lebanon, the occupied territories. (ANSA [Rome] 11/16; MM 11/19)

The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) expels 300 Palestinians fr. the caves in which they reside nr. Yatta on the West Bank, after declaring the area a closed military zone. (Gush Shalom press release 1/25; NYT 2/22)

IDF troops clash with Islamic Jihad mbrs. in s. Lebanon, killing 2 mbrs. On 11/15, Lebanese PM Salim al-Huss warned Palestinian groups that it is not in Lebanon's interest for them to stage attacks on Israel's targets in or fr. Lebanese territory. (AFP 11/16 in WNC 11/21; al-Quds, al-Safir 11/16 in WNC 11/22; RL 11/19 in WNC 11/23)

In Cairo, Egypt, Saudi Arabia close 2 days of higher comm. mtgs., agree to reduce barriers to bilateral trade. (MENA 11/16 in WNC 11/21)

17 NOVEMBER


Mbrs. of the Palestinian Bar Assn. hold a sit-in to protest the Palestinian Council's (PC) approval of Bar Association Law no. 3 of 1999, which lawyers believe restricts their work. (LAW 11/18)

Mauritania sends its 1st official delegation to Israel since establishing diplomatic ties on 10/28. (AFP 11/17 in WNC 11/22)

In Tehran, Iran, Qatar discuss expanding bilateral economic, political, security relations. (IRNA 11/17 in WNC 11/22)

Lebanese PM Huss meets with Islamic Jihad reps. to discuss their resistance activities in s. Lebanon. Jihad reps. agree not to take actions that "conflict with the Lebanese government's stance." (RL 11/17 in WNC 11/22; al-Safir 11/19 in WNC 11/23) (see 11/16)

18 NOVEMBER

In Jerusalem, the Israeli, PA final status teams hold their 4th round of talks, begin detailing their positions on issues that will be addressed in the framework agnt. on permanent status (FAPS). The PA demands that Israel compensate Palestinians for damages suffered due to yrs. of occupation, stresses that Oslo agmts. do not give Israel the right to unilaterally decide the FRDs. (AYM 11/19 in WNC 11/23; WJW 11/25)

On the sidelines of OSCE talks, Egyptian FM 'Amr Musa discusses with U.S. Secy. of State Madeleine Albright,Israeli PM Barak, Israeli FM Levy the possibility of resuming Syrian-Israeli talks; complains that implementation of Wye II is moving too slowly. (MENA 11/18 in WNC 11/22; MENA 11/19 in WNC 11/23)

At the OSCE talks, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey sign several agmts. to build an oil pipeline fr. Baku to Ceyhan. The U.S. pressed hard for the agmt., which is economically inviable yet will not be financed by the U.S., because it provides a route to move Caspian oil to the West that bypasses Iran, Russia. (ATL, Interfax, ITAR-TASS 11/18 in WNC 11/22; NYT, WP 11/19; Turan...
19 NOVEMBER

Some 30–50 Jewish settlers try to seize a Palestinian home in East Jerusalem by forcing owners to sign papers renouncing their ownership. Settlers injure 1 woman during the confrontation, before police intervene. (LAW 11/19)

The Israeli daily Ma'ariv reports that Israel is suing Iraq for $1.71 b. in damages caused by its Scud attacks during the 1991 Gulf War. The UN, which appropriates a third of Iraq’s oil sale profits to pay out reparations, is expected to hear the case within the yr. (MM 11/19)

In s. Lebanon, 1 Lebanese army soldier, 1 civilian are injured by IDF shelling. (RL 11/19 in WNC 11/23)

20 NOVEMBER

IDF troops storm the home of the PA security chief for Hebron, Abu Mahir al-Halawani, and arrest him. The PA complains that any problems regarding mbrs. of PA security forces should be dealt with through the Palestinian-Israeli Steering and Monitoring Comm. (SA 11/21 in WNC 11/23)

Palestinian refugees in ‘Ayn al-Hilwa camp in s. Lebanon stage a sit-in to protest the increase in Lebanese army security measures at the entrances to the camp since the murder of 3 judges in nearby Sidon on 6/8, routine discrimination against refugees by the Lebanese government. (RL 11/20, SA 11/21 in WNC 11/23)

21 NOVEMBER

In Cairo, Egyptian FM Musa, PA Planning M Nabil Shaath end 2 days of consultations on the peace process. Shaath also meets with Arab League secy. gen. Ismat ‘Abd al-Majid to request that the Arab League intervene with Lebanon to ease tensions regarding Palestinian refugees (see 11/20). (MENA, 11/21, MENA, al-Nahar 11/22 in WNC 11/23)

Israeli Education M Yossi Katz, who handles Labor party relations with the PA, says Israel bears some responsibility for the Palestinian refugee problem, should allow 100,000 Palestinian refugees to return to areas inside the Green Line. Labor says it may remove Katz fr. his party posts because of his comments. PM Barak says no refugees will be allowed to return to Israel in a final settlement. (MM 11/23, 11/24; al-Quds 12/1 in WNC 12/3; MM 12/2; JP, MM 12/3)

Jordan “suspects” cases against all Hamas mbrs. detained since 8/30, sends 4 senior Hamas leaders (Ibrahim Ghawshah, Musa Abu Marzouq, Khalid Mishal, and Muhammad Nazzal, who were arrested 9/22) to Qatar, and releases the remaining 20 Hamas activists. (SA 11/21, AFP, DUS 11/22 in WNC 11/23; MENA 11/21, JT, SA 11/23 in WNC 11/24; MM, NYT, WP, WT 11/22; MM 11/25; MEI 11/26; AYM 11/27 in WNC 12/1; JP 12/3)

The Israeli cabinet asks the Knesset to renew the state of emergency law for 6 mos. rather than 1 yr. as has been the case since the law was adopted in 1948. The 6-mo. extension would be the 1st legislative step toward abolishing the state of emergency, under which Israel may legally hold Arabs without charge or trial and confiscate civilian goods for military use. (MEI 11/22)

Israelis living along the n. border with Lebanon hold a 1-day strike to show concern for their safety following a withdrawal of IDF troops fr. s. Lebanon. (MM 11/22)

Turkish officials arrive in Israel for 4 days of talks on joint tourism programs. (ATL 11/21 in WNC 11/23)

22 NOVEMBER

PA, Israeli final status teams hold their 5th round of talks in Ramallah. (MEI 11/26)

With Vatican support, Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches across Israel, the Israeli-controlled occupied territories close for 2 days to protest Israel’s approval of plans for a mosque nr. Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth. (al-Quds 11/22 in WNC 11/23; MM, NYT, WT 11/23; WP 11/24; MEI 12/10) (see 11/5)

In the Gaza Strip, Palestinian taxi drivers go on 3-day strike to protest increase in taxes imposed by the PA. Some Palestinians stage a sit-in outside the PC to protest increased fuel prices. Some Palestinians are also refusing to pay phone bills, since rates have been lowered in Israel but not in the territories. (al-Quds 11/24 in WNC 11/29)

Iran rejects a U.S. request to send a consular team to Tehran to promote travel b/wn. the 2 countries. State Dept. says it is “high
time” Iran allowed such visits since Iranian officials are routinely allowed into the U.S. (NYT, WT 11/24; WJW 12/2; NYT 12/3)

A Turkish trade delegation arrives in Jordan on a 5-day visit to examine the Israeli-Jordanian-U.S.-qualified industrial zones (QIZs). (ATL 11/23 in WNC 11/24) (see Peace Monitor)

Turkish tourism officials meet with their PA counterparts to discuss including the PA in Turkish-Israeli joint projects. Turkey, the PA sign a bilateral agrnt. on tourist packages to Bethlehem. (ATL 11/22 in WNC 11/24)

In Tehran, Iran, Turkey discuss security on their common border, expanding economic cooperation. (IRNA 11/22 in WNC 11/23)

Iraq halts oil exports to protest the UN’s decision to extend the Oil-for-Food program for 2 wks. instead of 6 mos., as it has done in the past; says sanctions should be removed immediately. (NYT, WT 11/23)

In s. Lebanon, a civilian is wounded by IDF shelling. (RL 11/22 in WNC 11/23)

23 NOVEMBER

The PA issues a statement saying that it “distances itself from statements made by Suha Arafat” made during Hillary Clinton’s visit to Ramallah on 11/11, saying the criticisms of Israel were her own and not the PA’s. The announcement was made immediately after U.S. Consul General John Herbst met with Arafat in Gaza to demand an apology. (WT 11/25, 11/28) (see Peace Monitor in JPS 114)

The Vatican criticizes Israel for its handling of the Nazareth dispute (see 11/22), saying Israel is laying the “groundwork for future contradictions and tensions” b/wn. Christians, Muslims. Muslims hold a ceremony to lay the cornerstone for the new mosque.

100s of Israeli riot police deploy around Nazareth, but no demonstrations or clashes are reported. (ansa 11/23, AYM 11/24 in WNC 11/26; NYT, wp, WT 11/24; WJW 12/2; JP 12/3; ANSA 12/3 in WNC 12/6; MEI 12/10) (see Doc. AI)

Jordanian police shoot, wound, arrest a man who fired a toy gun at security guards outside the Israeli emb. in Amman. (APF 11/23 in WNC 11/24; NYT, WP 11/24; JT 11/24 in WNC 11/26)

IDF demolishes 2 Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem. (LAW 11/23)

Overnight, Jewish settlers set up 4 tents on a hill nr. Bethlehem. Israel says the IDF will dismantle the unauthorized enclave if the YESHA settlers council cannot persuade the settlers to leave voluntarily. (MM 11/23)

In Amman, 2,000 Jordanians attend solidarity rally organized by Hamas and professional unions in support of Hamas mbrs. deported on 11/21, call on the Jordanian government to step down. (JT 11/24 in WNC 11/26)

24 NOVEMBER

Israel’s Ministerial Comm. on Jerusalem announces plans to set aside an area within the city to serve as a future “embassy row,” to begin work on a ring road around Jerusalem. (NYT 11/25; AYM 11/26 in WNC 11/30; JP 12/3) (see Peace Monitor)

In Cairo, Egyptian pres. Husni Mubarak, PM Atlf Ubayd receive Israel’s Regional Cooperation M Shimon Peres for talks on the peace process, economic issues. Peres urges Egypt to convene MEA economic conference. (MENA 11/25 in WNC 11/26)

Outside the PM’s office in Jerusalem, 2,000 Israeli Arabs demonstrate for more state funds, an end to discrimination against them by the Jewish population. Police clash with demonstrators injuring several, including MKs Azmi Bishara, Talab al-Sane’, Ahmad Tibi. (MM, NYT 11/25; WJW 12/2)

Israel’s chief rabbi bans crucifixes, Christmas trees fr. Israeli hotel lobbies during the millennium holidays “because they are offensive to Jews.” (WP 11/25; JP 12/3; WP 12/24)

The Lebanese army arrests Fatah cmdrs. Brig. Taha Muhammad ‘Abd al-Qadir (also known as Khalid Arif), Col. Khalid Shayib nr. Tyr. The PA views the arrests of the men, who have been wanted for yrs., as an attempt to pressure Palestinian refugees in final status talks. (RL 11/24 in WNC 11/26; MM 11/25; AFP 11/25 in WNC 11/25; al-Safir 11/30 in WNC 12/1; AYM 12/1 in WNC 12/2; MM 12/3) (see 10/27)

At the close of their 4th joint economic commission session in Tehran, Iran and Syria sign a memorandum of understanding on economic cooperation, agree to form a joint council of trade officials to expand private sector ties. (IRNA 11/25 in WNC 11/26)

25 NOVEMBER

In Moscow, Russian dep. FM Vasily Sredin meets with amb. of Egypt, Jordan,
Lebanon, the PA, Syria and the Arab League envoy to discuss the peace process. (ITAR-TASS 11/26 in WNC 11/29)

