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QUARTERLY UPDATE ON CONFLICT AND DIPLOMACY

16 MAY-15 AUGUST 2005

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.

THE PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT

At the opening of the quarter, Israel was moving ahead with plans to begin its unilateral disengagement from Gaza and 4 West Bank settlements around 8/15 and to complete the process within 6-12 weeks. Israel maintained limited coordination with the Palestinian Authority (PA) to assure continued calm and the smooth transition of authority in Gaza, with the assistance of U.S. security envoy Gen. William Ward, Quartet economic envoy James Wolfensohn, and Egyptian intelligence official Omar Sulayman.

A unilateral truce agreed to by the Palestinian factions in 1/05 and extended in 3/05 through the end of 2005 remained in place but was shaky, given Israel's failure to follow through on pledges made at the 2/8/05 Sharm al-Shaykh summit between Israeli PM Ariel Sharon and PA Pres. Mahmud Abbas to release 400 more Palestinian prisoners; turn over security control for the West Bank cities of Bethlehem, Qalqilya, and Ramallah; and hold a follow-up meeting between Sharon and Abbas. (Israel had turned over security control of Jericho and Tulkarm and released 500 prisoners last quarter in keeping with Sharm al-Shaykh pledges but had reinvaded Tulkarm on 5/2; see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 136.)

Violence in the West Bank and Gaza had eased considerably since the unofficial truce 1/05 but threatened to rise as IDF maintained severe restrictions on Palestinian movement across the territories, continued arrest raids and house searches (particularly targeting Islamic Jihad), and kept up house demolitions, bulldozing operations, and land confiscations for construction of the West Bank separation wall. As of 5/16, at least 4,051 Palestinians (including 42 Israeli

Arabs and 16 unidentified Arab cross-border infiltrators), 965 Israelis (including 301 IDF soldiers and security personnel, 192 settlers, 472 civilians), and 54 foreign nationals (including 2 British suicide bombers) had been killed since the start of the al-Aqsa intifada.

The Abbas-Bush Meeting

From 5/16 to 5/26, Israeli and PA officials held coordination meetings on disengagement or bilateral meetings with Ward every few days to discuss Gaza security, the transfer of settlement assets, border crossing and trade arrangements after disengagement, the creation of a safe-passage link between Gaza and the West Bank, and the reconstruction of Gaza's airport and building of a sea port, but little if any progress was made. The only significant development was Israel's declaration on 5/22 that it planned to fully ban Palestinians from working inside Israel completely by 2008 as part of a "deliberate process to separate the two economies." Israel complained (5/23) that PA plans for deploying security forces in Gaza during and after disengagement were "superficial and unsatisfactory," while the PA complained (5/25) that Israel still had not provided the PA with critical information on the settlement assets to be turned over or the scope and details of its withdrawal plan. The PA emphasized (5/25) that the parties needed to have a firm understanding of steps to be taken after disengagement—including agreeing on a timetable for empowering the PA in Gaza (e.g., allowing construction of a port and airport, assumption of border controls, economic and physical reconstruction), implementing road map provisions, and resuming final status talks—if the disengagement were to mark a true step toward a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

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Israel and the PA were seemingly in a holding pattern in advance of a long-planned 5/26 meeting in Washington between Abbas and U.S. Pres. George W. Bush, which was intended to counterbalance Bush's meeting with Sharon on 4/11/05 when he praised Sharon's "courageous initiative to disengage" and reiterated the U.S.'s position that "existing major Israeli population centers [in the West Bank and East Jerusalem] must be taken into account in any final status negotiations" (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 136). At the 5/26 meeting, Abbas stressed the PA's need for assistance to build up the PA security forces' capabilities for maintaining order and brought maps showing how Israeli settlement expansion and construction of the separation wall were precluding chances of a viable Palestinian state. Bush publicly praised Abbas's commitment to democracy and reminded Israel of its obligations (including halting settlement expansion and construction of the separation wall deep into Palestinian territory, easing restrictions on Palestinian movement, and pulling back troops from West Bank population centers to 9/00 lines), explicitly stating that Israel must not undertake activity that would "prejudice final status negotiations with regard to Gaza, the West Bank, and Jerusalem" and that "changes to the 1949 armistice lines must be mutually agreed to" (see Doc. C1). Privately, he reportedly pressed Abbas to rein in militant groups. (Sharon complained on 5/31 that Bush did not put significant pressure on Abbas to launch a "war on terror" and dismantle the armed factions, but the Bush administration reportedly had decided not to push disarmament until after Palestinian legislative council elections, so as not to feed popular support for Hamas.) Bush also announced that Secy. of State Condoleezza Rice would visit the region in the coming weeks to encourage momentum on disengagement and to focus Israel and the PA on next steps to lead "the way back on the road map."

Immediately following the Abbas-Bush meeting, the U.S. expanded (5/27) Ward's mandate from assisting the PA in rebuilding and reforming its security forces to mediating between Israel and the PA on security-related disengagement issues with the aim of improving disengagement coordination. Under pressure from the U.S., Israel authorized (5/29) the release of the remaining 400 prisoners it had pledged to free at the 2/8 Sharm al-Shaykh summit, resumed (5/30) talks with the PA on the transfer of

Bethlehem and Qalqilya to PA security control, and announced (6/1) plans to hold an Abbas-Sharon meeting on 6/21; the prisoners were freed on 6/2. On 6/16, Israel handed the PA maps of the civilian infrastructure (e.g., roads, water, sewerage, electricity networks) in the Gaza settlements. Meanwhile, the PA revived (5/28) a long-standing proposal to recruit and train a new 5,000-member security force to serve as a buffer between Palestinians and the settlements during disengagement. Wolfensohn, in consultation with Bush administration officials, began drafting (ca. 6/16) an aid package for postdisengagement Gaza redevelopment. The level of Israeli-PA security talks was upgraded (6/14), and Israeli-PA coordination talks and bilateral meetings with Ward, Wolfensohn, and Sulayman continued through 6/18, without producing significant breakthroughs.

