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QUARTERLY UPDATE ON CONFLICT AND DIPLOMACY

16 FEBRUARY–15 MAY 2003

COMPILED BY MICHELE K. ESPOSITO

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

At the opening of the quarter, Ariel Sharon had been reelected PM of Israel and was in the process of forming a government. U.S. Pres. George W. Bush had delayed until the formation of the Sharon government publication of the road map, the U.S.-draft plan for resuming negotiations and creating a Palestinian state by 2005, which the U.S. had finalized on 12/20/02 in consultation with fellow Quartet members, the European Union (EU), Russia, and the UN. Under pressure from the U.S. and Israel, Palestinian Authority (PA) head Yasir Arafat had agreed (2/14) to appoint a Palestinian PM responsible for day-to-day running of the PA, which the U.S. and Israel hoped would relegate Arafat to a figurehead (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 127). Meanwhile, global attention was focused on the likelihood of a U.S.-led attack on Iraq.

As of 2/16, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) were inside or encircling all West Bank Palestinian population centers, except Jericho, as was the case last quarter. Restrictions on movement in Gaza were also tight, with the IDF frequently closing main roads and dividing the Strip into three sections. Across the occupied territories, Israeli-Palestinian violence was rising (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 127), with tensions high following a Hamas roadside bombing on 2/15 that destroyed an IDF tank and killed four IDF soldiers. 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 had been killed since 9/28/00.

Positioning for War on Iraq

To keep up the appearance of movement on the peace process in the run-up to a war on Iraq, the Quartet convened a series of high-profile but ultimately ineffective meetings in London 2/18–20 with Israeli, PA, and donor representatives, including side meetings of the donor's Ad Hoc Liaison Comm. (2/18–19; see below) and the Quartet's International Task Force for Reform (ITFR; 2/19–20). Participants reviewed PA reform efforts and the humanitarian crisis in the occupied territories, praised Israel and the PA for steps taken to date, and urged further steps toward a cease-fire, PA reform, and easing restrictions on Palestinians. The only new development resulting from the meeting was a Quartet agreement on the general outline for a monitoring mechanism to assess compliance with the road map after its adoption: the U.S. would head the monitoring team, which would be divided into four subcomms. on humanitarian affairs, PA reforms, security, and "special functions" (including settlements, PA activities in East Jerusalem). The U.S. continued to resist EU pressures for the immediate release of the road map.

Meanwhile, Israel, which last quarter had increasingly disparaged the road map and the Quartet (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 127), took steps either to amend the 12/20/02 draft or to replace it with its own U.S.-backed proposal that would reduce Israel's expected concessions, increase demands on the PA, and curtail the EU role. By 2/19, an Israeli team led by Likud MK Dan Meridor had drawn up a list of

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more than 100 “corrections” to the seven-page road map that it intended to submit to the U.S., including a clarification that implementation would be sequential (requiring the PA first to complete a cease-fire, a change of leadership, and far-reaching reforms before anything would be required by Israel) and the addition of a clause requiring the PA to give up the right of return for Palestinian refugees.

Israel also continued to explore the idea of a “Gaza First” staged cease-fire and withdrawal proposal (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 127) to preempt the road map. The idea meshed with the PA’s own calls (e.g., 2/21, 2/24) on Palestinian factions (especially the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade [AMB], Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP]) to agree to a unilateral one-year cease-fire to jumpstart negotiations. Meridor had reportedly passed messages to Hamas (one on 2/17, one earlier) indicating that Israel would make unspecified confidence-building gestures to the movement if it signed on to a cease-fire agreement, and that when it became clear that there would be no cease-fire, he offered (ca. 2/25–27) to ease restrictions in Gaza if the PA cracked down on Hamas there.

Meanwhile, Israel stepped up attacks on Palestinians, especially in Gaza, in retaliation for the 2/15 Hamas incident (see Chronology for details). The IDF assassinated six senior Hamas members in Gaza City (2/16), Izzeddin al-Qassam Brigades second-in-command Riyadh Abu Zayd near Netzarim (2/17), Hamas member Muhammad Muhr in Yatta (2/18), and AMB member Shahr Zakarna in Jenin (2/19); staged (2/18) a major raid on Gaza City that left 11 Palestinians dead and 25 wounded; invaded Bayt Hanun (2/23–24), killing 7 Palestinians and wounding 28; conducted (2/19–24) a prolonged incursion into Nablus, leaving 6 Palestinians dead; tightened (2/20) restrictions on movement in Gaza, dividing the Strip into three sections; and dramatically increased the bulldozing of Palestinian land around Gaza’s Aley Sinai settlement (2/16–17) and Rafah (2/23). A wanted *tanzim* member also may have been assassinated on 2/20. On the Palestinian side, a PFLP sniper fatally shot (2/23) an IDF soldier in Khan Yunis, and Hamas resumed (e.g., 2/19, 2/20, 2/23)

firing Qassam rockets at Sederot, inside the Green Line, and at Jewish settlements in Gaza, causing one light injury. By the time violence began to slow on 2/25, due to the onset of the worst winter storm in years, 51 Palestinians and 5 IDF soldiers had been killed, bringing the death toll since 9/28/00 to 2,377 Palestinians and 691 Israelis.

Sharon Names a Government, Arafat Nominates a PM

On 2/24 and 2/25, Sharon finalized his coalition deals with the right-wing, pro-settler National Religious Party (NRP; 6 seats), the ultraright-wing National Union Party (NUP; 7 seats), and the right-wing secular nationalist Shinui (15 seats), giving himself control of 68 of the Knesset’s 120 seats. The coalition government, comprising far more MKs who oppose creation of a Palestinian state and favor Jewish settlement expansion than the previous Sharon government, was sworn in on 2/27. (See Doc. C1 for Basic Guidelines excerpts.) In presenting his team, Sharon pledged that the economy would take priority over the peace process, and stated that the Palestinians would have to give up the right of return, agree to Jerusalem remaining the unified capital of Israel, and halt all violence if they wanted a comprehensive peace.

In Washington, as escalating presidential statements made it increasingly clear that the U.S. was determined to go to war against Iraq, U.S. allies Britain and Spain pressed the U.S. to send an encouraging message to the Arab world that the peace process would be the U.S.’s top priority after dealing with Iraq. To this end, Bush gave (2/26) a brief televised address, arguing that the overthrow of the Iraqi regime would serve as a catalyst for peace in the region, explicitly linking resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and creation of a “truly democratic Palestinian state” to removing Saddam Hussein, whom Bush claimed financed Palestinian “terrorism” by giving “rewards to the families of suicide bombers.” Bush also signaled a shift closer to Sharon’s view that no action should be taken on settlements until the Palestinians had taken significant steps to halt violence, stating that “As progress is made towards peace, settlement activity in the occupied territories must end.”

Meanwhile, the Quartet renewed (2/28) pressure on Arafat to appoint a PM quickly, before a war on Iraq was launched (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 127). On 3/6, Arafat nominated PLO Executive Comm. gen. secy. and senior Palestinian negotiator Mahmud Abbas as his candidate. Abbas was reportedly the favored choice of Israel and the U.S. and is well regarded within Fatah, but does not have a strong popular following.

On the ground, Israel timed its announcement of the new government with IDF orders (2/25) to step up "active defense" in Gaza, targeting Hamas. The process started gradually on 2/25 (see Chronology for details), with more house demolitions in Rafah and bulldozing of land in Khan Yunis, then increased sharply on 3/1, with major raids—termed "preemptive operations," mirroring the U.S. rhetoric on terrorism—on Khan Yunis (3/1–2), leaving 3 Palestinians dead and 47 wounded, and on Bureij and Nussayrat refugee camps (r.c.'s; 3/3), killing 8 and wounding more than 40. The IDF also aggressively conducted arrest raids in Nablus (3/3) and Jenin (3/4). Hamas struck back on 3/5, staging a suicide bombing in Haifa (the first inside Israel since 1/5/03) that killed 17 and wounded 38. In light of a rare U.S. warning on 3/4 regarding the Gaza escalation, Israel vowed (3/5) not to respond on "a scale that would disrupt any U.S. preparations for a possible attack on Iraq." Nonetheless, the IDF staged a major raid on Jabaliya r.c. (3/5–6), killing 11 Palestinians and wounding more than 120; carved out (3/7) a 4 mi² "security zone" in north Gaza to prevent Palestinians from firing rockets into Israel, razing 100 dunams (4 dunams = 1 acre) of Palestinian land; and assassinated (3/8) senior Hamas political official Ibrahim Maqadama, the most senior Palestinian political figure to be killed by Israel since the intifada began. (Of note: the U.S. did not officially comment on the IDF's seizure of the north Gaza territory, whereas Israel's seizure of the same "security zone" on 4/17/01 prompted such strong criticism from the U.S. that the IDF withdrew the same day; see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 120. The IDF pulled out of the zone of its own accord on 3/10, after having denuded at least 314 dunams of land.) By the close of 3/9, 2,427 Palestinians and 704 Israelis had been killed.

The U.S. and the Road Map

In the last days before the war against Iraq was launched, Bush (under pressure from British PM Tony Blair, the EU, and Secy. of State Colin Powell) made several pledges to promote the road map that ultimately raised questions as to his desire to pursue the plan. Following U.S. dismissal as "completely" insufficient of a UN weapons inspectors' update (3/7) on Iraqi disarmament progress, Bush formally announced (3/8) that the U.S. would not issue the road map until after the Iraqi crisis was resolved. Several days later (3/10), after the Palestinian Council (PC) approved (73–1) amendments to the Basic Law creating the post of PM and opened debate on a bill outlining the PM's duties, the U.S. cautioned that without assurances that the new PM had authority over security and peacemaking, it would not move forward with the plan.

Under pressure from Blair, facing tremendous domestic opposition for his position on Iraq, Bush made a statement on 3/14 promising to release the road map as soon as the PA appointed a "credible" PM in a "position of real authority," at which point the sides would have an opportunity to submit changes to the draft. The State Dept. clarified on 3/19 that the road map itself was nonnegotiable, but that "how to implement the plan" was open to discussion. The PA stated (3/19) that this position showed that the U.S. was "not at all serious" about the plan, meaning a breakthrough was unlikely. Israeli officials cautioned (3/15) that even if Abbas were installed quickly, it might take time to determine how much authority he would actually have. (Of note: At the Azores summit on Iraq (3/16), where Bush, Blair, Spanish PM José Mar'a Aznar, and Portuguese PM José Manuel Durao Barroso—the leading coalition members—made a final ultimatum to Iraq, Aznar, Barroso, and Blair each mentioned the road map in their statements to the press, whereas Bush did not—an omission widely seen as deliberate and an indication that Bush was not serious about pursuing the plan.)