Chmn. of China’s National People’s Congress, Li Peng, arrives in Israel on a 6-day visit aimed at strengthening bilateral ties, especially in military cooperation. (XIN 11/25 in WNC 11/26, 11/29; WP, WT 11/26; XIN 11/29 in WNC 12/1; AFP 11/30 in WNC 12/1; XIN 11/30, 12/1 in WNC 12/2; NYT, WT 12/2)

In Tulkarm, 600 Palestinians fr. West Bank refugee camps hold mtg. to demand that the PA fight for the refugees’ right of return during final status negotiations. (BADIL press release 11/29)

Palestinians in Gaza City strike to protest price hikes on basic goods, such as flour and gas; they accuse PA monopolies of banning imports fr. Israel, then increasing prices. PA says it will investigate. (MENL 11/25)

Turkey’s court of appeals upholds the death sentence against Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) leader Abdullah Ocalan. The European Union (EU) warns that the decision may affect Turkey’s chances of joining the EU. (MM 11/25; ATL 11/25 in WNC 11/26; CSM, NYT, WP, WT 11/26) (see 6/29)

26 NOVEMBER

At the UN in New York, EU officials discuss but fail to reach consensus on U.S., Israeli requests that Israel be allowed to join the UN’s Western Europe regional group. (NYT 12/3) (see Peace Monitor)

Arafat orders prices reduced on essential goods, sets maximum prices on several items, orders investigation into phone rates. Strikes, protests begun on 11/25 end. (MM 11/29; AYM 11/30 in WNC 12/2; FR 12/1)

Israel approves construction of 1,026 new housing units in Efrat settlement nr. Bethlehem. (WT 12/1)

The Muslim Brotherhood holds a rally in Amman to urge the Jordanian government to allow the Hamas leaders deported 11/21 to return to the kingdom. (JT 11/27 in WNC 11/29) (see 11/23)

In Rabat, Iran, Morocco discuss expanding bilateral political, economic, cultural relations. (IRIB [Tehran] Television, IRNA 11/27 in WNC 11/29; IRNA 11/30 in WNC 12/1)

27 NOVEMBER

20 Palestinian lawmakers, academics, professionals issue a statement (the “Petition of the 20”) charging that Arafat has allowed PA corruption. (MM, NYT, WP 11/29; AFP 11/29 in WNC 11/30; AYM 11/30 in WNC 12/2; WJW 12/2; AYM 12/2 in WNC 12/6; MEI 12/10) (see Doc. B1)

28 NOVEMBER

PA intelligence officers detain without charge 7 Palestinians who signed the Petition of the 20. Of the 7, 2 are placed under house arrest, 5 are in PA custody. (LAW 11/28; CSM, MM, NYT, WP 11/29; CSM, MM 11/30; AYM 11/30 in WNC 12/2; MM 12/1; WJW 12/2; MEI 12/10)

Israeli police question fmr. PM Benjamin Netanyahou for 10 hrs. regarding charges that he accepted illegal favors as PM, that he took valuables belonging to the Israeli government when he left office. (MM, WT 11/29; MM 12/7) (see 10/21)

King Abdullah of Jordan meets with Muslim Brotherhood leader ‘Abd al-Majid Dhunaybat as a gesture of reconciliation in the wake of the deportation of Hamas leaders 11/21 and the end of the Hamas crisis. (SA 12/1 in WNC 12/2)

29 NOVEMBER

In Moscow for a 2-day visit, Arafat holds talks with Russian PM Vladimir Putin on the peace process; bilateral relations in education, culture, communications, transportation; developing a regular flight route bwn. Gaza, Moscow. (Interfax, ITAR-TASS 11/29 in WNC 11/30; Interfax, ITAR-TASS 11/30 in WNC 12/1)

PM Barak says that he will insist that the FAPS, due to be completed by 2/00, contain a PA promise that the refugees’ right of return will not be raised again at a later time; reiterates that no refugees will be allowed to return to inside the Green Line. (MM 11/30; MM, WT 12/1)

In Jerusalem, Israeli, PA final status teams held their 6th mtg. PA team hands Israelis a letter urging PM Barak to end Jewish settlement expansion. (AFP 11/30 in WNC 12/1; AYM 11/30 in WNC 12/2; MM, WT 12/1; MENA 12/4 in WNC 12/6) (see 10/26)

As the final status mtg. is taking place, the IDF demolishes 2 Palestinian homes, a store in al-Khader, in the West Bank, apparently as part of the expansion of Efrat settlement. (LAW 11/30; WT 12/1; MM 12/2) (see 11/26)

PA intelligence officers arrest another 3 Palestinians who signed the 11/27 state-
ment criticizing PA corruption. (CSM, NYT, WP 11/30; SA 12/1 in WNC 12/2; MEI 12/10)

In Gaza, 35 opposition leaders representing the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine hold mtg. in support of the Petition of the 20, call on the PA to release the detainees and allow freedom of expression. (AFP 11/29 in WNC 11/30; SA 12/3 in WNC 12/6)

30 NOVEMBER

On his way home fr. Moscow, Arafat stops in Cairo for a 2-day visit to brief Pres. Mubarak on the peace process, discuss increasing bilateral trade exchange. (MENA 11/30 in WNC 12/1; MENA 11/30, 12/1 in WNC 12/2)

King Abdullah of Jordan begins a 5-day visit to Japan for talks on boosting bilateral cooperation, economic assistance to the kingdom. (JT 12/2 in WNC 12/3)

In New York, the UN Comm. on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People meets to observe the annual International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. (WT 12/1)

PA intelligence officers detain for questioning another signatory of the Petition of the 20, bringing to 11 the number who have been detained. The other 9 are PC mbrs. (all Fatah mbrs.), who are immune from prosecution. Arafat has reportedly asked the PC to lift their immunity so they may be arrested. PA police also arrest 2 Palestinians suspected of distributing the leaflet. (Law 11/30; AFP, SA 11/30 in WNC 12/1; WP 12/1; AYM 12/2 in WNC 12/6)

1 DECEMBER

Israeli FM Levy arrives in Moscow for 2 days of talks with PM Putin on the peace process. (Interfax, ITAR-TASS 12/1 in WNC 12/2; Interfax, ITAR-TASS 12/2 in WNC 12/3)

The PC holds emergency session to discuss the Petition of the 20. Those attending pass (33-8, with 3 abstentions) a resolution condemning the 9 PC mbrs. who signed the statement for seeking to divide the Palestinian people, but do not act to strip the 9 mbrs. of their immunity fr. prosecution. (CSM, MM, NYT, WP, WT 12/2; AYM 12/2 in WNC 12/6; AYM 12/4 in WNC 12/8; MEI 12/10)

To date, 100s of Palestinians inside the territories and around the world have signed two solidarity statements in support of the Petition of the 20, opposing the PA crackdown on the signers. (LAW 12/2) (see Docs. B2 and B3)

On the way home fr. attending the PC session, PA legislator Muawiya Masri, who signed the Petition of the 20, is shot and wounded by masked men in Nablus. (LAW, MM, NYT, WT 12/2; CSM, MM 12/3; SA 12/3 in WNC 12/6; WJW 12/9, JP, MEI 12/10)

In reaction to the Petition of the 20, 1,000s of Arafat supporters hold a rally in Ramallah supporting the PA. (WT 12/2)

2 DECEMBER

PM Barak says Israel will not accept PA demands to redraw the maps for the 2d stage of the 2d FRD. (al-Quds 12/3 in WNC 12/7)

In Cairo, Orient House head Faisal Husseini holds talks with FM Musa on the final status talks, Jerusalem. (MENA 12/2 in WNC 12/6)

Israel approves construction of another 495 new housing units in 2 West Bank Jewish settlements. (WP 12/6) (see 11/26)

In Haifa, 42 Palestinian companies hold a trade fair to market their goods to Israeli businessmen and consumers, to promote joint projects. (AYM 12/3 in WNC 12/8)

Overnight, settlers fr. Kiryat Arba uproot 400 grape vines on nearby Palestinian land. (NYT 12/3)

3 DECEMBER

Arafat says final status talks with Israel are deadlocked, accuses Israel of using talks as a cover for settlement expansion, urges U.S. intervention. (WP, WT 12/4) (see 12/2)

In Nablus, 1000s of Palestinians rally in support of PC mbr. Masri, who was wounded by masked gunmen on 12/1. (WP 12/4; WJW 12/9)

Elsewhere in the West Bank, IDF troops clash with 200 Palestinians demonstrating against Israeli settlement expansion, leaving 4 injured. (NYT 12/4)

Israel submits to Jordan a proposal that would allow direct ("door-to-door") transportation of goods fr. Jordan to the West Bank as of mid-Jan. (JT [Internet] 12/4)

In Irbid, 1000s of Jordanians participate in a rally organized by the Islamic Action Front to urge the government to reconsider its deportation of 4 Hamas leaders on 11/21. (JT 12/4 in WNC 12/6) (see 11/26)
Several high-ranking Iranian clerics traveling to Washington on special State Dept. visas to participate in a Georgetown University seminar are halted by U.S. customs officials in New York, who fingerprint, photograph, and subject them to racist insults. The delegation returns to Iran in protest. The State Dept. says only that mistakes were made. (WT 12/4) (see 11/22)

4 DECEMBER

PA chief negotiator for final status talks Yasir ‘Abd Rabbuh goes to Cairo to brief FM Musa on interim and final status talks with Israel. (MENA 12/4 in WNC 12/6)

Arafat hosts tree-lighting ceremony in Bethlehem, officially opening the PA’s Bethlehem 2000 celebrations. (NYT, WT 12/5)

In Ramallah, 5,000 Palestinians hold a rally to mark the 51st anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, call on PA to stop political detention, safeguard freedom of expression, uphold democracy and the rule of law, end corruption. (LAW 12/6)

Iraq rejects a 2d, week-long UN extension of the Oil-for-Food program; continues to suspend its oil exports. (WT 12/5) (see 11/22)

5 DECEMBER

An Israeli FMin. delegation arrives in Egypt for talks on bilateral relations, the peace process. (MENA 12/5 in WNC 12/6)

6 DECEMBER

U.S. Secy. of State Albright arrives in Saudi Arabia on the 1st leg of her 5-day tour of the Middle East to nudge the peace process forward. (CSM, MM, WP 12/7; WJW 12/9; MEI 12/10)

U.S. special envoy Ross arrives in Israel to prepare for Albright’s visit later this wk. He meets with the Israeli and PA teams to try to bridge the impasse over FRD implementation. (WP, WT 12/7; MM 12/8; MEI 12/10)

PA chief negotiator ‘Abd Rabbuh cancels the day’s planned round of talks, saying the PA will no longer discuss anything with Israel except the settlements. (MM, NYT, WP, WT 12/7; AYM, al-Quds 12/7, al-Quds 12/8 in WNC 12/9; WJW 12/9; MEI 12/10) (see 12/3)

Iran, Syria sign a media cooperation agmt. (IRNA 12/6 in WNC 12/7)

The U.S. grants QIZ status to the Jordanian industrial city of Duluiy. (JT 12/7 in WNC 12/8)

7 DECEMBER

In Damascus, Secy. of State Albright holds 3 hrs. of talks with Pres. Hafiz al-Asad on resuming Syrian-Israeli negotiations. Asad gives “new clarifications on important points” that Albright will relay to PM Barak when she arrives in Israel. (MM 12/7; MM, NYT, WP, WT 12/8; JT, SA 12/9 in WNC 12/10) (see Peace Monitor)

Just before Albright arrives, Barak announces that he will not allow work on new settlement housing units approved on 11/26, 12/2 to begin or approve new units until 2/00, so as to defuse tensions while Israel and the PA attempt to conclude the FAPS. (MM, NYT, WP, WT 12/8; JP 12/17)

