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# PEACE MONITOR

16 NOVEMBER 2000–15 FEBRUARY 2001

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

## BILATERALS

### PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI TRACK

As the quarter opened, the al-Aqsa intifada, triggered by Likud MK Ariel Sharon's provocative visit to the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount on 9/28, entered its fiftieth day. Israeli-Palestinian clashes continued at a high level, peace talks were suspended, and security coordination between Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA) was minimal. At least 228 Palestinians (including Israeli Arabs), 12 members of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), two Israeli civilian guards, five Jewish settlers, three Israeli civilians, and one German had been killed. An estimated 7,000 Palestinians had been injured, of whom 1,000 were expected to be permanently disabled. Israeli PM Ehud Barak's coalition was in jeopardy, with the Shas party agreeing to block no-confidence votes in the Knesset until 11/28 to keep the government from falling. The extent of PA head Yasir Arafat's control over his security forces was questionable. The PA itself was unable to function normally given Israeli closures, and PA ministries had shifted to crisis management. International efforts to curb the violence were underway, led by Egypt, the European Union (EU), France, Jordan, Russia, Turkey, the UN, and the U.S.

#### *Continued Deterioration*

At the start of the quarter, U.S. special envoy Dennis Ross traveled to Israel (11/15) and Gaza (11/16) to follow up with Barak and Arafat on their unsuccessful meetings with Pres. Bill Clinton in Washington in early 11/00 (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 118). Talks focused on reducing violence, and Barak stressed he had no intention of meeting with Arafat. On 11/17, Arafat for the first time publicly ordered Palestinians to stop shooting at Israelis from PA-controlled areas, but there was no indication that the order was heeded. Barak tightened (11/17) the closure and economic sanctions on the Palestinians, ordering the IDF to prevent any goods other

than food and medicine, including fuel, from entering PA areas.

The security situation deteriorated further on 11/20, when unidentified Palestinians detonated a roadside bomb near Kefar Darom settlement in Gaza, hitting an armored school bus escorted by IDF troops, killing 2 Jewish settlers and wounding 9 settler children. Barak blamed Arafat and Fatah and ordered IDF helicopter gunships and naval vessels to rocket 12 buildings in Gaza City (including Fatah and PA headquarters, PA Preventive Security Force [PSF] offices, Force 17 offices, Voice of Palestine Radio, and a Palestinian TV station), killing two Palestinians, injuring 125, hitting four homes, and cutting electricity; the IDF also stepped up the bulldozing of Palestinian agricultural land. For the first time in seven weeks of conflict, the U.S. warned Israel (11/20) that retaliating with "excessive use of force is not the right way to go." Special envoy Ross, who had planned to return to the region that day, canceled his trip. Shas, noting the deterioration, said (11/20) it would not renew Barak's safety net after 11/28.

At this stage, Israel increased its targeted attacks on selected Palestinians, deliberately shelling the home of a senior PSF officer in Dayr al-Balah (11/21) and assassinating a senior Fatah official in Gaza (11/22) and a senior Hamas operative in Nablus (11/23). Hours after the 11/22 attack, Palestinians detonated a remote-controlled car bomb in Hadera, Israel, killing two Israelis and injuring 60. On 11/23, a bomb exploded at an Israeli-PA district coordination office (DCO) in Gaza, killing 1 IDF joint patrol member. U.S. Secy. of State Madeleine Albright phoned Barak and Arafat (11/22) to urge restraint. Meanwhile, Israel informed the U.S. (11/21) that it would delay the start of the investigation into the causes of the intifada by the Mitchell Committee, set up by the U.S. under the 10/17 Sharm al-Shaykh understandings (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 118 and below), because "the timing is wrong."

Barak convened his security cabinet (11/22, 11/23) to discuss how to respond to

the Hadera and DCO bombings. Cabinet members rejected Barak's proposed list of Palestinian targets for retaliatory air strikes, because of their low deterrent effect and negative impact on Israel's public image; instead, "precision operations against specific targets" (i.e., assassinations) were recommended. Israel also evicted (11/23) all PSF officers from the DCOs in the West Bank and Gaza, officially severing all security coordination. (DCOs had all but ceased functioning weeks before.)

On 11/23, Arafat met in Gaza with UN special envoy Terje Larsen and phoned Secy. Albright on the deteriorating situation. Later in the day, senior Israeli and PA security officials met at Erez crossing to discuss ways of halting the further escalation of violence. With the additional mediation of Russian pres. Vladimir Putin, Arafat and Barak agreed (11/24) to resume security coordination (despite the IDF assassination of a Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP] official that day). The evening of 11/24, Israel and the PA began a high-level security dialogue that continued throughout the quarter; Israel allowed PSF officers back into DCOs as of 11/24.

Meanwhile, 11/28 also marked the expiration of Shas's safety net. Preempting a no-confidence vote that he was expected to lose, Barak informed the Knesset (11/28) that he was prepared to hold early Knesset elections, probably around 5/01. After his address, MKs overwhelmingly approved five no-confidence motions. Barak then stated (11/28) his willingness to drop his demand (made at the Camp David talks in 7/00; see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 117) for a full final status agreement with the PA in favor of another "long-term interim agreement." He proposed (11/30) a sharply scaled-back peace accord that would recognize a Palestinian state on about 30% of the West Bank (18.1% currently in PA-controlled area A, plus another 10%) and the 65–70% of Gaza that the PA now controls. Issues of final borders, Jerusalem, and refugees would be deferred for up to three years. The PA rejected the proposal as a campaign ploy.

Justice M Yossi Beilin, dispatched to Washington by Barak, informed (12/1) Ross and National Security Adviser (NSA) Sandy Berger that Barak still hoped to conclude a comprehensive agreement with the PA before Clinton left office and that the 30% proposal made on 11/30 was Israel's "fallback" position. Pres. Clinton phoned

Barak (12/2) to "impress upon [him] the need to move ahead" with the Mitchell inquiry, and Israel agreed (12/3) to cooperate with the committee once its mandate was agreed (see below).

From 11/28 to 12/9, Israel and the PA continued security talks and began behind-the-scenes discussions (including meetings between Arafat and senior Barak advisers) on resuming peace talks. Egypt, Jordan, and the U.S. reportedly were involved in mediating. Israeli-U.S. talks reportedly focused on the U.S. role and specifically whether Clinton should present bridging proposals based on agreements reached at Camp David. Soon after Beilin's 12/1 visit to Washington, the U.S. and the PA agreed that Ross and Arafat would meet in Morocco on 12/12 to discuss resuming formal negotiations.

Meanwhile, Israeli-Palestinian clashes, which had seemed to abate somewhat as of 11/27 (Israel had even announced plans to transfer some monies owed the PA), escalated sharply on 12/8, the thirteenth anniversary of the outbreak of the first intifada. By 12/9, 300 Arabs and 25 Jews had been killed.

### **Barak's Resignation**

In a surprise move on 12/9, Barak announced that he would submit his resignation on 12/10 and call elections exclusively for PM as a "referendum on peace." By resigning, Barak triggered a law that restricts candidates in a special election for PM to current MKs, thereby knocking out his primary challenger, Likud's Benjamin Netanyahu. Resigning also forced Barak to hold elections within two months. Although Arafat initially declared (12/10) peace talks on hold until after the elections, senior Israeli and PA officials continued to meet, and plans for the Ross-Arafat meeting went forward. Barak phoned Clinton (12/11) to explain his resignation and to coordinate positions.

Arafat and Ross met in Rabat on 12/12, but no details of their meeting were released. Arafat then held talks at Erez with Israeli FM Shlomo Ben-Ami and chief negotiator Gilead Sher on 12/14 and 12/15. The sides agreed to take steps to reduce violence and to continue to discuss restarting talks. In Washington, Clinton obtained (ca. 12/16) president-elect George W. Bush's approval to attempt to negotiate an Israeli-PA deal before the inauguration. On 12/17, Israel and the PA accepted invitations to send negotiators to Washington to meet separately with the U.S. peace team.

PA and Israeli teams (led by Local Government M Saeb Erakat, Information M Yasir 'Abid Rabbuh, and PSF head Muhammad Dahlan for the PA and FM Ben-Ami and Barak adviser Sher for Israel) arrived at Bolling Air Force Base on 2/18. After two days of separate meetings with Ross, the U.S. brought (12/20) Erakat and Ben-Ami together at the White House with Clinton and Albright. Erakat and Ben-Ami described the three days of talks as "serious" but not promising. Nonetheless, Clinton convinced the sides to begin direct talks at Bolling on 12/21, with Albright joining in on 12/22. The talks, meant to reduce gaps remaining from the Camp David summit, achieved little progress. At one point on 12/21, the PA team walked out of talks citing as proof of Israel's lack of good faith the fact that Ben-Ami raised the demand to annex 5% of the West Bank (made before lunch) to 10% (after lunch). (*Yedi'ot Abaronot*, noting on 12/24 that Ben-Ami's shift came three hours of former PM Shimon Peres's decision not to challenge Barak for PM, argued that with Peres out of the race, it was more beneficial for Barak to take a harder line with the PA.)