Meanwhile, Israeli pres. Moshe Katsav met (3/13) secretly with PA Interior M Hani al-Hassan to push the Gaza First proposal. On the ground, Israeli-Palestinian violence remained high (see Chronology for details). The IDF launched (3/12–13) a major raid on Saida, near Tulkarm,

rounding up all men ages 15–65 for questioning; staged (3/17) a major incursion into Nussayrat r.c., fatally shooting seven Palestinians, including wanted Islamic Jihad member Muhammad Saafn in what may have been an assassination; raided (3/17) Bayt Lahia, detaining all men ages 15–40 for questioning, arresting 100s, and fatally shooting four Palestinians; and continued house demolitions, especially in Gaza. The deaths of six Hamas members on 3/13, AMB's Yusuf Masharqa on 3/14, and Hamas's Nasir Assida on 3/18 also may have been IDF assassinations. An AMB gunman fatally shot (3/19) a Jewish settler near Jenin; a Palestinian gunman ambushed (3/10) an IDF patrol in Hebron, killing one IDF soldier and wounding five; another gunman ambushed and wounded (3/13) two Jewish settlers in occupied Jerusalem; and Qassam rocket attacks remained frequent but caused no damage or injuries. As of 3/19, 2,466 Palestinians and 710 Israelis had been killed.

The War on Iraq

On 3/17, the U.S. and Britain abandoned efforts to put forward a new UN res. on Iraq, determining that the motion would be sure to fail, and Bush issued an ultimatum giving Hussein and his sons 48 hours to leave Iraq or face military confrontation. As the deadline approached, Palestinian civilians in the West Bank and Gaza, fearing Israel would step up attacks and impose stiff curfews as soon as the war broke out, closed schools and businesses, hoarded provisions, and stayed inside. Israel extended the closure on the territories (imposed on 3/17 for Purim) until 3/30, then indefinitely. On 3/19, the U.S. launched a missile strike on Baghdad, marking the opening of the war. For the next week, Palestinian violence remained low, while Israeli violence continued at a moderate level, with the IDF increasingly imposing 24-hour curfews on Palestinian population centers to keep Palestinians indoors. The PA received (3/20) assurances from Britain and France that Israel would not exploit the war to expel Palestinians, as many feared.

Around 3/27, after the U.S. military offensive in Iraq hit its stride, parties to the peace process resumed positioning for the postwar environment. Meridor's team finalized Israel's desired corrections to the road map and submitted (3/25) them to

DM Shaul Mofaz in a document entitled "Profile of the Israeli Diplomatic Initiative" (not released), which also reportedly set out guidelines to "deflect international pressure should the road map fail." Israeli and PA security teams held (3/27) their first high-level meeting in over a year to discuss details of how a Gaza First proposal might be implemented and possible West Bank areas to which the plan could be extended, though no decisions were taken. At a meeting (2/27) in Camp David to discuss Iraq, Bush and Blair reiterated their intention to release the road map "soon." Separately, Powell said (3/27) that Bush would press Sharon "to do something" about the peace process as soon as the war in Iraq was over.

Israeli FM Silvan Shalom told (3/31–4/1) U.S. officials in Washington that Israel would give Abbas one to two months "probation" once inaugurated to show whether his new government could halt Palestinian violence, but stressed that "without cessation of terrorism, there is no chance of any peace process of any kind." Shalom also briefed officials on the 100 changes Israel sought to the road map, underlining that Israel would not accept any process that confined Jewish settlements to their existing boundaries. (Underlining this point, the first Jewish settlers moved into the homes in the Ras al-Amud/Ma'ale Ha'Zeitim settlement in East Jerusalem on 4/1, despite U.S. and French appeals to Sharon to block the move.) Reportedly among Israel's 100 changes were demands for abandonment of a set implementation timetable, PA abandonment of the right of return, a change of Palestinian leadership, IDF freedom of operation in PA territories, detailed security requirements of the Palestinians (including the arrest, interrogation, and trial of "terror suspects" and confirmation that the Palestinian state could only be founded after the complete dissolution of the "terrorist infrastructure"), no dismantling of any settlements during the interim period, explicit Palestinian recognition of Israel as a Jewish state, and elimination of references to the Saudi initiative, which refers to a return to 1967 borders as the basis for peace (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 24). The State Dept. stated (4/1) that the themes, ideas, and concepts in the road map were "not negotiable," but that "what's going to be elastic will be the time frame, the manner

in which we achieve reciprocity, the sequencing, [and] the verification process." In Brussels, Quartet reps. discussed (4/3) how to present the road map, how to reach consensus concerning the monitoring mechanism, and whether Israel would accept either.

After his return to Israel, and after reportedly having grouped its 100 changes into 15 broader categories to make them appear more digestible, Shalom announced (4/5) that Israel would present the U.S. with a list of 15 "reservations" to the road map. Israel, he stated, would not accept the road map or discuss reopening negotiations unless all 15 points were addressed.

Violence in the territories began escalating around 3/27, starting with an IDF raid on Bayt Hanun and then followed by large-scale incursions (involving house-to-house searches) into Khan Yunis and Rafah on 3/28, Nussayrat r.c. on 4/3, Jenin on 4/4, and Massadir on 4/6. On 4/2, the IDF launched a major operation in Tulkarm r.c., rounding up all males ages 14–40 and busing them outside the camp; some 2,000 were detained, and the rest were released but barred from returning to the camp until soldiers withdrew on 4/4. The IDF conducted a similar one-day operation in Nussayrat r.c. on 4/9, including busing men outside the camp. The IDF also assassinated four Hamas members (two on 3/25, 4/3, 4/8), killing 8 bystanders and injuring 56; the IDF's fatal shooting of a wanted Palestinian on 4/8 may also have been an assassination. The only major incidents on the Palestinian side were two Islamic Jihad acts on 3/30: a suicide bombing in Netanya, injuring 38, and an attempt to infiltrate a kibbutz in s. Israel, causing no injuries. By the time the U.S. occupied Baghdad on 4/9, marking the overthrow of the Hussein regime and the unofficial end of combat in Iraq, the Palestinian toll had reached 2,513, whereas the Israeli toll remained 710.

Arafat and Abbas Jockey for Power

As soon as Baghdad was taken, Britain and France declared (4/9) that it was urgent for the U.S. to present the road map, but the U.S. stood by its decision to wait for Abbas to form a government. The cabinet formation process constituted a tug-of-war between Arafat and Abbas that ultimately left open questions as to the extent of Abbas's authority (see below for

details). The situation was especially complex because Abbas, to whom Arafat was forced by the U.S. to cede authority as the new PM, intended as a Fatah loyalist and PA insider to respect Arafat's position as the democratically elected head of the PA. But since he also disagreed with many of Arafat's decisions, and ultimately wanted to encourage real government reform and a halt to violence, he was largely an unknown, or at least an untested, quantity.

Abbas spent the war period in consultation with all Palestinian factions regarding formation of a cabinet and implementing a unilateral cease-fire, without reaching a final decision. On 4/9, the day of his deadline for cabinet appointments, the PC granted him a two-week extension. On 4/13, he revealed his provisional cabinet choices, criticized by reformers for not going far enough and by Arafat cadres for going too far.

Arafat and Abbas debated the cabinet makeup for a week, marked by Abbas's threats to resign and international pressure. Egypt, the EU, France, Russia, and the U.S. sent delegates and messages to Arafat, warning that Abbas was the only acceptable choice for PM and urging him to drop his demands and approve Abbas's cabinet. After a day of direct mediation by Egyptian intelligence chief Omar Sulayman, phone calls from King Abdallah of Jordan and Pres. Husni Mubarak of Egypt, and public warnings by Blair that if Arafat continued to obstruct Abbas, the international community would give up its efforts to revive the peace process, Arafat and Abbas reached (4/23) a compromise that left Abbas's 4/13 slate nearly intact. The vote of confidence by the PC was set for 4/29.

Meanwhile, Sharon sent his Chief of Staff Dov Weisglass and National Security Adviser (NSA) Ephraim Halevy back to Washington (4/13–15) to restate Israel's "preliminary comments" on the road map to Powell, NSA Condoleezza Rice, Dept. Defense Secy. Douglas Feith, and National Security Council (NSC) Middle East adviser Elliott Abrams. The U.S. officials gave assurances that the U.S. would take their views into consideration (some reports said they indicated general support for as many as 14 of the 15 reservations), but reiterated that the road map would be released without changes. In Israel, U.S. amb. Dan Kurtzer attended (ca. 4/13) a private dinner with several senior Israeli

politicians in which he reportedly (*Ma'ariv* 4/15) attempted to allay right-wing concerns about the road map by saying that it was "irrelevant" and aimed only at "reactivating" the peace process, after which the process would continue of itself and not necessarily be linked to the road map.

After Abbas and Arafat agreed on a cabinet, Israel and the U.S. hardened their positions. Sharon and his advisers began (e.g., 4/25, 4/27, 4/28) to express alarm over the idea of a Palestinian cease-fire (originally Israel's prerequisite for restarting talks), arguing that it would only serve as a timeout that would "permit terrorists to rearm"; said (e.g., 4/25) that the PA should instead "arrest or kill Hamas and Islamic Jihad activists"; and stated (4/25) that a provisional Palestinian state should last for 10 or more years rather than the two specified in the road map. The U.S. and Israel also began (4/25) to press foreign states to cut all contact with Arafat on the grounds that continued engagement would undermine Abbas and make it impossible for him to halt violence and incitement. The U.S. reportedly also urged (4/25) donors not to transfer assistance to the PA as long as Arafat asserted any measure of control. Abbas announced (4/27) that he would not travel to any foreign capitals to discuss the road map until Israel allowed Arafat to travel abroad and return freely. Israel replied (4/27) that it would not make any gestures toward Abbas until he arrested, interrogated, and tried Palestinian militants.

By 4/25, the U.S. had reportedly drafted a codicil to the road map, aimed at enhancing the U.S. role and diluting the participation of other Quartet members, so as to address a number of Israeli concerns. The codicil, entitled "Verification Mechanism for the Quartet Road Map," outlines formation of an on-the-ground comm. to monitor compliance with and oversee implementation of the road map, which would be led solely by the U.S. (apparently by the CIA), though all Quartet members would be responsible for funding its operation. The comm. would be divided into four subcomms., as agreed in the 2/18–20 London meetings, but the U.S. would head the security, PA reform, and special functions subcomms., while the EU would be in charge of humanitarian affairs.