Jordan’s State Security Court decides not to press charges against a 12-yr.-old man who fired a toy gun outside the Israeli emb. in Amman, concluding that he is mentally disturbed, suicidal. (JT 12/8 in WNC 12/9) (see 11/23)

In s. Lebanon, 1 Lebanese, 3 Syrian laborers irrigating a fruit grove are killed by IDF shelling. (RL 12/7 in WNC 12/8)

8 DECEMBER

Secy. Albright briefs PM Barak on her mtg. with Syrian pres. Asad, then meets with Arafat in Ramallah. She presents both Barak and Arafat with a rough time line for concluding a FAPS. (MM 12/8; NYT 12/9; AYM 12/9 in WNC 12/14; MM 12/13; MEI 12/24) (see Peace Monitor)

Hrs. later in Washington, Pres. Clinton announces that Israel, Syria have agreed to resume negotiations. PM Barak, Syrian FM Faruq al-Shara will hold an initial mtg. next wk. in Washington, to be followed immediately by intensive negotiations at an as yet undetermined location. (MM 12/8; MM, NYT, WP, WT 12/9; AFP, DUS, Interfax, MENA, RL, SA, XIN 12/9 in WNC 12/10; CSM, MM, NYT, WP, WT 12/10; WP 12/13) (see Peace Monitor)

Pres. Clinton, PM Barak both phone Arafat to assure him that the resumption of the Syrian-Israeli track will not affect progress on the PA-Israeli track. (WP 12/9; AYM 12/9, 12/11 in WNC 12/14; MM 12/13)

Syrian pres. Asad phones Lebanese pres. Emile Lahoud, PM Huss to coordinate positions in advance of Syrian-Israeli
Chronology

12 DECEMBER

They agree that neither Syria nor Lebanon will make a separate peace with Israel. (NYT 12/9; RL 12/9 in WNC 12/10; NYT 12/10)

In light of the announcement on the Syrian-Israeli talks, Russia calls for multilateral talks, which began in 1992 but stalled in 1996, to resume as soon as possible; offers to host a steering comm. mtg. (Interfax 12/9 in WNC 12/10)

In Amman, 100s of Jordanian university students hold a rally to protest the government decision to deport 4 Hamas leaders on 11/21. (SA 12/9 in WNC 12/10)

In Beirut, a group calling itself the World Islamic Front urges attacks on Russian emb.s. worldwide to protest Russia’s war in the breakaway Muslim republic of Chechnya. (SA 12/9 in WNC 12/10)

9 DECEMBER

The donors’ Local Aid Coordination Comm. meets in Gaza. (World Bank press release 2/1) (see Peace Monitor)

Secy. Albright ends her visit to the Middle East with a mtg. with Egyptian pres. Mubarak in Sharm al-Shaykh. Afterward, Albright says that the U.S., Egypt are in agreement that multilateral talks should resume quickly. (MENA 12/9 in WNC 12/10; JP 12/17)

PM Barak says he thinks that a peace agmt. with Syria could be completed in a few mos. (NYT 12/10)

In s. Lebanon, 2 Hizbullah mbrs. are killed in a clash with the IDF. (RL 12/9 in WNC 12/13)

10 DECEMBER

Israeli security officials report that the PA police seized 660 lbs. of explosives and electronic equipment fr. a Hamas hideout in Hebron. (NYT 12/11)

11 DECEMBER

Egyptian FM Musa says that with the decision to resume Syrian-Israeli negotiations, it is now possible to resume multilateral talks. (MENA 12/11 in WNC 12/13)

12 DECEMBER

Secy. of State Albright says that mos. of behind-the-scenes contacts have narrowed gaps b/wn. Syria, Israel on issues of territory, security, and future diplomatic, cultural, trade relations; the cumulative effect of the exchanges made each side confident that they now have a real chance to reach an agmt. (WP 12/13)

In Damascus, Syrian FM Shara’ says that he is “so optimistic [as] to say that a few months could be enough to reach a peace agreement” with Israel. In Israel, PM Barak tells his cabinet he thinks an agreement could be reached in a few wks. (NYT, WT 12/13)

Egyptian FM Musa makes 1-day trip to Damascus to give Syrian FM Shara’ a message fr. Pres. Mubarak to Pres. Asad, to discuss the peace process. (MENA 12/12 in WNC 12/13; NYT 12/13)

Vowing to block efforts by PM Barak to trade land for peace with Syria, Jewish settlers inaugurate a new 390-unit neighborhood in Qatzrin, the largest Golan settlement. There are 17,000 settlers on the Golan. (CSM, WT 12/13)

Israel informs the PA that it will not release any Palestinian prisoners to mark Ramadan until Barak returns fr. talks with Shara’ in Washington. Almost 2,000 Palestinians are still in Israeli jails. (AFP 12/12 in WNC 12/13) (see Peace Monitor)

In Beirut, Russian dep. FM Sredin holds talk with Lebanese FM Huss on the resumption of Syrian-Israeli talks. (ITAR-TASS 12/12 in WNC 12/13)

13 DECEMBER

PM Barak tells his cabinet that although he had made no new commitments to Syria in order to resume talks, he “would not erase” any promises made in previous negotiations under Pms Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres, or Benjamin Netanyahu. (CSM, NYT, WP 12/14)

At the Knesset, PM Barak gives a speech, telling Israelis to prepare to pay “a heavy territorial price” for peace with Syria. After 7 hrs. of debate, MKs pass (47-31, with 24 abstentions, 18 absent) a vote of confidence giving Barak a mandate to negotiate with Syria. 1,000s of Golan settlers demonstrate outside. (CSM, MM, NYT, WP 12/14; CSM 12/15; WJW 12/16)

Russian dep. FM Sredin arrives in Amman for a 2-day visit. He discusses the peace process with the Russian rep. to the PA and Russian ambs. to Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria. (ITAR-TASS 12/14 in WNC 12/15)

In Bayt Awa, nr. Hebron, IDF commandos searching for 2 wanted Hamas mbrs. storm a house, killing 2 Palestinians, arrest-
ing 3. DM Efraim Sneh admits that there was a "contract" out for 1 of the men for killing an undercover Israeli policeman in 1/99. (WT 12/14; NYT, WP 12/15; VIRI 12/15 in WNC 12/16; LAW 12/16; JP, MEI 12/24)

The U.S. reports the arrest in the Middle East of 13 mbrs. of a suspected terrorist group with links to Saudi dissident Osama Bin Laden that was believed to be planning New Year's attacks around the world. (NYT, WP 12/14; WT 12/15)

14 DECEMBER

Arafat makes 1-day trip to Cairo to consult with Pres. Mubarak on the peace process in light of the resumption of Syrian-Israeli talks. (MENA 12/14 in WNC 12/15)

Before departing for Washington, PM Barak meets with Golan settler leaders. Barak's entire cabinet, which is divided on negotiations with Syria, sees him off at the airport. (MM 12/14; NYT 12/15)

On the anniversary of the annexation of the Golan Heights, Druze residents of Majdal Shams, on the Golan, hold a rally in support of Syria in the upcoming negotiations with Israel. (WP, WT 12/15)

15 DECEMBER

The donors' Joint Liaison Comm. convenes in Gaza. (World Bank press release 2/1) (see Peace Monitor)

The Israeli-Syrian talks resume with a welcoming ceremony at the White House for Israeli PM Barak, Syrian PM Shara' hosted by Pres. Clinton. While Clinton and Barak speak briefly and optimistically of the possibility of an accord, Shara' gives a prepared address welcoming talks but listing Syria's grievances (see Doc. A3). Afterward, Clinton meets with Barak, Shara' together and then separately. Both men also meet privately with Secy. Albright, who then takes them to Blair House, where they discuss procedural matters, with Albright and special envoy Ross on hand. (CSM, MM 12/15; SA, XIN 12/15 in WNC 12/16; CSM, MM, NYT, WP, WT 12/16; al-Quds 12/16 in WNC 12/20; AYM 12/16, IRIB Television [Tehran] 12/20 in WNC 12/21; MM 12/20, 12/21; JP, MEI 12/24)

At a cabinet mtg., Lebanese PM Huss says that Dep. PM Michel al-Murr will head the Lebanese delegation in talks with Israel when needed. (RL 12/15 in WNC 12/16; RL 12/16 in WNC 12/17; RL 12/18, 12/19 in WNC 12/20; MEI 1/14) (see Peace Monitor)

JORDAN announces that the 13 Arabs (11 Jordanians, an Iraqui, an Algerian) recently arrested for plotting attacks against U.S. targets in the Middle East (see 12/13) were detained in the kingdom. Several others are wanted for questioning. (WP, WT 12/16; AFP, JT, SA 12/16 in WNC 12/17; CSM, WP 12/17; SA 12/17, JT 12/18, SA 12/19 in WNC 12/20; JT 1/6 in WNC 1/7)

16 DECEMBER

Israeli PM Barak, Syrian FM Shara' close 2 days of "friendly" talks in Washington, agree that teams will hold their 1st round of intensive negotiations 1/3-9 in Washington. (MM 12/16; MM, NYT, WP, WT 12/17; ITAR-TASS 12/17 in WNC 12/20; IRNA, al-Quds, SA 12/20 in WNC 12/21; JP, MEI 12/24) (see Peace Monitor)

In Washington, Orthodox Jews protest outside the White House, objecting to any return of the Golan Heights to Syria. (WT 12/17)

In Gaza, Russian dep. FM Sredin hands Arafat a message fr. Pres. Boris Yeltsin, discusses the peace process. (ITAR-TASS 12/16 in WNC 12/17)

In s. Lebanon, 3 IDF shells strike an elementary school, wounding 20 Lebanese children. Israel apologizes for the attack, which marks the 4th time the school has been hit by errant IDF shells over the yrs. (see Doc. A3)

Hizballah says it will not retaliate in light of the Syrian-Israeli negotiations ongoing in Washington. (AFP, RL 12/16 in WNC 12/17; CSM, MM, NYT, WP, WT 12/17; DUS, ITAR-TASS, RL 12/17 in WNC 12/20; NYT 12/18; MEI 12/24)

PA General Intelligence Service mbrs. detain, severely beat PC mbr. 'Abd al-Jawad Salih for participating in a sit-in protest outside Jericho prison where several signers of the Petition of the 20 are still being held. (LAW 12/16; AYM 12/20, al-Quds 12/22 in WNC 12/23; MEI 12/24)
Pakistan extradites to Jordan for questioning suspected Bin Laden associate Khalil Deek, the 14th person arrested for plotting attacks on tourists. (WP 12/18; JT 12/18, The News [Islamabad] 12/18, 12/19 in WNC 12/20) (see 12/15)

Iraq resumes oil exports. (WT 12/17) (see 12/4)

17 DECEMBER

Russian dep. FM Sredni arrives in Cairo on 2-day visit, discusses with FM Musa reviving multilateral talks. (ITAR-TASS, MENA 12/17, MENA 12/18 in WNC 12/20)

The UN Security Council (UNSC) votes (Britain, U.S. for; China, France, Russia abstaining) to create a new arms inspection system for Iraq, with the promise to Pres. Saddam Hussein that sanctions could be suspended within a yr., eventually lifted if he complies. If Iraq accepts the deal, the UN would immediately remove the ceiling on Iraqi oil sales under the Oil-for-Food program, ease some controls on imports of medical, agricultural, educational goods. (NYT, WP, WT 12/18; LPA 12/18 in WNC 12/20; MM 12/20; AYM 12/20 in WNC 12/22; MEI 1/14)

18 DECEMBER

Citing the "murky political situation" surrounding final status talks with Israel, Arafat postpones until 1/15 a crucial PLO Central Council (POLOCC) mtg., which was to take place on 12/20. (JT, al-Quds 12/19 in WNC 12/21; AYM 1/5 in WNC 1/6)