### ***The Clinton Proposals***

After five days of fruitless talks at Bolling, Clinton and Albright convened (12/23) a second White House meeting with Erakat and Ben-Ami, where Clinton proposed "parameters" for a final status agreement and asked the sides to tell him by 12/27 if they would be willing to accept the proposals as the basis for further negotiations. If they agreed, Clinton would invite them to Washington for separate meetings and possibly a three-way summit in a final push for a comprehensive agreement. If no agreement was reached before he left office, his proposals would be null and void.

Clinton's proposals were given orally, and no official U.S. notes of the meeting were released, though several corresponding accounts were leaked to the media by Israel and the PA (see Doc. D1). The main points, according to these accounts, are as follows:

#### *End of Conflict*

- The UN Security Council would officially state that UN Res. 242 and 338 have been implemented.
- Israel would release all Palestinian prisoners.

#### *Land*

- A Palestinian state on 94–96% of the West Bank, with as much contiguity as possible and with a 1–3% land swap.

- 80% of Jewish settlers under Israeli sovereignty.

#### *Security*

- International forces to be deployed as Israel withdraws (withdrawal over 36 months).
- A small Israeli presence may remain for another 36 months in six locations under the authority of the international forces.
- Israel to maintain three early warning stations in the West Bank, subject to renewal after ten years.
- Palestinian sovereignty over its airspace.
- A demilitarized Palestinian state.

#### *Jerusalem*

- "Arab areas are Palestinian, and Jewish areas are Israeli."
- Palestinian sovereignty over the Haram al-Sharif, and Israeli sovereignty over the Western Wall, with shared functional sovereignty underneath the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount and with joint approval of excavations required.

#### *Refugees*

- Israel to acknowledge "moral and material suffering" caused the Palestinians by the 1948 war.
- Palestinian refugees can return to the State of Palestine; Israel alone would decide how many refugees would be allowed into Israel.
- An international compensation regime to be established.

On 12/25, Clinton and Albright began phoning the leaders of Egypt, France, Jordan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey to brief them on the proposals and to encourage them to press Arafat to accept them.

On 12/27, Israel conditionally accepted the parameters, reportedly noting around 40 concerns, while the PA sent a letter to Clinton listing 25 points that needed clarification. Clinton responded (12/28) by telling Arafat that the U.S. would not reply to the 12/27 letter and saw no point in further discussion with the PA until it clearly accepted the parameters.

Meanwhile, Israel and the PA held a secret round of talks on the Clinton proposals in New York from 12/26 to 12/28 (Palestinian Council [PC] speaker Ahmad Qurai' for the PA, Tourism M Amnon Shahak and Barak adviser Yossi Ginossaur for Israel; unnamed U.S. officials reportedly also took part). The PA acknowledged (12/30) that the talks took place but did not release details.

From 12/27 until 1/1, the PA continued to say it could not accept the Clinton proposals without clarification, issuing a formal statement on 1/1 outlining its position (see Doc. B2). During the same period, Barak repeat-

edly stated (e.g., 12/29, 12/31) that he would never sign an agreement that ceded sovereignty over the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount to the PA or that accepted the right of return "in any shape or form—period," raising questions on whether Israel would seriously consider the Clinton proposals if talks resumed.

In a positive sign, however, the Israeli-Palestinian clashes began abating significantly on 12/23, after the Bolling talks. Though there were still major incidents (e.g., the bombing in Tel Aviv on 12/28, the fatal shooting of Jewish settler leader Benjamin Kahane near Ramallah on 12/31, and the IDF assassination of senior Fatah official Thabet Thabet in Tulkarm on 12/31) and Israel's harsh closure remained in place, the overall number of exchanges dropped to a lower threshold after 12/23 and the number of fatalities dropped sharply. By 1/1, 345 Arabs and 40 Jews had been killed.

### ***The Taba-Elat Talks***

Though scarcely three weeks from leaving office, Clinton on 1/1 phoned Arafat in Cairo, where he was conferring with Egyptian pres. Husni Mubarak, and invited him to Washington for one-on-one talks. Arafat arrived in Washington on 1/2 and held three sessions with Clinton (1/2–3), who focused talks both on what the PA could do to halt the clashes and on convincing Arafat to accept his parameters. Between sessions, Arafat met with CIA Dir. George Tenet to discuss reviving the tripartite (Israeli-PA-U.S.) security committee. On 1/3, the White House announced that Arafat had accepted the 12/23 Clinton proposals "with reservations" and had promised to take steps to curb Palestinian violence (including rearresting Hamas and Islamic Jihad members who had been released). Conditional acceptance by both sides opened the way to U.S. mediation to refine the understandings; if sufficient progress were made, Clinton would bring the sides together for a last attempt to finalize a comprehensive final status agreement.

At that point, however, Barak declared (1/2) that Israel could not continue contacts with the PA while violence (which, as mentioned above, had been abating) continued and that he had informed the IDF to prepare for unilateral separation. He also stated (1/3) that he had given up on reaching a comprehensive agreement before the 2/6 Israeli elections and that Israel was on "strategic alert for war."

Barak dispatched chief negotiator Sher to Washington (1/4–5) to be briefed on the Clinton-Arafat meeting and to present the U.S. peace team with a six-page document outlining Israel's position on the parameters. After two days of consultations, Sher declared (1/5) that the most that could be expected would be a presidential declaration by Clinton, possibly signed by Arafat and Barak, formally outlining the proposals.

Trilateral security talks, led by Tenet with Egyptian participation, were held in Cairo on 1/7–8. The sides agreed to an eight-point plan, drafted by Tenet, for reducing tensions. The plan reportedly included a timetable for implementing parallel steps, including resuming low-level security coordination and joint patrols and easing the closure. Israel and the PA then moved bilateral security talks to Erez (1/9–1/10), and Arafat and Shahak met (1/9) to discuss reviving negotiations. Meanwhile, Barak again urged Clinton (1/9) to issue a presidential declaration. The U.S., strongly preferring the sides to draft their own document, suspended (1/9) and then canceled (1/16) U.S. envoy Ross's trip to the region pending the outcome of direct Israeli-PA talks.

From 1/11 to 1/16, Israel and the PA attempted to hold framework talks (Ben-Ami, Sher, and Shahak for Israel; Erakat, Qurai', 'Abid Rabbuh, and Dahlan for the PA) but got nowhere, impeded first by Israel's demand that 'Abid Rabbuh retract an earlier statement to the press accusing Barak of war crimes (in reference to the assassination policy) and then suspended by Israel over the murder of a settler in Gaza. Meanwhile, Arafat held "serious" talks with Peres (1/13) and discussed the refugee issue with Shahak (1/15), but achieved no breakthroughs. When the teams met again on 1/15–16, they rehearsed old debates on territorial contiguity. Ben-Ami presented Qurai' with maps outlining Israel's conception of final status, but Qurai' rejected them as not detailed enough.

On 1/17, Arafat met with Ben-Ami and recommended that the sides hold marathon talks, away from the media, aimed at reaching a peace accord or at least a document outlining points of agreement before the 2/6 Israeli elections. Barak accepted the offer on 1/20, the day of the U.S. presidential inauguration. Israel and the PA opened marathon talks on 1/21, shifting meetings between Taba and Elat. The U.S. was not invited, though both sides briefed the State Department. EU special envoy Miguel Moratinos ar-

rived in Taba on 1/23 to monitor the talks but did not participate.

After preliminary meetings on 1/21, the Israeli and PA teams broke into four working groups (1/22)—Jerusalem, borders, security guarantees, and refugees—and reportedly exchanged maps and working papers based on the Clinton parameters. Israel suspended the talks on 1/23 over the murder of 2 Israeli civilians in Tulkarm but allowed them to resume on 1/25. Meetings continued through 1/27, when the sides issued a final joint statement saying that despite substantial progress on the issues discussed it was not possible to finalize an agreement by the 2/6 elections; the hope was expressed that the remaining gaps could be quickly bridged following the elections. Various versions of the content of the talks circulated in the media with agreement on only two points: (1) that the sides were discussing creating one or more “refugee cities” on land in the Negev near Gaza that would be turned over to the PA in a land swap and (2) that Israel demanded sovereignty over the “holy basin” in Jerusalem, defined variously as including Ras al-Amud, Silwan, the Mount of Olives, the Jewish cemetery, and the Gethsemane Church.

Although no further negotiations were held before the end of the quarter, Israeli officials confirmed (1/27, 1/30) that Barak was considering a final high-profile meeting with Arafat before the Israeli elections either in Stockholm around 1/30 (the plan was dropped 1/28 ostensibly because of Arafat’s address to the World Economic Forum at Davos denouncing Israel’s “fascist” military actions) or under Mubarak’s auspices at Sharm al-Shaykh on 2/4 or 2/5, where the leaders ideally would present a timetable for resuming negotiations after elections and signing an agreement by 3/15. Barak dropped this idea on 2/1.

