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QUARTERLY UPDATE ON CONFLICT AND DIPLOMACY

16 NOVEMBER 2002–15 FEBRUARY 2003

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The Quarterly Update is a summary of bilateral, multilateral, regional, and international events affecting the Palestinians and the future of the peace process.

BILATERALS

PALESTINE-ISRAEL

Israeli and U.S. efforts to revive the peace process were on hold this quarter in the run-up to Israeli elections on 1/28/03 and in anticipation of a U.S. strike on Iraq. Meanwhile, the other members of the Quartet—the European Union (EU), Russia, and the UN—attempted to advance a U.S. draft road map for implementation of a cease-fire and resumption of negotiations (see *Quarterly Update in JPS* 1/26), while the Palestinian Authority (PA) made limited progress on reform (see below).

As the quarter began, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) were inside or encircling all West Bank Palestinian population centers, and restrictions on movement were high. No IDF forces were in Jericho, as was the case last quarter, and there was only a light troop presence in Bethlehem. Curfews, while eased somewhat, were in place for long stretches in most areas of the West Bank. Restrictions on movement in Gaza were also tight, with the IDF frequently closing main roads, dividing the Strip into three sections. Across the occupied territories, Israeli daily violence against Palestinians remained high, whereas Palestinian violence continued at a moderate level, characterized by occasional dramatic attacks by militant groups rather than sustained armed resistance. At least 2,058 Palestinians (including 30 Israeli Arabs and 12 unidentified Arab cross-border infiltrators), 633 Israelis (including 195 IDF soldiers and security personnel, 154 settlers, 284 civilians), and 19 foreign nationals had been killed.

Violence Escalates

From the Islamic Jihad ambush of IDF and settler security officers in Hebron on 11/15 (see *Quarterly Update in JPS* 126) through the end of 11/02, Palestinian vio-

lence escalated: Islamic Jihad bombed a bus in Jerusalem on 11/21, killing 11 Israelis, and detonated an explosives-packed boat near an Israeli navy patrol on 11/22, injuring four soldiers; Hamas members fatally shot an IDF soldier near Gush Katif on 11/22 and infiltrated Dolah settlement on 11/29, killing two Thai workers and a Jewish settler; the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) staged a suicide car bombing near an IDF post in Gaza on 11/27, killing only the driver, causing no other injuries; and, most significantly, the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades (AMB) attacked a polling station in Beit She'an 11/28, the day of the Likud primaries, killing six Israelis. The Beit She'an attack occurred the same day as two major attacks on Israeli tourists in Kenya, which killed three Israelis and 11 Kenyans; those attacks were claimed first by an unknown group called the Government of Universal Palestine in Exile—Army of Palestine and later on an alleged al-Qa'ida Web site as a "Ramadan greeting to the Palestinian people." (On 12/16, Arafat publicly demanded that Osama Bin Laden and al-Qa'ida stop using the Palestinian struggle as a pretext for attacks on Israelis, saying Bin Laden "never helped us. He was working in a completely different area and against our interests.")

Under pressure from the U.S. to avoid drawing international attention to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict while it built a coalition against Iraq, Israel held off staging large-scale retaliatory military operations and instead increased house demolitions and bulldozing Palestinian land (particularly in Gaza), tightened closures, and stepped up arrest raids and assassinations of wanted Palestinians (see *Chronology* for details). Of note: The IDF reoccupied (11/22) Bethlehem completely following the 11/21 Islamic Jihad attack, though it pulled out of the main areas

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of the city on 11/25 under U.S. pressure. The IDF made major raids into Hebron (11/15), Dahaysha refugee camp (r.c.; 11/26), Dayr al-Balah (11/26), and Bayt Lahia (11/30). With PM Ariel Sharon's encouragement, preparations immediately began to clear the area linking Kiryat Arba and the Tomb of the Patriarchs/al-Ibrahimi Mosque, establish a new settlement, and plan a new bypass road and protective wall. (The Israeli High Court recommended that the project be halted on 2/14.) The IDF also assassinated AMB member Tariq Zaghaf (11/19), AMB Jenin leader Ala' Ahmad Sabbagh (11/26), and Izzeddin al-Qassam Brigades Jenin cmdr. Imad Nasharti (11/26) and made failed attempts on wanted Palestinian Riad 'Abd al-Ghani (11/17) and Islamic Jihad's Jenin military cmdr. Imad al-Barqawi. By 11/30, some 2,132 Palestinians and 651 Israelis had been killed.

The U.S. Puts the Road Map on Hold

Meanwhile, Israel reiterated (11/21) to the U.S. that it did not want to make specific decisions on the U.S. draft road map "before the situation with Iraq is cleared up" (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 126). While the U.S. proceeded with plans to hold a Quartet meeting in Washington on 12/20, where the Quartet had intended to finalize and adopt the road map (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 126), it promised Israel (ca. 11/26)—against the wishes of other Quartet members—that no progress on the draft would be made before Israeli elections. U.S. Secy. of State Colin Powell briefed PA Planning M Nabil Shaath on the U.S. decision during consultations in Washington on 11/27–28.

At the Herzliya national security conference on 12/4, Sharon stated that he agreed with the draft road map "in principle," but he rejected the idea of adopting a detailed timetable and reiterated that Arafat would have to be removed and all violence cease before any steps toward peace could be made (see Doc. C). He later emphasized (12/5) that accepting the U.S. road map in principle did not mean that he agreed with the aim of creating a Palestinian state by 2005.

At the same time, in the wake of the 11/28 Kenya attacks, the Israeli government stepped up accusations of a Palestinian link to al-Qa'ida. IDF Chief of Staff Moshe Ya'alon claimed (12/2) that the IDF had already foiled many al-Qa'ida attacks in Israel and that al-Qa'ida uses Palestinian operatives in the territories. Sharon claimed (12/5) that al-Qa'ida members were inside Gaza and Lebanon, "operating closely with Hizballah."

Neither provided evidence. On 12/4, Israel deported American physician Nazem Diab, who had been detained since his arrival at Ben-Gurion airport on 11/14 on the grounds that he had funneled money from al-Qa'ida to Hamas. The U.S. officially denied (12/4) that Diab had any links to terrorism and criticized Israel for barring U.S. officials from seeing him during his detention. Hours later, however, the U.S. issued a low-key retraction of its statement absolving Diab and refused further comment. The PA accused (12/7) Mossad of attempting to set up fake al-Qa'ida cells in the territories by enticing selected Palestinians to recruit Palestinian youths in exchange for money. (Later, on 2/3, an Israeli military court sentenced a Gaza Hamas member arrested in 6/00 to 27 years for training with al-Qa'ida in Afghanistan and plotting attacks on Israelis; he was accused of being a member of al-Qa'ida or of having taken any violent action.)

On 12/12, the U.S. publicly announced that the road map would not be ready for adoption at the Quartet meeting on 12/20, citing "heated Israeli objections" (particularly over EU, Russian, and UN participation in the drafting process) as part of the reason. The EU expressed (12/12) dismay and frustration over the U.S.'s "lack of appreciation" of the importance of making progress on reviving the peace process, especially in the event of war in Iraq. In the week before the 12/20 session, the EU repeatedly urged (e.g., 2/13, 2/15, 2/18) the U.S. not to delay the road map's adoption, arguing that Israelis should know the details of the plan before going to the polls on 1/28.

On 12/20, U.S. Pres. George W. Bush and Secy. of State Powell received EU pres. and Danish FM Per Stig Moeller, EU foreign policy dir. Javier Solana, Russian FM Igor Ivanov, and UN Secy.-Gen. Kofi Annan in Washington. The Quartet reaffirmed its call for the creation of a Palestinian state by 2005 and said it had completed "99.5%" of the revisions to the draft road map, but Powell overruled calls to finalize and endorse the plan. The latest draft reportedly differs little from previous versions. Administration officials said (12/20) privately, however, that the U.S. had pushed for new language implying that Arafat's ouster must come before the creation of a state, even though the EU, in particular, protested. The participants canceled a postmeeting press conference so as not to embarrass the U.S. by pointing up the U.S. differences with the other Quartet mem-

bers. Instead, the State Dept. issued a statement (12/20; see Doc. D3) reporting that the "drafting of a timetable for creation of a Palestinian state is being accompanied by actions leading to the goal of easing Mr. Arafat out." The U.S. gave Israel and the PA copies of the revised road map on 12/23.