On 6/9, Israeli High Court justices voted 10-1 that Sharon's disengagement plan was legal and in the national interest. In rallying public support, Sharon stressed (6/16) that the disengagement was intended "to leave an area of less security importance in order to strengthen those with a high strategic value for us," specifically Greater Jerusalem, the Galilee, and the Negev. The IDF announced (6/17) plans to begin collecting weapons from the 8,500 Gaza settlers, many of which it had itself distributed to strengthen the settlers' defenses over the years; the IDF estimated that these included at least 1,872 M-16 assault rifles, 172 Uzi submachine guns, 990 handguns, several dozen machine guns, and a number of mortars. On 6/17, the IDF announced that the navy would build a sea barrier 950 m into the sea off the northern Gaza coast to prevent Palestinians from reaching Israel from Gaza.

Meanwhile, Israeli-Palestinian violence continued at a moderate level. In the sharpest escalation since 2/8, the IDF on 5/28 fatally shot a Hamas member in a clash on the Rafah border. Hamas responded (5/18) with a barrage of mortars on Jewish settlements in Gaza, causing light damage but no injuries, and the IDF hit back with air strikes against Hamas members in Gaza, killing 1 and wounding 1. Palestinian mortar and rocket fire on Gaza settlements, the Qarni crossing, and the Israeli town of Sederot continued on 5/19, causing light damage but no injuries. On 5/20, the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade (AMB), Hamas, and Islamic Jihad staged a joint attack on Gaza's Kefar Darom settlement, causing damage but no

injuries; the IDF returned fire, killing the Hamas member, while the other 2 assailants escaped. Israel otherwise did not respond in force, allowing PA Interior M Nasr Yusuf to intervene with Hamas leaders to secure their commitment to restore the truce on 5/21. A similar spike occurred on 6/7 when the IDF fatally shot an Islamic Jihad military commander in Qabatyia during an arrest raid, sparking a 90-minute clash in Qabatyia that left 1 Palestinian dead and 9 injured, massive protests in neighboring Jenin, and another barrage of mortar and rocket fire in Gaza by Islamic Jihad and Hamas that left 2 Palestinian and 1 Chinese settlement workers dead and 5 Palestinian workers injured. Hamas and the IDF continued to exchange heavy fire in Khan Yunis on 6/8, leaving 2 IDF soldiers injured, but both sides then scaled down. Israeli curfews, arrest raids, house searches and demolitions continued, as did near daily attacks by Jewish settlers against Palestinians, particularly in Hebron (see below). Scattered incidents of Palestinian fire against IDF and settler targets in Gaza in particular also occurred. By 6/17, the Palestinian death toll had risen to 4,075, while the Israeli toll remained unchanged at 965.

Rice Visit Spurs Action

On 6/18, Secy. Rice arrived in the region as planned. In meetings (6/18) in Ramallah with Abbas and senior PA officials, she praised Abbas's security efforts to date but stressed the need to do more to contain Palestinian violence and to coordinate with Israel on disengagement. Abbas noted Israel's refusal to be forthcoming regarding its disengagement plans and again stressed the settlement issue. In talks (6/19) with Sharon, Rice stated that the U.S. would not accept any further West Bank settlement construction and would not "be forced to accept changes in the status quo." (In a slight to Rice, the Israeli Housing Min. announced plans the same day to issue tenders for the construction of 300 new settlement units in Ma'ale Adumim and 400 in Beitar Ilit.)

Details of Rice's talks on disengagement were not released, but at the close of her visit, Rice announced (6/19) that Israel had agreed in principle to the PA's request to demolish settler homes in Gaza to make way for higher density housing while preserving valuable infrastructure. Israel would pay for and carry out the dismantling at an estimated cost of \$50 m.-\$60 m. (The World Bank stated on 6/19 that it could not fund

the process, since its mandate does not allow aid to high-income nations, like Israel; the implication was that covering the cost would also run contrary to the demands of international law, which states that the occupier must bear the cost of returning the land to its state prior to occupation.) Details remained undecided, especially regarding the removal of rubble.

Between 6/17 and 6/19, Wolfensohn also held talks with Abbas, Sharon, and Rice to finalize his proposed Rapid Action Plan for the economic aspects of disengagement, which he publicly revealed on 6/20. The plan addressed 6 crucial disengagement issues that his team would prioritize with Israel and the PA: besides the fate of settlers' houses already decided in principle, these were the fate of settler greenhouses, seen as a viable economic enterprise that could be transferred to the Palestinians; movement of Palestinians and their goods into and out of Gaza; safe-passage for Palestinians to travel between Gaza and the West Bank; reopening the Gaza airport and constructing a sea port; and reducing restrictions on Palestinian movement in the West Bank. The plan also identified 3 additional areas of focus for talks with the PA: ways of overcoming the PA's fiscal crisis and creating a social safety net; refocusing the PA's "medium-term financial platform" to serve as a basis for expanded donor financing to support Palestinian development; and the need for the international community to fast-track additional aid to the Palestinians and identify projects that would have a quick, noticeable impact on the territories in the first 6 months after disengagement, so as to encourage Palestinians to maintain calm and cooperation. Wolfensohn also proposed that the international community pledge \$3 b. over 3 years (FY 2006-2008) to foster Gaza reconstruction and to revitalize the Palestinian economy.