As these events unfolded, violence declined slightly in the territories (see

Chronology). The IDF assassinated (4/10) Islamic Jihad military leader Mahmud Zatma in Gaza City, injuring 15 bystanders; attempted to assassinate (4/10) 3 AMB members in Tulkarm, killing 1 bystander; launched (4/19) a major raid on Rafah r.c., killing at least 5 Palestinians and wounding 30; and stepped up bulldozing of Palestinian land in Gaza and around East Jerusalem. The death of a Hamas member in a mysterious explosion on 4/23 may also have been an assassination. An AMB offshoot staged (4/24) a suicide bombing in Kfar Saba (in Israel), killing 1 and wounding 13; Palestinian gunmen raided (4/10) an IDF base and killed 2 soldiers; and Islamic Jihad members raided (4/19) Shaked settlement, wounding 2 soldiers and 1 guard before being shot dead. At the close of 4/28, 2,546 Palestinians and 720 Israelis had been killed.

The U.S. Presents the Road Map

Just before the PC meeting to confirm the new PA cabinet, Israel assassinated (4/29) PFLP leader Nidal Salama in Khan Yunis and AMB commander Mahmud Salah in Bethlehem. The PC met anyway and approved (69–12, with 3 abstentions) Abbas's government. In his inaugural speech (see Doc. B2), Abbas stated that there is no military solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, rejected "terrorism," pledged to crack down on militant groups, and demanded an independent Palestinian state within 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as its capital, and without Jewish settlements. Israel cautiously welcomed (4/29) his words on violence but said his statements on final status raised "serious questions regarding a readiness to arrive at an agreed-upon solution." Two hours after the PC session, Hamas and the AMB jointly claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing in Tel Aviv, carried out by two British Muslims, that killed 3 and wounded 34. Israeli government spokesman Dore Gold stated, "This is really the first test of the new Palestinian government . . . and unfortunately it has turned out to be a complete failure."

After Abbas and the Executive Authority (EA) were sworn in (4/30), the U.S. formally presented (4/30) him and Sharon with the road map (see Special Documents section in this issue), with acting U.S. consul gen. Jeffrey Feltman noting that it was "not a sacred text" but rather "a

guideline, a starting point." Bush issued a low-key statement (see Special Documents section) saying that "the pace of progress will depend strictly on the performance of the parties." U.S. officials stated that changes should be discussed between Israel and the PA, not with the Quartet, and that anything agreed to by the two sides would be acceptable to the U.S. Hours later, Israel launched (5/1) a major incursion into Gaza City, killing senior Izzeddin al-Qassam Brigades commander Yusuf Abu Hin, his two brothers, and 10 other Palestinians, wounding more than 60, and destroying some 20 Palestinian homes. The IDF also fatally shot (4/30) a senior AMB member in Yatta in what may have been an assassination.

The U.S. originally intended that Powell would begin a regional tour in Israel and the territories on 5/1, immediately after the road map's release, to encourage the two sides to begin implementing the plan quickly and to press the Arab states to cut ties with Arafat. Soon after the U.S. announced the trip, it reconsidered (4/25), fearing that Powell's arrival so soon after Abbas's inauguration could make Abbas look like a U.S. puppet. Powell instead split the regional tour, going to Lebanon and Syria first (5/3), then going to Israel, the West Bank, Jordan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia (5/10–14).

In advance of Powell's arrival, the PLO Executive Comm. approved (5/3) the road map, while Israel would not. NSC adviser Abrams and Dep. NSA Stephen Hadley secretly met (4/30) with Sharon to assess his intentions concerning the plan. Sharon sent (5/4) Tourism M Benny Elon to New York and Washington to lobby members of Congress and evangelical Christians to urge Bush to drop the initiative. Asst. Secy. of State William Burns arrived (5/4) in the region to "take suggestions from the two sides" on how to implement the road map in preparation for Powell's visit, but Sharon said (5/4, 5/6) he would not move forward until he presented his objections to Bush in a meeting in late 5/03 or early 6/03 and until Abbas took action against Palestinian militants. When Burns pressed Abbas (5/5) to launch a decisive fight against "terrorism and violence," Abbas said Israel must first accept the road map. In addition, the IDF assassinated (5/8) senior Hamas member Iyad al-Bik and killed (perhaps assassinated, 5/7) wanted Hamas member Amin Manzalawi.

En route to the region, Powell stressed (5/10) that he did not want to spend time discussing the terms of the road map with the sides; the plan would not be altered, and the sides should start implementing it in earnest. He asked (5/11) Sharon to accept the road map, but Sharon again refused and said that time had run out for "declarations, promises, talks." Sharon stressed that Israel would not halt settlement expansion, that a Palestinian cease-fire would be dangerous, and that the PA must combat militant groups, and only offered a series of limited measures to ease Palestinian restrictions (e.g., increasing the area where Palestinians may fish off Gaza, giving another 4,000 Palestinians permits to work in Gaza's Qarni industrial zone, easing travel restrictions on Palestinians with permits to work in Israel, transferring VAT revenues, restoring VIP status for travel inside the territories to Palestinian officials who "advance the reform process," and releasing some Palestinian prisoners), which Powell called "very promising." Powell, like Burns before him, pressed (5/11) Abbas to disarm militant groups, noting Sharon's measures to ease restrictions. Abbas reiterated that he would not take action until Israel formally approved the road map and dismissed Sharon's gestures as mostly symbolic.

Hours after Powell's meetings, the IDF imposed (5/11) the most severe closure on the Gaza Strip since the al-Aqsa intifada began, barring everyone except diplomats and aid workers from entering or exiting (though in practice, aid workers were barred as well; see below). Over the next four days, 15 Palestinians were killed by the IDF. While Israel did release (5/11–12) around 100 prisoners, almost all were Palestinians who had been caught working in Israel illegally and who had only days left to their sentences; none were security prisoners.

In meetings (5/12) with Mubarak, King Abdallah, and Quartet reps. on his way home, Powell stated that it made "no difference" whether or not Israel had declared acceptance of the road map and that the U.S. would not press it to do so; what mattered was that the sides took steps to move forward. Officials in Washington echoed (5/12) these statements, adding that the U.S. believed that the "initial steps" Israel had taken (apparently a reference to the gestures announced 5/11)

"in effect" marked the beginning of implementation.

At the close of the quarter, Sharon and Abbas tentatively planned to hold their first meeting on 5/17—what might be the last chance to salvage the road map. Violence, which had been continuing at a moderate pace since 4/29, jumped sharply on 5/13 when the IDF, responding to mortar fire (5/13) that lightly injured nine soldiers, sent more than 100 tanks and armored vehicles, supported by helicopter gunships, into Khan Yunis, shelling residential areas, wounding at least 20 Palestinians, demolishing 26 houses and damaging another 30, leaving 247 Palestinians homeless. On 5/15, the IDF staged a major incursion into Bayt Hanun. Troops entered with 70 tanks and armored vehicles, killing 5 Palestinians, wounding 20, demolishing at least 4 houses, bulldozing 100s of orange trees, and conducting house-to-house searches. Gaza remained cut off, and movement in the West Bank was tightly restricted, with frequent closures. The IDF ban imposed on 3/15/03 barring Palestinians aged 16–35 from traveling outside the West Bank and Gaza remained in place.

Intifada Data and Trends

During the quarter at least 272 Palestinians and 38 Israelis were killed, bringing the toll at the close of the quarter to at least 2,598 Palestinians (including 31 Israeli Arabs, 14 unidentified Arab cross-border infiltrators, and 2 British suicide bombers), 724 Israelis (including 219 IDF soldiers and security personnel, 165 settlers, 340 civilians), and 34 foreign nationals. The Israeli DMin. issued (3/13) "unofficial" statistics showing that according to their figures, 1,945 Palestinians had been killed since the start of the intifada, with 18% (365 individuals) noncombatants, including 130 children under 16 (not 18). (Israel typically categorizes stone throwers as combatants.) Of the combatants, according to Israeli statistics, 441 were Hamas and Islamic Jihad members (22%); 324 were Fatah and *tanzim* (presumably including AMB) members (17%); 329 were PA Preventive Security Force (PSF) officers (17%); 69 were Arab Liberation Force, Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), Fatah-Uprising, or PFLP members (4%); and 417 were unaffiliated (22%). The Palestinian human rights group LAW

reported (3/16) the toll as 2,110 Palestinians—304 combatants (14%) and 1,806 civilians (86%), including 115 women and 436 children under age 18; 136 had been assassinated (not including bystanders) and 39 had been killed by Jewish settlers.

This quarter, Israel carried out 18 killings that were clearly or almost definitely assassinations (up from 15 last quarter), also killing 14 bystanders and wounding 77: AMB's Shahar Zakarna (2/19) and Muhammad Salah (4/29); Hamas's Mufid al-Bul (2/16), Nidal Farahat (2/16), Ayman Mahana (2/16), Akram Nasar (2/16), Iyad Shaladan (2/16), Muhammad Silmi (2/16), Riyadh Abu Zayd (2/17), Muhammad Muhr (2/18), Ibrahim Maqadama (3/8), Ala' Ayad (3/25), Nadir Jarawish (3/25), Khalid Rayan (4/3), Sa'ad Arabid (4/8), and Iyad al-Bik (5/8); Islamic Jihad's Mahmud Zatma (4/10); and the PFLP's Nidal Salama (4/29). At least 14 other deaths (2/20, 6 on 3/13, 3/14, 3/17, 3/18, 4/8, 4/23, 5/1, 5/7) had the markings of assassinations but could not be confirmed; 3 bystanders were killed and 11 wounded in these incidents. An attack on 4/10 was clearly a failed assassination attempt, which killed one bystander.

During the quarter, there were 12 Palestinian suicide attacks (down from 15 last quarter), which killed 28 and injured around 146 (compared to 51 killed and around 97 injured last quarter). Of these, 6 were bombings (2/18, 3/5, 3/30, 4/24, 4/29, 5/8). The other 6 attacks (3/7, 3/10, 4/10, 4/19, 5/1, 5/15) could be called "suicide" insofar as they were certain to result in the deaths of those who staged them. Though in some cases multiple groups took responsibility for a single incident, Islamic Jihad is believed to have staged 2 attacks (down from 5), the AMB 1 (down from 4), the AMB Nablus faction 1 (up from 0), Hamas 3 or 4 (up from 1), and the PFLP possibly 1 (the same as last quarter); 3 incidents were carried out by unaffiliated individuals (down from 4). The bombing on 4/29 was staged by two British Muslims, one of Kashmiri and one of Pakistani descent, marking the first time non-Palestinians have staged such an attack. Use of mortars and rockets seemed to be much more frequent than last quarter.