Pres. Clinton renews 6-mo. waiver of the Jerusalem Embassy Act, which calls on the U.S. to move its emb. in Israel fr. Tel Aviv to Jerusalem or face cuts to the State Dept. budget. (MM 12/22; WJW 12/30; JP 12/31)

Iraq rejects the UNSC plan for resuming arms inspections, easing sanctions. (NYT, WP, WT 12/19; MM 1/5; MEI 1/14)

In Beirut, Iran, Lebanon hold talks on expanding tourism, scientific, cultural exchanges. (IRNA 12/18 in WNC 12/20)

19 DECEMBER

After plans for the mtg. are leaked to the press, Arafat, Barak cancel a secret mtg. that they were to hold today in Jericho. (MM, NYT 12/22)

Barak says that he wants upcoming negotiations with Syria to focus on security, normalization before dealing with final borders, water; says Israel's aim is to reach a "core agmt.," which he defines as something more than a declaration of principles and less than a full peace treaty. (MM, NYT, WT 12/20; MEI 12/24)

Mbrs. of Israel's client militia, the South Lebanon Army (SLA), petition Israel's High Court to grant them refuge in Israel if IDF troops are withdrawn fr. s. Lebanon as planned in 7/00. (WP 12/20)

Arafat releases on $75,000 bail 6 Palestinians who signed the Petition of the 20; the 6 also sign a pledge to appear at police stations if summoned. 2 others are still in jail—Abd al-Sattar Qassim, whom the PA has singled out as "the main culprit" behind the petition, and Ahmad Shakir Duddin, who refused to sign the pledge. (LAW, NYT 12/20; WJW 12/23; MEI 12/24; JP 12/31)

20 DECEMBER

In Ramallah, Israeli, PA final status teams meet but make no progress on the FAPS. The PA reportedly rejects Israel's demand that decisions on final borders be based on Israel's security needs and continued Israeli sovereignty over settlements. (CSM 12/21)

Syrian FM Shara stops in Beirut to brief Lebanese leaders on the Washington talks with Israel. (RL 12/20 in WNC 12/21)

Arafat arrives in Amman for 2-day visit to brief King Abdullah on talks with Israel, discuss Arab coordination in light of the resumption of the Syrian-Israeli talks. Arafat asks the king to intervene with Syria to improve PA-Syrian relations, encourage coordination on their negotiating tracks. Arafat would like to hold a 5-way summit among Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, the PA, Syria. (AYM, al-Quds 12/20 in WNC 12/22; al-Quds 12/21; JT 12/22 in WNC 12/23; AYM 12/21 in WNC 12/27; JT 12/28 in WNC 12/29)

21 DECEMBER

Close to midnight, Barak goes to Ramallah to meet with Arafat to assure him that resumption of the Syrian-Israeli track will not derail negotiations with the PA. (This is the 1st time an Israeli PM has entered the PA-controlled areas.) After 3 hrs. of talks, Barak and Arafat say they expect their negotiators, who did not attend the mtg., to resolve within a wk. differences on the 2d stage of the 2d FRD, a Palestinian prisoner release to mark Ramadan; plan to hold more 1-on-1 mtgs. in the nr. future. (MM 12/21; NYT 12/22; MENA 12/22 in WNC 12/23; NYT, WP
12/23; al-Quds 12/24 in WNC 12/28) (see Peace Monitor)

22 DECEMBER

Israel's Education M Katz sends a letter to principals of schools in the Golan Heights, urging them to open classroom discussions on the possible return of the Golan to Syria, saying that opinions supporting and opposing withdrawal as a condition of peace should be presented. (NYT 12/23)

23 DECEMBER

Lebanese PM Huss says that Lebanon will demand the return of 7 villages in Israel as part of a peace deal. (RL 12/23 in WNC 12/27)

24 DECEMBER

Barak approves construction of 70 new housing units in 2 Golan Heights settlements, saying that as long as Israel has no atm. with Syria, settlement expansion will continue. (NYT 12/25)

Israel announces that PM Barak will lead a 5-mbr. steering comm. on talks with Lebanon, which Israel hopes will open within wks. (NYT, WT 12/25)

Artillery exchanges in s. Lebanon resume after an undeclared 3-day cease-fire, requested by the Israeli-Lebanon Monitoring Group (ILMG) to allow the UN and Red Cross to collect the bodies of 5 Hizballah mbrs. killed in recent fighting. The cease-fire is the longest in s. Lebanon in 20 yrs. (NYT, WT 12/25; JP 12/31)

A briefcase containing a pipe bomb explodes in Natanya bus station in Israel. No one is injured, no suspects are detained. (NYT 12/25)

PA police surround the Qatari diplomatic mission in Gaza, where Issam Abu Issa, a Qatari Palestinian and the fmr. head of the privately run Palestine International Bank (PIB), has sought refuge. The PA seeks his arrest on embezzlement charges. (AFP 12/24 in WNC 12/27; SA 12/26 in WNC 12/28; MEI 1/28) (see Peace Monitor)

25 DECEMBER

Italian PM Massimo D'Alema, in Bethlehem to attend PA Christmas celebrations, meets with Arafat, announces that direct flights bwn. Gaza and Rome will begin this spring. (ANSA 12/26 in WNC 12/27; al-Quds 12/27 in WNC 12/29)

In Amman, PA, Jordanian trade Ms hold talks on transportation, agricultural cooperation; prepare for planned 3-way trade mtg. with Israel. (JT 12/27 in WNC 12/28)

A Hizballah mbr. is killed, an SLA mbr. is wounded in clashes in s. Lebanon. (RL 12/25 in WNC 12/27; WP 12/26)

26 DECEMBER

In Jerusalem, Italian PM D'Alema meets with PM Barak, announces that Italy is prepared to drop its opposition to Israel's membership in the UN's Western Europe group, stresses that the EU should play a greater role in the peace process, urges against continued settlement expansion. (ANSA 12/26, 12/27 in WNC 12/27)

In a deal brokered by Germany, Israel frees 5 Hizballah mbrs. whom it seized in Lebanon bwn. 1986 and 1989 and was holding without trial; returns them to Lebanon as a goodwill gesture before the resumption of Syrian-Israeli talks. (AFP, RL 12/26 in WNC 12/27; NYT, WP, WT 12/27; RL 12/27 in WNC 12/28; SA 1/30 in WNC 1/31)

In Cairo, Egyptian FM Musa receives Amb. of Palestine to the UN Naseer al-Kidwa for talks on the peace process. Kidwa says that Israel should be allowed to join the UN Asian states regional group, rather than the Western Europe group, but only if it refrains fr. violating UN resolutions and makes peace with its neighbors. (MENA 12/26 in WNC 12/28)

27 DECEMBER

Barak holds talks with top officials, advisers regarding upcoming round of talks with Syria. Barak has not yet appointed the negotiating team, which is scheduled to begin mtgs. on 1/3. (AFP 12/27 in WNC 12/29)

The Shas party threatens to leave Barak's governing coalition if he does not approve funding in the FY 2000 budget for its religious schools, which are $24 m. in debt. If Shas shifts its 17 Knesset seats to the opposition, Barak would be left with a minority government that might not be able to win a referendum on a peace deal with Syria. (XIN 12/27 in WNC 12/29; CSM, NYT, WP, WT 12/28)

In Tel Aviv, annual 2-day strategic mtgs. bwn. Israel, Turkey begin. Israeli assures Turkey that a peace deal with Syria would not harm Turkish interests. A Jordanian observer attends. (ATL 12/27 in WNC 12/28; ATL 12/29 in WNC 12/30)
Chronology

Barak forbids the Supreme Planning Council in the Israeli Civil Administration to meet unless its agenda has been approved in advance by him or someone appointed by him. Peace activists had disclosed that the council had approved 2,757 new units in West Bank settlements despite Barak's 12/7 decision to suspend settlement expansion until 2/00 to facilitate FAPS talks. (WT 12/28)

PA military court sentences to death PA Preventive Security Force officer Hashim Abu Nahil for the murder of Ayman Abu Nahil during a family feud on 11/23. This is the 27th death sentence issued by the military court since it was set up in 1994. (LAW 12/28; al-Quds 12/28 in WNC 12/30; al-Quds 12/29 in WNC 1/2; JP 1/7)

28 DECEMBER

Arafat arrives in Cairo for 2 days of talks with Pres. Mubarak. FM Musa on the peace process. (MENA 12/28 in WNC 12/29; MENA 12/28, 12/29 in WNC 12/30)

Qatar recalls its envoy to the occupied territories to protest the PA's handling of the Abu Issa embezzlement dispute. (WT 12/29; JP 1/7; MEI 1/28) (see 12/24)

In another gesture before resuming talks with Syria, Israel hands over to Lebanon the bodies of 2 Hizballah mbrs. killed 12/9 in fighting in s. Lebanon. (NYT 12/29; JP 1/7) (see 12/27)

Shas agrees not to quit the governing coalition after Barak budgets $13 m. for its religious schools. (CSM, NYT, WP 12/29; JP 1/7) (see 12/27)

29 DECEMBER

In Tehran, Iran, Turkey close 2 days of general talks on their bilateral strategic relations. (ATL 12/29 in WNC 13/0)

Israel frees 26 Palestinian prisoners to mark Ramadan. The PA says the small number of prisoners is proof that Israel is not serious about negotiations. (NYT, WP 12/30; al-Quds 12/30 in WNC 1/2; JP 1/7) (see Peace Monitor)

Israel approves construction of more than 50 new housing units in 2 Golan Heights settlements. Syria says it "is a step that cannot be categorized under good intentions." (WP 12/30)

The IDF demolishes a shrine at the grave of Baruch Goldstein, who murdered 29 Muslims in Hebron's al-Ibrahimi Mosque in 1994. 10s of settlers attempt to block the soldiers. (NYT, WP, WT 12/30)

Israeli police arrest an Israeli Arab as he tries to enter al-Aqsa Mosque carrying a submachine gun and bag of ammunition. (NYT 12/30; WT 12/31)

30 DECEMBER

Israel releases another 7 Palestinian prisoners, all fr. East Jerusalem, to mark Ramadan. (CSM, NYT, WP 12/31; WJW 1/6; JP 1/7) (see 12/29)

An Israeli journalist reports that Pres. Weizman did not report receiving $453,000 fr. French executive Edouard Saroussi fr. 1988 to 1993, when he was an MK and cabinet minister. Weizman says the money was a personal gift fr. a friend who has no connections to Israel, therefore he did not have to report it. (NYT 1/4; MM 1/5; JP 1/7; WP 1/10; MEI, MM 1/14; WT 1/16; WJW 1/20; JP 1/21)

In s. Lebanon, a car bomb is detonated nr. an IDF convoy, killing the unidentified bomber, injuring 1 IDF soldier and 12 Lebanese civilians (including 7 children). Hizballah claims responsibility. (NYT, WP, WT 12/31; RL 12/31 in WNC 1/2)

31 DECEMBER

In Diniyya, Lebanon, mbrs. of the radical group Takfir wa al-Hijra ambush a Lebanese army patrol, killing 4 soldiers, kidnaping 2, wounding 3. The army deploys 3,000 soldiers to flush out the rebels. Until now the government considered the group, which surfaced 2–3 yrs. ago and has an estimated 150–300 mbrs., to be disorganized and insignificant. (WP, WT 1/2; RL 1/2 in WNC 1/3; MM 1/4; GIU 1/7; MEI 1/14)

1 JANUARY

PLO Refugees Affairs Dept. head As'ad 'Abd al-Rahman arrives in Beirut to meet with PM Huss, visit Palestinian refugee camps. The 5-day trip aims to ease tensions bwn. refugees, the Lebanese government. (al-Safir 1/7, DUS 1/9 in WNC 1/10)