Back in the territories, from early 12/02 through Christmas, Palestinian violence diminished while Israeli military action increased. On the Palestinian side, armed men from Hamas (12/15, 12/16), Islamic Jihad, the PFLP (12/12), and an unknown group (12/21) unsuccessfully attempted to infiltrate Jewish settlements or into Israel; one Jewish settler (12/20) and two IDF soldiers (12/12) were fatally shot by Palestinians; and the IDF found and disabled (12/20) a package bomb in Netanya. On the Israeli side, the IDF staged major raids on Jenin on 12/2 (opening fire on a market full of children on their way to school, killing 1 and wounding 18) and Bureij r.c. on 12/6 (killing 10), closed al-Najah University (12/14), kept up its high pace of house demolitions, and apparently eased open fire regulations, increasingly shooting stone throwers and ordinary Palestinians who strayed too close to IDF posts or Jewish settlements or who left their homes during curfew (see Chronology for details). The IDF also assassinated senior Palestinian resistance comm. (PRC) member Mustafa Sabah (12/4), Islamic Jihad's 'Abd al-Hadi Omar (12/7), and Hamas's Tulkarm military cmdr. Tariq 'Abid Rabbuh (12/13), Jadallah Shuka (12/13), Shaman Subuh (12/23), and Mustafa Baqash (12/23), also killing Hamas's Yasin al-Agha (12/10) and Talib Abu Hawash (12/25), and wanted Palestinian Usama Badra (12/10) in what may have been assassinations. By the close of 12/25, 2,190 Palestinians and 654 Israelis had been killed.

The London Quartet Meeting

In an attempt to show some movement on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict after the suspension of the road map, British PM Tony Blair, the strongest backer of a U.S. strike on Iraq, invited (12/16) the PA and Quartet reps. to London on 1/14 for talks on PA reform. The U.S. and PA immediately welcomed the idea, but Israel, which was not invited, sought to discredit the meeting by stressing that it would discuss reforms only, not wider peace process issues. In the run-up to the 1/14 meeting, Israeli-British tensions escalated when Blair turned down (12/17) a request for a meeting by Israeli FM Benjamin Netanyahu but agreed to meet (1/9) Labor

candidate for PM Amram Mitzna and when Britain announced (1/3) that it would not sell Israel spare parts for 140 F-4 Phantom fighter jets on the grounds that British exports could not be used against Palestinians.

Meanwhile, violence in the territories escalated sharply on 12/26, just before Fatah and Hamas were to resume cease-fire talks in Cairo (see below), when the IDF reoccupied Bethlehem immediately after Christmas and reimposed a 24-hour curfew on residents; assassinated AMB Tulkarm head Jamal Yahya, Hamas's Bassam Ashqar, and Islamic Jihad Qabatiyya head Yusif Abu Rub; and fatally shot a wanted Palestinian inside a Ramallah hospital in what may have been an assassination. Around this time, reports started surfacing that some IDF soldiers were conducting a "lottery"—stopping Palestinians for interrogation and making them draw a lot for their punishment, either to their persons (e.g., broken arm, broken hand, broken leg, broken foot, broken nose, smashed head) or to their cars (e.g., break window, take keys, slash tires), which soldiers would then carry out; on 12/30, a 17-year-old Palestinian caught violating the curfew in Hebron was beaten to death by IDF soldiers in what was thought to be the first lottery fatality. The IDF also staged (1/1–2) major raids into Bureij r.c., Maghazi r.c., and Nussayrat r.c., and demolished (1/2–3) 29 Palestinian houses in Rafah r.c.

In response to Israeli actions, Palestinians fired (12/26) two mortars at a Jewish settlement in Gaza, causing damage but no injuries; Islamic Jihad gunmen infiltrated (12/27) Otniel settlement, fatally shooting two Jewish settlers and two IDF soldiers; an East Jerusalem Palestinian prematurely detonated (12/28) a car bomb in East Jerusalem, injuring only himself; a Palestinian gunman infiltrated (1/2) a home in Maor near the West Bank border but was fatally shot before injuring the residents; and AMB members ambushed (1/4) an IDF undercover unit in Jenin, wounding five IDF soldiers. In addition, Hamas for the first time (12/28) fired a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) at an IDF patrol in Gaza, destroying an armored car and injuring two IDF soldiers.

The violence peaked on 1/5, when two AMB suicide bombers from Nablus detonated devices on parallel streets near the Tel Aviv bus station, killing 14 Israelis and 9 foreign workers, and marking the first suicide bombing in Israel since 11/21/02. Over the next week, Israel, still constrained by U.S.

pressure, did not stage a major attack, but intensified arrest raids, continued house demolitions, demolished numerous workshops in Gaza City (1/5) and Khan Yunis (1/11), closed (1/8) three Palestinian colleges, made (1/12) failed assassination attempts on Hamas members Muhammad Abu Shammala and Ra'id al-Attar, and killed (1/7) two Hamas and one Islamic Jihad member in what may have been assassinations (see Chronology for details). Most significantly, a Palestinian delegation that had been invited to London for the Quartet meeting was barred (1/6) by Israel from leaving the country. Britain and the U.S. urged Israel to reconsider, including through personal appeals by Blair (1/7, 1/9) and Powell (1/6), but Sharon would not back down, even refusing (1/10) to meet with the British ambassador.

Blair convened the Quartet meeting on 1/14 as planned, with the Palestinian delegation participating by video link. Reps. from Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia also attended. The PA briefed the delegates on its reform progress, stressing that efforts were hampered by Israel's military actions. The Quartet acknowledged the PA's "significant progress" and its difficulties, but said that Israeli actions, in the words of Britain, "cannot be used as an excuse" to halt reform and that the PA should step up the pace of changes. Egypt updated the Quartet on its efforts to advance national unity talks among the Palestinian factions (see below). No decisions were taken. By 1/14, the death toll had reached 2,245 Palestinians and 675 Israelis.

The Run-up to Israeli Elections

The period between 1/15 and the end of the quarter was marked by positioning and waiting, pending Israeli elections on 1/28 and UN inspectors reports on Iraq (expected to determine the U.S. decision on a military offensive) on 1/27 and 2/14; the outcomes of both events were expected to shape the direction of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. International attention focused almost exclusively on Iraq, and the U.S., in particular, had no desire to shift it back to the Palestinians unless it was to show progress toward peace.

Israel became increasingly outspoken (e.g., 1/26, 2/9) about its hopes that the U.S.'s removal of Saddam Hussein would cause a domino effect in the region, prompting Iran and Syria to drop support for the Palestinian opposition groups and Hizballah, and the Palestinians to halt the intifada and agree to peace on Israel's terms. In a candid series of

statements on 1/19, Sharon spokesman Raanan Gissin said that Sharon believed that the road map was "not realistic. . . . There is nothing in that program that can be implemented." Sharon himself declared that the "Quartet is nothing! Don't take it seriously! I don't think the United States takes it seriously" and publicly told the EU, "Your attitude toward Israel and the Arabs and the Palestinians should be balanced. . . . When it will be balanced, you are mostly welcome to participate" in the peace process. In a response to a statement (1/26) by Powell that Israel must offer the Palestinians more than a "phony state diced into a thousand different pieces," Israel declared (1/26) that it planned to present its own two-stage road map, without timetable, under which, according to a senior diplomatic source (*Ha'aretz* 1/26), "In the first half, [all responsibility] is placed on the Palestinians and only when they prove themselves in a long list of difficult demands, will it be time for the second half."

Egypt convened a meeting (1/24–27) in Cairo of all Palestinian factions in hopes of convincing them to agree to a cease-fire that could be announced right before the Israeli elections (see below). Possibly to scuttle the Cairo talks or as an election ploy, Sharon stepped up attacks on Gaza and threatened (1/25) to reoccupy the entire Strip, using as a pretext Hamas's firing (1/24) three Qassam rockets across the Gaza border into Sederot, lightly injuring one Israeli (itself a response to the IDF firing 11 rockets into a metal workshop in downtown Gaza City). The three-day assault (1/24–26) on Bayt Hanun, Gaza City, and Rafah marked Israel's deepest incursion into Gaza since the start of the intifada, killing 14 Palestinians and injuring scores. After pulling out (1/26), the IDF made (1/27) a failed assassination attempt on senior Hamas member Muhammad Atil, firing missiles at his Gaza City home, killing his two teenage children and wounding 11 others. In Cairo, the Palestinian factions adjourned (1/27) without agreeing on a cease-fire.

Indeed, the IDF intensified its arrest raids immediately after the 1/14 London meeting and continued up to the elections to raid and shut Palestinian universities, demolish houses, and liberally fire on Palestinians and residential areas (see Chronology). Of note, the IDF razed (1/21) 63 shops in the Nazlat Issa market and began confiscating (1/20) dozens of Palestinian taxis with Israeli license plates operating in East Jerusalem on

suspicion that they were transporting illegal workers. The only notable Palestinians incidents were the ambush and fatal shooting (1/23) of three IDF soldiers near Hebron, a Palestinian van packed with explosives discovered (1/21) by Israeli police in Umm al-Fahm, and Hamas's fatal shooting (1/17) of a prominent Kach activist during a raid on an illegal settlement outpost near Hebron, which sparked three days of rampaging, attacks, and vandalism by Jewish settlers in Palestinian areas of Hebron, unimpeded by the IDF. As of 1/28, 2,284 Palestinians and 679 Israelis had been killed.