IDF demolition of Palestinian houses was down slightly this quarter, though still very high (see Chronology for details). Once again, the vast majority of house

demolitions were in Gaza, with some 144 concentrated in the Khan Yunis/Rafah area, 35 in central Gaza, and 41 in the north. Relatively few were in the West Bank: roughly 16 in the East Jerusalem region, 15 in Hebron, 15 in the Nablus region, 8 in Ramallah, 6 in Tulkarm, 4 in Qalqilya, and 3 each in Bethlehem and Jenin. UNRWA reported (5/7) that as of 4/30, 12,737 Palestinians had been made homeless by IDF house demolitions. IDF bulldozing of Palestinian agricultural land seemed to be up significantly, especially in the northern and southern Gaza Strip. In the Bayt Hanun area, the IDF bulldozed more than 850 dunams during the quarter (2/16–17, 3/7–10, 4/23–24, 5/9–14). In the south, the IDF razed some 315 dunams in Khan Yunis (4/22–5/10) and another 315 in Rafah (4/24, 5/10). In central Gaza, 64 dunams were bulldozed in Dayr al-Balah on 3/21.

Only one ailing Palestinian (down from 11 last quarter) reportedly died as a result of IDF delays. IDF attacks and raids on medical centers (e.g., 4/17, 4/23, two on 5/5, 5/12) were also down slightly from at least 7 last quarter, but attacks on ambulances and delays of medical personnel seemed to remain high. The Palestine Red Crescent Society reported that as of 5/9, ambulances had been restricted access to patients on 838 occasions and fired on 244 times, damaging 116 ambulances, 28 of them beyond repair; three medics had been killed, 192 injured, and (since 3/29/02) 80 arrested while on duty. The IDF also killed 2 journalists (4/19, 5/2), wounded 2 (both 3/6), beat 2 (both 4/9), and detained 4 (2/23, 2 on 4/9, 4/22) to prevent them from covering clashes; most of the reporters and cameramen were Palestinians working for foreign outlets. As of 5/15, the IDF had killed 7 journalists (5 Palestinian, 1 British, 1 Italian) and injured 95 since the start of the intifada.

The IDF also increasingly targeted foreign activists ("internationals") with the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), which organizes with local Palestinians and Israeli peace activists to stage acts of nonviolent resistance to Israeli occupation (for more on the ISM see the Seitz report in this issue). Israeli pressures against internationals increased after American ISM volunteer Rachel Corrie was crushed and killed (3/16) by an IDF bulldozer while taking part in a demonstration to block the

demolition of a Palestinian home (see In Perspective section in this issue). A British ISM volunteer was left brain-dead by an IDF bullet on 4/11, and two other ISM members were seriously wounded by the IDF on 4/5. In light of the publicity, the IDF ordered (4/15) the removal of ISM activists from the territories, saying they were "creating provocations that injure [IDF] freedom of action on the ground." (The first ISM member was detained on 4/22.) After the IDF learned (5/3) that two British suicide bombers had attended an ISM function, IDF raided (5/22) ISM headquarters in Bayt Sahur, confiscating computers and arresting three members. More arrests followed on 5/10.

In addition, in late 4/03, the IDF began restricting access of international aid workers to Gaza, first (4/26) requiring that they undergo additional security checks when entering or leaving, then requiring (beginning 5/1) long interviews (up to seven hours) on their activities before they could enter or leave, randomly denying (beginning 5/5) entry without giving a reason, requiring (beginning 5/8) that they sign a waiver freeing the IDF from responsibility for death or injury as a result of military activity, and finally (after imposing on 5/11 a general closure on the Strip to everyone except diplomats) barring access altogether. (A Norwegian diplomat was barred entry on 5/14.) As a result, the international medical relief organization Médecins du Monde permanently ended (5/12) its operations in Gaza, saying Israeli military measures made it impossible to continue work; the UN warned (5/19) that it might have to do the same; numerous other international aid groups suspended Gaza activities indefinitely.

Israel also announced (3/11, 4/10) plans to deport several more West Bank Palestinians to Gaza for allegedly aiding relatives in staging attacks on Israelis, though no one was actually transferred. Two Palestinians, the brother and sister of a suicide bomber, have been banished to Gaza to date (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 126).

The Israeli DMin. reported (5/1) that there were 90–100 "illegal" settlement outposts (i.e., not approved by the government) in the West Bank as of 5/03, up from 66 in 5/02. This is despite Israeli claims to have dismantled 35 such outposts between 7/02 and 10/02, with orders given in 10/02 to dismantle another 30.

Buffer Zones

Israel continued work this quarter on a buffer zone and security fence between Israelis and Palestinians in the West Bank (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 127). The IDF stated (4/30) that the completed fence would run some 600 km—nearly twice as long as the 330-km Green Line—and would delineate “the entire boundary area between Israel and the territory under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority.” The donors’ Local Aid Coordination Comm. (LACC), which released (5/4) a study of the impact of the security fence construction on the Palestinians, concluded that the first phase of the fence project would place some 12,000 Palestinians and 11,500 dunams of land (including some of the richest agricultural land in the West Bank) on the Israeli side of the fence, perhaps forcing Palestinians in those areas who have been cut off by the fence from their lands to migrate east. Ultimately, 95,000 Palestinians (4.5% of the West Bank population; 61,000 of them around Jerusalem) might be affected.

The LACC also stated that as of early 4/03, 147 km of fence was under construction, but only small stretches had been completed—4.5 km in the north, running from Kfar Salam, 4 km west of Qalqilya and northwest of Tulkarm, and 3 km near Jerusalem. The Israeli Treasury and DMin. approved (3/6) funding for two stretches of the security fence totaling 160 km and costing \$34 m. One stretch would run parallel to the Green Line from Salim to Elkana, the other would surround Jerusalem.

The Israeli DMin. recommended (3/23) that the fence run further east than originally planned in some areas to bring more Jewish settlements (including Ariel, Emmanuel, and Keddumim), housing 40,000 Jewish settlers and some 3,000 Palestinians, over to the Israeli side of the fence (cf. the YESHA plan in the Quarterly Update in *JPS* 127). Israel announced (2/18) plans to place 14 dunams of Bethlehem land, including Rachel’s Tomb and some 40 Palestinian homes, on the Israeli side of the fence, effectively annexing them to Jerusalem. Sharon was set to finalize these plans but then delayed on 4/6, reportedly fearing it would raise tensions with the U.S. while the Iraq war was going on and cause budget problems at home.

The DMin. was also reportedly considering (3/23) plans to construct an eastern separation fence that would cut off Palestinian access to the Jordan Valley. This fence would run along the “Alon axis” from Mehola to Ma’ale Adumim and from there to the desert southeast of Hebron. On 3/26, Sharon presented a plan for a fence that would divide the West Bank into a northern bloc (Jenin, Nablus, Qalqilya, Ramallah, and Tulkarm) and a southern bloc (Bethlehem and Hebron), leaving Jericho in the middle and seizing the Jordan Valley. Unnamed Israeli ministers said (3/23) that Sharon intends the fences to outline the temporary borders of the Palestinian state under Bush’s road map. Indeed, his 3/26 plan concords with his previous statements that he would approve a Palestinian state on no more than 45% of the West Bank and 70% of Gaza.

INTRA-PALESTINIAN RELATIONS AND REFORM EFFORTS

The PA continued reform efforts but at a slower pace than previously. Already at the start of the quarter, the PA argued (2/18) that many steps, such as holding elections and issuing a constitution, could not move forward unless Israel eased restrictions on the Palestinians and resumed peace talks.

Political Reform

Most activity this quarter surrounded creating and filling the PM’s post and forming a new EA (or cabinet). As noted above, Arafat strenuously resisted relinquishing any measure of real control, especially to individuals such as former Gaza security chief Muhammad Dahlan, a favorite of Israel and the U.S., who might make significant concessions to Israel to consolidate their own power base.

The first struggle was to define the duties of the PM. After Arafat named Abbas as his choice (3/6), the PLO Central Comm. (PLOCC) endorsed (3/8–9) his candidacy and the creation of the post of PM, as well as discussed the duties of the PM. (Israel allowed 90 of the 143 PLOCC members to travel to Ramallah to attend.) Although the PLOCC could not officially approve Abbas or set his duties—legally the job of the Palestinian Council (PC)—the PLOCC’s opinions carry weight with the PC.

The PC quickly approved (3/10) 14 new articles to the Basic Law, creating the position of PM, but retained clauses outlining the duties of the president intact.

Subsequent PC debate (3/17–18) reconciling the two sets of articles and detailing the PM duties was heated: Arafat demanded that the PM be required to seek his approval, as president, in selecting the EA and making ministerial appointments, and sought provisions for two dep. PM posts to be appointed by the president and thus curb the PM's power. The PC rejected (22–49) these proposals, forcing Arafat to accept the final bill (approved 69–0, with 1 abstention, on 3/18) allowing him to appoint and dismiss the PM and leaving final say on security and negotiations in his hands, but giving the PM the authority to make ministerial appointments without consultation and day-to-day decisions. This seemed to meet U.S. and Israeli demands that Arafat be left with symbolic authority only.

Once Abbas accepted (3/19) his official nomination, he kept consultations on the new EA confidential. As is customary, though not legally required, Abbas made (4/13) his initial presentation to the Fatah Central Comm. (As with the PLOCC, the Fatah bloc typically meets before an important PC session for consultations and to form a unified position—a practice that has given Arafat a measure of control over PC decision making.) When Abbas indicated that he would replace the interior and justice ministers with men not closely tied to Arafat, Arafat and some Fatah leaders strongly objected and forced Abbas to delay the presentation of his cabinet to the PC. Further uproar was caused when the tentative slate was leaked (4/13): Reformers complained of too many old faces, and no women, while some cabinet members were stunned to find they were not included or moved to new posts. Abbas, who apparently had not briefed existing or proposed ministers on his choices, angered even his allies, some of whom threatened to reject their new portfolios.

More than a week of heated debate within Fatah followed, with Abbas threatening to quit over Arafat's attempts to curb his decision making (particularly by demanding that Abbas return Interior M Hassan and exclude former Gaza PSF chief Dahlan) and finally walking out of meetings on 4/19. Under stiff pressure from the international community (see above), Arafat and Abbas agreed to a compromise on 4/23: Abbas himself would serve as interior minister, with Dahlan

under him as state minister for security affairs. Otherwise, the 24-member Executive Authority (see Doc. B1), approved by the PC on 4/29, differed by only a few members from the one that had raised such objections when Abbas presented it on 4/13.

Among the figures retained at Arafat's insistence was Saeb Erakat, local government minister and senior PA negotiator since 1995, who was given the new post of negotiations affairs minister after Abbas attempted to demote him to minister without portfolio. On 5/15, Erakat resigned without giving a reason. Rumors suggested that he had not been invited by Abbas to take part in the Abbas-Sharon meeting set for 5/17, the first high-level PA-Israeli talks since the Taba negotiations in 1/01.