At the same time, Israel revived (6/20) talks with Egypt on deploying Egyptian border police along the Egyptian side of the Rafah border following disengagement to help prevent arms smuggling into Gaza and thereby allow Israel to withdraw troops from the Philadelphi Route on the Gaza side of the border. Most details of an agreement had been reached by 2/05 (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 135), but Egypt still resisted Israeli demands that it state in writing that it would assume full responsibility for preventing arms smuggling across the border.

A "Difficult" Sharon-Abbas Meeting

The limited progress on disengagement coordination was overshadowed by a deterioration in the security situation coinciding with Rice's visit. On 6/18, the IDF stepped up operations against Islamic Jihad in Gaza following a clash that day outside Kefar Darom that left 1 Islamic Jihad member dead and an AMB member wounded. On 6/19, Islamic Jihad and the Abu Rish Brigades (a local Fatah offshoot), citing Israel's arrest of some 300 Islamic Jihad members in the previous 2 months, fired an antitank missile and a rocket-propelled grenade at 2 IDF posts in Rafah, killing 1 soldier and wounding 2; IDF soldiers returned fire, killing 1 armed Palestinian. An Islamic Jihad gunman then fatally shot a Jewish settler near Tulkarm on 6/20, prompting Israel to launch its most intensive arrest campaign in the West Bank since 3/05, detaining 52 Islamic Jihad members in raids on 6/21 alone, as well as attempting to assassinate a wanted Islamic Jihad member on 6/21 in violation of its 2/8 Sharm al-Shaykh pledges.

As a result, the Abbas-Sharon meeting of 6/21, their first since the 2/8 summit, was reportedly "difficult" and ended "bitterly," with only minor progress. At the meeting, Sharon pledged that if the cease-fire were restored, Israel would turn over security control of Bethlehem and Qalqilya within 2 weeks, allow more Palestinian workers into Israel, and ease restrictions on Palestinian movement. He also agreed to the deployment of the new contingent of 5,000 security officers proposed by the PA (see above) but demanded that they be unarmed. The leaders clashed over Sharon's demands that Abbas take stronger measures to disarm and dismantle militant groups and Abbas's call for Israel to release more Palestinian prisoners (including jailed Fatah *tanzim* leader Marwan Barghouti) and to reopen the Gaza airport. Sharon reportedly showed anger at Abbas, warning that Israel would take action to eradicate militant groups if Abbas did not, and Abbas was reportedly "furious and disappointed" by Sharon's tone.

Following the meeting, Israel announced (6/22) that the IDF would resume targeting Islamic Jihad members for assassination and staged a failed attempt on a group of Islamic Jihad members in Bayt Lahiya later that day. The PA immediately called for restraint on both sides and opened intensive talks with Islamic Jihad leaders in Gaza. Though 1,000 Islamic Jihad supporters in northern Gaza and 100s in Ramallah rallied

(6/24) to protest Israel's actions, the Islamic Jihad leadership reaffirmed (6/23, 6/24) its commitment to the unofficial cease-fire. The crisis seemed to pass, though Israel continued its targeted arrest raids, and Islamic Jihad members continued intermittent mortar fire (see Chronology).

Over the next 3 weeks, disengagement coordination efforts plodded along, with Israel continuing to move unilaterally on disengagement, keeping coordination to the bare minimum dictated by its security concerns. When the chief PA disengagement coordinator, Civil Affairs M Muhammad Dahlan, complained on 7/5 that "with 45 days to go, we can't get an answer from the Israelis on any serious question," a senior Israeli official involved in the process said, "He's right. . . . There is a real tension between our desire to control and our desire not to be responsible for Gaza."

On 6/30 Israel declared the Gaza settlements a closed military zone to enable the IDF to bar and remove any nonresident Israelis protesting disengagement: the IDF estimated that as many as 2,000 disengagement protesters, largely hard-line West Bank settler youths, had already moved into Gaza settlements to block the withdrawal. Similarly, by 6/25 the population of Sanur, 1 of the 4 West Bank settlements slated for evacuation, had grown from 38 in 6/04 to 250. Inside Israel, protesters began their first large-scale antidisengagement demonstrations (6/27, 6/29; see Chronology). By 7/7, the deadline for settlers to request government compensation for their evacuation, only 396 of the roughly 1,600 families had applied. On 7/9, Israel confirmed that it would begin disengagement on 8/17, estimating that it would take about 2 weeks to remove all settlers from Gaza and a month to complete evacuations in the West Bank.

In the absence of any formal PA-Israeli agreement on the fate of Gaza settlement assets, Jewish settlers began (6/29) dismantling their greenhouses—to prevent their transfer to the Palestinians—marking the settlers' first major move to withdraw. By mid-7/05, Wolfensohn was in the process of cobbling together a deal for a consortium of wealthy Americans to buy the greenhouses and give them to the PA, but by then around half had been dismantled by the settlers. Wolfensohn also pressed (7/8) his \$3-b. aid package at the G-8 meeting in Scotland, where member states vowed to mobilize support for the plan but did not pledge specific amounts

or announce a target sum for overall G-8 pledging.

Meanwhile, Ward's team worked steadily behind the scenes to assess the PA's security capabilities after nearly 5 years of intifada, to begin the long process of unifying the security forces under a centralized command-and-control structure answerable to PA Interior M Yusuf, and to revive Israeli-PA security coordination mechanisms in Gaza to promote calm and prevent violence during disengagement. Ward noted in testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 6/30 that the Gaza security forces operated essentially as individual fiefdoms, since most of their infrastructure and communications equipment had been destroyed by Israel; barely a third of officers routinely showed up for duty, and most operated without radios, vehicles, standardized uniforms, reliable weapons, or ammunition; even if they were permitted by Israel to carry lethal weapons, which they were not, they would be seriously outgunned by the militant groups they were trying to contain. While there was no way that security reform could even approach completion by the start of disengagement, some progress was possible. Israel and the PA agreed (7/5) to resume joint patrols in Gaza. Egyptian (and some reports indicated U.S.) officers began (7/4) training the PA's new 5,000 member security detail, made up of officers taken from various PA security branches, to maintain order during the Israeli withdrawal.