Unidentified assailants detonate a bomb in 'Ayn al-Hilwa refugee camp in s. Lebanon, causing damage but no injuries. (al-Safir 1/3 in WNC 1/4; MM 1/4)

2 JANUARY

Ending a diplomatic row with Qatar, the PA agrees to let Palestinian banker Abu Issa return to Doha and to appoint an interna-
tional auditing firm to arbitrate its dispute with PIB. Qatar agrees to send its emissary back to Gaza. (J[ Internet] 1/3) (see 12/28)

3 JANUARY

Israeli PM Barak, Syrian FM Shara' resume substantive peace talks in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. Pres. Clinton, Secy. Albright both meet separately with Barak, Shara'; these mtgs. run long, forcing the cancellation of a 3-way mtg. among Barak, Clinton, Shara'. Talks focus on Israel's demand that talks start with security issues, Syria's demand that they start with the extent of Israel's withdrawal fr. the Golan. The U.S. convinces them to discuss all issues simultaneously. (AFP, IRNA 1/3 in WNC 1/4; AYM 1/3, DUS, al-Quds 1/4 in WNC 1/5; CSM, MM, NYT, WP, WT 1/4; WP 1/5; Tehran Times 1/5 in WNC 1/6; WJW 1/6; MEI 1/14) (see Peace Monitor)

During their private mtg., Barak asks Clinton for a $17-b. military assistance package to ensure Israeli security in the event of a Golan withdrawal. (MM 1/4; MM, WP 1/5; NYT, WJW, WT, WP 1/6; SA 1/6 in WNC 1/7; MM 1/7; MEI 1/14) (see Peace Monitor)

In Beirut, Ahmad Raja Abu Kharub, a Palestinian refugee angered by Russia's war in Chechnya, fires 4 grenades at the Russian emb., killing a policeman, injuring 7 civilians before being killed by security forces. (ITAR-TASS, RL 1/3 in WNC 1/4; MM, WT 1/4; Interfax, ITAR-TASS, RL 1/4 in WNC 1/5; ITAR-TASS 1/5 in WNC 1/6; MM 1/6; RL 1/10 in WNC 1/11; MEI 1/14) (see 12/8)

Lebanese soldiers storm a village in the Diniyya region, where mburs. of Takfir wa al-Hijra, on the run from authorities following their 12/31 attack, are hiding out. 11 Takfir mburs., 2 civilians, 1 soldier taken hostage on 12/31, 3 other soldiers are killed in the clash. (SA 1/3 in WNC 1/4; MM, WP 1/4; AFP 1/4 in WNC 1/5; al-Nahar 1/5 in WNC 1/6; RL 1/7 in WNC 1/10; MEI 1/14; al-Safir 2/1 in WNC 2/1)

In Ramallah, a group of armed Palestinian youths fr. al-Amari refugee camp close off the Jerusalem-Ramallah road, roam downtown Ramallah, occasionally fire into the air in an attempt to pressure the PA into releasing a camp resident serving a life sentence in a PA jail. PA security forces disperse the youths, reopen the road, take up positions downtown to ensure residents safety. (AYM 1/4 in WNC 1/6)

4 JANUARY

In Shepherdstown, PM Barak and FM Shara', with Secy. Albright attending, set up 4 technical comms. to discuss simultaneously withdrawal fr. the Golan, security arrangements, normalization of relations, water. U.S. mediators hold an informal session with Syrian military officers to discuss the border issue. In the evening, Pres. Clinton holds a small "ice-breaking" reception with Barak, Shara'. (AYM 1/4 in WNC 1/6; MM, NYT, WP 1/5; MM, WJW, WP 1/6; MEI 1/14)

Israel, the PA agree to carry out the 2d stage of the 2d FRD based on the maps that were originally presented by Israel and rejected by the PA on 11/11. The PA suggests that Israel may give more desirable areas in the 3d stage of the 2d FRD, which is to be carried out on 1/20. (CSM, NYT, WP 1/5; al-Quds 1/5 in WNC 1/7)

In the 5th day of escalating violence, Lebanese troops engage Takfir mburs. in house-to-house fighting in 2 villages n. of Beirut. In total, 11 soldiers, 10 civilians, around 25 rebels have been killed, some 20 rebels have been wounded and around 55 captured since 12/31. (CSM, NYT, WP 1/5; al-Nahar, RL 1/5 in WNC 1/6; GIU 1/7; MM 1/11; MEI 1/14)

5 JANUARY

In Shepherdstown, Israeli-Syrian comms. on security arrangements and normalization meet. The U.S. holds informal discussions with the teams on withdrawal, water. Secy. Albright holds separate mtgs. with Barak, Shara'. (NYT, WP, WT 1/5; MEI 1/14)

Pres. Clinton, Secy. of State Albright send letters to Lebanese pres. Lahoud stating that the U.S. is optimistic that, now that Syrian-Israeli talks have resumed, progress can be made soon on the Lebanese-Israeli track. (RL 1/5 in WNC 1/6)

Israel transfers 3% of Israeli-controlled area C to jointly controlled area B and 2% of area B to PA-controlled area A. (MM 1/5; CSM, NYT, WP 1/6; JP, MEI 1/14) (see Peace Monitor)

Fmr. Russian pres. Boris Yeltsin arrives in Israel for Orthodox Christmas celebrations. This private visit was planned as an official trip before Yeltsin resigned on 12/31. (Interfax, ITAR-TASS 1/5 in WNC 1/6; WP, WT 1/6; NYT, WP 1/7)
6 JANUARY

At the Shepherdstown talks, Syria complains that Israel has refused to convene the technical comm.s on withdrawal or water, agreeing to discuss the border issue informally only (see 1/4, 1/5); says it will not participate in further mtgs. of the security or normalization comm.s. until Israel agrees to discuss withdrawal formally. Pres. Clinton flies to Shepherdstown for 3d time this wk., holds 6 hrs. of talks with Barak, Shara' but does not break the impasse. (SA 1/6 in WNC 1/7; MM, NYT, WP 1/7; MEI 1/14)

Russia, the U.S. announce plans to host a FM-level mtg. of the multilateral steering comm. in Moscow on 2/1. (ITAR-TASS 1/6 in WNC 1/7; MM, WP 1/7)

The PA frees Qassim and Dudin, the last 2 imprisoned Palestinians who signed the Petition of the 20. (NYT 1/7; LAW 1/12; MEI 1/28) (see 12/19)

Turkey's amb. to Washington hosts a farewell reception for outgoing Israeli amb. Zalman Shoval. (WT 1/7)

7 JANUARY

At Shepherdstown, Pres. Clinton presents Barak, Shara' with a U.S. draft for an Israeli-Syrian core agmt. The State Dept. describes the 7-page document, which is not released, as "a summary of the issues to be decided and the differences between the parties to focus the substantive discussions and to help bridge the differences that now exist." Syria welcomes the document; Israel does not comment. The U.S. says discussion of the draft should supersede the technical comm. mtgs. The teams agree to meet again on 1/9. (XIN 1/7 in WNC 1/10; NYT, WP, WT 1/8; WT 1/9; MM 1/10; MEI 1/14) (see Doc. D1)

In Bethlehem, Arafat hosts fmr. Russian pres. Yeltsin and the leaders of Belarus, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Ukraine for Eastern Orthodox Christmas services. (MM 1/7; NYT 1/8; ITAR-TASS 1/8 in WNC 1/10)

8 JANUARY

In Shepherdstown, the Israeli delegation announces that Barak will return to Israel on 1/10, leave talks in the hands of lower-level negotiators. (WT 1/9)

Syrian FM Shara' phones Lebanese PM Huss fr. Shepherdstown to brief him on the Syrian-Israeli negotiations. (RL 1/8 in WNC 1/10)

Arafat phones Barak in Shepherdstown to urge him not to forget the Palestinian track. (AFP 1/8 in WNC 1/10)

9 JANUARY

In Shepherdstown, the Israeli, Syrian teams begin discussing the U.S. working paper, reportedly address Israeli withdrawal fr. the Golan for 1st time. State Dept. notes some progress but says it is too early for the U.S. to step in with "dramatic bridging proposals." Pres. Clinton returns to Shepherdstown to dine with Barak, Shara'. (MENA 1/9 in WNC 1/10; NYT, WP, WT 1/10; MEI 1/14)

The London-based daily al-Hayat publishes a document, reportedly leaked by Syria, that claims to outline the differing Syrian and Israeli positions reflected in the U.S. working paper and that implies Israel's consent to withdrawal fr. the Golan. Israel says the report is "partial and inaccurate." (MM 1/10, 2/9) (see Peace Monitor)

The Israeli DM, announces that the number of soldiers deployed to guard West Bank, Gaza settlements will be reduced by 40% in line with a general cut in the army budget. Settlers accuse the government of discrimination. (WT 1/12)

In s. Lebanon, 1 IDF soldier is wounded when a Hizballah roadside bomb explodes. (RL 1/9 in WNC 1/10; MEI 1/14)

10 JANUARY

In Ramallah, PA, Israeli final status teams hold another round of talks on the FAPS. The PA demands that Israel allow Palestinian refugees to return to their homes, provide them with compensation. Israel rejects the demand. PA chief negotiator 'Abid Rabbuh says that the FAPS should include Israel's recognition of its "ethical responsibility regarding the displacement of the Palestinian people and their homelessness." (WP 1/11)

In Shepherdstown, Israeli, Syrian teams adjourn negotiations, with plans to resume talks on the U.S. working paper on 1/19. The entire delegations return home; earlier the sides had discussed having the comm.s. stay on to work while Barak, Shara' returned home (see 1/8). (CSM, MM, NYT, WP, WT 1/11; al-Quds 1/11 in WNC 1/13; JWJ 1/13; MEI 1/14; AYM 1/14 in WNC 1/21)

In Tel Aviv, 100,000 Israelis, many of whom are West Bank settlers, rally to protest any withdrawal fr. the Golan Heights in a peace deal with Syria. (MM, NYT, WP 1/11;
CSM, MM, NYT 1/12; al-Quds 1/13 in WNC 1/18; MM 1/17; WJW 1/21)

More than 150 Reform Jewish leaders visit the Israeli emb., in Washington to show support for peace talks with Syria, countering recent demonstrations by ultra-Orthodox Jews who oppose trading land for peace. (WP 1/11; WJW 1/13)

PA Finance M Zuhdi al-Nashashibi announces the establishment of the PA Higher Council for Development, chaired by Arafat, to ensure the transparency of the public finance system. (AYM 1/13 in WNC 1/18; see Peace Monitor)

Israel lowers the minimum age for Palestinians to work inside Israel fr. 25 to 21, increases the number of Palestinians allowed to drive their own cars into Israel, cuts fees for commercial traffic entering Gaza through Qamri crossing. (WT 1/12)

Israel says that Oman has decided to reactivate bilateral trade links. (WP 1/11)

11 JANUARY

Upon his return to Israel, Barak assures Israelis that any concessions made in a peace deal with Syria will be balanced by security guarantees; predicts that a majority of the 100,000 protesters in Tel Aviv on 1/10 would support a referendum on a peace deal. (MM 1/11; MM, NYT, WP 1/12; CS 1/13)

Arafat postpones the long-delayed PLOCC mtg., scheduled for 1/15, until 2/00, without setting a new date. (SA 1/11 in WNC 1/12) (see 12/18)

Hizballah attacks an SLA patrol in s. Lebanon, wounding 2 SLA mbrs. (RL 1/11 in WNC 1/12)

12 JANUARY

The Israeli daily Ha'aretz publishes the U.S. working paper for the Israeli-Syrian talks, which the Clinton administration had urged the sides to keep confidential. Diplomats confirm that the document, which was reportedly leaked by PM Barak, is accurate. The State Dept. says the leak is “damaging and harms the cause of peace.” (MM, NYT 1/13; NYT, WP, WT 1/14; AYM 1/15 in WNC 1/21; AYM 1/16 in WNC 1/19; MM 1/19; JP 1/21; MEI 1/28) (see Doc. D1)