By the end of the quarter, Arafat reportedly had appointed 58 Fatah members to senior posts (including 15 to posts in the Interior Min.) without consulting Abbas, in an attempt to reassert control over certain ministries; Abbas was reportedly furious and had demanded Arafat revoke the appointments immediately.

The PA continued work on the constitution, reportedly completing a 43-page draft ca. 2/17, which it began circulating to experts for comments. The draft was presented to PC members on 3/10 but not discussed. Abbas reportedly gave the draft to Powell in their meeting on 5/11.

Security Reform

Abbas's removal of Hassan as interior minister and appointment of Dahlan as state security minister marked a major change that Israel and the U.S. hoped would lead to a revamping of the security forces, reassertion of PA security control over the territories, and a halt to violence. At the 4/29 PC meeting, however, Arafat also established a new national security council that would report directly to him, undercutting Abbas and Dahlan's ultimate control over the security organizations. The council would include Arafat, Abbas, Dahlan, Hassan (kept on as Arafat's personal adviser on security matters), Finance M Salam al-Fayyad, and the heads of Force 17, General Intelligence, naval intelligence, military intelligence, and the civilian police, with these last five to report to Hassan, leaving Dahlan in direct control

only of the PSF and counterintelligence. Abbas countered by announcing (5/5) the transfer of Interior Min. authority over all security services to the state security department, raising protests from Arafat that Abbas was attempting to bypass him. After further debate with Arafat, Abbas agreed (5/6) to give Dahlan responsibility for "specific security operations and sectors" but not authority over all security forces.

Dahlan held his first meeting with Hamas and Islamic Jihad reps. in Gaza on 4/24 to discuss a cease-fire and reopened security talks with Israeli Maj. Gen. Amos Gilad on 5/9. As of 5/10, Dahlan had reportedly drafted a security strategy plan for Abbas, but there were no plans to implement it until Israel accepted the road map. As of 5/14, the PA was reportedly quietly offering cash rewards for information on arms dealers and arms smuggling.

Israeli DM Mofaz reported on 4/2 that since the PA-Israeli security meeting on 3/27, the first such high-level meeting in over a year, the PSF had increased efforts to prevent Palestinians from firing Qassam rockets from Gaza, had made several arrests in this regard, and had begun coordinating the manning of new PSF posts near the IDF's operational areas.

The PA reportedly began (2/18) deploying dozens of unarmed security personnel in Nablus, called the Palestinian Authority Joint Forces, to handle traffic and civil complaints. The PA said it had not coordinated with Israel regarding the force.

Fiscal Reform

PA Finance M Fayyad met with Sharon in Jerusalem on 2/16 to discuss the Palestinian economic situation and the Israeli transfer of VAT revenues owed the PA. There was no confirmation that VAT transfers continued this quarter. Israel seized (3/10) \$7.4 m of the frozen VAT funds to pay for repair of a sewage and water purification system in the West Bank.

Fayyad issued (2/28) a 345-page report, partially prepared by Standard and Poors, detailing the holdings of the Palestinian Investment Fund (PIF) and showing consolidation of \$658 m. that had previously been held as 79 individual commercial ventures (including the Oasis hotel and casino in Jericho and a cement

company). Fayyad said that the holding of the investments in so many accounts is what apparently gave rise to Israeli accusations that Arafat and the PA held slush funds and to other reports of the PA controlling monopolies on important goods. He also said that most of the investments would be sold off when market conditions permit, stating, "Commerce is an honorable profession, but it's not for the state." PIF statements are now to be issued monthly.

Chairman of the PC budget comm. Sa'id Karanz complained (3/26) that some salary payments to the security services and Finance Min. were still being made in cash (rather than by direct deposit, as ordered by Fayyad in 12/02) because of resistance by some officials who skim money from the cash transactions. On 4/12, Fayyad announced that all salaries were being paid by direct deposit.

Judicial Reform

At its ITFR meeting in London (2/19–20), the Quartet noted that the PA had not made significant efforts on the rule of law, noting in particular the need to eliminate security courts, which are illegal under the Basic Law. Then-Interior M Hassan had abolished the security courts on 4/8, ordering military courts to be created to try members of the security services only.

National Unity

The national unity dialogue among Palestinian factions held in Cairo last quarter (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 127) and tentatively set to open its third round on 2/26 did not recommence despite much discussion. Instead Abbas held talks (3/28–ca. 4/1) with the various factions regarding forming his new cabinet and outlining his security, political, and economic policies. The AMB, DFLP, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and PFLP refused to participate in the new government, saying they would do so only if new elections were held and recommending that before trying to form a cabinet, Abbas should first negotiate a national unity platform acceptable to all factions. At the close of the quarter, Egypt and the PA were discussing reconvening the Cairo talks, but no decisions had been taken.

Splits within the AMB continued to be apparent this quarter, as the Nablus wing of the AMB continued to act on its own. A caller claiming to be an AMB member took

responsibility for the 4/24 Kfar Saba suicide bombing (staged by a Palestinian from Balata r.c., near Nablus), stating that it had been planned with the help of the PFLP. AMB's chief spokesman quickly denied (4/24) that the AMB was involved, saying that the Nablus breakaway faction was to blame.

Palestinian Peoples Party leader Mustafa Barghouti resigned (4/4) from the party to step up efforts to form the Palestinian National Initiative, an independent reform movement announced on 6/17/02 (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 125).

Arafat canceled (3/16) elections for the al-Azhar University workers union, fearing a landslide victory by Hamas.

PALESTINIAN OPINION

The following data are excerpted from a poll conducted by the Birzeit University Development Studies Program (DSP) between 8 and 10 May 2003. Results are based on a survey of 1,200 men and women from the West Bank and Gaza. The poll, the twelfth in a series, was taken from DSP's Web site at www.birzeit.edu/dsp.

1. Mr. Abbas, the new prime minister, called upon Palestinian factions to refrain from attacking Israeli civilians to provide a chance for negotiations. Do you support or oppose this call?

	West Bank	Gaza	Total
a. Support	21.2%	17.7%	19.9%
b. Support if Israel refrains from using violence against Palestinians	53.0%	48.8%	51.5%
c. Oppose	20.0%	31.7%	24.2%
d. No opinion	5.8%	1.8%	4.4%

2. In his inauguration speech, Mr. Abbas said that the new government will halt the illegal possession of weapons and that the only legal weapons are used by the security agencies to implement law and order. Do you support or oppose this statement?

	West Bank	Gaza	Total
a. Support	74.3%	76.1%	75.0%
b. Oppose	15.5%	20.5%	17.2%
c. No opinion	10.2%	3.4%	7.8%

3. Do you think that Israel will implement the road map proposed by the United States to resolve the conflict?

	West Bank	Gaza	Total
a. Yes	18.3%	13.9%	16.7%
b. No	69.3%	79.4%	72.9%
c. Don't know	12.4%	6.7%	10.4%

4. Do you believe that the United States is serious about implementing the road map?

	West Bank	Gaza	Total
a. Yes	32.6%	28.9%	31.2%
b. No	52.9%	60.4%	55.6%
c. Don't know	14.6%	10.7%	13.2%

JORDAN-ISRAEL

Jordan continued to keep a low profile this quarter in light of potential ramifications for the kingdom of the U.S.-led offensive against Iraq. Although public contacts with Israel were kept to a minimum, rumors circulated in the Hebrew press (early 3/03) that Sharon and King Abdallah had held three secret meetings in Amman and Aqaba in the past year, with the latest three months previous, to "coordinate the two countries' positions ahead of a possible U.S.-led war in Iraq." Neither state confirmed or denied the stories. Jordan also approved (5/5) Israel's choice of Yaqub Haddas Handlsman as ambassador extraordinaire to Amman.

Following rumors that there were 1,000s of U.S. troops in the kingdom (instead of 100s as the government claimed), Jordanian opposition groups staged (3/15) a demonstration demanding that the U.S. troops be expelled. The government denied the rumors but did not quash the protest, as would have been the case in recent quarters (see Quarterly Updates in *JPS* 125-27). After the start of the Iraq war on 3/19, King Abdallah had ordered (3/22) the security services to exercise "self-restraint" in dealing with protesters, and the government began issuing dozens of permits for antiwar demonstrations; some 60 rallies were held between 3/19 and 3/23 alone, most if not all also condemning Israeli actions against the Palestinians and U.S. policy toward Israel. King Abdallah also paid (3/22) condolence visits to the families of five Jordanians killed in Iraq.

Some 95 prominent Jordanians (including former PMs, chiefs of the royal court, and intelligence chiefs, as well as leading Islamists, leftists, and pan-Arabists) delivered (3/30) a petition to King Abdallah, urging him to clearly denounce the war on Iraq. The Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood also issued (3/30) a statement condemning "certain Arab governments" (alluding to Jordan as well) for allowing "invading forces" to use their bases and airspace for attacks on Iraq. Abdallah's first official statement did not come until 4/3, when he criticized U.S. forces for causing Iraqi civilian casualties.

Israeli Infrastructure M Joseph Paritzky stated (4/9) that Israel would soon hold talks with Jordan regarding rebuilding the old Mosul-Haifa oil pipeline via Jordan (to replace the pipeline that crosses Syria). Paritzky first raised the idea of reviving the pre-1948 pipeline, little of which remains, around 4/1, believing that the U.S. would support the project after Iraq was defeated. Jordan denied (4/9) that any talks were planned. The U.S. had no comment.

Jordan extradited (3/9) to Israel a Palestinian from Hebron, Abdallah al-Wawi, on suspicion of being a member of al-Qa'ida. Jordan's State Security Court sentenced (3/12) Jordanian 'Abd al-Rahman Abu Khudayr to 15 years hard labor for importing a rifle from Saudi Arabia with the intention of infiltrating into Israel.

SYRIA-ISRAEL

From the start of the quarter, Israel and the U.S. increased pressure on Syria, with Sharon urging (2/17, 4/15) the U.S. to "disarm" Syria—as well as Iran and Libya—after Iraq, and the U.S. vowing (2/17) that it would "deal with" the threats emanating from those states. At a session of the UN Counterterrorism Comm. in New York on 2/20, Israel's newly appointed Amb. to the UN Dan Gillerman launched a diplomatic assault on Syria, accusing Damascus of openly and "unapologetically" supporting "ten separate terrorist organizations" (i.e., the Damascus-based Palestinian rejectionist groups). Concerned by the statements, Syrian pres. Bashar al-Asad made (3/16) an emergency trip to Iran to confer with Pres. Mohamed Khatami on the Iraq situation and specifically what steps the U.S. might take against Hizballah.