As expected, Sharon and his Likud party won (1/28) a landslide election victory, largely at the Labor party's expense, taking 38 seats, up from 19. (Yisrael Ba'Alia agreed to "merge" with Likud on 2/6, giving Sharon control of another two seats.) Sharon immediately said that he would take the full six weeks allowed to form a government and urged the U.S. not to move forward with the road map until the new government was in place. Bush's State of the Union address that night was long on Iraq and short on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, with a single sentence on the latter: "We will continue to seek peace between a secure Israel and a democratic Palestine."

Preparing for the Post-Iraq Environment

With elections out of the way and coalition building against Iraq the primary U.S. concern, pressure on Israel grew to make some opening to the Palestinians. Among those congratulating Sharon on his victory were Arafat, who publicly called (1/29) on him to resume peace talks immediately (Sharon replied that he would not deal with Palestinians "involved in terror"), and EU Pres. Romano Prodi, who urged (1/29) him to take action on the road map quickly. Egyptian pres. Mubarak, who had refused direct contact with Sharon since 4/02 (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 124), phoned him twice (1/29, 2/3) to invite him to reopen peace talks with the Palestinians in Cairo after the formation of his new government, but Sharon demurred. Similarly, Blair urged (1/31) Bush to announce the road map immediately, but Bush refused, saying he was totally focused on Iraq. On 2/8, the U.S. formally told the PA that the road map was on hold until after formation of an Israeli government.

Behind the scenes, however, the U.S. was pressing Sharon to resume contacts with PA

officials regarding security coordination and a cease-fire to get violence under control. Under "intense pressure," Sharon held (2/5) a secret meeting with senior PA official Ahmad Qurai' and offered a plan whereby the IDF would withdraw from selected areas, turn over security control to the PA Preventive Security Force (PSF), and increasingly ease economic conditions. The arrangement would be expanded to additional areas if the PSF prevented violence—the same idea as former DM Benjamin Ben-Eliezer's Gaza First proposal that Israel proposed and then backed away from last quarter (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 126). Sharon Chief of Staff Dov Weisglass and PA Interior M. Hanan al-Hassan met (2/6) secretly at the home of U.S. Amb. Dan Kurtzer to discuss details of the plan, but no agreement was reached. Israel and the PA revealed the talks on 2/8 and scheduled another Weisglass-Hassan meeting for 2/10, but it was delayed twice without explanation and had not been rescheduled by the end of the quarter.

Meanwhile, the Quartet (minus the U.S., which declined to send a rep.) held six days of quiet talks (2/9–14) with Arafat in Ramallah, the details of which were not released. At the close of the meetings, Arafat held a press conference to announce his intention to appoint a PM. The Quartet reportedly asked him to provide them with a timetable by 2/16 for naming the PM, saying they wanted the process completed before a U.S. strike on Iraq. An aide to EU special envoy Miguel Moratinos said (2/14) that Arafat "has seen that the international situation has changed and he has to adapt." Israel refused (2/10) to confirm or deny reports in *Yedi'ot Abaronot* (2/9) that it had reached a written agreement with the U.S. on conditions (e.g., refusing to appoint a PM with executive powers) for ousting Arafat after the U.S. removes Saddam Hussein.

As the quarter closed, violence in the territories continued apace, with the IDF increasingly focusing military assaults, particularly house demolitions, in Gaza and conducting massive arrest raids targeting Hamas and Islamic Jihad in the West Bank—this despite reports by the IDF (2/4) that the PSF had noticeably increased efforts to curb violence in Gaza since just before the elections. The IDF assassinated AMB Tulkarm cmdr. Fayiz Jabber (1/30), Hamas's Iyad Musa (1/30), and the PFLP's Imad Mabruk (2/10), and fatally shot a wanted *tanzim* member (2/11) in what may have been an

assassination. On the Palestinian side, the AMB and PFLP staged (2/6) a joint attack on an IDF post in Nablus, killing two IDF soldiers; three Islamic Jihad members detonated a car bomb near an IDF post outside Gush Katif, killing only themselves but lightly injuring four soldiers; a PFLP gunman fatally shot (2/11) an IDF soldier in Bethlehem's Manger Square; and three Hamas members were caught (2/10) near Ramallah carrying 44 lbs. of explosives, allegedly en route to stage a suicide bombing. Anticipating Palestinian attacks during the Id al-Adha holiday, the IDF sealed the territories and imposed 24-hour curfews on Palestinian population centers on 2/10. The seal was lifted on 2/13, but curfews remained in place in many areas. At the close of the quarter, the IDF continued its full reoccupation of Hebron, Jenin, Nablus, Qalqilya, Ramallah, and Tulkarm and its partial reoccupation of Bethlehem; only Jericho remained encircled but free of troops.

Intifada Data and Trends

During the quarter at least 268 Palestinians and 53 Israelis were killed, bringing the toll at the close of the quarter to at least 2,326 Palestinians (including 31 Israeli Arabs and 14 unidentified Arab cross-border infiltrators), 686 Israelis (including 210 IDF soldiers and security personnel, 158 settlers, 318 civilians), and 29 foreign nationals. PA officials reported that of the approximately 2,100 Palestinians killed as of 11/26, 258 were PSF officers. The Associated Press estimated that as of 1/14/03, 275 unarmed Palestinian children (under age 18) and 72 Israeli children had been killed. Addameer (12/10) and B'Tselem (1/2) estimated that 6,000 Palestinians were in Israeli jails, 1,000 of them under administrative detention (compared to 36 in 1/02). The Israeli DMin. reported (12/29) that the IDF had arrested more than 1,200 Palestinians since the end of 10/02.

On 11/18 the UNRWA announced that it was planning to distribute food parcels to 1.3 m. Palestinians in the territories in the first half of 2003, up from 115,000 before the al-Aqsa intifada began. The UNRWA issued emergency appeals (12/10, 2/10) for \$94 m. to cover the cost of the distributions for 6 mos., warning of a "great humanitarian disaster" if donors did not come through. Palestinians in Gaza noted (ca. 1/12) sharp increases in the cost of fuel (up 9%) and basic foodstuffs (flour up 53%, cooking oil up 24%, bread up 17%) since 1/1/03.

This quarter, Israel carried out 15 killings that were clearly or almost definitely assassinations (down from 17 last quarter), also killing 6 bystanders and wounding 17: AMB's Tariq Zaghal (11/19), Ala' Ahmad Sabbagh (11/26), Jamal Yahya (12/26), and Fayiz Jabber (1/30); Hamas's Imad Nasharti (11/26), Tariq 'Abid Rabbuh (12/13), Jadallah Shuka (12/13), Shaman Subuh (12/23), Mustafa Baqash (12/23), Bassam Ashqar (12/26), and Iyad Musa (1/31); Islamic Jihad's 'Abd al-Hadi Omar (12/7) and Yusuf Abu Rub (12/26); the PFLP's Imad Mabruk (2/10); and PRC member Mustafa Sabah (12/4). At least 7 other deaths (two on 12/10, 12/25, 12/26, 1/7, 1/12, 2/11) had the markings of assassinations but could not be confirmed; 1 Palestinian was wounded in these incidents. Attacks on wanted Palestinian Ra'id 'Abd al-Ghani (11/17), Islamic Jihad's Imad al-Barqawi (12/1), and Hamas's Muhammad Abu Shammala (1/12), Ra'id al-Attar (1/12), and Muhammad Atil (1/27) were clearly failed assassination attempts, which killed 5 bystanders and wounded 13.

During the quarter, there were 15 Palestinian suicide attacks (up from 13 last quarter), which killed 51 and injured around 97 (compared to 43 killed and around 175 injured last quarter). Of these, 6 were bombings (11/21, 11/22, 12/27, 1/5, 1/17, 2/9). The other 9 attacks (11/28, 11/29, 12/2, 12/21, 12/27, 1/12, 1/17, 1/23, 2/6) could be called "suicide" insofar as they were certain to result in the deaths of those who staged them. Though multiple groups occasionally took responsibility for a single incident, Islamic Jihad is believed to have staged 5 attacks (up from 3), the AMB 4 (up from 2), Hamas 1 (down from 5), and the PFLP 1 (same as last quarter); 4 incidents were carried out by unaffiliated individuals (up from 2). Use of mortars, rockets, grenades, and roadside bombs seemed to be the same as last quarter. Except for suicide attacks, Hamas was noticeably more aggressive this quarter, for the first time using a roadside bomb to destroy a Magach 7-Kfir tank (2/15), killing four IDF soldiers; using an RPG to destroy an armored car (12/28); and stating (12/15, 1/12) that it was considering kidnapping Israelis to hold them in exchange for the release of Hamas members in Israeli custody. Previous tank strikes (on 2/14/02, killing 3 and injuring 2; in 3/14/02, killing 3; in 9/5/02, killing 1 and injuring several) were staged by the PRCs and destroyed larger Merkava tanks.