Jordan, Israel renew their bilateral trade agmt., discuss setting up a 2d QIZ in the Aqaba-Elat area. (DUS 1/12 in WNC 1/13; NYT 1/13; JT 1/15 in WNC 1/18) (see 12/6)

In Rabat on a 4-day visit, Israeli FM Levy meets with Morocco's King Muhammad for talks on the peace process, bilateral relations. (SA 1/14 in WNC 1/18; WJW 1/20; SA 2/10 in WNC 2/14)

Turkey delays PKK leader Ocalan's execution in hopes of enhancing its bid to join the EU. The European Court of Human Rights has asked to review Ocalan's case. (MM, NYT, WP, WT 1/13; MM 1/20) (see 11/25)

13 JANUARY

Pres. Clinton phones Pres. Asad to discuss the next round of Syrian-Israel talks, which is to begin on 1/19. (WT 1/14)

In Ramallah, Arafat receives U.S. Middle East peace coordinator Aaron Miller, who is in the territories to set the agenda for Arafat's mtg. with Clinton on 1/20. (al-Quds 1/14 in WNC 1/19)

Israel releases 2 Hizballah mbrs. held in detention inside Israel, frees 25 Lebanese detained in al-Khiyam jail in s. Lebanon, apparently in exchange for information on IDF airman Ron Arad, whose plane crashed in Lebanon in 1986. (RL 1/13 in WNC 1/18; NYT 1/14; WJW 1/20; JP 1/21)

In Jordan, King Abdullah accepts Royal Court chief 'Abd al-Karim Karabiti's resignation, appoints Fayiz Tarawnah to replace him. The king keeps as PM his rival 'Abd al-Rauf Rawabda, who was recently accused of corruption by 2 parliament mbrs.; approves plans for a cabinet reshuffle. (MM 1/14, JT 1/14 in WNC 1/18; JT 1/16 in WNC 1/19; MM 1/17, 1/27; MEI 1/28)

Israeli police, IDF troops forcibly remove a group of settlers that tried to claim a West Bank hilltop nr. Havat Maon. (WJW 1/20; JP 1/21)

14 JANUARY

 Israeli FM Levy announces that on 1/20, PM Barak will take a break fr. negotiations with the Syrians (set to begin 1/19) to meet with Arafat, Clinton regarding final status talks. (NYT 1/15)

A Palestinian detainee dies in an Israeli jail outside Nablus. Israeli police say that Lafi al-Rajab asphyxiated himself, but an autopsy shows signs of torture. (LAW 1/19; WP, WT 1/20)

Based on information that Islamic Jihad is planning an attack, Israel carries out a series of "preventive" arrests of Palestinians nr. Hebron, Jenin, and Ramallah, detaining at least 20 Palestinians. (NYT 1/15; JP 1/21)
Chronology

The 50-mbr. Shura Council of Jordan's Muslim Brotherhood closes a 3-day mtg. to discuss internal divisions in the wake of the government's fall 1999 crackdown on Hamas. (SA 1/25 in WNC 1/27)

Austrian police announce that they have arrested Halima Nimr, a Palestinian closely linked to Abu Nidal, whose organization staged deadly attacks in Vienna in 1981, 1982, 1985. (AFP 1/14 in WNC 1/18; NYT 1/15; MM 1/17)

15 JANUARY

PA police attempt to seize control of a monastery in Jericho that is the subject of a dispute b/w 2 branches of the Russian Orthodox church, but 2 nuns refuse to leave. Police leave the building surrounded, refusing to evict the nuns by force. The PA claims it is acting at the request of Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow. (WT 1/18; WP 1/28)

Jordanian PM Rawabda reshuffles the cabinet, bringing 7 technocrats into the new government. (JT 1/16 in WNC 1/19; MM 1/17, 1/27; MEI 1/28)

16 JANUARY

PM Barak postpones the 3d stage of the 2d FRD planned for 1/20, saying he has been too occupied with the Syrian track to review the FRD maps. (MM, NYT 1/17; JT, al-Quds 1/17 in WNC 1/19; WT 1/18; al-Quds 1/19 in WNC 1/24; WJW 1/20; JP 1/21; MEI 1/28) (see Peace Monitor)

Syrian FM Shara' phones U.S. Secy. of State Albright to say that Syria wants Golan withdrawal to top the agenda of the 2d round of talks with Israel. Publicly, Syria says it has not yet agreed to resume the negotiations. (MM, NYT, WT 1/17; al-Nahar 1/17 in WNC 1/19)

Jordanian FM Abdallah Khatib, PA negotiator ‘Abid Rabbuh hold talks on the peace process. (JT 1/17 in WNC 1/19)

David Ivri assumes his post as the new Israeli amb. to the U.S., replacing Shoval. (WJW 1/20; JP 1/28; WJW 2/10)

In s. Lebanon, 1 Amal mbr. is killed in a clash with the SIA. (RL 1/16 in WNC 1/19)

17 JANUARY

The U.S. puts the 2d round of Syrian-Israeli talks on hold, saying Israel, Syria have fundamental differences that must be resolved for the next round to be substantive. Both sides agree to send experts to Washington in the interim to discuss the U.S. working paper. (AFP, ANSA, al-Safir 1/17, al-Quds 1/18 in WNC 1/19; MM, NYT, WP, WT 1/18; NYT, WT 1/19; al-Quds 1/19 in WNC 1/24; MM, WJW 1/20; MEI 1/28) (see Peace Monitor)

In Tel Aviv, Barak holds a private mtg. with Arafat, asks for a 2-mo. extension to the 2/13 FAPS deadline. Arafat refuses. (AFP 1/17 in WNC 1/19; MM, WP, WT 1/18; CSM, MM, NYT 1/19; MENA 1/19 in WNC 1/21; MM 1/20; MEI 1/28) (see Peace Monitor)

An EU delegation meets separately with Arafat, Barak for talks on the Palestinian track, increasing the EU role in the peace process. The EU reps. express extreme concern by the slow movement on the Palestinian track. (ANSA 1/17 in WNC 1/19)

In Tel Aviv, Jordanian FM Khatib meets with PM Levy, urges Israel to implement the 1/20 FRD. (DUS 1/18 in WNC 1/19; JT 1/25 in WNC 1/27)

In Cairo, French FM Hubert Vedrine holds talks with Pres. Mubarak, FM Musa on the peace process, the Barcelona process. Egypt agrees to host a Euro-Mediterranean partnership mtg. on 10/3. (MENA 1/17 in WNC 1/19)

The PA for the 1st time turns over a Palestinian prisoner to Israel. The prisoner, Hisham Najim, is wanted for rape and murder of a child nr. Nablus. (al-Quds 1/18 in WNC 1/19; JP 2/11)

Turkey says that it wants to aid the peace process by selling water to Israel, Jordan. Jordan's water M arrives in Ankara for 3 days of talks on importing 180 mcm of water over 2 yrs. (ATL, JT 1/17 in WNC 1/19; WP 1/18; MM 1/19; ATL, JT, Milliyet 1/19 in WNC 1/21; SA 1/28 in WNC 1/31)

In Hadera, Israel, a crude pipe bomb, similar to those used in Natanya on 11/7, explodes in a trash can. 22 Israelis seek medical attention, mostly for shock. Israel suspects Islamic Jihad (see 1/14). (MM, NYT, WP, WT 1/18; MM 1/19; WJW 1/20; JP 1/28)

In Nicosia, the Cypriot DMin. receives an Israeli DMin. delegation for exploratory talks on developing bilateral ties. (Cyprus News Agency 1/17 in WNC 1/19)

In s. Lebanon, a roadside bomb thought to have been planted by Hizballah explodes, injuring 1 civilian. (WP 1/18)

18 JANUARY

Israeli historian Teddy Katz says that he has uncovered credible evidence that Israeli troops massacred 200 Palestinians in

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the village of Tantura on the day Israel came into being on 5/15/48, possibly making the Tantura incident larger than the infamous Dayy Yasin massacre of 4/9/48. (MEI 1/28)

Lebanese pres. Lahoud, PM Huss receive an EU delegation for talks on the peace process. Lebanon says Israel's recent actions on the Syrian track raise serious doubts about Israel's desire to reach peace. (RL 1/19 in WNC 1/21; RL 1/20 in WNC 1/24)

The 4 Jordanian Hamas leaders deported on 11/21 appeal their expulsion to Qatar to the High Court. (JT 1/18 in WNC 1/19; NYT 1/19; JT 1/19 in WNC 1/21; JT 1/20 in WNC 1/24)

At the close of 2 days of talks in Ankara, Iran, Turkey sign a memorandum of understanding on enhancing bilateral cooperation in political, economic, security, cultural fields. (ATT, IRNA 1/18 in WNC 1/19)

19 JANUARY

Syrian FM Shara' says Damascus will not resume negotiations with Israel until Tel Aviv pledges to agree to withdraw fr. the Golan to the 6/4/67 borders. (MM 1/19; RL 1/19 in WNC 1/21; al-Safir 1/19 in WNC 1/24; WT 1/30)

Arafat stops in Cairo to meet with Pres. Mubarak before heading to Washington to meet with Pres. Clinton. (WT 1/19; MENA 1/19 in WNC 1/21; al-Quds 1/20 in WNC 1/24)

Fearing that the peace process could collapse, more than 300 U.S. rabbis associated with Peace Lobby issue a statement calling on Israel, the PA to share sovereignty over Jerusalem. (NYT 1/20; WJW, WP 1/27) (see Doc. D2)

In Israel's 1st official recognition of non-Orthodox Judaism, the Education Min. agrees to finance Reform and Conservative Jewish educational programs. (NYT 1/20; JP 1/28)

20 JANUARY

In Washington, Arafat meets with Pres. Clinton to discuss the stalled negotiations with Israel. Arafat announces that during his 1/17 mtg. with Barak, the PA agreed to carry out the 3d stage of the 2d FRD within 2 wks. (WT 1/20; NYT, WP, WT 1/21; al-Quds 1/22, AYM 1/23 in WNC 1/27 WJW 1/27; MM 1/24; JP, MEI 1/28) (see Peace Monitor)

Israel's Atty. Gen. Elyakim Rubenstein orders police to open a criminal investiga-
tion of Pres. Weizman for accepting money fr. French textile magnate Saroussi. Weizman refuses to resign or take a leave of absence in the interim. (JP, MM, NYT, WP, WT 1/21; MM, NYT, WP 1/24; NYT 1/26; MEI 1/28; MM 1/31, 2/3; JP 2/4) (see 12/30)

The central bodies of U.S. Conservative and Orthodox Judaism condemn yesterday's petition by 316 U.S. rabbis (mostly representing Reform Judaism), emphasize Israel's right to decide its security matters. (WP 1/27) (see Doc. D3)

21 JANUARY

In Washington, Arafat attends a mtg. of the Palestinian-U.S. bilateral comm. (AYM 1/24 in WNC 1/27) (see Peace Monitor)

22 JANUARY

Egyptian pres. Mubarak makes a surprise trip to Damascus to discuss the peace process with Pres. Asad. Mubarak urges Syria to coordinate its peace track with the PA, recommends holding an Arab summit. (MENA 1/22, JT, MENA 1/23 in WNC 1/24; MENA, SA 1/23, MENA 1/24, Tehran Times 1/25 in WNC 1/27; MM 1/24; AYM 1/25, 1/26 in WNC 1/28; MEI 1/28)

In Hebron, Jewish settlers throw stones at Palestinian taxis on Shuhada street to protest Palestinian access to the road. (Hatzofe 1/23 in WNC 1/24)