By the eve of the elections, Israeli-Palestinian violence had declined significantly. Barak himself had cited (1/21) the diminution as the reason he agreed to the Taba talks. Israeli and PA sources agreed that from the conclusion of the trilateral security accord in Cairo on 1/10 to the start of Taba talks on 1/21, there had been a 70% decrease in violent activity in the West Bank and a 40% decrease in Gaza. By 2/1, Palestinian TV had stopped its special intifada broadcasts showing clips of the first intifada and playing nationalist music. Moreover, in a rare sign of cooperation, the Israeli-PA Joint Water Com-

mittee had signed (1/31) an agreement to take all possible measures to protect the water and wastewater infrastructure in the territories; the leaderships appealed to their publics not to damage the water networks or related infrastructure or harm maintenance workers. Nonetheless, the rigid closures remained in place, and the IDF continued its collective punishment of Palestinians. Meanwhile, the death toll by 2/6 had slowly but steadily risen to 385 Arabs and 51 Jews.

### *Sharon’s Election*

As expected, Likud MK Sharon won the 2/6 Israeli elections for PM by a landslide, taking 62.4% of the vote (78% in Greater Jerusalem), though voter turnout was the lowest in Israeli history (59.1% overall, 18% in Arab areas). Even before election day, Sharon had laid out (1/18, 1/24) his peace policy: no negotiations with the PA while clashes continued; a nonbelligerence pact with the PA rather than a comprehensive final status agreement; and opposition to Barak’s separation plan (the territories being an integral part of Israel). The most he would offer would be a long-term interim agreement under which a Palestinian state would be created in the 40–42% of the West Bank currently under full or partial PA control (areas A and B); even family reunification for Palestinian refugees would be opposed. Sharon advisers met with PA officials in Vienna on 1/24 to clarify these stands.

Barak, conceding defeat (2/6), vowed to give up his Knesset seat, resign as Labor party head, and retire from politics, but Sharon in his victory speech (2/6) invited Labor to join a unity government. With Peres poised to begin Labor’s negotiations with Likud, Barak declared that his resignation was not formal and took over (2/9) negotiations himself. At the end of the quarter, Barak had agreed (2/15) to join Sharon’s government as DM pending agreement on the government’s guidelines, and Sharon was considering Peres as FM. Many Labor stalwarts, appalled at Barak and Peres’s quick about-face, were threatening to vote against a coalition or leave the party.

Arafat congratulated Sharon by letter (2/7) and phone (2/9), emphasizing his hope that negotiations would resume soon from where they left off at the end of the Taba talks. Sharon and his advisers reiterated (2/7, 2/9) that they had no intention of starting talks from Barak’s endpoint or of holding talks at all or easing the closure while clashes con-

tinued, and Sharon further threatened (2/7) to undertake a Vietnam-style "pacification" in the West Bank and Gaza, "separating the terrorists from the civilian population." On 2/8, the new Bush administration formally abandoned Clinton's 12/23 parameters, saying they belonged to the outgoing president and were irrelevant now that Sharon had been elected PM Barak (2/8) and the outgoing Israeli cabinet (2/11) issued similar assessments. The Bush team also stated (2/8) that future negotiations should be left to the Israelis and Palestinians, and the U.S. would not be as actively involved as under Clinton. With the U.S. urging (2/6) the Arab states not to prejudice Sharon, Egypt and Jordan advised (2/7) the PA to await events.

Israeli-Palestinian clashes intensified sharply with Sharon's election. More Palestinians participated in demonstrations and clashed with the IDF during the day, causing casualty rates to soar into the hundreds per day, though the rate of fatalities did not rise. Palestinians set off a car bomb in Jerusalem (2/8), fired three mortars at Netzarim settlement (2/10, 2/15) and an antitank missile at Gilo settlement (2/12), and threw a grenade at an IDF post in Gaza (2/10), injuring one Israeli in all. On 2/14, a Palestinian bus driver deliberately crashed into a bus stop in Holon, Israel, killing seven IDF soldiers and one civilian and injuring 17—the deadliest incident in several years.

### **Overview of the Clashes**

Early this quarter, the daily Israeli-Palestinian clashes became routine. Palestinian actions began to shift from daytime, rock-throwing demonstrations to nighttime operations, sniping, and increasingly sophisticated roadside bombings (e.g., shaped charges, decoys, remote-controlled and cell phone-activated devices). Jewish settlers, as well as IDF soldiers, were the main targets of Palestinian attacks. By 12/1, most media were no longer reporting on the clashes on a daily basis or even in their coverage of efforts to resume negotiations or the Israeli elections. On 1/12, Israel noted that even incidents of Palestinian gunfire and roadside bombings had dipped to 5–6/day from 30–40/day in previous weeks. Violence abated even further by the time the Taba talks opened on 1/21 and maintained a low level until the Sharon election. Nonetheless, casualties steadily mounted. By the end of the quarter, at least 383 Palestinians (including Israeli Arabs), 29 IDF soldiers and Israeli security personnel, 18 Jewish settlers, 11 Is-

raeli civilians, and 1 German citizen had been killed; more than 11,000 Palestinians had been injured, at least 1,500 of whom had been permanently disabled. (For additional data on deaths and injuries see Doc. B4; for information on the economic impact of the closure, see Doc. A.)

A significant change in Israeli tactics was noted early in the quarter. Israel's response to the 11/20 Kefar Darom bus bombing (as to the Ramallah lynching on 10/12 last quarter) had been helicopter air strikes on PA infrastructure, but this policy was largely abandoned by cabinet decisions (11/23). Instead, a "liquidation policy" targeting specific Palestinian security officials and activists was adopted. In addition to senior Fatah commander Hussayn Ubayyat, killed in Bayt Sahur on 11/9, the IDF assassinated at least 12 Palestinians this quarter: Jamal 'Abd al-Razik (Fatah), 11/22; Ibrahim Bani Odeh (Hamas), 11/23; Firas Qasim Saba'na (DFLP), 11/24; Mahmud Mughrabi (Fatah), 12/10; Anwar Mahmud Hamran (Islamic Jihad), 12/11; Yusuf Abu Sawi (Fatah), 12/12; Abbas al-Iwaywi (Hamas), 12/13; Hani Abu Bakir (Hamas), 12/14; Samih Malabi (Fatah), 12/17; Thabet Thabet (Fatah), 12/31; Shakir Hassouna (Fatah), 1/12; and Massud Ayyad (Force 17), 2/13. Four MKs on the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee (Yossi Beilin, Naomi Chazan, Zahava Gal-On, Dan Meridor) publicly opposed the policy (1/2) on the grounds that it violates Israeli and international law, but Atty. Gen. Elyakim Rubenstein said Israel was justified in fighting Palestinian "terror" with all available means. Following the 2/13 assassination of Massud Ayyad, the Bush administration reprimanded Israel, saying the "targeted killing" caused a serious deterioration in the security situation.

During the quarter, IDF and settler actions on the ground—to enforce the closures, prevent movement along roads, and "secure settlements" by bulldozing or confiscating Palestinian land—increased (see the Chronology for details). By mid-12/00, Jewish settlers reportedly had begun organizing their own armed security patrols to "assist" the IDF. The IDF officially approved the practice on 1/16. The settlers' Jordan Valley Regional Council posted flyers (12/00) in Arabic in Palestinian villages warning that those caught taking part in intifada activities would be severely punished and that "the punishment will include physical injury." Explosive devices thought to have been planted by settler

groups were found in Palestinian schools in Balata and Nablus on 11/22. By 11/18, the IDF was routinely digging trenches and building earthen embankments across main roads used by Palestinians and by 1/4 was doing the same on side roads. As a result, the number of Palestinians who gave birth at checkpoints or died for lack of prompt medical attention rose (e.g., 12/15, 1/9, 1/24, 1/28, 1/30, 2/5). By 12/26, the Bethlehem, Hebron, and Nablus areas reported that to deter Palestinians from driving, soldiers at checkpoints randomly halted Palestinians and shot out tires or imposed fines or tolls, sometimes confiscating Palestinians' IDs or car keys until money was found.

In mid-12/00, Israel began moving road-blocks and closing roads in such a way that the Green Line at a minimum of seven points (near the Beater Forest, Kiryat Sefer, Mac-cabim, Oranit, Rantis, Shma', and Tna-Omarim checkpoints) was effectively moved east a few hundred meters. On 12/26, the Israeli DMin. announced that Barak had approved plans to erect a 45 mi. security fence (concrete walls, iron bars, earthen ramparts) along the Green Line, starting near Tulkarm and running north to Moshave Mei Ami and south to Latrun, to block the movement of Palestinians into Israel. Work began around 1/3.

Demonstrations in solidarity with the Palestinians continued at a lower level this quarter, but the international concern over the Palestinians' plight continued. In the U.S., rallies were held in Atlanta; Berkeley, CA; Boston; Carlisle, PA; Chicago; Garden Grove, CA; Los Angeles; New Haven; New York; Patterson, NJ; Philadelphia; Raleigh, NC; Sacramento; San Francisco; San Jose; and Washington. Outside the U.S., rallies were held in Australia, Bahrain, Canada, England, France, Holland, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Nigeria, Mauritania, Pakistan, Scotland, Switzerland, and Syria.