IDF demolition of Palestinian houses was up dramatically this quarter (see Chronology for details), with most incidents in the Gaza Strip (at least 185 in s. Gaza, of which 160 were in Rafah; 28 in central Gaza; 29 in n. Gaza). House demolitions in the West Bank were concentrated in the Hebron area (at least 53), with 14 in the Nablus region, at least 11 in Bethlehem, 7 in Jenin, 4 in Ramallah, 3 in Tulkarm, and 5 in East Jerusalem. The IDF also bulldozed a high concentration of shops in Nazlat Issa (63 on 1/21), Khan Yunis (30 on 1/11), and Jenin (11 on 1/14), as well as 18 factories and workshops (mostly automotive) in Rafah (12/23, 1/25–26). The PA Housing Min. estimated that as of 12/10/02, 41,000 Palestinian homes had been damaged and 2,777 houses, 411 PA security installations, and 112 public buildings had been totally destroyed since the start of the intifada.

At least 11 ailing Palestinians (up from 9 last quarter) died when they were prevented from crossing IDF checkpoints to reach hospitals or when the IDF barred medical workers from reaching the wounded (2 on 11/27, 12/3, 12/6, 12/8, 12/10, 12/29, 12/30, 1/1, 1/11, 2/2). IDF attacks and raids on medical centers (e.g., 11/18, 11/19, 11/27, 12/5, 12/26, 12/30, 2/5) seemed to be high, though PRCS reporting may simply have improved. This is down from 9 last quarter. The IDF also continued to wound (12/29, 1/28), beat (11/19, 1/21), and detain (11/19, 12/15) journalists to prevent them from covering clashes; most of the reporters and cameramen were Palestinians working for foreign outlets.

Buffer Zones

Israel continued work this quarter on a buffer zone and security fence paralleling the Green Line in the West Bank (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 126). Palestinian hydrologists warned (12/23) that in the n. West Bank (Jenin, Qalqilya, Tulkarm), 100% of water reserves will be on the Israeli side of the fence and that irrigation-based agriculture in that area could fall from 22% to 3%, creating “a fait accompli that will weaken the Palestinian side in any future negotiations on water.” Rabbis for Human Rights estimated (1/9) that in the n. West Bank, 10–27% of the land (some 132,000 dunams) will fall between the Green Line and the separation fence: in Qalqilya the area off-limits to Palestinians would cover 35,000 dunams (including 25,000 citrus trees, 80,000 fruit and almond trees, 120,000 olive trees, 2,000

greenhouses, 4,000 dunams of crop land, 2,000 dunams of pasture land, 10,000 dunams of other arable land, and 22 wells supplying 3.3 mcm of water/year); in Tulkarm the area would cover 47,000 dunams (including 29 wells providing 3.8 mcm of water/year).

The IDF issued (ca. 12/14) an order for clearing land for construction of the security fence near Qalqilya that effectively requires the removal of the entire village of al-Daba', where 250 Palestinians live in 42 houses on 600–700 dunams of land. The IDF also issued (1/27) an order taking control of 20,000 dunams north of Tulkarm for the fence project.

Within days of the 11/28 Beit She'an attack, the Gilboa regional council approved plans to build a privately funded electronic security fence along 40 km of the Green Line to separate the region from the West Bank. The council hoped to raise \$52 m. of funds and begin work by 2/03 and complete it before the end of 2003. On 12/5, the IDF agreed to incorporate the Gilboa plan into the existing government plan. On 1/27, the IDF began work on a 45-km stretch of fence running from Kafr Salim to Beit She'an.

The IDF also continued work on separation fences around individual or blocs of settlements in the West Bank (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 126), completing the first perimeter fence around Hermesh on 1/1. As of 12/1, the IDF was reportedly working on a fence encircling 'Aley Sinai, Dugit, and Nisanit settlements in n. Gaza, effectively annexing the area to Israel. The YESHA settlers' council was reportedly drawing up (ca. 1/16) its own separation fence plans, some of which had been shared with the IDF. One of the plans reportedly recommends expanding the Jerusalem corridor, placing the Binyamin and Gush Etzion settlement blocs west of the fence, encircling Bethlehem from the north, and creating a corridor to the Ganim-Qadim settlements in the north. Settlements in the Nablus area would remain east of the fence. If adopted, the plan would put 110,000 West Bank Palestinians west of the fence, in comparison to the “few thousand” who would be annexed under the existing IDF plan.

Palestinians in Gaza reported (12/12) that the IDF was building a wall along 500 m of the border with Egypt near Rafah r.c., 30 m inside Palestinian territory. The IDF also reportedly intended (1/8) to submit construction plans for a 200-km fence that would run from the Dead Sea to Jerusalem and n. to

Elkana, with 75% of the work to be completed by 7/03.

Israeli Legal Maneuvers

Israel stepped up the prosecution of Palestinians from Israel and the occupied territories (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 126). Israeli courts convicted a total of 10 Israeli Arabs (12/30, 1/8, 1/30) and 8 East Jerusalem Palestinians (12/15, 12/30) on charges of plotting or aiding in attacks and sentenced them to terms ranging from three years to multiple life sentences. Two Hamas members (1/16) and one Islamic Jihad member (1/24), possibly from the West Bank, were similarly convicted.

Reversing an 8/18/02 decision, the Israeli High Court ruled (1/21) that the IDF's "neighborhood procedure" (i.e., sending a Palestinian to warn a wanted individual to surrender to troops waiting nearby) is legal, saying the IDF may not force Palestinians to act as human shields, but it may use them if they "volunteer."

In a case brought by eight IDF reservists who refused to serve in the occupied territories on the grounds that the Israeli occupation is illegal, the Israeli High Court ruled (12/30) that reservists cannot refuse specific assignments (e.g., postings to the West Bank or Gaza) and claim to be conscientious objectors.

INTRA-PALESTINIAN RELATIONS AND REFORM EFFORTS

PA reforms continued at a slower pace this quarter, as many steps could not go forward without further progress on the U.S. draft road map, suspended by the U.S. in advance of Israeli elections and a possible strike on Iraq. Most intra-Palestinian activity focused on unity talks among the Palestinian factions aimed at agreeing on a unified political program and strategy, securing a ceasefire, and convincing Hamas to participate in the PA and in eventual elections.

Of note: Arafat's Orient House adviser Samir Gosheh announced (1/9) that Orient House had resumed limited legal and diplomatic operations out of temporary offices in the West Bank, following Israel's closure on 8/10/01 of Orient House (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 121). The PA also opened an embassy in Belarus on 2/4.

Political Reform

During their consultations in Washington on 11/27, Powell informed PA Planning M Shaath that the U.S. did not believe that the

PA could hold elections on 1/20/03 as planned and that the U.S. did not intend to press Israel before its 1/28/03 elections on a withdrawal from population centers to facilitate Palestinian elections. As a result, Arafat postponed elections indefinitely on 12/8; the Palestinian Council (PC) formally confirmed the decision on 12/22. The PA reportedly completed (ca. 12/28) a new draft election law based on a parliamentary system (no details were released), and Arafat announced (2/14) plans to appoint a PM.

The PLO constitution comm. presented (1/9) to 34 of 128 members of the PLO Central Comm. a draft constitution that would replace the Basic Law after creation of a Palestinian state. With so few members in attendance because of Israeli travel bans, debate on the draft was postponed. The draft was not released publicly but reportedly calls for a parliamentary democracy, with a 150-member parliament in two chambers, representing Palestinians in the state and the diaspora, and with a "strong" president who could not serve more than two five-year terms. On 1/16 PC speaker Qurai' said that completion of the constitution, while important, was not a priority given the uncertain political environment.

Security Reform

Interior M Hassan took steps to improve PSF efforts to halt Palestinian violence in Gaza, particularly in the north (where Palestinians had frequently launched rockets and mortars into Israel), setting up some new outposts and increasing patrols. A PSF officer who stopped a suspicious vehicle near the border at Bayt Hanun was shot and wounded (12/21) by an Islamic Jihad member. The PSF also reportedly arrested (ca. 12/4) DFLP Central Comm. member Issam Abu Daqqah in Gaza. The IDF acknowledged (2/4) the PSF efforts in Gaza.

Israel itself seemed resistant to improving security coordination with the PA. Between 12/3/02 and 1/11/03, Israel closed all West Bank District Coordination Offices (DCOs) except for the DCO in Jericho, confiscating all PSF weapons at the stations on the pretext that it was dangerous to have armed PSF officers in close proximity to IDF soldiers. The DCOs are joint IDF-PSF posts that were created to enhance regional security cooperation between Israel and the PA. Since the start of the intifada, they have been crucial in facilitating the transportation of wounded or ailing Palestinians to hospitals during curfews and closures.