Of note: On 7/1, the State Dept. lifted its 10/03 ban on official U.S. travel to the Gaza Strip for Ward and Wolfensohn. This facilitated the envoys' work with the Palestinians only slightly, since restrictions remained requiring their team members to seek special advance approval to travel to Gaza or the West Bank, always with a heavy security detail, limiting maneuverability, spontaneity, and overall interaction with the Palestinians.

The only concrete result of ongoing Israeli-PA talks was an agreement in principle (7/4) that Israeli security would escort Palestinian convoys transporting goods between Gaza and the West Bank until a safe passage (talks debated a sunken road or a railway link) was completed. Meanwhile, prospects for Israeli confidence-building steps faded, with talks on the transfer of security control over Bethlehem and Qalqilya deadlocking by 7/4 and no noticeable improvements in the entry of Palestinian laborers to Israel or freedom of movement in the territories.

Abbas declared (6/28) his government to be in a state of emergency until the completion of disengagement to prevent the PC from going into summer recess.

Israel Steps Up Targeting of Islamic Jihad

Meanwhile, Israeli-Palestinian violence increased, and on 7/10, the IDF staged a failed assassination attempt against a senior Islamic Jihad military commander in Gaza City. On 7/12, an Islamic Jihad suicide bomber detonated a device outside a mall in Netanya, killing 5 Israelis and wounding 46, marking the first suicide attack since the 2/25 Tel Aviv bombing carried out by a renegade Islamic Jihad member. Islamic Jihad initially denied the attack but then claimed it, raising speculation that this attack also may not have been sanctioned by the leadership. At nearly the same time as the bombing, a stolen car broke through the fence of the West Bank settlement of Shavei Shomron, exploding and injuring the driver but causing no other casualties. The IDF determined that the driver was an Islamic Jihad member who worked as an informant for Israel; he had been handcuffed to the wheel of the car and the bomb he was carrying was detonated by cell phone. Abbas denounced the Netanya "terrorist attack" as a crime against the Palestinian people and promised swift action. Israel immediately suspended all talks with the PA on disengagement and sealed the West Bank and Gaza, vowing a harsh response.

Over the next few days, Israel launched (7/13) a "sustained campaign" against Islamic Jihad and quickly widened it (7/14) to include Hamas—marking a definitive end to the unofficial truce that had been in place since 2/8. The IDF fatally shot (7/13) an Islamic Jihad military commander during an arrest raid in Nablus; conducted overnight (7/14-15) air strikes on 4 Hamas buildings in Gaza, wounding 2 Palestinians; and assassinated (7/15) 5 Hamas members in a missile strike in Gaza City and 3 in a missile strike in Salfit, also killing 1 bystander and injuring 10. On 7/16 and 7/17, Israel massed troops and tanks on Gaza's northern border apparently in preparation for the IDF's threatened **Operation Summer's End** (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 136) to deal a decisive blow to the "terrorist infrastructure" in Gaza before withdrawal. Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the AMB ramped up mortar and rocket attacks on IDF and settlement targets in Gaza and on towns inside Israel, killing 1 Israeli and

wounding 15 settlers and 1 Israeli civilian between 7/14 and 7/17.

Concurrently, Abbas placed (7/14) PA security forces in Gaza on high alert and ordered them to prevent any attacks on Israeli targets. The PA security forces honed in on Hamas militants instead of Islamic Jihad, sparking serious intra-Palestinian clashes in Bayt Lahiya (7/14, 7/16) and Gaza City (7/15) that left 2 Palestinian bystanders dead and 5 Hamas members and 4 PA policemen wounded and raised Hamas fears that the PA was in fact launching a preemptive campaign to disarm it. Fatah and Hamas opened emergency talks in Gaza on 7/15, but tensions remained high.

Fearing that the violence could jeopardize disengagement, Rice announced (7/16) an emergency trip to the region beginning 7/22, and Sharon advisers stated (7/17) that any push into Gaza likely would not occur until after her visit. Egypt also dispatched (7/16) senior intelligence official Mustafa Bihayri to the territories to hold intensive meetings with the PA, all the Palestinian factions, and Israel to restore the cease-fire. Nonetheless, the IDF assassinated a senior Hamas commander in Khan Yunis on 7/17 and fatally shot 2 wanted Islamic Jihad members in an arrest raid near Jenin, while Hamas and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) kept up mortar and rocket attacks, killing 1 Palestinian and injuring 7 settlers, 4 foreign workers, and an IDF soldier by 7/22. PA efforts (some coordinated with the AMB) to rein in Hamas resulted in further serious intra-Palestinian clashes in Jabaliya refugee camp (r.c.; 7/19) and Gaza City (7/20) that left 20 Palestinians wounded and prompted Palestinian protests in Ramallah (7/19, 7/20) and Jericho (7/20), calling for national unity and an end to the security chaos. Inside Israel, some 20,000 disengagement protesters held 3 days of demonstrations near the Gaza border 7/18–20.

On 7/21, thanks to Bihayri's mediation, the National and Islamic Coordinating Committee for the Follow-up of the Intifada (NIHC; the umbrella group representing all Palestinian factions) convened the PA and senior reps. of all Palestinian factions to reaffirm their pledge to the cease-fire, to remove all armed forces from the streets (except PA security forces), and to halt provocations and incitement. In response, the IDF agreed (7/21) to renew disengagement coordination with the PA. By the close of 7/21, the death toll had reached 4,108 Palestinians and 976 Israelis.