23 JANUARY

PM Barak tells his cabinet that if asked, he will not make any written pledge to withdraw fr. the Golan to resume peace talks with Syria. (MM, WP 1/24; WJW 1/27)

In Amman, Egyptian pres. Mubarak, King Abdallah discuss the peace process, inter-Arab coordination. (JT, MENA 1/23 in WNC 1/24; MM 1/24; al-Quds 1/24, AYM 1/25 in WNC 1/27)

Martin Indyk assumes his post as U.S. amb. to Israel. Indyk left his post as asst. secy. of state to serve as amb. to Israel for the 2d time. His 1st term was 1995-97. (WT 1/25; MM, NYT 1/26; WJW 1/27)

Hizbullah spiritual leader Shaykh Hassan Nasrallah says Hizbullah is "working very assiduously" to ascertain the fate of IDF airman Arad. He doubts Arad is alive but hopes to find his remains, so they can be exchanged for Hizbullah mbrs. jailed by Israel. (Der Spiegel, SA 1/24 in WNC 1/27; MEI 1/28; MM 2/4) (see 1/13)
24 JANUARY

Israel, PA announce that they will begin marathon FAPS talks on multiple tracks (including refugees, Jerusalem, borders, settlements) beginning around 2/1. (MM, WT 1/25; MENA 1/25 in WNC 1/27; CSM 1/26; AFP 1/26 in WNC 1/27) (see Peace Monitor)

On his way home fr. Washington, Arafat stops in Brussels to meet with EU officials, who report a significant improvement in PA accountability regarding EU aid. (al-Quds 1/24 in WNC 1/27; JP 2/4)

Lebanese security foils a 2d attack on the Russian emb. in Beirut. 4 gunmen are spotted but evade capture. (al-Nahar 1/26 in WNC 1/27) (see 1/3)

25 JANUARY

PM Barak cancels plans to send experts to Washington today for talks with the U.S. peace team on the U.S. working paper. In response, Syria says it will send its experts, who were scheduled to arrive ca. 1/31, when it is convinced that Israel is serious about exchanging land for peace. (AFP 1/25 in WNC 1/27; MM, NYT, WP, WT 1/26; MM 1/27, 1/28) (see 1/17)

In Cairo, Arafat, Mubarak hold talks on the peace process. (MENA 1/25 in WNC 1/27)

For the 1st time since 8/99, an IDF soldier is killed in s. Lebanon in a clash with Hizballah; 3 SLA mbrs. are wounded. The IDF retaliates with an air strike, killing 2 civilians. (RL 1/25 in WNC 1/27; MM, NYT, WP, WT 1/26; MM 1/27; MEI 2/11)

26 JANUARY

Despite his cancellation of experts meetings with the U.S. (see 1/25), Barak says he is optimistic that talks with Syria will resume in 4–6 wks. (MM 1/26)

Israeli and PA chief negotiators Oded Eran and ‘Abid Rabbuh hold a preparatory mtg. in advance of their intensive negotiations on the FAPS, which are set to start on 1/30. (AFP 1/27 in WNC 1/28)

Israel, the PA agree to move forward with plans to build 2 water purification plants along the 1967 border to serve both Israeli and Palestinian towns. Funding would come fr. the EU. (MENL 1/27)

PC passes the FY 2000 budget, its 1st balanced budget; however, it does not include any funding to implement Arafat’s promise to increase the salaries of more than 100,000 civil servants. (al-Quds 1/27 in WNC 2/1; MENL 1/30) (see Peace Monitor)

The UN names Swedish arms control expert Hans Blix as head of the new UN Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission for Iraq (UNMOVIC). Baghdad says it will not allow UNMOVIC inspectors into Iraq. (NYT, WP 1/27; MM, WP 1/28; MEI 2/11)

27 JANUARY

Israel's State Comptroller Eliezer Goldberg fines PM Barak's One Israeli/Labor party $3.4 m. and places it under criminal investigation for allegedly carrying out a “systematic and massive” illegal fundraising scheme that netted more than $2 m. for Barak's spring 1999 campaign. In total, 12 of the 31 parties that took part in the 5/99 elections (and 10 of the 15 parties now in the Knesset) are charged with campaign finance violations. (MM 1/27; CSM, MM, NYT, WP 1/28; WP 1/29; WT 1/30; WJW 2/3; JP 2/4)

Israel rejects plans for construction of a new terminal for the joint Aqaba-Elat airport project with Jordan, citing environmental concerns. (JT 1/28 in WNC 1/31)

In Ankara, Turkey, Iran close a 2-day session of their joint economic commission, which focused on expanding trade ties, particularly in the energy sector. The sides sign a memorandum of understanding on construction of a natural gas pipeline. (ATL, IRNA 1/26 in WNC 1/27; ATL 1/27 in WNC 1/28)

28 JANUARY

PA chief negotiators ‘Abid Rabbuh (final status), Saeb Erakat (interim issues) arrive in Egypt for a visit of several days for talks on the peace process, particularly on Israeli obstacles to final status talks. (MENA 1/28 in WNC 1/31)

29 JANUARY

Pres. Clinton meets with Arafat on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum mtg. in Davos, Switzerland. Afterward, the U.S. announces that Arafat, Barak will meet at Erez crossing on 2/3 to discuss FAPS talks. (WP, WT 1/30; AFP 1/30 in WNC 1/31)

On the sidelines of the Davos mtg., the delegates of Israel, 9 Arab countries discuss future regional economic cooperation. (MM 1/31)
Also in Davos, Egyptian, Iranian FMs discuss expanding bilateral ties. (IRNA 1/29 in WNC 1/31)

Palestinian teachers threaten to strike over the absence of funding for promised salary increases in the FY 2000 PA budget. (MENA 1/30) (see 1/26)

30 JANUARY

In Elat, Israel, the PA begin 10 days of intensive FAPS talks. (WT 1/30; AFP, AYM 1/30 in WNC 1/31; al-Quds 1/30 in WNC 2/1; NYT, WP, WT 1/31; MM 2/3) (see Peace Monitor)

At Pres. Clinton's recommendation, Barak goes to Cairo to discuss with Mubarak ways to speed the multitrack peace process. Mubarak briefs Barak on his recent mtgs. with Arafat, Asad, King Abdallah. (MENA 1/30 in WNC 1/31, 2/7; MM, NYT, WP, WT 1/31; MM 2/1; WJW 2/3) (see 1/22)

In Davos, Secy. of State Albright meets separately with PA's Arafat, Jordan's King Abdallah, Egypt's FM Musa, Israel's Regional Cooperation M Peres for talks on the peace process. Peres also meets with Bahrain's crown prince Shaykh Salman Bin-Hamad al-Khalifa. (AFP 1/30 in WNC 1/31; MM, NYT 1/31; MM 2/1, 2/2)

In s. Lebanon, Hizballah detonates a large roadside bomb, killing the SLA's 2d in command, Col. 'Aql Hashim. Israel considers the assassination a significant blow since Hashim was the only likely successor to SLA Cmdr. Antoine Lahd, who is expected to retire soon. The IDF makes a limited counterattack on Hizballah targets, killing 1 civilian. (RL 1/30 in WNC 1/31; CSM, NYT, WP, WT 1/31; MM 2/2; WJW 2/3; al-Safrir 2/3 in WNC 2/4; MEI 2/11)

31 JANUARY

Hizballah attacks an IDF post in s. Lebanon, killing 3 IDF soldiers, wounding 4. Barak does not order a severe response but vows that Israel will retaliate "at the place and the time of our choosing." He also says Syria must rein in Hizballah for talks to resume. (MM 1/31; RL 1/31 in WNC 2/1, 2/7; CSM, MM, NYT, WP, WT 2/1; al-Safrir 2/1 in WNC 2/2; MM 2/2; WJW 2/3; MEI 2/11)

On the 2d day of their joint economic comm. mtg. in Tehran, Iran, Lebanon sign 3 memoranda of understanding on expanding economic, trade, commercial relations; discuss possible joint industrial projects. (IRIB Television, IRNA 1/30 in WNC 1/31; IRIB Television 1/31 in WNC 2/1)

1 FEBRUARY

In Moscow, U.S. Secy. of State Albright, Russian FM Igor Ivanov host the multilateral steering comm. session. Participants agree to resume working group mtgs. on refugees, water, economic development, the environment in 4/99 and 5/99. But Egypt refuses to convene the arms control group, of which it is chair, unless Israel agrees to open its nuclear program for inspection. (Interfax, ITAR-TASS 2/1 in WNC 2/2; ITAR-TASS, XIN 2/1, ITAR-TASS 2/2 in WNC 2/3; MM, NYT, WP, WT 2/2; WJW 2/3; MENA, SA 2/3 in WNC 2/4; RL 2/4 in WNC 2/7; AYM 2/6 in WNC 2/10) (see Peace Monitor)

The IDF demolishes 1 Palestinian home, damages a 2d in East Jerusalem. (LAW 2/1)

2 FEBRUARY

Just before U.S. special envoy Ross arrives in Israel to oversee intensive FAPS talks, the Israeli cabinet approves the 3d stage of the 2d FRD, which was to have taken place by 1/20. (MM 2/2, 2/3, 2/4)

In Gaza, the PLOCC opens a 2d-day national dialogue mtg. to discuss unilateral declaration of statehood, red lines for negotiations with Israel, PLO directions and strategy. (AYM 2/2 in WNC 2/4; AYM 2/3 in WNC 2/7) (see Peace Monitor)

The Knesset holds its 1st public debate on Israel's nuclear policy. The request for the debate, made by Israeli Arab MK Issam Mahoul, was initially rejected on security grounds, but Speaker Avraham Burg reversed the decision when Mahoul took the petition to the High Court. The debate lasts less than 1 hr.; most MKs walk out in protest, 6 are ejected for disrupting the proceedings. (NYT, WT 2/3; WJW 2/10; JP, MEI 2/11)

Israeli police raid Shuafat refugee camp n. of Jerusalem, arrest 4 Palestinians for possessing illegal weapons. Several days ago, police carried out a similar raid on Qalandiya refugee camp. (al-Quds 2/3 in WNC 2/4)

Iran releases on bail 3 of the 13 Iranian Jews arrested last yr. on charges of spying for Israel, the U.S. (IRNA 2/3 in WNC 2/4; WJW 2/10; JP 2/11) (see 6/8/99)

In s. Lebanon, an SLA mbr. is killed in a Hizballah attack. The SLA responds with indiscriminate fire, hitting 5 UN posts, several
homes, a mosque. **Senior adviser to the UN forces, Timur Goksel,** warns that exposed UN positions may have to be abandoned if they continue to be endangered by random SLA fire, the launching of Hizballah attacks fr. nearby sites. (AFP 2/2 in WNC 2/3; MM 2/3; MENA 2/3 in WNC 2/4; MEI 2/11)

### 3 FEBRUARY

**Arafat, Barak** hold heated 3-hr. mtg. at Erez crossing to close gaps on interim and final status issues but fail to make any headway. Both sides say there is now no chance of meeting the 2/13 FAPS deadline. (MM 2/3; AFP 2/3 in WNC 2/4; XIN 2/3, AFP, AYM, al-Quds 2/4, MENA 2/6 in WNC 2/7; CSM, MM, NYT, WP, WT 2/4; al-Quds 2/5 in WNC 2/8; JP, MEI 2/11) (see Peace Monitor)

At the close of its 2-day debate, the PLOCC issues a final communiqué calling on **Arafat to declare an independent Palestinian state by 9/00, reactivate dormant PLO comms.; on Israel to immediately implement the interim agmts.; and on the PA to negotiate for the refugees' right of return, full Israeli withdrawal fr. the occupied territories (including East Jerusalem), removal of Jewish settlements. (AFP 2/3 in WNC 2/4; AYM 2/4 in WNC 2/7; al-Quds 2/5 in WNC 2/8; AYM 2/8 in WNC 2/10; al-Quds 2/9 in WNC 2/14; JP, MEI 2/11)