#### ***Mitchell Committee***

At the Sharm al-Shaykh summit on 10/17, Israel and the PA agreed to the appointment by the U.S. (in consultation with Israel, the PA, and the UN) of a committee to look into the causes of the al-Aqsa intifada (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 118). (The U.S.-named committee represented a compromise: the PA had wanted an independent, international commission of inquiry; the Israelis did not want a commission of inquiry at all.) On 11/7, Clinton named former senator George Mitchell (D-ME) as chair of the committee,

which would also include former Turkish pres. Suleyman Demirel, Norwegian FM Thorbjørn Jagland, former U.S. senator Warren Rudman (R-NH), and EU foreign policy director Javier Solana.

From the outset, Israel attempted to block the inquiry and to limit the committee's mandate, which the PA sought to broaden. Israel and the PA debated such issues as whether the committee should begin its examination from the end of the Camp David talks (as Israel wanted) or from Sharon's visit to the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount (as the PA preferred), whether the committee should be allowed to assign blame and whether its recommendations would be legally binding, which outside professionals could be consulted by the committee, etc. By the time the committee members arrived for their preliminary meetings on 12/10, the Israelis had won a significant concession from the U.S.—the understanding that the committee's main task would be to analyze written material submitted by both sides. This effectively reduced the inquiry to what Israel and the U.S. had initially proposed at Sharm al-Shaykh and the PA had rejected: that each side should investigate its own actions and submit a report to the U.S., which would review them and issue an opinion.

The five Mitchell Committee members held preliminary consultations with Israel, the PA, Egypt, and Jordan between 12/11 and 12/13. The committee received initial reports from Israel on 12/28 (see Doc. C1) and the PA on 12/30 (see Doc. B1). When the Mitchell Committee technical staff arrived on 1/9 to begin collecting data in Israel and the PA, Israel demanded that they sign a document requiring them to have an Israeli representative with them at all stages of collecting testimony (including possibly allowing the representative to ask questions and make comments) and to coordinate any tours of Israel or the territories with the FMin. The staff refused. When they then visited the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount on 1/13 without prior coordination with the FMin., Israel demanded a reduction in the size of the technical staff and warned that it might find the committee's conclusions unacceptable in light of the staff's action.

On 1/17, Israel announced that it would not cooperate with another inquiry committee established by the UN Human Rights Commission (UNHRC) on 11/22, saying it was unnecessary since the Mitchell Committee had already been charged with the same



task. On 1/21, immediately after the U.S. inauguration, Israel suspended cooperation with the Mitchell Committee, citing the technical staff's 1/13 visit, and demanded that it renew its mandate with the Bush administration. The Mitchell Committee suspended its work indefinitely on 1/22, but the UNHRC team began work in Gaza on 2/10 without Israel's approval.

### ***Palestinian Authority***

The PA began to crack down on Palestinian collaborators during this quarter. The PA State Security Court sentenced Alam Bani Odeh (12/7) and Majdi Makawi (1/11) to death for collaborating with Israel in the assassinations of Bani Odeh (11/23) and 'Abd al-Razik (11/22). The pair were put to death by firing squad on 1/13, the same day the PA charged four more Palestinians with collaboration, sentencing two to death. In light of international outrage over the 1/13 executions, which were taped and broadcast by Israeli TV, the PA offered (1/15) amnesty to collaborators who turned themselves in within 45 days. According to the PA, 400 collaborators had turned themselves in by 1/18. Despite the amnesty, the PA sentenced a PSF officer to death for collaboration on 2/11.

Arafat issued a presidential decree (12/11) creating a higher relief committee to seek and allocate financial aid for families of Palestinians killed or wounded during the clashes and for workers affected by the closure.

Arafat appointed (1/9) senior negotiator Mahmud Abbas to replace As'ad 'Abd al-Rahman, who resigned as the PLO refugee affairs coordinator on 7/23. (It was Planning M Nabil Shaath, however, who led the refugee talks at Taba.) On 12/18, the PA released 'Abd al-Fattah Ghanem, Arafat's adviser on refugee affairs, who had been detained without charge on 6/21 after making statements to the press criticizing the PA's failure to find a just settlement to the refugee issue.

### **INTRA-PALESTINIAN COORDINATION**

The National and Islamic Higher Committee for the Follow-Up of the Intifada (NIHC), comprising all Palestinian nationalist and Islamist parties but separate from the PA, continued to release leaflets on roughly a weekly basis calling for the continuation of the al-Aqsa intifada and support for the right of return, urging the PA against resuming negotiations with Israel, and issuing schedules for popular demonstrations. Although the NIHC clearly encouraged Palestinians to or-

ganize local groups and to focus their actions against IDF soldiers and settlers, there was little evidence that the NIHC was capable of directing the intifada on a broad scale. Coordination was at best loose. NIHC Gaza leader Jamal Zaqqut noted (ca. 12/8) that Hamas-Fatah coordination in particular was "formulaic" and did not represent a "real unity about the aims of the uprising." Moreover, nationalist groups, including Arafat's own Fatah, issued more individual statements urging Palestinians to intensify the intifada and the PA to halt talks than they signed as part of the NIHC (e.g., 11/24, 11/27, 12/7, 12/16, 12/18, 12/26, 12/30, 12/31, 1/2, 1/9, 1/23, 1/30, 2/12).

By the beginning of this quarter, a grass-roots movement to boycott Israeli goods was well underway. The first NIHC leaflets encouraged continuation of the practice. In late 11/00, the PA set up a national boycott committee, which began (ca. 1/15) formally ordering Palestinians to adhere to bans on purchasing goods made in Israel or the settlements for which Palestinian alternatives are available. Fatah took things a step further on 2/2, pasting lists of products it wanted Palestinians to boycott on shop doors across the territories. Israel's Finance M Avraham Shohat warned the PA on 2/11 that if it did not stop the Palestinian boycott, Israel would take "retaliatory measures" and impose economic sanctions.

On 1/26, Arafat for the first time met with NIHC representatives to discuss the Palestinian situation and PA corruption. In addition to Zaqqut, a FIDA official, the delegation included DFLP politburo member Sahil Zaydan, PFLP politburo member Jamil Majdalawi, and two senior members of the Palestinian Council—Political Committee chairman Ziyad Abu Amr and Deputy Speaker Ibrahim Abu al-Naja. In mid-12/00, several independent PC members created (ca. mid-12/00) a new ad hoc coalition, called the Democratic Alliance Bloc, which opposed resuming negotiations under the Oslo framework or based on Clinton's 12/23 parameters. Another ad hoc group, the Palestinian Committee for the Defense of Palestinian Refugee Rights, emerged by late 1/01 to condemn the PA for abandoning the right of return in favor of "nonessential details pertaining to compensation." A third group, the Palestinian Popular Antinormalization Committee (formed in 1999 but inactive since its inception) began (1/28) calling for adherence to the boycott of Israeli goods and for a

halt to security coordination. (A document announcing the establishment of another new organization, the anticorruption pro-reform National Independence Commission, distributed on 2/1 by PLO Central Council chairman Salim Zanun and listing 100 prominent Palestinians as founding members, turned out to be a dead letter. A number of "founding members," including Haidar 'Abd al-Shafi, Hanan Ashrawi, and Faisal Hussein, denied ever having heard of the group. Arafat, initially angry that the document was released before being presented to him personally, promised Zanun on 2/4 that he would study the matter, effectively doing away with it.)

Meanwhile, three previously unknown militant groups emerged during this quarter: Hizballah-Palestine (which, along with three other groups, claimed responsibility for the Kefar Darom bus bombing on 11/20); the Palestinian Popular Resistance Forces (which claimed to have shot a settler in Gaza on 12/21 and detonated a remote-control car bomb in Jerusalem 2/8); and the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade (AMB). This last was one of the organizations claiming responsibility for the Kefar Darom attack and was apparently responsible for the 1/17 assassination of Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation head Hisham Makki, an Arafat confidant notorious for corruption and high living. After AMB circulated a leaflet (ca. 1/30) demanding that Arafat weed out corruption in Palestinian society, the PA opened an investigation to discover who was backing the group. (Elements of Fatah are suspected by many.)

The multitude of overlapping affiliations and new opposition groups coincided with increasing lawlessness and intra-Palestinian tensions inside the territories. In mid-12/00, incidents of Palestinians shooting Palestinians increased significantly. While at least three incidents (12/17, 1/14, 2/1) involved individuals taking the law into their own hands and killing verified collaborators, several other "collaborator killings" were thinly masked murders committed to settle personal scores.

Several larger incidents also appeared to represent a settling of scores between groups. On 1/27, 50 armed, plainclothes Palestinians, reportedly members of a PA security branch, attacked a billiards parlor across from the PA Finance Min. in Gaza, sparking a riot. Force 17 members intervened, exchanged gunfire with the men, and arrested 18. Around 2/5, scores of PSF officers entered Jabaliya refugee camp and

clashed with residents, shooting and wounding several and arresting 18. Some said the PSF was attempting to arrest a Hamas member, while others said the clash stemmed from the camp residents' longstanding feelings of discrimination in hiring for PSF jobs. A clash between rival Palestinian groups in Khan Yunis camp occurred the next day.