Onward toward Disengagement

Because Israeli-Palestinian coordination before 7/12 had been limited, the spike in violence and suspension of bilateral contacts did not greatly affect overall disengagement planning. Wolfensohn and Ward continued their mediation with both sides, U.S. Asst. Secy. of State for Near East Affairs David Welch (ca. 7/13–16) and EU foreign policy adviser Javier Solana (7/10–15) went ahead with visits to the region for disengagement consultations, and Quartet reps. met (7/15) in Jerusalem to prepare for the aftermath of withdrawal. Indeed, at the height of chaos in Gaza, the Knesset easily voted down (7/20) 3 bills calling for disengagement to be delayed.

The Wolfensohn and Solana talks succeeded in getting Israel and the PA to begin discussing concrete ideas for border-crossing mechanisms and movement of goods and people after disengagement: Israel agreed to consider allowing private contractors overseen by EU customs officials to replace Israeli customs and visa agents at the Rafah crossing and proposed that the existing Rafah terminal be changed to a trade crossing only and that a new terminal for individuals be built at Nitzana on the Egypt-Israel-Gaza border. This solution, which would oblige individuals to enter and leave Gaza through Israel, rather than directly to Egypt, would allow Israel to maintain control over people entering and leaving Gaza while removing its security presence from the Strip. Israel also agreed in principle to a 3-stage transition from back-to-back to door-to-door transit of goods between Gaza and the West Bank based on the installation of upgraded X-ray equipment to scan vehicles' cargo without offloading.

Alongside coordinated efforts, Israeli unilateral steps also continued. In the first indication of the scope of withdrawal in the West Bank, the Israeli DMin. recommended (7/12) that after disengagement, the IDF maintain all posts in the area of the 4 West Bank settlements to be evacuated and continue to patrol the northern West Bank, rather than turn the area over to PA security control (area B status). The PA had hoped that the IDF would evacuate all military installations, redeploy troops, and turn over most of the Jenin area to PA security control. While the Israelis had never indicated that this would be the case, the announcement soured the public mood. Sharon's security cabinet also stated (7/12) that the government would officially dissolve military rule in Gaza, in place since 1967, once disengagement was complete so

as to underline Israel's position (disputed by the international community) that it no longer would be responsible for the Gaza Strip.

Given these continued efforts, Rice's 7/22-23 visit was more symbolic than substantive. According to the parties, she did not engage in detailed discussion of any contentious disengagement issues. She urged both sides to halt violence and increase coordination; proposed holding a summit between Israel and Arab states after disengagement was complete; handed Sharon a letter from Bush pledging "American support and involvement" in Israel disengagement efforts; and stated that the Palestinians must have significant freedom of movement within and between the West Bank and Gaza after disengagement. Rice also announced that she would visit the region several more times before the end of 2005, suggesting a more active U.S. role in moving the parties toward road map implementation, though the State Dept. explicitly denied that any "shuttle diplomacy" was planned.

Israeli DM Shaul Mofaz and PA Interior M Yusuf held the first Israeli-PA talks since the 7/12 bombing on 7/24 but made no progress. Afterward, the PA complained (7/24) that it had still not been given "one answer" to questions on withdrawal, only 3 weeks away. On 7/25, Abbas announced that until disengagement was complete, he was relocating to Gaza to better guarantee that Palestinian violence remain low and to have access to Gaza faction leaders if it escalated.

Meanwhile, the IDF began (ca. 7/28) constructing 2 additional fences around the Gaza Strip inside Israel—1 of razor wire and 1 with electric sensors and surveillance cameras—to ensure Israeli security after disengagement. Israel said (7/31) that after withdrawal, it would require Israelis and Palestinians crossing the Israeli-Gaza border to obtain visas.

Despite the commitment to the unofficial cease-fire on 7/21, Israeli-Palestinian violence continued at a moderate level. The IDF continued arrest raids targeting Islamic Jihad (see Chronology), assassinated an Islamic Jihad member in Tulkarm on 7/28, arrested Islamic Jihad's West Bank leader Shaykh Ibrahim Fayyad on 7/31, and fired missiles at Palestinian gunmen in Bayt Lahiya on 7/24 in what may have been an assassination attempt. Clashes (7/24) between the IDF and members of the AMB, Islamic Jihad, and the Palestinian Resistance Committees (PRCs) at Gaza's Kissufim crossing

left 2 Israeli civilians and 2 Palestinian gunmen dead. Palestinian mortar and rocket fire lessened but did not cease.

The Disengagement Process Begins

From the beginning of 8/05, planning and coordination accelerated and the pieces quickly fell in place for an organized Israeli evacuation of settlers. On 8/1, the PA handed Israel maps of the locations where PA security forces would be deployed around the settlements during disengagement, and Gaza settler leaders began collecting settlers' weapons. On 8/2, Israeli and PA field officers began "field trips," walking the ground together to coordinate logistics for the specifics of evacuating the settlers, keeping the Palestinian population separated, and guarding the settlements and surrounding areas during the demolition of structures. The PA began (8/10) deploying its 5,000-member disengagement security forces. By 8/11, 2 joint operation centers had opened at Erez and Rafah to coordinate security.

Israel and the PA reached (8/9) an agreement on the removal of debris from the settlements after their demolition (see above): The PA would be allowed to salvage what building materials could be used for future construction projects, and the IDF would destroy the rest, removing any hazardous debris from Gaza (either to Israel or to Egypt, if an agreement could be reached). The World Bank would underwrite the Palestinian costs. The PA Planning Min. also released (ca. 8/3) its comprehensive land use plan for the evacuated settlement areas, including provisions for a railroad along Gaza's border with Israel, a new beach road and green areas along the coast, new housing for up to 250,000 people, and a sea port outside Netzarim, using the former settlement as a port staging area.