Fiscal Reform

PA Finance M Salam Fayyad presented (12/31) a \$1.3 b. budget for FY 2003, forecasting a deficit of \$747 m. The new budget includes two notable reforms: incorporating a shadow defense budget into the public accounts and requiring salaries to PSF officers to be made by direct deposit instead of in cash. The PC, meeting on 2/1 via video conference, approved (45-5, with 37 members absent) the budget, without holding the three required readings.

During the last quarter, Israel finally agreed to transfer to the PA \$43 m. of the approximately \$681 m. of value-added tax (VAT) collected on the PA's behalf in three installments. By the end of the quarter, however, only two (totaling \$29 m.) had been completed. Under pressure from the U.S., Israel made the third transfer of \$15 m. on 11/24. Almost all of the \$15 m. went to Israel's electricity company to cover PA expenses; \$200,000 went to the Israeli Agriculture Min. to cover the cost of vaccinations given to Palestinian farmers.

With the U.S. pressing Israel to make monthly payments of the frozen VAT revenues, Israel transferred \$28 m. to the PA on 12/10. (A senior Israeli official said on 12/10 that Israel's decision to make the monthly payments was "not unrelated to the government's request for U.S. loan guarantees and increased financial assistance"—see below.) A second transfer of an unknown amount was made on 1/1, and a third of \$58 m. was made on 2/3. USAID had agreed to monitor the funds to make sure they were not used to "support terrorism," but Israel complained (1/1) that its monitoring was insufficient.

Israeli courts issued several rulings authorizing Israel to seize the PA's frozen funds to pay Israeli firms: On 1/29 \$9 m. was ordered seized to pay the Ayalon insurance company to cover claims for cars stolen between 1996 and 2000, allegedly with the PA's knowledge and cooperation; on 2/2 \$12 m. was ordered seized to pay Israel's electric company for power supplied to Gaza districts; on 2/4, \$10 m. was ordered seized to pay damages to Israel's Egged bus company for losses caused by suicide bombings.

Judicial Reform

On 12/26 Arafat issued a presidential decree appointing Khalid al-Qidra as atty. gen. and merging the offices of the state security and public prosecutors. The Palestinian Center for Human Rights and lawyers groups opposed the decision, arguing that the High

Judiciary Council, an independent council of judges, is the only body allowed to make court appointments under the Basic Law and that the state security courts are illegal and should have been eliminated altogether. They did not oppose the choice of Qidra himself, only the method of his appointment. Lawyers groups also opposed a PA order (12/31) that a 2002 presidential decree temporarily appointing 49 judges remain in force indefinitely (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 125), saying it was a violation of the PA law organizing the judiciary.

National Unity

Hamas and Fatah agreed (11/19) to re-sum national unity talks in Cairo, the first round of which were held 11/10-13 (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 126), after Ramadan ended on 12/4. The first round had made significant progress but had been temporarily derailed by Israel's assassination of a senior Hamas member and the Islamic Jihad ambush on 11/15.

In the interim between sessions, PLO Secy. Gen. Mahmud Abbas addressed (ca. 11/26) a meeting of Fatah leaders in Gaza, where he denounced the "armed intifada" and urged Palestinian factions to agree on a "formula for truce" that would be followed by election of a new Palestinian government "to specify the road we should take, announce it openly, and convince our people that the road will lead to our desired goals" (see further excerpts of his address in *JPS* 126).

Egypt apparently held discussions with Fatah and Hamas behind the scenes and concluded by 12/15 that the gap between their positions had narrowed enough to expand the talks to include the other Palestinian factions. During the second half of 12/02, Omar Sulayman, adviser to Egyptian pres. Husni Mubarak, held a series of bilateral meetings with nine factions (including the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP], Fatah, FIDA, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, PFLP, Palestine Liberation Front [PLF], Palestinian Peoples Party [PPP]) and invited them to participate in a meeting of all factions on 12/22. The session was postponed for a week at the last minute on 12/22 without explanation, though it was likely due to the IDF assassination of two Hamas members that day.

Sulayman continued bilateral meetings with the factions through the end of 12/02 and held a single joint meeting with Fatah and Hamas on 1/2. At the London meeting

on 1/14, Sulayman briefed the Quartet on the talks and presented a draft "national agreement of all the Palestinian factions," reportedly outlining the Palestinians' minimum demands and basic goals (an independent state within the 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as its capital, and a "just solution" for the refugee problem based on UN Res. 194). The draft reportedly proposed a two-stage cease-fire, with Israel and the Palestinians first agreeing to end attacks against civilians, then expanding to a comprehensive cease-fire and implementation of the U.S. road map, including a settlement freeze and release of prisoners. As of 1/14 only Arafat, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad had seen the draft, and only Arafat had approved it.

Sulayman brought all Palestinian factions together in Cairo again on 1/24 to debate the draft and, ideally, agree on a cease-fire before the 1/28 Israeli elections. (This was the first meeting of all factions since the 13th Palestine National Council session in 1982.) Talks snagged on conditions for a cease-fire: Fatah was the only group willing to adopt a one-year unilateral cease-fire. Hamas and Islamic Jihad refused to consider a cease-fire unless Israel agreed to halt assassinations in return. There was discussion of putting a unilateral cease-fire pledge "on deposit" with Egypt until Israel gave some sort of guarantees that it would respond favorably, but nothing was decided. The factions also disagreed on whether a cease-fire would be inside Israel only or in the territories as well. In addition, Hamas was uncomfortable with wording stating the Palestinians' goal as a Palestinian state within 1967 borders; it was willing to accept this as a minimum goal but not to explicitly renounce claims to all of historic Palestine. The factions broke on 1/27 without taking a decision, agreeing tentatively to resume talks on 2/26.

There were continued signs of fissuring within Fatah and the AMB this quarter, with the Nablus wing of the AMB increasingly acting on its own. The 1/5 Tel Aviv suicide bombing was carried out by two members of the Nablus AMB. It was claimed as an AMB operation by cells in Nablus and Gaza, whereas AMB cells in Ramallah disavowed responsibility and pledged to work for a cease-fire. After Interior M Hassan, a senior Fatah man, condemned a 1/23 AMB suicide attack in which two of its men were killed, the Nablus AMB released (2/7) a letter warning him not to come to Nablus or it would

"have to send its first suicide bomber against a Palestinian." The statement also threatened Nablus *tanzim* head Walid Kharrush for not paying condolences to the families of the 1/23 gunmen. Hassan defied the AMB by going to Nablus on 2/8 to brief public figures on efforts to resume talks with Israel and PA strategy in the event of a U.S. strike on Iraq.

On 2/7 Hamas spokesman Mahmud Zahar declared that Hamas was "absolutely" able to take over leadership from the PA "politically, financially, socially" but said it would do so through elections, not by force.

PALESTINIAN OPINION

The following data are excerpted from a poll conducted by the Jerusalem Media and Communication Center (JMCC) between 8 and 12 December 2002. Results are based on a survey of 1,200 men and women from the West Bank and Gaza. The poll, 47th in a series, was taken from JMCC's Web site at www.jmcc.org.

1. There is a discussion within Palestinian society on the benefit of continuing the intifada. What is your opinion? Should the intifada continue in its current form, should it continue but in other forms, or should the intifada stop? (* = answers not included among the options read to the interviewees)

	West Bank	Gaza	Total
a. Should continue in its current form	57.9%	60.2%	58.8%
b. Should stop	19.5%	13.2%	17.2%
c. Should continue in other forms	5.5%	8.0%	6.4%
d. Should reactivate the popular characteristic of the intifada*	3.7%	2.0%	3.1%
e. By reactivating armed resistance*	4.3%	8.9%	6.0%
f. By reinforcing national unity and organiz[ing] the intifada*	3.6%	4.3%	3.8%
g. No answer	5.5%	3.4%	4.7%

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	Total
a. Suitable response under current conditions	65.3%	76.1%	69.3%
b. I reject it and find it harmful	26.8%	19.1%	24.0%
c. I don't know	5.3%	3.9%	4.8%
d. No answer	2.6%	0.9%	1.9%

3. Some believe that a two-state formula is the favored solution for the Arab-Israeli conflict, while others believe that historic Palestine cannot be divided and thus the favored solution is a binational state in all of Palestine, where Palestinians and Israelis enjoy equal representation and rights. Which of these solutions do you prefer? (* = answers not included among the options read to the interviewees)

	West Bank	Gaza	Total
a. Two-state solution, Israeli and Palestinian	48.3%	43.4%	46.5%
b. Binational state in all of historic Palestine	26.1%	26.4%	26.2%
c. One Palestinian state with one nationality*	10.0%	13.2%	11.2%
d. Islamic independent state with Jerusalem as its capital*	3.9%	8.0%	5.4%
e. Islamic state*	4.7%	4.3%	4.6%
f. I don't know	4.5%	2.7%	3.8%
g. No answer	2.5%	2.0%	2.3%

4. Some say that the ideal way to achieve Palestinian national goals is through negotiations, others say through armed struggle. Which opinion is closer to your view?