In mid-12/00, there were several days of anti-PA protests in the West Bank and Gaza refugees camps focusing on rising unemployment, the PA's failure to pay salaries, and the cut off of phone service to individuals who could not pay their bills. In Gaza on 12/15, 30,000 Palestinians attended a Hamas rally in support of continuing the intifada no matter what stand the PA took on resuming negotiations with Israel. On 1/5, 3,000 Palestinians in Ramallah, 2,000 in Tulkarm, and 1,000 in Nablus demonstrated against the 12/23 Clinton proposals. The NIHC sponsored demonstrations against the Taba talks on 1/26.

**PALESTINIAN OPINION**

*The following data are excerpted from a poll conducted by the Jerusalem Media and Communications Center (JMCC) on 21-24 December 2000. Results are based on a survey of 1,199 men and women from the West Bank and Gaza. The poll, thirty-ninth in a series, was made available by JMCC's office in Jerusalem.*

**1. Do you support or oppose the continuation of the current Palestinian intifada?**

	West Bank & Gaza	West Bank	Gaza
a. Support	70.1%	66.8%	75.9%
b. Oppose	17.8%	18.3%	16.8%
c. Don't know	8.9%	10.7%	5.9%
d. No answer	3.2%	4.2%	1.4%

**2. Do you support the resumption of military operations against Israeli targets as a suitable response under the current political conditions, or do you reject it and find it harmful to Palestinian national interests?**

	West Bank & Gaza	West Bank	Gaza
a. Suitable response	72.1%	66.9%	80.9%
b. Harmful to national interests	16.8%	19.2%	12.7%
c. Don't know	7.4%	8.6%	5.5%
d. No answer	3.7%	5.3%	0.9%

**3. What is your opinion of the Oslo agreement? Would you say that you strongly support it, support it, oppose it, or strongly oppose it?**

	West Bank & Gaza	West Bank	Gaza
a. Strongly support	3.2%	4.5%	0.9%
b. Support	35.8%	37.3%	33.2%
c. Oppose	36.0%	34.4%	38.9%
d. Strongly oppose	18.5%	15.4%	23.9%
e. No answer	6.5%	8.4%	3.1%

**4. If Jerusalem formed the last obstacle in signing a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians, would you then approve making Jerusalem the unified capital of Israel?**

	West Bank & Gaza	West Bank	Gaza
a. Agree	2.7%	4.1%	0.2%
b. Disagree	94.3%	91.4%	99.3%
c. Don't know	2.4%	3.7%	0.2%
d. No answer	0.6%	0.8%	0.3%

**JORDANIAN-ISRAELI TRACK**

With the ongoing al-Aqsa intifada, domestic opposition to Jordan's ties with Israel increased significantly this quarter, creating serious domestic tensions. For this reason, Jordan limited its contacts with Israel to attempting to find ways to curb the violence and to receiving briefings on Israel's position in talks with the PA (e.g., 11/24, 1/14).

Two Israeli embassy employees were shot and wounded in apparent assassination attempts on 11/19 and 12/5. Two previously unknown groups claimed responsibility for the attacks: the Jordanian Islamic Resistance Movement for Holy Struggle and the Holy Warriors (although a group named the Movement of the Jordanian Islamic Resistance carried out a similar attack in 9/97). On 12/7, Israel recalled all nonessential personnel from the embassy, and an Israeli textile company suspended (12/20) a joint venture with two Jordanian firms, citing security concerns.

The lower house of parliament held a special closed session (1/10) on Jordan's "lack of involvement" in the Israeli-PA-U.S. talks on final status. PM Ali Abu Raghīb stated that while Jordan was not involved in final status talks, it had prepared strategies to deal with the full range of refugee outcomes. He also stressed that Jordan had made clear to Israel, the PA, the EU, and the U.S. that it is unwilling to take in any more refugees and expects to receive compensation.

By the time the parliament reconvened (11/25) after its fall break, 16 MPs had signed on to a letter urging the parliament to draft a bill abrogating the 1994 peace treaty with Israel. On 12/13, 14 of those MPs submitted a motion for an open debate to review the treaty. On 12/10, 100s of protesters in Ma'an started an open-ended sit-in calling for the severing of ties with Israel and the release of Ma'an residents arrested after the pro-Palestinian rallies in 10/00 (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 118). Jordanian security forces detained at gunpoint (12/17) a group of professional association members en route to Ma'an to join the sit-in, ultimately forcing them to return to Amman.

By late 12/00, Jordanian security forces had detained as many as 500 Jordanians and East Bank Palestinians for participating in pro-intifada activities. On 12/25, King Abdallah appeared on television to warn "elements within Jordan as well as outside it" not to exploit the al-Aqsa intifada to try to destabilize the kingdom, saying the army was prepared for confrontation. As of 12/7, Jordan was considering amending the election law to increase the number of parliamentary seats from 80 to 100 to correct the "overrepresentation" of rural and tribal areas at the expense of urban areas. Abdallah was also rumored to be weighing postponing the 5/01 parliamentary elections because of the domestic tensions arising from the intifada. On 1/15, Abu Raghīb met with representatives of political parties and professional associations to discuss the impact of the intifada on Jordan and to urge them not to take actions "harmful to the kingdom's economy and national unity," such as fighting normalization with Israel. No common understandings were reached.

Even before the Abu Raghīb meeting on 1/15, the Antinormalization Committee of the Union of Professional Associations released to the press (11/19) the blacklist it had been threatening to release since 10/99; the list named 22 Jordanian journalists, academics, artists, companies, and schools that had advocated normalization with Israel and urged other Jordanians to cut ties with them. Fearing liable suits, the press refused to release the names. On 1/22, the committee widely circulated a second list naming 36 individuals (including 12 senior establishment types), 27 companies (including 12 in joint ventures with Israeli firms), 5 importers, 3 "former normalizers," and 7 individuals and companies whose stand on normalization is "sus-

pect.” The government considered the publication of the list to be precisely the type of activity Abu Raghieb cautioned against on 1/15. Interior M Awad Khulayfat warned the committee on 1/24 to stop circulating the list or face a ban on political activity. The committee refused, citing freedom of speech and the public’s right to know. In predawn raids on 1/27, Jordanian authorities arrested seven committee members on charges of belonging to an illegal organization and issued a warrant for an eighth. Two of the eight, including committee chair Ali Abu Sukkar, were also charged with possession of explosive detonators, which the committee claimed were planted by security officers. Jordan’s military prosecutor raided the professional association’s offices on 2/3, confiscating documents pertaining to the antinormalization drive. By 2/14, the authorities had arrested 20 committee members; all but four had been released on bail, and one was still at large.

On 11/23, 500 University of Jordan students attended an antinormalization sit-in and march on campus, despite the university’s ban on protests. The government rejected a request by the professional associations to hold a large march on 12/15 to call for a boycott of Israeli and U.S. goods and for support of the al-Aqsa intifada. The associations were permitted to hold a small rally outside their offices instead. On 1/5, 200 Muslim Brotherhood members staged a demonstration in Amman urging the PA not to sign an agreement with Israel that cedes control over the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount. More than 800 Palestinians attended a Muslim Brotherhood rally in Amman on 1/19 to support of the right of return. Around 100 Jordanians attended a similar rally outside parliament on 1/16. On 1/28, 150 Jordanian lawyers staged a sit-in to protest the 1/27 arrest of antinormalization committee members.

Jordan announced (1/3) that the new Aqaba Special Economic Zone (ASEZ), approved in 4/00, should begin operation in mid-2/01, barring further delays in bringing the area’s 70 pre-existing companies into compliance with new regulations. The ASEZ will be a low-tax import/export hub with special customs and legal systems to attract foreign investment. It will include a 500-dunam Qualified Industrial Zone for joint ventures with Israeli firms.

Jordan dropped (1/3) legal charges against senior Hamas member Muhammad

Nazzal, who has remained at large since 1999, when he and four of his colleagues were ordered arrested and deported on charges of membership in an illegal political group (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 115). The four others, who were deported to Qatar, continue to appeal their case.

#### SYRIAN-ISRAELI TRACK

The Syrian-Israeli track was frozen this quarter, though there were rumors that in early 12/00, Syria had received (via the U.S.) an offer from Israel to resume negotiations, which it ignored. In early 2/01, Syrian pres. Bashar al-Asad said he would be willing to hold talks with any Israeli PM who is serious about reaching an accord.

Asad focused instead on his domestic reforms, granting amnesty to 600 of Syria’s estimated 1,500 political prisoners (11/16), approving the establishment of a stock market and private banks (12/2), and sanctioning the formation of private universities (2/6). Asad also said (2/8) he would consider allowing new political parties. Indeed, several new political groups announced their formation, encouraged by the government reforms. The Rally for Democracy and Unity (founded on 1/18 by a maj. gen. of the Syrian army, a former member of the People’s Assembly, an economist, several businessmen, and a journalist) proclaimed itself a reform-oriented organization whose aim is to provide a political alternative to the National Progressive Front. The Social Peace Movement, a liberal political organization formed (1/14) by independent MP Ra’id Saif, aims to bring together the younger, prodemocratization generation.

On 1/14, 1,000 Syrian intellectuals, led by MP Saif, published a document calling on the Syrian government to introduce wide-ranging political reforms and hasten democratization. No official Syrian papers ran the document, and the government did not formally comment (though in an interview on 2/5, Pres. Asad appeared to question the intentions of the intellectuals).