By 8/13, Wolfensohn had finalized the deal for half a dozen American philanthropists to put up \$14 m. (including \$500,000 of Wolfensohn's own money) to buy the settlement greenhouses still standing and reportedly to rebuild the others. He also stated (8/4, 8/10) that he had made significant progress on key issues related to border crossings and movement of goods and people, and hoped to have "many of these issues" solved by the completion of Israel's withdrawal by the end of the year, including a timetable and a mechanism for international guarantees for implementation. USAID had been tasked with evaluating the efficiency of a sunken road versus a rail link as a safe passage and expected to

complete its assessment in "several months." Israel had agreed that work on a sea port could begin immediately but indicated that it would not permit the airport to reopen for 2-3 years. Wolfensohn stressed that the success of the PA's 3-year development plan for Gaza would rest on the degree of freedom of movement into and out of Gaza afforded by Israel after disengagement, as well as on continued PA reforms. He also noted that the PA, donors, and UN had agreed that the package of "quick-impact economic programs" for the first 6 months after disengagement should focus on job creation, infrastructure, housing, water, sewerage, community development, and credit provision services.

On 8/7 the Israeli cabinet authorized (16-5) the IDF to begin the first stage of disengagement. By that date, 90% of the West Bank families had applied for compensation and 20% had evacuated, and 60% of Gaza families had filed for compensation but few had left. The next day, the IDF began delivering letters to the 1,600 settler families in the 25 Gaza and West Bank settlements slated for evacuation, telling them that they had until 8/15 to leave their homes and receive full compensation; those who remained until 8/17 would be forcibly removed, would not be allowed to return to collect their belongings (which would be packed and shipped by the IDF), and would not receive full compensation. (Individual letters were delivered to many, if not most, settlements. Seeking to avoid clashes, the IDF decided not to deliver notices in the most hard-line Gaza settlements of Dugit, Katif, Kefar Darom, and Netzarim and delivered "bulk" eviction orders to others.) Israel also agreed (8/8) to evacuate the families of 40 Palestinian collaborators from Dahaniyya in Gaza to Israel and give them temporary residency. Inside Israel, 25,000 disengagement protesters held 2 days of demonstrations in Sederot 8/2-3, 70,000 protested at the Western Wall 8/10, and 150,000 gathered in Tel Aviv on 8/11.

On 8/14, the PA completed deployment of 7,500 security forces across Gaza to prevent Palestinians from approaching the settlements. At midnight that night, the IDF sealed the Gaza Strip, making it illegal for Israelis to enter and tightened restrictions on Palestinian movement. On 8/15, the Israeli cabinet approved the second stage of disengagement. The IDF then declared the northern West Bank a closed military zone and began going door-to-door in Gaza settlements asking residents to leave within 48 hours. During the day, some 1,000 right-

wing settlers in various locations in southern Gaza simultaneously began marching toward Gush Katif to block troops but were prevented from reaching the settlement bloc by Israeli forces. Other settler youths slashed tires of several army jeeps, sprayed dishwashing liquid on windshields to limit visibility, and spread nails on roads to delay convoys of movers, but no serious violence was reported. In the West Bank, the last residents of Ganim (est. 1983, pop. 172) and Kadim (est. 1983, pop. 169) left voluntarily.

Also on 8/15, Israel and Egypt initialed a protocol for the deployment of 750 Egyptian border police along the Philadelphi Route and sent it to the Knesset for ratification. Under the arrangement, the Egyptians would be equipped with armored personnel carriers, rocket propelled grenades, assault rifles, light machine guns, jeeps, and quad bikes; they would be allowed to erect only unfortified observation towers. In addition, 30 members of the Egyptian navy would patrol the coast around the clock. The Multinational Forces and Observers mission in Egypt would play a role (no details released) in overseeing the Egyptian contingent, which Israel expected to be in place by the end of the year. Israel also agreed (8/8) to recognize a 3-mile area of water off Gaza as Palestinian territorial waters after the IDF's withdrawal from the Philadelphi Route.

Meanwhile, Israeli-Palestinian violence continued at the same level (see Chronology for details). In a major incident on 8/4, an IDF soldier who had deserted 2 months earlier to protest disengagement opened fire on a bus in the Israeli Palestinian town of Shafa 'Amr, killing 4 Israeli Palestinians and wounding 20 before a mob beat him to death. In the territories, the IDF continued to conduct arrest raids and fire on residential areas, including in Khan Yunis, the al-Mawasi area near Gush Katif, and Rafah; to bulldoze West Bank land for construction of the separation wall; and to patrol in Palestinian villages, towns, and camps. Jewish settler attacks on Palestinians occurred almost daily, while Palestinian mortar and rocket fire dropped off significantly, ceasing by 8/6.

Intifada Data and Trends

Deaths doubled this quarter: at least 78 Palestinians and 14 Israelis were killed (compared to 39 Palestinians and 7 Israelis last quarter), bringing the toll at 5/15 to at least 4,129 Palestinians (including 46 Israeli Arabs and 17 unidentified Arab cross-border infiltrators), 979 Israelis (including 304 IDF

soldiers and security personnel, 195 settlers, 480 civilians), and 55 foreign nationals (including 2 British suicide bombers).

The PA Interior Min. reported (7/14) that between 3/1/05 and 6/30/05—the period of greatest Palestinian calm following the 2/8 Sharm al-Shaykh summit—46 Palestinians had been killed (*JPS* figures are 47), 462 injured, and 1,249 arrested. The IDF reported (7/24) that between the 7/12 Netanyahu bombing and 7/24 it arrested 95 Hamas and Islamic Jihad members.