Once military operations in Iraq were under control, the U.S. unleashed a diplomatic barrage against Syria, suggesting it could be the next U.S. target. U.S. Defense Secy. Donald Rumsfeld launched the first salvo on 3/28, when he publicly accused Syria of shipping military equipment to Iraq and giving free passage across the Syrian border to individuals who wanted to fight alongside Iraqi forces, saying that the U.S. considered these "hostile acts" and would hold Syria accountable. The accusation was made despite the fact that senior U.S. sources the same day clarified that military equipment referred to was night vision goggles and other dual-use items sent from Russian companies to Iraq "via Syria" and that the U.S. for weeks had been in quiet contact with Russia, urging it to rein in the private companies and halt the shipments. Moreover, aside from the fact that the length of the Syrian-Iraqi border made it impractical to assume that Syria could halt all cross-border traffic, top U.S. military officers reported (*New York Times* 4/15) that they knew of no Syrian role in recruiting fighters for Iraq. Nonetheless, the public attacks continued.

In a speech to the American Israel Public Affairs Comm. (AIPAC) on 3/30, Powell cautioned Damascus to stop "direct support for terrorist groups and the dying regime of Saddam Hussein," warning that Syria "faces a critical choice" and would be held responsible for its decisions. The same day, Israel revived accusations (which even Sharon said he could not confirm; see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 127) that Iraq had exported its weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) to Syria before the start of the war. (Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Richard Myers stated ca. 4/9 that "there is no evidence" that WMDs were taken out of Iraq.) Anonymous U.S. intelligence officials were cited (4/14) as saying that Hizballah members had crossed from Syria into Iraq, a charge Hizballah denied (4/14). Dep. Defense Secy. Paul Wolfowitz (4/6) and former CIA Dir. James Woolsey (4/6) called for regime change in Damascus. Statements in the same vein followed from Bush (4/11), White House spokesman Ari Fleischer (4/14), Pentagon adviser Richard Perle (4/12), Powell (4/10, 4/14), Rumsfeld (4/9), and again Wolfowitz (4/10). The House (4/11) and Senate (5/2) also reintroduced the Syria Accountability Act, which was shelved last fall after the

administration argued that it would complicate peace efforts; the act calls for an export ban, prohibitions on U.S. private investment, and restrictions on diplomatic contacts.

Around 4/3 numerous rumors citing unidentified administration officials and NSC staff began circulating (e.g., *Guardian* 4/15, *Washington Post* 4/17, UPI 5/2), indicating that Rumsfeld and Feith had ordered the Joint Chiefs of Staff to direct the U.S. European Command to prepare a contingency strike plan for Syria, based on the pretext of "hot pursuit." Israeli NSA Halevy reportedly pursued the idea in meetings with Powell and Rice on 4/13–15. Stories claimed that the plan had been blocked by the White House, specifically by Rice and Bush political adviser Karl Rove, who stated that Bush did not want any further military campaigns during his first term. On 4/14, an anonymous senior administration official stated that there were no plans to launch a military attack on Syria, but "we're trying to scare them for the moment" in hopes that "Syria will change its behavior." Another anonymous official said (4/14), "We've changed the geostrategic situation in the Middle East. Syria can either wake up to that fact or not. It's up to Syria to decide whether to become a part of the new Middle East that we are shaping." The U.S. also reportedly felt that it was "an opportune moment to press the allegations" and "was looking for leverage to ensure Syrian cooperation" with a renewed U.S. initiative on the peace process.

Israeli DM Mofaz stated (4/14) that Israel had "a long list of issues we are thinking of demanding of the Syrians, and it would be best done through the Americans." The list reportedly included removing Syrian troops from Lebanon, ending Syrian support of Hizballah and Palestinian rejectionist groups, and "effective Syrian disarmament." Sharon warned (4/15) that Asad was "dangerous" and that his "judgment is impaired," again stating that Syria held Iraq's WMDs and could give them to Hizballah. He urged (4/15, 4/16) the U.S. to exert "heavy pressure" on Syria—"not necessarily going to war, but diplomatic and economic pressure."

By 4/14, the Arab League, Britain, Denmark, Egypt, the EU, France, Germany, Lebanon, Russia, Spain, and the UN had strongly urged the U.S. to "cool down" and

exhibit restraint. Syria sealed (mid-4/03) its border with Iraq, urged Hizballah and the Palestinian groups to lay low before Powell's visit to the region on 5/3, and reportedly passed information to the U.S. regarding the whereabouts of Palestine Liberation Front leader Muhammad Abbas (Abu Abbas) after he tried to flee Iraq for Syria, leading to his capture by U.S. Special Forces in Baghdad on 4/14. On 4/20, Bush stated that Syria was showing some cooperation, and the aggressive statements abated. (One exception was a comment by Israeli amb. Danny Ayalon on 4/28 that the war on Iraq had created great opportunities for Israel but was "not enough," saying "regime change" in Iran and Syria was needed next.)

Soon after, reports surfaced (particularly in the Hebrew press) that Asad had made serious offers to Israel to restart peace talks both before and after the war on Iraq began. Responding to reports that Rep. Tom Lantos (D-CA) had passed a message (4/28) to Sharon from Asad regarding renewing talks, Sharon said (4/28) that Asad was merely attempting to deflect U.S. criticism but that Israel would be willing to reopen talks provided there were no "preconditions," such as starting from where negotiations left off in 1/00. Senior aides to Sharon confirmed (5/5) rumors suggesting that Asad had sent a relative to Amman to discuss an offer with Israeli FMin. dir. gen. Eytan Ben-Tzur but that Sharon rejected it because Syria's seriousness and motivation were questionable. Another aide said (5/5) that Sharon believed that restarting talks would "let Syria off the hook" at a time when the U.S. was using the momentum of the Iraq war to press Damascus to comply with numerous demands favorable to Israel. Sharon then said (5/8) that Israel "must wait a few weeks before deciding on talks with Syria to make the best use of U.S. pressure on Damascus." Syria (5/7, 5/11) and Jordan (5/6) eventually denied that any approaches took place.

The U.S. turned up the heat with Powell's visit to Syria on 5/3. En route to Damascus, Powell said (5/2) that the U.S. expected "specific action and performance" from Syria on a long list of issues to reflect its understanding and acceptance of the region's "new strategic dynamic." In his meeting with Asad, Powell demanded that Syria halt aid to Hizballah, continue to seal its border with Iraq and turn over any Iraqi

officials found in the country, halt chemical weapons development (which Syria denied was taking place), and address child custody disputes between Syrians and Americans, warning that there would be “consequences” if Syria did not take action. After the meeting, Powell declared that Syria had shut the offices of some Palestinian groups regarded as “terrorist organizations” by the U.S., including Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command. Syria did not confirm the closures, and the groups themselves claimed (5/3, 5/7) that they had received no such orders and were still operating. In an interview on 5/11, Asad said he had never given Powell any assurances he would close the offices and, to the contrary, had told him that the issues would have to be discussed in the context of restarting peace talks. By common accord, however, the 10 Damascus-based Palestinian groups agreed (5/10) to “freeze their activities because of the circumstances in Syria.” Journalists who visited the offices thereafter found them closed. Around 5/10, Hamas political leaders Musa Abu Marzuq and Khalid Mishal left Syria for Qatar, and senior Islamic Jihad political leader Ramadan Shallah left Syria for Lebanon.

In the first half of 5/03, the Syrian government reportedly licensed its first three private banks, approved two new private universities and four private radio stations, announced that school children would no longer have to wear military-style uniforms as of the fall, and began debate on eliminating requirements that all students join Ba’thist youth groups and on allowing the position of PM to be held by a non-Ba’th party member. The moves were thought to be related to the war on Iraq.

Also of note: Syria withdrew (2/18) 4,000 of its troops from Lebanon, leaving 16,000 troops in the country. Syrian officials said it was implementing the 1989 Ta’if Accord, while unofficial sources cited both domestic (placating Lebanon’s Christian opposition, which condemns the Syrian presence) and regional (concern over a strike on Iraq) causes as explanations.

On 3/9, more than 10,000 Lebanese and Palestinians drove to Syria to express support for Asad’s stance against the U.S. positions on Iraq and Israel, and urged

Syria, as a UN Security Council (UNSC) rotating member, to vote against a British draft UNSC res. giving Iraq until 3/17 to disarm.

LEBANON-ISRAEL

Tensions on the Israeli-Lebanese border remained high in light of the Iraq conflict. Israel continued to make surveillance overflights of Lebanese territory, and Hizballah continued to fire occasional anti-aircraft missiles in symbolic protest, as in previous quarters; one unexploded missile landed (3/15) in Kiryat Shimona inside Israel, causing no damage or injuries. Once the war on Iraq began, Hizballah redeployed (3/20) Katyushas toward the Israeli border, and the Lebanese army reinforced troops in the south to deter Israel from using the U.S. offensive as a pretext to attack Lebanon.

On 4/15, Lebanese PM Rafiq Hariri announced his cabinet’s resignation, reportedly under pressure from Syria, which wanted to “order its affairs in Lebanon as a preemptive measure against expected U.S. pressures following the collapse of the Ba’th regime in Iraq,” according to analysts (see *al-Quds al-Arabi* 4/17, *Middle East International* 5/2). Lebanese pres. Emile Lahoud, supported by 93 of the parliament’s 128 members, quickly appointed (4/15) Hariri to form a new government. The government, approved and sworn in on 4/17, was more strongly supportive of Damascus and Hizballah.

En route to Syria, Powell stopped (5/3) in Lebanon, where he urged Lahoud and Hariri to disarm Hizballah, remove all long-range rockets from southern Lebanon, assert military control over southern Lebanon, and provide a list of suspects involved in the kidnapping of U.S. citizens in Lebanon. Powell also stressed U.S. support for a “Lebanon free of all—all—foreign forces,” in reference to Syria. (In talks with Asad, however, Powell did not mention withdrawing Syrian troops from Lebanon.)

Lebanon reported (5/8) that it had arrested, with the help of Syrian intelligence, 25 persons, including 5 Palestinians, involved in a string of bombings outside American fast-food restaurants in Lebanon and an aborted plot to assassinate U.S. Amb. to Lebanon Vincent Battle during a visit to Tripoli on 1/15/03. Lebanon also announced (5/15)

the arrest, again aided by Syrian intelligence, of seven Lebanese and two Palestinians for plotting a major attack on the U.S. embassy. Israeli police reported (2/17) that over the past month, they had arrested five Israeli Jews from Kiryat Shimona and six Israeli Arabs from the divided city of Ghajar, on the Lebanese border, for giving Hizballah intelligence information in exchange for hashish. Three Lebanese captured by Israel off the coast of Gaza in 5/01 and convicted in 12/02 of smuggling arms to the Palestinians were sentenced (3/23) by an IDF tribunal to 10–12 years in jail.