Also of note: The Israeli Housing Min. began (12/21) an aggressive campaign to sell 600 housing units on the Golan Heights at bargain prices.

#### LEBANESE-ISRAELI TRACK

Six months after Israel’s unilateral withdrawal from southern Lebanon, Israel and Hizballah had settled into a new pattern of engagement along the UN’s blue line sepa-

rating Israel and Lebanon. Hizballah harassed IDF soldiers in the disputed Shaba' Farms area, such as setting off a small bomb on 11/16 (slightly injuring an IDF soldier), detonating a roadside bomb on 11/26 (killing 1 soldier), and firing seven mortars at an IDF patrol on 1/3 (causing no damage). In response to the 11/26 incident, Israel staged its most severe retaliatory strike on Lebanon since its withdrawal, carrying out air and artillery strikes and training machine-gun fire across the border on Hizballah targets, wounding one civilian. After the exchange, the U.S. warned that Israel could mount a major military operation against Syrian forces in Lebanon, or even Syria itself, if Hizballah was not reined in. On 12/30, Israel directly threatened to take action against Syria if border violence escalated. In return, Iran warned (12/30) of "astounding and unexpected" retaliation if Israel struck Lebanon or Syria.

Throughout the quarter, Israel violated Lebanese air space every few days to conduct aerial surveillance and to break the sound barrier over Beirut. In several incidents, Israel also crossed the blue line: On 12/4, Israeli laborers and IDF soldiers crossed into Lebanon to fill a manhole with concrete. On 1/19, the IDF resumed construction of a security fence along the blue line. After flying over the border, UN special envoy Steffan de Mistura reported (2/2) that Israel appeared to be extending the fence into Lebanon beyond the divided border village of Ghajar, effectively annexing 400 m<sup>2</sup> of land. Israel promised (2/2) to halt the construction and adjust the fence.

On 1/27, IDF troops in Shaba' Farms shot dead two heavily armed members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command (PFLP—GC) on the Lebanese side of the border. Lebanon warned (1/28) Palestinians against using the south as a base to launch attacks on Israel. PFLP—GC commander Ahmad Jibril phoned Lebanese Speaker Nabih Birri to apologize, and promised that his group would not operate out of Lebanon except in coordination with the Lebanese resistance or the state.

Lebanese and Palestinian protesters routinely gathered at three points along the blue line, near IDF outposts, to demonstrate against and throw stones at IDF soldiers. In several incidents (e.g., 11/29, 12/5, 12/28, 12/30), the IDF fired across the blue line at the protesters: by the end of 1/15, 13 demonstrators had been killed and more than 40

wounded by IDF gunfire. On 1/2, a Lebanese gunman fired across the blue line, injuring an Israeli workman, the first Israeli civilian hit by gunfire at the border since the withdrawal.

On 1/23, UN Secy.-Gen. Kofi Annan told the UN Security Council (UNSC) that the situation in Lebanon was relatively calm eight months after the IDF withdrawal, but Hizballah's crossborder attacks and Israel's reprisals and violations of airspace were a source of great concern. Annan urged Lebanon to deploy its army to take full control of the south and to restrain demonstrators who might draw Israeli fire. Given the relative calm, the UNSC voted unanimously (1/30) to reduce the size of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) from 5,800 to 4,700 troops, its original size before the UN increased troops in 8/00 to verify the Israeli withdrawal. On 1/13, Israel informed UNIFIL that it does not have maps locating the position of 50,000 mines in south Lebanon planted by the South Lebanon Army. UNIFIL estimates that Israel left behind 130,000 mines when it evacuated. Israel has turned over maps showing 70,000 devices.

In early 12/00, Israel accused UNIFIL of complicity in the kidnapping of three IDF soldiers in the Shaba' Farms area in 10/00, saying India Batt troops saw what was happening and did not act and that the assailants wore UNIFIL uniforms and carried UNIFIL gear. UNIFIL adviser Timur Goksel denied the first charge and, responding to the second, noted that secondhand UNIFIL gear is sold throughout southern Lebanon. On 12/12, Hizballah and Israel confirmed that Germany was trying to secure the release of the three soldiers plus a suspected Israeli Mossad agent kidnapped in Lebanon in 10/00 in exchange for a number of Lebanese political detainees being held by Israel. Austria also said (12/30) it was attempting to mediate. On 2/10, PA Prisoner Affairs M Hisham 'Abd al-Razik said that Hizballah had requested and received from the PA a list of the 1,650 Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails and would demand that Israel free Palestinians as part of a deal.

Indeed, during the quarter, Israel became increasingly concerned that Hizballah and Palestinians inside Israel and the occupied territories were beginning to coordinate. The State Department said (2/14) that it had received reports that "terrorist groups," including Hizballah, and Palestinian rejectionist groups had met in Beirut in late 1/01 and

pledged to work together to combat Israel. There were also rumors that Hizballah officials had met with exiled Jordanian Hamas leaders in Beirut (ca. 12/8). On 11/29, Israeli security officials announced that they had detained 7 Israeli Arabs on suspicion of aiding Hizballah by passing information pertaining to IDF patrols and collaborators, plotting kidnappings and bombings, and enlisting activists among Israeli Arabs. Israel claimed it assassinated Force 17 commander Ayyad (2/12) because he led a Gaza-based Hizballah cell, though the PA denied this.

### MULTILATERAL TALKS

No multilateral talks were held this quarter due to the breakdown of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and the eruption of violence.

### REGIONAL AFFAIRS

#### REFUGEES

No official meetings on refugees were held this quarter. In Paris on 1/27, however, PLO representative to France Leila Shahid and PA Supply M 'Abd al-Aziz Shahin hosted a meeting of representatives of the camps in the West Bank, Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. Participants called on the EU to support the right of return.

On 11/30, Israel allowed the last nine families from Canada camp in Egypt to enter Gaza. Israel began allowing the last Canada camp refugees to move permanently to Gaza on 10/18 under an agreement with UNRWA.

#### RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL

Israeli-Arab relations continued to decline this quarter as the al-Aqsa intifada continued. In many Arab countries (e.g., Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Yemen), popular boycotts of British and U.S. goods took root as protests against Israeli actions. The Chili's restaurant chain in Egypt and the McDonald's chain in Saudi Arabia, fearing the impact of the boycotts, promised to donate 10% and 30% of their profits, respectively, to Palestinian hospitals and organizations providing aid to suffering Palestinians. By mid-12/00, the demand for U.S. goods in Qatar, Saudi Arabia (mainly Dammam and Jeddah), and the UAE reportedly had dropped 35–50%.

Egypt and Jordan maintained contact with Israel during the quarter in an effort to find a way to halt the clashes and resume Israeli-PA

negotiations (e.g., 11/16, 11/19, 11/24, 11/26, 12/19, 12/20, 12/30, 1/14). Egypt, however, recalled its ambassador to Israel on 11/21 to protest Israel's decision to escalate attacks on PA infrastructure following the 11/20 Kefar Darom bombing. Barak protested the recall but generally did not let the incident affect Israeli-Egyptian relations. Egypt also announced 11/28 that it had arrested an Egyptian engineer on charges of spying for Israel. Egyptian and Israeli gas companies finalized (1/31) a \$3 b. deal for Egypt to supply Israel with half of its natural gas needs until at least 2012. Neither Barak nor Mubarak commented on the deal at the time; on 2/15 Egypt's official *al-Abram* newspaper ran a notice denying an agreement had been reached. Israeli officials were surprised, saying (2/15) they had not been directly informed.

On a visit on 11/28, U.S. Defense Secy. William Cohen urged Qatar to reopen Israel's trade mission, which Qatar ordered closed to protest Israel's excessive use of force against the Palestinians. Qatar refused.

#### INTER-ARAB HIGHLIGHTS

Inter-Arab efforts this quarter were aimed at curbing Israeli-Palestinian violence, providing aid for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, and, to a lesser degree, encouraging the resumption of PA-Israeli talks. Coordination on resuming negotiations and curbing violence was mainly among Egypt, Jordan, and the PA (e.g., 11/22, 11/25, 11/26, 11/28, 12/6, 12/7, 12/9–10, 12/19–21, 12/23, 12/25–26, 12/28, 12/30, 1/1–4, 1/11, 1/15, 1/17–18, 1/29, 2/10–11, 2/13). Arafat also personally conferred with the leaders of Libya (11/29), Oman (1/6), Qatar (12/3), Saudi Arabia (1/1–2, 1/6, 1/23), and Tunisia (11/29, 12/30, 2/13).