	West Bank	Gaza	Total
a. Negotiations	20.9%	21.4%	21.0%
b. Armed struggle	35.7%	35.2%	35.5%
c. Negotiations and armed struggle	38.6%	42.0%	39.8%
d. No answer	4.8%	1.4%	3.7%

JORDAN-ISRAEL

Jordan continued to keep a low profile this quarter in anticipation of a U.S. strike on Iraq and potential ramifications for the kingdom. Contacts with Israel were kept to a minimum. King Abdallah reportedly warned (1/16) the U.S. that Jordan would use military force if necessary to prevent Israel from "exploiting" chaos in the region during a strike on Iraq to push Palestinians across the border and undermine Jordanian stability. Jordan again refused (11/23, 1/11) to take in some 30 Palestinians with Jordanian travel documents whom Israel wanted to deport for living in Israel illegally (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 126).

Jordanian security forces continued (11/24-27) crackdowns on opposition groups in Ma'an in advance of a possible U.S. strike on Iraq (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 126), leaving at least two Jordanians dead. The Jordanian Interior Min. banned (12/4) a solidarity visit to Ma'an by a 20-member delegation organized by the Islamic Action Front.

The Jordanian High Court ruled (11/28) that the professional associations' anti-normalization comm. was illegal and that the associations' law "includes no provision allowing the syndicates to form any committees to practice political activities." Several hours later, the State Security Court released on bail three antinormalization comm. members detained on 10/7/02 (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 126). Officials said that the men were released as a "goodwill gesture and to give the unions another chance to stick to professional activities." On 11/29, Jordan outlawed Islamist-dominated groups that campaign against Israeli and U.S. interests in Jordan (no specific groups were mentioned) and reiterated that professional associations may not undertake political activities.

With tensions building after the U.S. announced (12/6) plans to station troops in

Jordan to hunt for Scuds in w. Iraq in the event of war, the authorities allowed a few demonstrations (e.g., 1/18, 2/1) protesting U.S. and Israeli actions as a pressure release. Jordan's arrest (1/16) of three *al-Hilal* journalists for writing an article defaming the prophet was also seen by the media as a gesture to the Islamist opposition to offset some of ill will garnered by the crackdowns.

Of note: the U.S. reportedly gave Jordan an advance copy of Powell's 12/12 speech announcing the U.S.-Middle East Partnership Initiative. Jordan was reportedly upset that it was not included alongside Bahrain, Morocco, and Qatar as "the promising Arab democracies" mentioned in the initiative and asked that it be added. The U.S. did not respond to the request, and Powell did not add Jordan to the list in his speech.

SYRIA-ISRAEL

The Israeli-Syrian negotiating track remained dormant this quarter. The main issue once again was Israel's escalating rhetoric linking Syria to "terrorism" and the U.S. "war on terror," as well as threats to strike Syria. On 12/24, Sharon accused Iraq of transferring its biological and chemical weapons to Syria in order to hide them from UN inspectors, though he later admitted (12/24) that the reports Israel had received were unconfirmed. At a meeting with American Jewish leaders in Washington, Israeli DM Shaul Mofaz stated (12/16) that if Syria and Iran did not disarm Hizballah, "Israel will do it on its own." The IDF also arrested (2/4) 17 Islamic Jihad members in Hebron, claiming they were members of a dangerous cell taking orders from Syria.

Syria rejected (11/19) a request by the U.S. to close Islamic Jihad offices in Damascus following the 11/15 Islamic Jihad ambush in Hebron, stating that such operations are planned and carried out in the occupied territories as a result of Israel's continued occupation and "not based on instructions issued by the media offices that are found in some Arab capitals." The State Dept. responded that it "is in the Syrians' best interest to get with the mainstream of the international community and reject this type of organization." British PM Blair also urged (12/16) Syrian pres. Bashar al-Asad to reduce support for Damascus-based Palestinian opposition groups and Hizballah.

Despite the hostile posturing, Israel and Syria handled a serious cross-border incident on the Golan Heights on 1/8 with the utmost

diplomacy. That day, two Syrian civilians accompanied by two armed police officers entered the disengagement zone to draw water. The IDF, believing they were hostile infiltrators, opened fire, killing one police officer and capturing a civilian, as the others fled. A nearby Syrian army patrol, believing itself under fire, initially shot back across the border, without causing injuries, but quickly held fire. Israel and Syria did not exchange accusations over the incident or comment on it extensively. Israel returned the captured civilian and body of the police officer to Damascus on 1/10.

In mid-12/02, Syria began redeploying troops to its border with the Golan out of concern that Israel could exploit a U.S. strike on Iraq in order to initiate strikes against Syria. Israel viewed (12/15) the redeployments as defensive.

Also of note: Israel decided (11/19) to dismantle the cash-strapped Kibbutz Ha'on on the eastern shore of Lake Tiberias.

LEBANON-ISRAEL

Tensions on the Israel-Lebanon border remained high this quarter as anticipation of a U.S. strike on Iraq grew, with Lebanon and Israel each fearing that the other might exploit a war on Iraq to draw it into a conflict. The respected British newsletter *Jane's Foreign Report* cited (12/16) a "senior Israeli government official" as saying that Israel had plans for a 3-5 day operation to bomb every power station in Lebanon and wipe out Hizballah's infrastructure "once and for all," "turning Lebanon back to the Stone Age." On 12/29, unnamed Lebanese officials claimed to have received information from EU countries that Sharon was seriously considering striking Lebanon on the pretext of removing the threat of Hizballah missiles from s. Lebanon. It was further claimed that the U.S. had said it would not oppose such an attack as long as Israel stayed out of a confrontation with Iraq.

In mid-1/03, Lebanon began reinforcing the border with Israel and increasing patrols in s. Lebanon in anticipation of a war on Iraq. UN Secy.-Gen. Annan praised (1/21) the increased efforts to secure the border. (Previously Lebanon had been resistant to securing the south because the border with Israel, particularly around Shaba' Farms, is still disputed; Beirut does not want to recognize the UN blue line as the official border.) Israel said (1/21) that in the preceding six months it had returned to Lebanon one Palestinian

refugee, two Lebanese civilians, and two foreigners who infiltrated Israel from Lebanon.

In keeping with UN plans, the Fijian battalion pulled out of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), reducing the UNIFIL contingent to 2,000 troops. The Polish logistics battalion and Ukrainian engineering battalion were reduced in 10/02 and 11/02 respectively. No further demobilizations are planned.

Israel continued sporadic overflights of Lebanese territory during the quarter and began mock raids deep into Lebanese air space on 1/30. (The UN expressed concern on 2/3.) In response, the Lebanese army for the first time in recent years fired (1/30) warning shots at Israeli planes. On 1/21, Hizballah fired antitank shells and mortars at IDF forces in Shaba' Farms for the first time in four months, causing no damage or injuries. Israel responded with air strikes on s. Lebanon, killing one Lebanese farmer, wounding another.

An unknown group, possibly Hizballah, detonated (12/7) a roadside bomb near an IDF patrol in Shaba' Farms, lightly wounding two IDF soldiers. The group claimed the attack was in retaliation for the death of two Lebanese, one an intelligence agent who previously worked for Hizballah, killed by a roadside bomb on 12/6, for which Hizballah had blamed Israel.

As mentioned above, Israel made public accusations this quarter that al-Qa'ida, Hizballah, and Palestinian groups were coordinating operations. In addition, Israeli Interior M. Eli Yishai announced (11/27) his decision to strip Qays Obeid, an Israeli Arab now residing in Lebanon, of his Israeli citizenship for allegedly spying for Hizballah, marking the second time that Yishai has stripped an Israeli Arab of his citizenship (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 126). On 11/28, Israeli Arab Nissim Nasser pleaded guilty in a Tel Aviv court to spying for Hizballah in exchange for a reduced sentence. Meanwhile, Fatah commanders in 'Ayn al-Hilwa r.c. turned over (2/5) a Palestinian Jordanian and a North Korean to Lebanese security forces, stating that they had discovered that the pair, who joined Fatah a year ago, were using false passports and planning attacks on U.S. and British targets meant to cause unrest and draw attention to the camps.