The **PC** passes a draft law on independence of the judiciary, which would promote the separation of powers and financial independence of the judicial system. (PCHR 2/9)

### 4 FEBRUARY

In the West Bank, **Palestinian residents** of Jalud, al-Mughir, Qaryut, Turmusaya villages scuffle with **Jewish settlers** fr. nearby Shafut Rahl, who begin plowing under plots owned by the villagers. **IDF troops** intervene to break up the fight. (AYM 2/5 in WNC 2/10)

In **s. Lebanon**, **IDF** helicopters fire rockets at the car of Hizballah's top military cmdr., **Ibrahim 'Aql,** slightly injuring 'Aql, 6 civilians. The failed assassination attempt was meant as retaliation for the recent series of fatal Hizballah attacks on IDF, SLA targets. (RL 2/4, AFP 2/5 in WNC 2/7; NYT 2/7; JP, MEI 2/11; JP 2/18) (see 1/31)

The **SLA** evacuates its Sujud post in **s. Lebanon.** The **IDF** calls the withdrawal a tactical maneuver. (RL 2/4 in WNC 2/7)

In Jeddah, **Iran, Saudi Arabia** hold talks on expanding bilateral trade. (SA 2/5 in WNC 2/10)

### 5 FEBRUARY


In Amman, PA chief negotiators **'Abid Rabbuh, Erahat** brief Jordanian FM **Khatib** on status of negotiations with Israel, Arafat's mtg. with Barak on 2/3. (JT 2/6 in WNC 2/7)

**Cyprus, Israel** form a business association to promote commercial, financial, business relations b/wn. their countries. (Cyprus News Agency 2/5 in WNC 2/7)

### 6 FEBRUARY

The **PA** cancels a planned mtg. b/wn. **Arafat, Barak,** suspends negotiations with **Israel** to wait for U.S. proposals to get talks back on track. (WT 2/7; AFP 2/7 in WNC 2/8; CSM 2/8); (see 2/5)

PM **Barak** goes to Jordan to discuss the peace process with **King Abdallah,** outlines Israel's positions on resuming talks with **Syria.** (NYT, WT 2/7; DUS, JT 2/7 in WNC 2/8; MEI 2/11)

**Arafat** makes brief visit to Cairo to meet with **Mubarak** on the peace process. (MENA 2/6 in WNC 2/7; MENA 2/6, JT 2/7 in WNC 2/8; NYT, WT 2/7)

Also in Cairo, **Egypt, Israel, Jordan,** the **PA** convene high-level talks on the future of 1967 Palestinian refugees. (MENA 2/6 in WNC 2/7; MENA 2/6, 2/7 in WNC 2/8; NYT 2/7; MENA 2/8 in WNC 2/10) (see Peace Monitor)

In retaliation for the IDF's 2/4 assassination attempt, Hizballah attacks another IDF patrol in **s. Lebanon,** killing 1 IDF soldier, wounding 7. The battle is broadcast on Israeli television, causing a public uproar.

**Barak** calls an emergency mtg. of his **security cabinet.** (RL 2/6 in WNC 2/7; AFP 2/6 in WNC 2/8; MM, NYT, WT 2/7; MEI 2/11; JP 2/18)

In Israel, **Turkey, Israel** open 4-day joint economic comm. mtg. on expanding bilateral trade volume. (ATL 2/6 in WNC 2/7; ATL 2/8, 2/9 in WNC 2/10; ATL 2/11 in WNC 2/14)

### 7 FEBRUARY

In response to recent attacks that have killed 5 IDF soldiers in **s. Lebanon, Israel** carries out air strikes against Hizballah ba-
ses in the Biqa' Valley and 3 power stations n. of the self-declared security zone, wounding 18 Lebanese civilians and leaving much of Lebanon without electricity. The raids are the most severe since 6/99, before Barak took office. (MM, NYT, WP, WT 2/8; AFP 2/8 in WNC 2/10; MEI 2/11; JP 2/18)

The PA says it is suspending negotiations until Israel provides acceptable answers to questions on FAPS talks, FRD implementation. (NYT 2/8; SA 2/8 in WNC 2/10; AYM 2/8 in WNC 2/14) (see Peace Monitor)

The PA releases senior Hamas official 'Abd al-'Aziz Rantisi, who has been jailed for nearly 2 yrs. without charges for his outspoken criticism of the Oslo process. (NYT 2/8; JP 2/18)

Egyptian FM Musa makes 1-day trip to Syria to discuss with Pres. Assad developments in the peace process. (MENA 2/7 in WNC 2/8; NYT 2/9)

Tunisian secy. of state for foreign affairs Tahar Sioud meets with Israeli FM Levy, marking the 1st visit to Israel of a high-ranking Tunisian since the countries established diplomatic relations 6 yrs. ago. (NYT 2/8)

Palestinian judges go on a 3-day strike to protest the failure of the PA police to stop an attack on a Bethlehem courthouse on 2/6. (LAW 2/7; NYT, PCHR 2/8)

IDF troops storm a home in West Bank area C to arrest 2 Palestinians wanted for security reasons. The mother of the 2 men suffers a fatal heart attack fr. the shock of the predawn raid. (LAW 2/9)

8 FEBRUARY

In s. Lebanon, Hizballah attacks an IDF patrol, killing 1 soldier. For the 2d time in 24 hrs., Israel responds with air strikes against civilian sites, Hizballah bases, wounding 2 persons. Claiming that Hizballah launched strikes fr. civilian areas, PM Barak says Israel will no longer honor the 1996 April Understanding prohibiting all parties in s. Lebanon fr. involving civilians in violence. (AFP, MENA, RL 2/8, RL 2/9 in WNC 2/10; CSM, MM, NYT, WP, WT 2/9; AYM, al-Quds 2/9 in WNC 2/11; WJW 2/10; MEI 2/11; JP 2/18) (see Doc. D-4)

In Jericho, PA police using a bulldozer force their way into a disputed Russian Orthodox monastery in an apparent effort to divide the property btwn. the 2 branches of the church, but U.S. consular officials intervene, persuading the PA to halt the action at least temporarily. (WP 2/9) (see 1/15)

In Cairo, Egypt, Iran hold talks on expanding agricultural cooperation. (MENA 2/8 in WNC 2/10)

9 FEBRUARY

Israel carries out air strikes on Lebanon for 3d day. Israeli FM Levy warns that if Hizballah responds by firing rockets into n. Israel, "the soil of Lebanon will burn... Vital interests of Lebanon will go up in flames, and it will take many years to restore them." Disputing Barak's 2/8 claims, UN monitors in s. Lebanon say they observed all but 1 of the recent Hizballah strikes on IDF/SLA targets and none was staged fr. a civilian area. UN cmdr. Goksel says that "it looks to me that [the Israelis] are creating an atmosphere to do what they wanted to do already." (AFP, RL, SA 2/9 in WNC 2/10; CSM, NYT, WP, WT 2/10; MM 2/11; JP 2/18)

Israel releases the summary of an official report that says that during the intifada, Shin Bet interrogators committed systematic abuses against Palestinian detainees. The report was submitted to the Knesset sub-conn. on intelligence in 1995 but was kept secret until the High Court ordered it to be released. (NYT 2/10; LAW 2/11; Guardian Weekly 2/17)

10 FEBRUARY

Israel carries out 1 air strike against a Hizballah base in s. Lebanon, wounding 2 Hizballah mbrs., before halting its attacks. IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Shaul Mofaz notes that Israel's latest air strikes mark the 1st time in the 18-yr. conflict that the IDF has targeted Lebanonese infrastructure in response to army deaths rather than civilian casualties in n. Israel. Barak says the new retaliation policy will hold. (MM 2/10; IRNA, MENA, RL 2/10 in WNC 2/11; CSM, MM, NYT 2/11)

In Khazira village, West Bank, a car bomb explodes, killing 1 Palestinian, severely injuring another. PA, Israeli police think the men were Hamas mbrs. plotting an attack on Israelis. (WJW 2/17; JP 2/18)

11 FEBRUARY

Hizballah attacks an IDF base in s. Lebanon, killing another IDF soldier, triggering another round of Israeli air strikes on Hizballah targets. PM Barak orders his reps. to leave an ILMG mtg. where, France, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, the U.S. are discussing the recent clashes. Israel accuses Syria of using Hizballah to gain concessions in negotia-
tions. The State Dept. accuses Hizballah of trying to derail the peace process, calls the continued strikes on the IDF/SLA "particularly egregious in the context of Israel's repeated commitment to withdraw from southern Lebanon by the middle of this year." (MM 2/11; AFP, MENA, RL 2/11, AFP, RL 2/12, RL 2/13 in WNC 2/14; NYT, WP, WT 2/12; MM 2/14; JP 2/18)

PA General Intelligence calls in for questioning Palestinian journalist Khaled Amayreh regarding his new weekly paper, Hebron Times, which is critical of the PA; threatens to close the paper if he does not begin publishing material favorable to Arafat. (Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group press release 2/21)

12 FEBRUARY

PM Barak says Israel has prepared a list of economic targets in Lebanon to hit if fatal attacks on IDF troops in s. Lebanon continue. (RL 2/13 in WNC 2/14)

Egyptian pres. Mubarak urges Israel to stop blocking the peace process, denounces FM Levy's threats against Lebanon (see 2/9). (AFP 2/12, MENA 2/13 in WNC 2/14; MM 2/14)

13 FEBRUARY

The deadline for Israel, the PA to conclude a FAPS passes without an agmt. Barak tells his cabinet that continuing FAPS talks for a few more wks. is preferable to jumping into talks on a full peace treaty. (XIN 2/13 in WNC 2/15; NYT, WP 2/14; al-Quds 2/14 in WNC 2/17; CSM 2/15)

Barak says that despite the public outcry over recent casualties, the IDF will not leave s. Lebanon before 4/00; if there is no sign of an agmt. with Syria by 4/00, Israel will consider unilateral withdrawal. (CSM, NYT, WP 2/14; JP 2/18)

14 FEBRUARY

Pres. Clinton says he is optimistic that there will be "forward movement" on the Syrian, Palestinian negotiating tracks within a few wks. (XIN 2/14 in WNC 2/17)

Israeli FM Levy says Israel will only resume negotiations with Syria if Damascus drops its up-front demand for territorial concessions. (CSM 2/15)

The dir. of the UN Oil-for-Food program, Hans von Sponeck, resigns, effective 5/31, saying he has lost hope of helping Iraqis living under the UN embargo. The U.S., Britain have sharply criticized von Sponeck for his criticism of the sanctions regime. Another Oil-for-Food dir., Denis Halliday, quit in 1998 for the same reasons. (NYT, WT 2/15; MM, WP 2/17) (see Halliday's article in JPS 110)

15 FEBRUARY

On the 5th day of Arafat's visit to Vatican City for mtgs. with Pope John Paul II, the Vatican and the PA sign an agmt. on bilateral relations and protecting religious freedom in Jerusalem. Israel calls the agmt. "deplorable." (ANSA 2/15 in WNC 2/17; MM, NYT, WP, WT 2/16; MM, WJW, WP 2/17) (Doc. A4)

Hebron Times editor Amayreh is questioned by the Israeli District Coordination Office, warned against publishing "inciting" material. (Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group press release 2/21) (see 2/11)

A 2d UN agency chief, Jutta Purghart, head of the World Food Program in Iraq, quits to protest sanctions, the failure of humanitarian aid programs in Iraq. (CSM, NYT, WT 2/16; MM 2/17) (see 2/14)
Israeli police subdue a protester during a demonstration on 11/24 by some 2,000 Israeli Arabs calling for an end to government discrimination against them. (AFP/Brian Hendler)