The Arab League follow-up committee (Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the PA, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia) overseeing the al-Aqsa intifada and Jerusalem funds created by the Arab League (10/21–22) to gather \$1 b. to aid the Palestinians (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 118) met several times this quarter. The committee arranged two preliminary meetings, one of Arab League Finance Ms (12/23) to discuss the collection of donations and the mechanism of their disbursement through the International Development Bank (IDB), and the other of Arab League Information Ms (11/25) to coordinate a media campaign to raise international awareness of Israel's violent actions against

the Palestinians. Subsequent meetings in Cairo on 12/3, Damascus on 12/11, Cairo on 1/4, Tunis on 1/10, and Amman on 2/10 all addressed the slow disbursement to the PA of donations collected. (Some problems are administrative while others reportedly involve donors not wanting the PA to handle money directly because of corruption fears.) At the end of the quarter, the IDB had approved and transferred \$43 m.–\$53 m. from the al-Aqsa intifada fund for programs to treat the injured, support families of those killed, provide education to children, procure medical supplies, repair damaged homes, and promote the Palestinian economy. Arab states reportedly had pledged \$760 m., of which \$270 m. had been received by the IDB.

On 1/4, Arafat briefed the Arab League follow-up committee on his talks with Clinton in Washington (1/2–3). The committee endorsed Arafat's conditional acceptance of the 12/23 Clinton proposals and the PA's positions on Jerusalem and the right of return, saying the final decision on refugees rests with the PA. The FMs of Lebanon and Syria, however, rejected the idea that refugees could be resettled in their host countries.

During the quarter, Arab states continued to expand their ties with Iraq to weaken U.S.-UK sanctions. Syria began moving Iraqi oil through its pipeline on 11/16 without UN approval, stating it was only testing the pipeline, though it could not be confirmed that pumping had stopped. The U.S. and UK were taken by surprise but did not take an aggressive stand, instead urging (1/23) Syria to request that the pipeline be declared a UN authorized route for Iraqi oil. On 1/31–2/1, Syria and Iraq signed a free trade agreement, an agricultural cooperation accord, and a transportation cooperation agreement; endorsed a joint project on sharing Tigris and Euphrates water (allocations to be set in consultation with Turkey); and held talks on a long-term strategic cooperation agreement. Syria also removed restrictions on travel to Iraq (1/4) and resumed commercial flights to Baghdad (2/12).

Iraq signed a free trade agreement with Egypt (1/18) and approved a draft free trade accord with Jordan (2/6). Jordan resumed regular commercial flights to Iraq on 11/30. Jordan and Tunisia agreed (12/4) to give back Iraqi passenger jets that were grounded at their airports during the Gulf crisis.

Iraq requested (1/8) that the U.S. and UK transfer \$949 m. of its oil-for-food proceeds

to the Palestinians to cover food and medicine shortages stemming from the Israeli closures. The U.S. and UK said (1/8) that Iraqi civilians should have first priority, but the UN Oil-for-Food Committee agreed (1/8) to discuss the issue at a future meeting. By 1/31, Iraq had begun giving \$10,000 to each family of a Palestinian killed during the al-Aqsa intifada and several hundred dollars to Palestinians injured. It was unclear whether this was a UN-approved payout of oil-for-food money.

Egyptian pres. Mubarak went to Damascus (1/15) for talks with Syrian pres. Asad on the Israeli-Palestinian track, the 12/23 Clinton parameters, and the new U.S. administration. After this meeting rumors arose that Asad might be willing to reconcile with Arafat in light of the al-Aqsa intifada. In an interview on 2/5, Asad said he would be willing to hold talks with Arafat if they had a clear objective and agenda. As its contribution to the intifada, Syria informed the PA (1/24) that it would buy all surplus Palestinian agriculture products.

Syria dispatched (1/21) an ambassador to Jordan for the first time since withdrawing its ambassador to protest the Jordan-Israel peace treaty in 1994. Jordan and Syria held (2/12) talks on water issues, the al-Wihda Dam project, and transportation. Syria also released (1/12, 1/27) nine Jordanian political detainees imprisoned for being affiliated with Palestinian organizations and gave assurances that it would release all Jordanian political detainees (unofficially estimated to number around 400) shortly. Syria also returned 48 Lebanese and eight Palestinian political prisoners to Beirut (12/11, 12/14).

Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria signed (1/28) an agreement on exporting, purchasing, and transporting Egyptian natural gas. Earlier in 1/01, Egypt, Jordan, and Syria finished linking their electricity grids; Iraq, Lebanon, and Turkey are to be added soon.

## INTERNATIONAL

### UNITED STATES

This quarter marked the transition from the Clinton to the Bush administration. Clinton continued his personal, hands-on involvement in the peace process until the very end of his term, offering his own bridging proposal less than a month before he left office and issuing open letters urging the Israelis and Palestinians to make peace the day before the inauguration. Immediately after leaving office, he made public statements (2/

2) praising Barak's peace efforts and implicitly criticizing Arafat. Incoming president Bush was expected to have a very different Middle East approach, along the lines of a policy paper published (1/18) by the conservative, pro-Israeli think tank the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP). WINEP recommended that Bush take a less active role in peace talks, reassess the Oslo formula as the basis of negotiations (possibly in favor of promoting separation/disengagement), take a harder line with Syria, watch Iran and Iraq as the main threats to U.S. interests, and be more willing to use military force against countries providing "safe haven to terrorists."

On 1/14, just before leaving office, Clinton gave initial approval for the Treasury Department to disburse \$12 m. to the Iraqi National Congress (INC) to reestablish a presence in the northern no-fly zone and to distribute humanitarian relief and propaganda in government-controlled areas of Iraq. This marked the first funding for INC operations inside Iraq since 1996. In 1998, the Clinton administration had allocated \$98 m. in military aid and equipment for the INC but ended up transferring very little. According to Clinton administration officials, Clinton intended the new allocation, which also had to be approved by the incoming Bush administration, as a test of Bush's commitment to ousting Saddam Hussein. (The Bush team, which includes many 1990-91 Gulf war architects like Colin Powell and Dick Cheney, promised from the start of the presidential campaign to reinvigorate the sanctions regime.) On 2/1, Bush seconded Clinton's approval and also authorized the INC to begin collecting information inside Iraq for transfer to the U.S. for analysis (most likely to build a case for a war crimes trial)—a significant step beyond Clinton's policy.

By the end of the quarter, Bush had not put together a new peace team. Peace process issues were expected to return to the purview of the asst. secy. of state for Near East affairs, who had not yet been named at the quarter's end. Special envoy Ross resigned his position with the change of administrations and accepted a fellowship at WINEP, and he was not expected to be replaced. (Ross had accepted a position as head of WINEP eight years earlier but rescinded his acceptance to take up the special envoy post.) Aaron Miller reportedly had stayed on, but his role in the new administration had not been defined. Another key

Clinton adviser, Amb. to Israel Martin Indyk (former head of WINEP), was expected to step down in several months. Incoming VP Dick Cheney appointed (2/5) John Hannah, previously of WINEP, as his Middle East adviser. Bush was reportedly considering current WINEP head Robert Satloff as Middle East adviser to the National Security Council. Also of note: when the Israeli election results were announced, incoming secy. of state Colin Powell conferred with Council of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations (CPMAJO) head Ron Lauder, a close friend of Powell and Sharon as well as a major Republican donor. Lauder reported (2/6) that Powell had been "very, very positive about Sharon."

Clinton had waived implementation (12/19) of the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 for another six months. On 1/22, the White House said that Bush would begin looking into moving the embassy but gave no further details. (In his speech to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee in 5/00, Bush had vowed to begin the process of moving the embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem as soon as he took office, if he became president.) On 2/4, Secy. of State Powell confirmed that moving the embassy "remains the goal of the United States and it remains the commitment made by Pres. Bush," but that to do so at present would damage the U.S.'s ability to act as mediator in peace talks.

On 12/15, Congress approved a supplemental spending bill that omitted Clinton's requested \$750 m. for Israel, Jordan, and Egypt. Members of Congress were reportedly agreeable to giving more aid to Israel and Jordan but strongly opposed giving additional funds to Egypt on the grounds that it was "outspoken in blaming Israel for the [ongoing] violence." Congressmen were also questioning regular aid to Egypt, vowing, in Sen. Jesse Helms's (R-NC) words, to "scrutinize" it "until Egypt becomes a constructive player in the peace process." Egypt and the U.S. reached (12/6) an economic aid agreement under which the U.S. will give Egypt \$5.5 b. over ten years to spur Egypt's economic growth.

In response to rumors that the U.S. had sent 1 armored division, 1 infantry division, 2 aviation brigades, 1 air defense brigade (including a Patriot missile battery), 8 corps brigades, and several artillery units to the Middle East region from Germany in a show of force in support of Israel in the run-up to



the 2/6 elections, the U.S. confirmed (1/26) only that it was conducting two training exercises with the IDF. Analysts believe the forces, which were apparently dispatched under Clinton's term and were still in place at the end of the quarter, could be unified quickly to defend Israel.

Israel asked (11/21, 12/5) the U.S. to lift the State Department warning against travel to Israel during the ongoing clashes and, in the future, to coordinate such advisories with the Israeli government, arguing that the travel warnings cause serious damage to the tourism industry.