On 12/4, the *Washington Times* misquoted Hizballah secy. gen. Hassan Nasrallah as stating that suicide bombings "should be

exported outside Palestine. . . . I encourage Palestinians to take suicide bombings worldwide." (Hamas and Islamic Jihad immediately issued statements saying that they have "no interest in transferring the battle to any field outside Palestine.") Although Hizballah released videotape of Nasrallah proving the quote erroneous, Canada declared (12/11) a ban on Hizballah's social arm, which is believed to have major fundraising operations in the country, citing the *Washington Times* report fears that the group might use Canada as a base to attack the U.S.; Canada had banned Hizballah's military wing in 2001.

Nasrallah did confirm (1/6) that IDF Col. Elhanan Tennenbaum (res.), a suspected Mossad agent who was lured to Lebanon and kidnapped by Hizballah in 10/00, is alive. In an interview on Lebanese TV, he said that Hizballah had taken "four prisoners, one of whom is known to be alive—the Israeli colonel, Colonel Tennenbaum"; the other three are presumed dead, though Hizballah has never confirmed this (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 122). Rep. Darrel Issa (R-CA) met (1/21) in Beirut with Lebanese pres. Emile Lahoud to discuss ways of facilitating a prisoner swap between Hizballah and Israel, and urged Hizballah to allow the International Comm. of the Red Cross (ICRC) to see the four Israelis.

REGIONAL AFFAIRS

RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL

Most Arab states continued to observe a moratorium on contacts with Israel to protest its military actions. Egypt, and to a lesser degree Jordan, kept channels with Israel open to facilitate the peace process and assist the Palestinians. After Sharon's reelection, Mubarak phoned Sharon twice (1/29, 2/4) to invite him to resume negotiations with the Palestinians in Cairo.

Several Israeli officials made visits to Egypt and Jordan before the 1/28 elections to discuss "regional issues." Visitors to Egypt included Labor party MK Yossi Katz (12/1), Labor member Ephraim Sneh (12/29), left-wing Meretz party leaders Yossi Sarid and Yossi Beilin (1/5), and Israel's National Security Adviser Ephraim Halevy (1/8). Jordanian FM Marwan Muasher announced (1/14) that he had a meeting scheduled with Labor, Likud, and Meretz party members in the two weeks before Israeli elections.

INTER-ARAB HIGHLIGHTS

Arab leaders kept in close contact this quarter in anticipation of a U.S. strike on Iraq, showing particular concern as to the ramifications for the Palestinians. Despite frequent phone contacts and one-on-one visits, however, little was actually done to present a united Arab stand. In late 12/02 and early 1/03, there was much discussion of convening an emergency Arab League session to discuss Iraq, with no mention of the Palestinian issue, but the meeting never materialized. New Turkish PM Abdallah Gul made the most significant effort to avert war in mid-1/03, conducting a regional tour and calling a meeting (1/23) of the FMs of Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Syria to issue a statement against an attack on Iraq, but this meeting did not address the Palestinian issue. (Gul had wanted the heads of state to participate, but Egypt said they were too busy.) Egypt concentrated its efforts on getting the Palestinian factions to agree on a cease-fire and a joint platform aimed at dissuading Israel from capitalizing on an attack on Iraq to take forceful action against the PA and Palestinians (see above).

Arab Follow-up Comm. meetings were held in Damascus on 11/20 to discuss the Palestinian situation and the U.S. draft road map. The PA urged the Arab states to increase political and financial support for the Palestinians, noting that the Arab states had not met their \$57 m. aid pledge for 10–12/02. By 1/3, the PA received \$25 m. from Saudi Arabia, \$17.8 m. from the UAE, \$3.3 m. from Bahrain, and \$850,000 from Tunisia to help pay recurring expenses (e.g., PA salaries), leaving \$12 m. outstanding. Saudi Arabia announced (1/9) that it would provide 20,000 families of unemployed Palestinians with a monthly stipend of \$133 for one year; 50% of the money would be paid through the Worker Unions Secretariat, 30% through the PA Labor Min., and 20% to the PA Social Affairs Min.

Kuwait imposed (12/12) new measures restricting the stay of Arabs from non-Gulf Cooperation Council states to no more than three months. Restrictions are aimed at Jordanians, Palestinians, Sudanese, and Yemenis, whose governments have strong ties to Iraq. About 35% of people residing in Kuwait (770,000 persons) are Arab expatriates.

INTERNATIONAL

UNITED STATES

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict remained peripheral for the Bush administration, as the U.S. made preparations for a possible strike on Iraq. Dep. Defense Secy. Paul Wolfowitz stated (1/18) that after a war with Iraq, the U.S. would focus on establishment of a Palestinian state and Jewish settlement construction. Meanwhile the U.S. pressed Israel to take steps showing progress (transfer VAT revenues, hold cease-fire talks) so that the Israeli-Palestinian issue would not impede coalition building; at the same time it pressured the PA to oust Arafat, form a new leadership, halt violence, and undertake reforms.

In keeping with the FY 2003 Foreign Relations Act, Bush simultaneously imposed and waived (11/29) a congressionally mandated sanction to “downgrade” the PLO office in Washington for at least 180 days, citing the PA for noncompliance with its commitment to work against violence, though the administration admitted there was no proof that the PA was directing hostilities (see Doc. D1). The PA deemed (11/29) the compliance report “unfair and unacceptable.” In making the case against Saddam Hussein at the UNSC, Powell alleged (2/5) that Iraq is tied to Palestinian “terrorism” because it hosts offices of Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Baghdad.

Israel formally asked (11/25) the U.S. for \$4 b. in new military aid to “defray the costs of fighting terrorism,” plus up to \$10 b. in loan guarantees to support its struggling economy. The \$14 b. amount exceeds the \$11.6 b. that the U.S. budgeted in 2002 for foreign aid to all countries combined. The \$4 b. reportedly would include the \$800 m. promised by the Clinton administration to cover the cost of the 5/00 withdrawal from Lebanon, which the Bush administration previously declined to honor (see Quarterly Updates in *JPS* 120, 121, 124). As of 11/26, the U.S. reportedly preferred to wait until after the resolution of the Iraq issue to submit a request to Congress bundling the money for Israel with additional aid to Jordan, Turkey, and other countries “directly affected” by a war on Iraq. On 12/11 the IMF stated that Israel could cope with its worst recession in 50 years without counting on U.S. aid.

The U.S. and Israel opened joint maneuvers in Israel (ca. 12/24) in preparation for an Iraq strike. The U.S. reportedly sent (ca. 12/12) 600 troops and three Patriot missile

batteries. Israel will be able to keep these, adding to the two it already has, plus two that Germany was expected to send on loan. Israel and the U.S. also held joint naval exercises with Turkey off the Israeli coast beginning on 1/1. The first members of a U.S. "liaison team" responsible for coordinating with the IDF in the event of a U.S. war on Iraq arrived in Israel ca. 1/14; the team is scheduled to stay until mid-2/03 but could be extended indefinitely. The U.S. reportedly plans to station a naval task force along Israel's coast during a war, enabling planes to reach targets in w. Iraq by overflying Israeli and Jordanian airspace.

Israeli officials reported (12/18) that the U.S. had convinced Egypt and Israel to accept an immediate reduction in the U.S. presence in the Multinational Force and Observer mission in the Sinai, established under the 1979 Egypt-Israel peace treaty. The U.S. reportedly will reduce its 900-member force "significantly" but will leave more than the 26 troops initially proposed by Secy. of Defense Donald Rumsfeld (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 125).

A delegation of 33 senior U.S. police and FBI officials went (1/16–19) to Israel to learn "how to apply what the Israelis have learned" about combating "terrorism." The head of the Israeli delegation, Israeli national police inspector Shlomo Aharonishky, urged U.S. law enforcement officials to think of the "civilian population as a strategic asset" in fighting terror, also stating that "terrorism has no borders, and neither should the police who deal with it." In the past few months, the U.S. has also reportedly sent legal experts to Israel to discuss the legal work undertaken by government jurists over the past two years to defend Israel's "targeted killings" policy against domestic and international challenges. United Press International (UPI) cited (1/15) anonymous Israeli sources as saying that the Israeli government had authorized Mossad to carry out assassinations in the U.S. and other foreign countries. UPI said it corroborated the report with more than six U.S. and Israeli officials and former officials. At the close of the quarter, Mossad chief Meir Dagan was reported to be "revving up for a relentless campaign against . . . the most serious threats" to Israel that would involve "shrewdly executed operations by agents," which "even if . . . deduced, described, or revealed by parties at the scenes of impact, Israeli officials will neither confirm nor accept responsibility."

In late 1/03, the Senate passed an amendment that would withhold U.S. funding to the ICRC until it recognizes Israel's Magen David Adom (MDA) as a full participant in ICRC activities (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 121). (The Senate took action despite the fact that the ICRC had signed a memorandum of understanding with MDA on 11/18 to coordinate efforts until a deal can be reached to admit MDA to the ICRC.) The legislation would affect only the \$8 m. that the State Dept. gives to the ICRC headquarters in Switzerland, not the U.S. contributions to ICRC humanitarian assistance.