Political rivalries in 'Ayn al-Hilwa r.c. between Fatah and the Islamist Usbat al-Ansar group, going on for a year, escalated sharply this quarter, with a number of killings (e.g., two on 2/23, 2/24, 3/1, 5/13) and four explosions on 4/26. In the 3/1 incident, Fatah allegedly killed 'Abd al-Sattar Jad (alias Abu Muhammad al-Masri, an Egyptian reported to be close to Egyptian Islamic Jihad, Usbat al-Ansar, and al-Qa'ida), whom it accused of having murdered a PLO activist in the camp, in a car bombing. Israel, which gave high profile to the killing, claiming Jad was the leader of the Lebanese branch of al-Qa'ida, was also rumored to be behind the assassination.

Interior M Elias Murr said (5/10) that his ministry would look into the cases of 200,000 individuals who became naturalized Lebanese citizens under a 1994 official decree, and warned that 10,000s of Palestinians and Syrians may be stripped of their citizenship if they lied in their applications. The Maronite League also filed (5/8) suit, arguing that the decree is unconstitutional and all citizenships awarded under it should be revoked.

REGIONAL AFFAIRS

RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL

Because of the war on Iraq and the ongoing intifada, there were few contacts between Israel and the Arab states. Israeli FM Shalom met (5/14) with Qatari FM Shaykh Hamad in Paris to discuss improving bilateral relations, marking the first ever public meeting between the two countries and Israel's highest level public meeting with a senior Arab official since the intifada began.

In light of the Iraq war, the Israeli Justice Min. began (ca. 4/16) preparing a list of property in Iraq, estimated to be worth \$1 b., which emigrating Iraqi Jews were forced to leave behind in the 1950s, with the aim of seeking compensation from frozen Iraqi assets. In an effort that may be coordinated, Iraqi Jews in Europe reportedly were discussing (5/15) filing class-action lawsuits against Iraq to achieve the same end. Israel's Trade Min. removed (4/30) prohibitions on Israel from doing business in Iraq. Several Israeli businessmen were reportedly already in contact with "U.S. elements" regarding becoming subcontractors to U.S. firms on various Iraqi projects.

INTER-ARAB HIGHLIGHTS

Arab leaders kept in close contact this quarter regarding the Iraq and Palestinian crises, but were unable or unwilling—given U.S. pressures and the risks of being perceived as "supporters of terror"—to formulate an effective united Arab policy. Arab League FMs held an emergency session on 2/16 to discuss moving the heads-of-state Arab summit slated for 3/24 in Bahrain to 2/26 in Cairo and making it a special session on Iraq. (The meeting reportedly was called at the urging of France, which had asked the Arab states officially to support the European antiwar stand.) All parties agreed on the need either to condone a U.S. attack on Iraq or unite in opposition against it, but the states remained divided. In the end, both sides opposed a special session on Iraq—Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the other Gulf states hosting U.S. troops because they did not want to be asked to approve a harsh statement opposing foreign troops on Arab soil; Algeria, Lebanon, Libya, Palestine, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen because they believed their strong opposition to a strike on Iraq would at best be watered down into a weak, noncommittal statement, thereby highlighting the Arab League's ineffectiveness. As a compromise, the states agreed to move the meeting to 3/1 in Sharm al-Shaykh but to keep it a regular summit session. The Palestinian issue was not discussed.

FMs met again (2/27–28) to draft a paragraph on Iraq that all states could subscribe to for the Arab summit's final statement, but the meeting ended without agreement. Powell called on the states "to

issue the strongest possible statement" telling Hussein that he must "step down and get out of the way and let some responsible leadership take over," outraging the League members, who stated, in the words of Egyptian FM Ahmad Maher, that "We are not in the business of changing the regime of one country or another. . . . We can only ask all parties to abide by international resolutions in order to avoid war." The summit's final statement expressed (3/1) "complete rejection of any aggression on Iraq" without UN approval, urged Arab states not to "participate" in an attack on Iraq, called on the international community to work toward Israeli-Palestinian peace, and renewed monthly budget support for the PA. Syrian pres. Asad dismissed (3/10) the statement, calling the Arab leaders weaklings unable to defend their own interests. The Arab League FMs held another special session on Iraq and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on 3/24, but observers said that there was "an almost universal feeling that [the Arab states] were merely going through the motions for public consumption."

Similarly, the Non-Aligned Movement ended its heads-of-state summit (2/24-25) with a bland statement condemning U.S. threats to Iraq and Israeli violence against the Palestinians and urging the international community to take action. The Organization of the Islamic Conference held (3/5) an emergency session to discuss the Iraq and Palestinian situations and issued a strong statement denouncing Israeli aggressions, but as with the 3/1 Arab League statement, it had little practical effect.

Meanwhile, as of late 2/03, massive popular demonstrations were held in the Arab world in solidarity with both the Palestinian and Iraqi peoples. For example, more than 120,000 Egyptians protested in Cairo on 2/27; 100,000 demonstrated in Cairo on 3/5; 10,000 Yemenis rallied in Sana' on 2/28; and 5,000 Palestinians demonstrated in Syria's Yarmuk r.c. on 3/6. After the start of the war on Iraq, much larger and more hostile demonstrations took place, particularly in Egypt, where 10,000s of protesters clashed with police on 3/20 and 3/21. Observers noted that the Arab protests were directed "as much at the individual Arab governments' active or passive collusion in the assault" on Iraq as at the U.S. and Britain.

Soon after the fall of Baghdad, humanitarian relief agencies began reporting (4/24) that Iraqis in the capital and in the south were retaliating against Palestinian refugees, seizing their homes and property, and that refugees were trickling toward the borders, seeking safe haven. The number of Palestinian refugees in Iraq is variously estimated to be 42,000 to 90,000. The Hussein regime forced 1,000s of poor Iraqis to give up their homes to refugees in return for a token rent, paid by the government, as a show of solidarity; refugees also received a small stipend from the government (not enough to live on but enough to spark jealousy among poor Iraqis). With the regime gone, some Iraqis sought to reclaim their houses. In Baghdad, as many as 460 Palestinian families (some 3,000 people) had been evicted by the end of the quarter and were living in a UN-established tent city or vacant government buildings. As of 4/28, the PLO reported that Jordan had allowed in 375 Palestinian refugees with Jordanian, Syrian, Egyptian, or Lebanese laissez-passer documents and set them up at a camp near al-Ruwayshid; another 50 without documents remained on the Iraqi side of the border.

INTERNATIONAL

UNITED STATES

As noted above, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remained peripheral to the administration's concerns as the U.S. geared up for and waged war on Iraq. Congress, however, made it a high priority and initiated unusually strong preemptive action against the road map and for supplemental aid to Israel (see below). Concerted criticism of the road map intensified in mid-3/03, when House majority leader Tom DeLay (R-TX) gave two speeches (3/12, 4/2), calling supporters of the road map "neopappeasers" and the plan an "absurd scheme [that] flows from an ethically obtuse obsession with establishing moral parity between the lone fountain of liberty in the Middle East and an apparatus of terror that was organized and deployed to destroy the Jewish state." Republican and Democratic congressional leaders (including DeLay, House majority whip Roy Blunt [R-MO], and House minority whip Steny Hoyer [D-MD]) called (4/3) on Bush and Powell

to temper their support of the road map and adopt a "more staunchly pro-Israel stance, even if it feeds the perception the United States is too closely aligned with ... Sharon's government." A number of speeches by members of Congress (including House minority leader Nancy Pelosi [D-CA], House speaker Dennis Hastert [R-IL], and Rep. Eric Cantor [R-VA]) at the annual AIPAC conference (3/30–4/1) echoed this line and made clear that Congress would oppose any peace deal that did not require the Palestinians to halt violence and change their leadership before Israel was forced to take any action. Several unnamed "key" Republicans said (4/3) that Bush had privately assured them that he agreed with them, but stated he was under pressure from Powell and Blair to press the road map.

After the road map was released, two letters from 88 senators and 313 representatives (drafted by AIPAC) were sent (4/30) to Bush, urging against pressing Israel to comply with the road map's requirements before the Palestinians halt all violence (see Docs. D2, D3). Breaking with the main Jewish lobbying organizations, 14 major Jewish philanthropists issued (4/29) a statement strongly supporting the road map. Analysts noted (e.g., *Washington Post* 5/1), however, that most of the signers likely would not vote for Bush anyway.

Sharon's chief of staff Weisglass (2/21–23) and Dep. DMin. dir. gen. Amos Yaron (2/25–26) returned to Washington to present a revised request for additional aid (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 127), seeking \$12 b.–\$8 b. in loan guarantees (down from \$10 b.) and \$4 b. in military aid. While Israel and the U.S. were still discussing details, Senate majority leader and presidential candidate Bill Frist (R-TN) and Senate minority leader Tom Daschle (D-SD) sent (3/13) a letter to Bush, urging him to back the aid as necessary to "help jumpstart" the Israeli economy and protect "a key American ally confronting both terrorism and the threat of attack from unconventional weapons." The White House ultimately asked Congress to give Israel \$10 b. (\$1 b. military aid, \$9 b. loan guarantees) over three years as part of a \$75 b. supplemental aid request submitted ca. 3/21. The package was stalled because of add-ons unrelated to the Middle East, but finally passed on 4/16. Under the law (P.L. 108–11), Israel may not spend the

loan guarantee money in the occupied territories. The U.S. may reduce Israel's next annual installment by the amount that the president determines to be "inconsistent with the objectives and understandings reached between the United States and the Government of Israel" (i.e., used for settlement expansion). The law also provides over three years \$50 m. for humanitarian aid in the occupied territories, \$1 b. in economic aid and \$8.5 b. in direct loans or loan guarantees for Turkey, \$700 m. in economic aid and \$406 m. in military aid for Jordan, \$300 m. in economic aid and \$2 b. in loan guarantees for Egypt, \$127 m. for Afghanistan, and \$200 m. for "Muslim outreach" and the Middle East Partnership Initiative (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 127).

Congress cut (ca. 2/17) FY 2003 foreign appropriations across the board by .65%, meaning that Israel will receive \$2.09 b. in military aid and \$596 m. in economic aid for the year. Israel was reportedly considering (ca. 2/19) making another \$850 m. special aid request to the U.S. or Germany to finance the purchase of two Dolphin submarines from Germany to add to the three it already has.