During a phone conversation on 12/11, PM Barak asked Clinton to pardon spy for Israel Jonathan Pollard, saying it would help his reelection bid. Clinton did not pardon Pollard but did grant clemency (ca. 1/19) to Marc Rich, who renounced his U.S. citizenship and adopted Israeli citizenship to escape prosecution by the federal government in the largest federal tax evasion case in U.S. history (\$43 m.). The *New York Post* revealed (2/5) that Rich worked for Mossad. Barak, former PM Peres, FM Ben-Ami, Knesset speaker Avraham Burg, former Mossad chief Shabtai Shavit, Jerusalem mayor Ehud Olmert, former finance minister Yaakov Neeman, King Juan Carlos of Spain, the chief rabbi of France, World Jewish Congress secy.-gen. Israel Singer, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council chairman Rabbi Irving Greenberg, and Anti-Defamation League national director Abraham Foxman were among those who wrote letters or personally appealed to Clinton on Rich's behalf.

Also of note: Yisrael Ba'Aliya leader Natan Sharansky received \$1 m. from 20 American donors to stage a massive rally at the Wailing Wall on 1/8, attended by 100,000–250,000 right-wing Jews reaffirming their "pledge of allegiance" to a united capital of Jerusalem and opposing Clinton's 12/23 proposals. Sharansky stated (1/8) that his fundraising visit to New York on 1/4, arranged by CPMAJO, whose president, Lauder, addressed the rally, was "the easiest fund-raising I've ever had to do."

## RUSSIA

Pres. Putin met with Arafat (11/24) in Moscow. During a three-way phone conversation with Putin (11/24), Arafat and Barak agreed to resume security coordination (see above). Russian FM Igor Ivanov made a one-week tour of the region (beginning 11/13) to assess conditions in light of the ongoing up-

rising. Stops included Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and the PA areas. Ivanov and FMin. director of Middle Eastern affairs Aleksandr Saltanov made a similar visit to the region (ca. 2/11–14) to consult with officials on the peace process in light of Sharon's election.

Russia also concluded (12/28) an expanded military and security partnership with Iran that may include arms sales in the future. The deal strains Russia's relations with the U.S.

## EUROPEAN UNION

In addition to monitoring the Taba talks in 1/01, EU special envoy Moratinos toured Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and the PA areas (12/5–8) for consultations on the Israeli-Palestinian clashes and to prepare for Hubert Vedrine's visit to the area (ca. 12/13–15). Moratinos reportedly carried a French proposal for halting the violence and resuming negotiations that called for implementing the 10/17 Sharm al-Shaykh understandings, deploying international observers in the occupied territories, implementing the outstanding Oslo requirements (including the third further redeployment, opening the northern safe passage, and releasing Palestinian prisoners), halting settlement construction, and resuming negotiations based on Israel showing flexibility on Jerusalem and the PA on refugees. No progress was reported. After Sharon's election, the EU stated (e.g., 2/6, 2/12, 2/14) that Israel should resume negotiations with the PA from the point where they left off at Taba on 1/27.

The EU agreed (12/13) to loan the PA up to \$84 m. from the Special Cash Facility (SCF) to cover current expenses if Israel continued to suspend transfers of monies owed the PA (which Israel indeed continued to suspend). The \$23 m. transferred to the PA from the SCF on 11/8 (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 118) was not included toward that cap. The first disbursement of \$28 m. from the new allocation was made on 1/25.

At the close of a two-day Euro-Mediterranean economic cooperation conference in Marseilles (11/16), EU ministers issued a statement reiterating their commitment to the establishment, preferably via negotiations, of a Palestinian state. Arab ministers denounced the EU's failure to become more involved in the peace process. EU FMs issued a statement (11/20) calling on Israel and the PA to take steps to reduce violence and return to peace talks and urging the Mitchell Committee to begin its inquiry as soon as possible.

EU FMs issued a similar statement at the close of their meeting in Nice on 12/8.

The EU canceled (1/21) its sponsorship of an economic conference of the European and Mediterranean chambers of commerce set for 1/22 in Cairo because the Egyptian organizers refused to invite Israeli delegates. The meeting was part of the Euro-Mediterranean Barcelona process.

#### UNITED NATIONS

UN Secy.-Gen. Annan began negotiations (11/17) with Israel and the PA on the establishment of an international observer mission in the West Bank, Gaza, and possibly East Jerusalem. The U.S. backed Annan's efforts but said (11/17) it would veto any resolution that Israel did not approve. Annan held meetings with Israeli and PLO officials on 11/20 and 11/22, but no common understanding was reached. When a UNSC resolution calling for the deployment of 2,000 unarmed UN observers in the West Bank and Gaza came up to vote on 12/28, it failed to get the nine votes needed to pass. Bangladesh, China, Jamaica, Malaysia, Mali, Namibia, Tunisia, and Ukraine voted for; Argentina, Canada, France, the Netherlands, Russia, the UK, and the U.S. abstained.

On 11/22, the UN Economic and Social Council adopted (21-19, with 11 abstentions) a resolution by the UNHRC in Geneva condemning Israel's grave violations of Palestinian human rights and calling for an inquiry into the causes of the al-Aqsa intifada. The inquiry committee began work in Gaza on 2/10 (see above).

#### VATICAN

In his annual World Peace Day address on 1/13, Pope John Paul II reaffirmed his call for Israeli-Palestinian peace, saying the sides could not live without each other, urging them each to respect the other's rights and traditions as well as those of the Christian community, and calling on them to adhere to the principles of international law.

On 1/9, IDF soldiers near Jinin fired shots toward a clearly marked Vatican car carrying Bishop Boulos Marcuzzo. The Vatican protested, and the IDF promised to investigate.

#### IRAN

Iran continued to build ties with Arab states this quarter. Syrian pres. Asad made his first official visit to Iran as head of state, arriving on 1/24 for strategic cooperation talks.

The two countries also held economic and trade cooperation talks on 11/23 and 1/24. Iran also held talks with Jordan on expanding bilateral relations (1/21-23); with Lebanon on expanding economic and political cooperation (12/14, 1/8, 1/13) and activating their joint economic committee (12/14); with Oman on expanding bilateral relations (1/23-25).

Also of note: An Iranian court rejected (2/7) an appeal by 10 Iranian Jews convicted on 7/1 of spying for Israel. Iran and Turkey signed a protocol expanding cultural cooperation (2/14) and a transportation agreement (1/31).

#### TURKEY

Turkey took a more active role in the peace process this quarter, dispatching FM Ismail Cem to the region (11/22, 1/21) to consult with Arafat, Israeli FM Ben-Ami, and Egyptian pres. Mubarak on reducing violence and resuming peace talks. Arafat (2/14), PA Planning M Shaath (11/30-12/1), Ben-Ami (1/19), and IDF Chief of Staff Shaul Mofaz (2/14-16) all traveled to Ankara to brief Turkish officials on the peace process. The U.S. also urged Turkey (12/25) to press Arafat to accept the 12/23 Clinton proposals.

Israel, Turkey, and the U.S. held (1/14-17) their third round of Reliant Mermaid naval exercises in the Mediterranean. Jordan did not participate as an observer as it has done previously. Greece reported (in 12/00) that Israel and the U.S. had been pressing Athens to join the trilateral strategic cooperation efforts. Israel and the U.S. reportedly argued that participating in the joint maneuvers would serve as a confidence-building gesture to Turkey and that it would downplay the image that Turkey has joined an Israeli-U.S. alliance against the Arab states. Greece fears joining would give the opposite impression—that the Mediterranean states are ganging up on the Arab states. Turkey also held regular semi-annual defense cooperation talks with Israel in Ankara (1/9-10), agreed to purchase 20,000 Zigzaver arms from Israel (12/12), and signed a memorandum of understanding on water sales to Israel (1/23).

Also of note: Turkey and Syria held regular security cooperation talks (1/24-26) and signed a declaration on energy cooperation (1/15). Turkey and Jordan signed a memorandum of understanding on combating terrorism and drug trafficking (2/11).

## DONORS

No formal donor meetings were held this quarter, though donors continued to monitor the Palestinian economic situation. UN special envoy Larsen briefed donors and foreign diplomats in Gaza on 12/4, noting that Palestinian economic output had dropped by half, unemployment had risen to 30% from 11% before the clashes, and GDP was down to -10% from 4% before 9/28. In sum, Larsen said, "Three years of progress have been wiped out in two months of conflict."

The World Food Program stated (12/5) that it had received no response from donors to an 11/00 request for \$3.9 m. in additional funding to feed hungry Palestinians suffering under the ongoing Israeli closures. "Donors say they're here to fund the peace process, not Palestinian people per se," said one anonymous aid official, adding, "Now there's

no peace process, so there's less enthusiasm about giving money."

On 12/12, the World Bank announced plans to give the PA a \$12 m. grant to alleviate the hardship in the West Bank and Gaza resulting from Israeli closures. The money, which will be disbursed through the Holst Fund, will be used to fund an emergency job-creation program that will temporarily employ Palestinians in such jobs as painting, pipe installation, and building repair. After the announcement, the Bank was flooded with calls and letters from U.S. congressmen, led by Rep. Anthony Weiner [D-NY], and American Jewish groups asking the Bank to reconsider, because, in Weiner's words, "this grant suggests the Palestinian Authority is a victim and bears no responsibility for the current situation."

Compiled by Michele L. Kjorlien



**An IDF soldier talks to Palestinian women at a checkpoint outside Anata, West Bank, 12 March 2001. (AP Photo/Eyal Warshavsky)**