On 2/11, the House passed (411-2) a res. to "commend the people of Israel for reaffirming their dedication to democratic ideals" following the 1/28 Israeli elections and reaffirming the "close bonds of friendship" that have "bound the people of the United States and the people of Israel together through turbulent times for more than half a century." The two reps. voting against the measure were Ron Paul (R-TX) and Nick Rahall (D-WV).

The Bush administration proposed (11/25) creation of a new federal corporation, the Millennium Challenge Account, separate from USAID, to administer its proposed fund for countries that embrace economic openness and rule of law. The administration reportedly fears that putting the \$5 b./year fund under State Dept. control "might stifle fresh approaches that the administration wants to see in foreign assistance."

After a three-month delay (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 126), Powell unveiled the U.S.-Middle East Partnership Initiative (the Bush administration's ambitious program to encourage fundamental economic, political, and social changes in the Arab world as critical steps to achieving U.S. objectives in the region). The program will include "training aspiring political candidates" and supporting the "establishment of more NGOs, independent media outlets, polling organizations, think tanks, and business associations," as well as direct investment in companies in Arab countries, technical assistance to Arab governments seeking to join the World Trade Organization, and scholarships to keep women in school. Congress has budgeted \$29 m. for FY 2003; the administration says it will seek a significant budget for FY 2004 and will ask rich Arab countries such as Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to contribute. The initiative will be run out of the State Dept. Near

East Affairs Bureau and overseen by Asst. Secy. of State Richard Armitage.

Bush appointed (12/2) Iran-Contra convicted conspirator Elliot Abrams as the National Security Council senior director on Near East and South Asian affairs, the position which oversees Israeli-Arab relations. Abrams, son-in-law of Bush ally and neoconservative icon Norman Podhoretz, pleaded guilty in 1991 to lying to Congress and was pardoned by Pres. George H.W. Bush in 1992. As of 12/31, there was still only an acting consul gen. in East Jerusalem (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 126).

When Israel closed (1/7) its borders to all Palestinian men under age 35, the U.S. warned (1/11) that the ban "applies to all travelers regardless of . . . any other foreign citizenship, including American citizenship," indicating that the State Dept. would not aid Palestinian-Americans stranded in the West Bank or Gaza.

RUSSIA

This quarter, Russian participation in the peace process was through Quartet meetings. No special tours to the region by Russian officials were reported.

EUROPEAN UNION

The EU also participated in the peace process mainly through the Quartet this quarter and was notably frustrated with the U.S. for overriding majority Quartet opinion and delaying adoption of the U.S. draft road map (see above). The only formal EU statement this quarter was issued (12/23) at the close of a two-day meeting in Copenhagen. The declaration on the Middle East called for a halt to Israel's excessive use of force and Palestinian violence, PA reform, relief of the Palestinians' humanitarian crisis, and the adoption by the Quartet on 12/20 of a road map with clear timelines for the establishment of a Palestinian state by 2005, points stressed by the EU throughout the quarter.

Relations with Israel were more strained than usual, and Sharon did not hide his disapproval of the pro-Palestinian "bias" of the EU, and Britain in particular, as noted above. Israeli pres. Moshe Katsav complained (12/28) that the EU had rejected his appeals to cut ties with the Palestinians until they halt all violence. Tensions peaked on 2/12, when Belgium's High Court reversed a 6/26/02 lower court decision (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 125), ruling that Sharon could be tried under a 1993 Belgian law for war

crimes for his actions related to the Sabra and Shatila massacre in Lebanon in 1982, but only after he leaves office, and that the case against Sharon's codefendant, former IDF Chief of Staff Amos Yaron, could proceed even though Yaron was not in Belgium. The 1993 law gives Belgian courts "universal jurisdiction" over crimes against humanity and war crimes anywhere. In protest, Israel recalled its ambassador to Belgium for consultations.

The Paris-based Simon Wiesenthal Center organized its supporters to "pepper" EU officials with 30,000 e-mails from around the world, according to EU External Relations Commissioner Chris Patten, protesting the PA's alleged funding of terrorism and demanding an investigation. In the end, 170 EU ministers signed (2/4) a petition calling on the EU to open an investigation into whether EU aid to the PA had been used to fund attacks on Israelis.

UNITED NATIONS

Tensions between the UN and Israel were high this quarter as a result of an increased number of cases where the IDF killed, detained, and restricted the movement of UN workers. On 11/22, senior Irish UNRWA official Iain Hook was fatally shot inside the UNRWA's Jenin r.c. compound by an IDF soldier. IDF soldiers also searched and blew up (12/2) a clearly marked UN World Food Program (WFP) warehouse in Gaza, containing 500 metric tons of food to feed 38,000 needy Palestinians for one month, and raided (11/22) the home of UNRWA worker Allegra Pacheco, holding her at gunpoint for two hours and arresting her husband. Two other UN workers were killed during a pre-dawn raid on Bureij r.c. on 12/6. The IDF also began (12/4) barring single-occupancy vehicles carrying international UNRWA staff from entering Israel from Gaza; UNRWA, which has only three international staff drivers, said its operations were severely curtailed by the order. More than 60 UN workers in the West Bank and Gaza sent (12/2) a letter to Israel strongly protesting the incidents (see Doc. A1), calling IDF actions surrounding Hook's killing a "refusal to respect the most elementary standards of humanity," which they stated followed a pattern of abuse that had "steadily eroded" the protection usually accorded UN workers. The U.S. vetoed (12/19) a UN Security Council (UNSC) res. condemning Israel for the killings of several UN employees and the de-

struction of the WFP warehouse, arguing that the res. "would not contribute to an environment where both sides would be ready to move forward"; 12 UNSC members voted for the res., while Bulgaria and Cameroon abstained (see Doc. A2).

At a meeting in Nairobi (2/7), the UN Environmental Program noted the "grave effects" of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict over the past five months, including contamination of water supplies, land degradation, lack of proper waste disposal, and depletion of ground aquifers. More than 1,000 delegates from 136 nations (including reps. of Israel and the PA) agreed on 136 recommendations to improve the environment, but Israel blamed the PA for the decline, saying the PA could have allocated funds to environmental protection despite the intifada.

Israeli amb. to the UN Yehuda Lancry stated (11/29) that the Israeli government supported the vision of "two states living side by side in peace and security" as the goal of negotiations, marking the first time that a member of Sharon's government had expressed support for the two-state solution. The next day, however, Sharon and his interim FM Benjamin Netanyahu stated that they did not approve or support Lancry's statement.

Israel voted (12/18) with the majority to approve the UN General Assembly's (UNGA) Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture. (The measure passed by a vote of 127-4, with 42 abstentions; the Marshall Islands, Nigeria, Palau, the U.S. voting against.) The next day, however, Israel said that its vote in favor was "a mistake" resulting from "human technical error." (Israel had ratified the convention itself in 1991.)

The U.S. for the first time voted (12/3) against an annual UN res. calling on Israel to annul its law unifying East and West Jerusalem. In previous years, it had abstained. This year 154 states voted for the res. and 5 against (Costa Rica, Israel, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, and the U.S.).

Israel was unanimously elected (ca. 2/3) to one of three vice chair posts on the UN Working Group on Disarmament. This is Israel's first UNGA position.

DONORS

Donors continued to operate on an emergency basis this quarter, unable to do much more than help ease the humanitarian crisis and monitor PA reforms. The UN included \$300 m. to cover the costs of the UN humanitarian action plan for the Palestinians (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 126) in its \$3 b. global humanitarian aid appeal, launched in Switzerland on 11/19.

A donors' Ad Hoc Liaison Comm. (AHLC) meeting, planned for mid-12/02 as part of the implementation of the Quartet road map (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 126), was postponed indefinitely after the U.S. blocked formal presentation of the plan at the 12/20 Quartet meeting. At the close of the quarter, an AHLC meeting was tentatively set for 2/18-19 in London, concurrent with meetings of the Quartet and International Task Force for Reform.

The Local Aid Coordination Comm. (LACC) met informally (e.g., 11/18, 1/24), and sector working groups (SWGs) met when possible to focus on emergency needs, expressing particular concern about increasing poverty and malnutrition. The most significant of these meetings was the job creation SWG session on 1/30. Participants stressed that given the ongoing intifada, donors should prioritize and conceive of projects in terms of providing humanitarian aid rather than fostering and directing economic development, and should be urged to keep up, rather than suspend, their commitment for that reason. For example, the goal of job creation projects should be to employ as much local labor and material as possible so as to get as many people as possible working, thereby alleviating poverty. In the circumstances, economic efficiency and sustainability were deemed to be secondary.