Anthony Zinni officially resigned (3/1) as U.S. special envoy on the Israel-Palestine conflict, saying that he had not heard from administration officials about the continuation of his mission and that it seemed to him that the administration was not interested in using him further. His last visit to the region was in 3–4/02, when he recommended a three-stage cease-fire plan (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 124). After the start of Israel's Operation Defensive Shield in 3/02, U.S. and Israeli efforts shifted to removing Arafat, and Zinni's ideas were shelved.

NSC Middle East adviser Abrams reportedly dismissed (ca. 2/25) three NSC staff members who supported the immediate release of the road map. Some reports say that the three (Flynt Leverett, Hillary Mann, and Ben Miller) resigned.

Bush announced (5/9) a plan for creating a Middle East free trade zone within 10 years that would foster regional "peace and security." The zone would build on existing U.S. free trade agreements with Israel and Jordan, and one under negotiation with Morocco. To qualify for participation in the zone, the states would be required to undertake

“necessary reforms,” which, depending on the country, would include renouncing and combating terrorism, fighting corruption, ending the boycott of Israel, and lowering barriers to trade and investment by U.S. companies. In return, the U.S. would help states gain World Trade Organization membership.

Leading Christian members of the Senate, led by Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC), submitted (4/2) a nonbinding resolution (S. Con. Res. 32) calling for holy sites in Jerusalem to remain under Israeli sovereignty so as to “assure the safety of American citizens” visiting there. Rep. Joe Wilson (R-SC) submitted a House version (H. Con. Res. 150) on 4/10.

Of note: While Jenin r.c. was under curfew on 3/24, the IDF reportedly led a group of U.S. army officers on a tour of the camp to study tactics Israel used during Operation Defensive Shield that could be adopted by the U.S. in Iraq, including bulldozing narrow streets in crowded areas to create wide paths for entry of infantry. The U.S. reportedly was particularly interested in how the IDF used tank rounds to blast holes in the walls of homes without collapsing them. According to the *New York Times* (4/1), Israeli military advisers stressed that the IDF could use helicopters to shell dense urban areas only “because the Palestinians were so poorly armed” that they could not pose a threat to helicopters, which are very vulnerable to ground fire.

RUSSIA

Russia participated in the peace process mostly through the Quartet this quarter. Russian special envoy Andrei Vdovin toured the region (ca. 3/6) for consultations on the Palestinian and Iraq issues and returned (ca. 4/21–24) to help mediate formation of the Palestinian cabinet. Russian dep. FM Aleksandr Saltanov also toured the region (late 4/03) for consultations on the road map and the Iraq postwar environment.

EUROPEAN UNION

EU-Israeli relations remained strained this quarter as the EU continued to press for immediate release and implementation of the road map. The EU submitted (2/19) a strongly worded letter to Israel criticizing IDF actions in the occupied territories, especially construction of the security fence, closing universities, and infringing

on humanitarian rights. Israel said (2/19) that it was one of the most serious criticisms it has received recently. The text was not released.

At the close of a two-day meeting in Brussels, the EU issued (3/21) a statement saying that the war on Iraq made it “all the more imperative” for the international community to deal with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and calling on Israel to “contribute effectively to efforts aiming at Palestinian reform and an end to violence.”

The EU said (5/9) that Israel and the U.S. were putting extreme pressure on EU officials not to meet with Arafat during visits to Israel and the occupied territories, but Israel was selectively applying its policy of refusing to meet officials who had met with Arafat. Sharon met (5/12) with EU rotating pres. Greek FM George Papandreou despite his plans to see Arafat the same day, but pressed EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana to cancel a meeting with Arafat. Solana instead canceled (5/14) his visit to Israel and went directly to Ramallah on 5/15. Also of note: Israel’s Justice M Tommy Lapid canceled (4/7) a meeting with German FM Joschka Fischer after Fischer requested that the venue be changed from the East Jerusalem offices of the Justice Min. Fischer met with Arafat and Abbas in Ramallah on 4/9.

British-Israeli relations deteriorated further this quarter (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 127) when FM Jack Straw stated (3/25) in an interview that Western nations had shown a “double standard” by pressing Iraq to carry out UN resolutions, while not putting the same pressure on Israel. Israel summoned (3/25) the British ambassador to protest formally. Blair himself had planned to link action on Iraq directly to the need for immediate progress on the peace process in a speech to a prominent Jewish group in London on 2/26, but deleted the statement at the last minute, at Israel’s request.

UNITED NATIONS

The UN was totally preoccupied with the Iraq issue this quarter and did comparatively little on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

On 4/14, the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) passed (33–5, with 1 abstention) a recurrent res. that “strongly condemned” Israel’s military occupation as “an aggression and an offense against humanity and flagrant

violation of human rights." Israel and the U.S. condemned (4/14) the res. as biased for failing to condemn in comparable terms the threat to Israel. The UNCHR also passed (50–1, with 2 abstentions) a recurrent res. calling on Israel to begin dismantling Jewish settlements and to halt their expansion, including natural growth; the U.S. was the sole vote against.

Israel was elected (4/29) to its second comm. post at the UN, winning one of 33 open positions for a three-year term on the UN Economic and Social Council's Commission on Narcotic Drugs. Before being selected to serve on the UN Working Group on Disarmament in 2/03 (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 127), Israel had not won a UN election since 1961, when it served on the UN General Assembly's (UNGA) legal comm.

IRAN

Iran, like Syria (see above), was the target of U.S. and Israeli pressure this quarter. From the start of the quarter, the U.S. (e.g., 2/17, 3/30, 4/10) warned it would "deal with threats from Iran" after taking care of Iraq, with Israel urging (e.g., 2/17, 4/14, 4/28) the U.S. from the sidelines. The main concern seemed to be Iran's support for Hizballah. In testimony before the House appropriations comm. (3/13), Powell stated his concern that Iran might provide Hizballah or other "terrorist" groups with WMDs. On 5/7, U.S. officials claimed that Iran had recently stepped up its nuclear program and that Israel had been pressing them "to take this problem seriously." Officials also said (5/7) that they had recently learned that Iran had an undisclosed uranium enrichment facility in Natanz, in north-central Iran, which they said was more worrisome than the Russian-assisted nuclear power facility in Busheir.

Iran released (2/19) the last five Iranian Jews of the 10 arrested in 1999 and convicted in 2000 on charges of spying for Israel (see Peace Monitors in *JPS* 113 and 118, and Quarterly Update in *JPS* 126).

TURKEY

Israeli FM Shalom held talks on bilateral relations with Turkish PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Pres. Ahmet Necdet Sezer, and FM Abdallah Gul in Ankara on 4/14. Israel agreed (4/11) to employ 800 Turkish construction workers in exchange for Turkey signing a \$687 m. deal for Israel to

refurbish Turkish tanks. The amount of workers' salaries would be deducted from the amount Israel must spend in Turkey under the military agreement, which includes mutual procurements. Turkey canceled (5/13), however, a \$12 m. project for Israel to upgrade eight C-130 cargo planes and removed Israel Aircraft Industries (IAI) from its list of approved suppliers after IAI tried to raise the price of the project. Turkey was also angry that it had not received an order of airborne reconnaissance cameras from Israel's Elbit Systems and RAFAEL 18 months after the order was due to arrive.

DONORS

The donors' Ad Hoc Liaison Comm. (AHLIC), which was to have met in 12/02 following the planned (but delayed) release of the road map, met in London 2/19–20 on the sidelines of the London Quartet mtg. to discuss current conditions in the territories (see Doc. A2), obstacles to economic progress, and the potential impact of Israel's new separation fence; both Israel and the PA attended. The PA briefed attendees on reform efforts and called for the relaunching of the donors' Joint Liaison Comm. (JLC), the oversight body of the Local Aid Coordination Comm. (LACC) that includes Israeli and PA reps.; Israel said it was not prepared to resume trilateral (Israel-PA-donor) mechanisms. The JLC last met in 4/00 (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 116). The World Bank presented a draft report on the economic and social damage to the Palestinian economy during the first two years of the intifada and possible measures to stabilize the economy, and called for Israel's immediate halt to closures and blockades. The World Bank estimated that the PA would need another \$1.1 b. in donor support in 2003 to keep the Palestinian economy afloat and alleviate the humanitarian crisis, stressing that this amount would cover "only the most urgent day-to-day needs"—emergency food, emergency job creation, and cash assistance for the neediest. Around two-thirds of that amount had already been pledged; donors pledged another \$700 m. (Of the \$1.1 b. the PA received in budget support in 2002, \$840 m. came from Arab League states and \$230 came from the EU).

The LACC continued to hold monthly meetings this quarter. It met (2/28) in

al-Ram to review conclusions of the 2/19–20 AHLC meeting; noted the deteriorating economic and humanitarian conditions in the occupied territories in 2002 (real GDP down 25%, real GNI down 26%, unemployment up 42%, those living below the poverty level of \$2/day totaling 60% of the population, lost investment equaling \$3.4 b.); discussed what logistical problems Israel's new security fence could create; noted coordination with Israel to ensure movement of international aid workers in case of a long-term curfew on the territories during a war on Iraq; and noted that donors had assembled a 2–3 mo. stock of food and medical supplies in case of a prolonged closure. Donors urged Israel to continue VAT transfers, facilitate work of international aid agencies, and issue permits to Palestinians involved in reform efforts; and urged the PA to develop and rally Palestinians around a national emergency plan to cope with the continuing crisis and to continue reform efforts.

The LACC met (4/1) in Ramallah to discuss the anticipated presentation of the road map and whether the LACC could play a role in monitoring implementation. This LACC meeting was the first in some

time attended by the PA; Israel did not attend. The PA presented donors with a draft Emergency Public Investment Plan (EPIP) for 2003, which anticipates continued Israeli military escalation and deterioration of the humanitarian situation, and which aims at relieving Palestinian suffering, preventing the total collapse of the Palestinian economy, reducing poverty and unemployment (specifically by urging greater donor financing of job creation programs to get another 160,000 unemployed working), maintaining social stability, and supporting and enhancing PA institutions. The plan seeks \$640 m. in new donor financing to bring total donor disbursements for 2003 to \$1.75 b. The PA also briefed donors on reform efforts and cited the need for better planning, delivering, and monitoring of donor aid. UNRWA reported that of the \$95 m. requested of donors in its latest emergency appeal (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 127), only \$35 m. had been pledged and \$6 m. delivered. The World Bank generally approved the EPIP, agreed to work with the PA to refine the plan, and said that the major aim for the next few months would be to secure sufficient budget support for the PA and fund the UNRWA emergency appeal.



Photo taken by Reuters photographer Ahmed Jadallah from where he landed, severely injured, when an IDF tank fired a shell at a crowd in Jabaliya r.c. Eight Palestinians were killed and 60 wounded in the 6 March 2003 incident.