This quarter, Israel carried out 10 clear assassinations (up from 1 last quarter), killing 1 bystander and wounding 10. Those assassinated this quarter were: **Hamas's** Asbir Abu Assi (7/15), 'Assim Abu Ras (7/15), Hamad Adah (wounded 7/15, died 7/22), Amjad Arafat (7/15), Muhammad Ayyash (7/15), Samir Dawahqa (7/15), 'Adil Haniyyeh (7/15), Muhammad Mar'ai (7/15), and Sa'id Siyam (7/17); and **Islamic Jihad's** Mu'ayyad Musa. The killing of AMB northern Gaza cmdr. Ahmad Abu Zayid on 8/1 may have been an assassination. The IDF also attempted to assassinate at least 3 Islamic Jihad members (6/21, 6/22, 7/10) and 1 Hamas member (7/17), also wounding 2 bystanders. An incident on 7/24 may have been a failed assassination attempt.

During the quarter, there was 1 Palestinian suicide bombing (the same as last quarter) claimed by Islamic Jihad that killed 5 and injured 46 (compared to 5 killed and about 22 injured last quarter). Three other incidents in which Palestinian gunmen attacked Israeli targets may have been intended suicide attacks insofar as the attackers did not expect to survive: a joint operation by the AMB, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad against Kefar Darom on 5/20; a joint AMB-Islamic Jihad attack on an IDF post outside Kefar Darom on 6/18; and an Islamic Jihad attack on Morag settlement on 7/6. In these incidents, 2 Islamic Jihad members and 1 Hamas member were killed, an AMB and an Islamic Jihad member were wounded, and 4 AMB members and 1 Islamic Jihad member escaped unharmed; no Israelis were injured.

Palestinian use of mortars, rockets, and roadside bombs remained high, targeting primarily Israeli soldiers and settlers in Gaza and, to a lesser degree, Israeli towns just across the Gaza border in Sederot and the Negev (see Chronology for details). Casualties in these strikes were markedly higher than in previous quarters, leaving 1 Israeli, 3 Palestinian settlement workers, and 1 foreign worker dead; 17 settlers, 12 IDF soldiers, 1

Israeli civilian contractor, 1 Israeli civilian, 5 Palestinian workers, and 5 foreign workers injured; there was light to moderate property damage in 10 incidents. On 7/21 a rocket aimed at Gush Katif hit Khan Yunis, killing 1 Palestinian; and on 8/2 a rocket aimed at Sederot fell in northern Gaza, killing 1 Palestinian and wounding 9.

House demolitions were up slightly this quarter. The IDF continued to suspend "punitive" home demolitions (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 136), citing the lull in Palestinian violence that followed the 2/05 Sharm al-Shaykh summit, but continued bulldozing houses built without permits or in the way of the West Bank separation wall. These included 16 in East Jerusalem (plus a 2-story and a 3-story building on 6/15), 13 near Hebron, 10 in Jiftlik near Jericho, 6 in Nablus, 4 near Bethlehem, 1 in Qabatya, and 1 in Qalqilya. In addition, the IDF demolished 22 structures in Khirbat Tana (pop. 450) near Nablus on 7/5, leaving only 2 buildings and the village's 200-year-old mosque standing.

While the IDF continued to confiscate and bulldoze wide tracts of Palestinian land for construction of the separation wall, other bulldozing nearly ceased. Five dunams (d.; 4 d. = 1 acre) were reported cleared in Khan Yunis on 6/22.

Jewish settler violence against Palestinians remained a near daily occurrence this quarter. Incidents included settlers temporarily occupying Palestinian homes (6/27, 2 on 6/29), beating or otherwise attacking Palestinians (5/19, 5/20, 5/21, 5/23, 5/31, 6/18, 2 on 6/26, 6/28, 6/29, 6/30, 7/15, 7/22, 7/23, 7/25, 7/29, 7/30, 8/1, 2 on 8/6, 8/7, 8/13), vandalizing houses (5/26, 5/28, 6/12, 6/16, 6/25, 6/26, 6/27, 6/28, 7/2, 7/13, 7/15, 7/22, 7/24, 8/12, 8/15), setting fire to property (5/26, 6/8, 6/26, 6/27, 7/13, 8/4, 8/15), destroying crops and uprooting trees (5/16, 5/17, 2 on 5/26, 6/15, 6/18, 6/26, 6/27, 7/25, 2 on 7/30), bulldozing land (5/17, 5/29), blocking roads and stoning cars (6/30, 7/2, 7/13, 7/19, 2 on 8/14), and poisoning (ca. 6/1, 6/14) or stealing (5/23) livestock. In addition, settlers killed 1 Palestinian (7/26) and injured 8 (6/2, 6/18, 7/1, 2 on 7/7, 7/15) in deliberate hit and run incidents, and shot and wounded 11 Palestinians (5/31, 8/6, 8/10). In an incident on 6/29, 40 settlers protesting disengagement and chanting "Death to Arabs" attacked a group of Palestinians and IDF soldiers in Gaza's Mawasi area abutting Gush Katif, severely beating a Palestinian in what observers described as a near lynching. Gangs of settlers also attacked international

peace activists making solidarity visits to Palestinians in Hebron (5/21, 5/28), causing damage to Palestinian residences but no serious injuries. Of 73 reported incidents, half occurred in Hebron, with the remainder occurring around Gaza (12), Bethlehem (6), Nablus (4), Qalqilya (3), Ramallah (3), Salfit (2), Tulkarm (2), and Jerusalem (1). Most incidents in Gaza (e.g., 6/9, 6/18, 6/26, 2 on 6/28, 6/29, 6/30, 7/6, 8/14, 8/15) and a handful near the West Bank settlements of Homesh (e.g., 8/12, 8/14) were essentially protests against disengagement.

The Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics reported (6/8) that Israel built almost twice as many settlement housing units in the first quarter of 2005 (564 units) as during the same period in 2004 (308 units).

The UN International Labor Organization (ILO) reported (5/27) that Palestinian unemployment (i.e., people without a job actively looking for work) had reached a record 224,000 in 2004 (up from 203,000 in 2003); among Palestinians age 15–24, unemployment was 40%; half of all men and 10% of all women in the West Bank and Gaza were actively employed in 2004; 57% of wage earners failed to earn enough to raise their family above the poverty line; and 1.8 m. Palestinians were living below the poverty line. The ILO blamed Israeli closures for the increase. The ILO also noted that some 150,000 West Bank Palestinians had lost jobs as a result of separation wall construction. As of 7/2, the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions in Gaza put the unemployment rate at 65% and the poverty rate at 75%.

Of note: The Israeli daily *Ma'ariv* carried (6/3) a report based on interviews with IDF soldiers confirming that the IDF carried out “eye for eye” reprisal attacks on PA police officers in 2002 in retaliation for the 2/19/02 killing of 6 IDF soldiers at a checkpoint outside Ramallah by a lone AMB gunman who escaped. The IDF never investigated the reprisal killings because, according to the *New York Times* (6/4), they were “part of a series of operations against terrorism in line with Israeli Army orders and procedures.”

Separation Wall

Construction on Israel's separation wall in the West Bank continued, with monitors reporting that most construction this quarter was concentrated around Jerusalem. The Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign reported (7/14) that since 1/1/05, the IDF had confiscated 58,814 d. of West

Bank land for construction of the separation wall and related bypass roads, settlement expansions, and military outposts. The total included 27,796 d. around Hebron, 10,000 d. around Ramallah, 5,595 d. around Jerusalem (predominantly Bayt Duqu, Bayt Hanina, Bayt Surik, al-Jib), 5,075 d. in the Jordan Valley, 4,939 d. around Tulkarm, 2,133 d. around Jenin, 1,675 d. around Salfit, 832 d. around Qalqilya, and 770 d. around Bethlehem.

On 7/10, a year and a day after the International Court of Justice (ICJ) declared the wall illegal and called for its immediate dismantlement (see Doc. A3 in *JPS* 133), the Israeli cabinet gave final approval to the route of the separation wall though Jerusalem, including plans for 11 passages in the wall segment around the city; Sharon at the same time ordered construction to be accelerated. Israel estimates that 55,000 Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem will be cut off from the rest of the city, while the wall will encompass 30,000 Jewish settlers living in Ma'ale Adumim. Israel did not release the exact route of the wall or say what changes have been made from earlier plans. Under the final plan, a portion of Greater Jerusalem (including the Palestinian neighborhoods of 'Anata, Kufr Aqab, Qalandia, and Shu'fat r.c.) would be outside the wall.

Independent Initiatives

The Israeli daily *Ha'Aretz* revealed on 5/31 that a group of Israelis and Palestinians, including 3 senior government officials and foreign experts—together called the Aix Group after Aix-en-Provence, where the group was formed in 7/02—were drafting an economic road map (ERM) to ensure that Israel's unilateral disengagement does not “unilaterally establish final status economic issues.” The ERM would be implemented with phase 3 of the road map (negotiation of final status) to ensure creation of a viable and economically independent Palestinian state. The plan calls for removal of internal closures within the West Bank and Gaza; creation of a secure, reliable link between the West Bank and Gaza; establishment of a secure, efficient, and reliable border regime; and implementation of an “urgent recovery program” for Gaza. The plan envisions 3 phases: phase 1 (“rescue phase”): free flow of goods inside the territories and abroad, free labor movement in the territories and a stable level of Palestinian labor inside Israel, and uninterrupted fiscal transfers from Israel to the PA consistent with a “modified” (unclarified) version of the Paris Protocol;

phase 2: redevelopment of the Palestinian economy; phase 3: movement to full Palestinian economic sovereignty and a free trade agreement with Israel. Among those participating as observers were PA Cabinet Secy. and Chief of Staff Samir Huleileh, Negotiation Support Unit legal adviser Nisreen Abbas, Israeli Trade Min. official Gaby Bar, director of Dep. PM Ehud Olmert's office Yishay Sorek, the World Bank's Sebastien Dessus, the IMF's Joel Toujas-Bernate, and European Commission principal administrator Bernard Philippe. Although the group has no official standing, participants hope that the contacts could build Israeli-Palestinian trust and influence policy formation moving forward.

INTRA-PALESTINIAN DYNAMICS

Elections

By the opening of the quarter, the PA had held three rounds of municipal elections (12/23/04, 1/27/05, 5/5/05) and planned at least one more round for 8/05. Results of the 5/5/05 elections had not been released due to Fatah accusations of Hamas vote rigging in Bayt Lahiya, Bureij, and Rafah in Gaza and the theft of several ballot boxes in Attara in the West Bank, raising the possibility of revotes in those districts. Legislative council elections, planned for 7/17, were in jeopardy because the Palestinian Council (PC) had failed to decide on amendments to the PA elections law by 5/15 to give the Central Election Commission (CEC) the 2 months necessary to prepare for the balloting (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 136).

Municipal Elections

The PA set (7/19) the fourth round of municipal elections for 132 local authorities in the West Bank and Gaza (mostly small villages) for 9/29 and the fifth round (considered the most important because it includes the cities of Hebron, Nablus, Khan Yunis, and Gaza City) for 12/8. On 8/15, the CEC postponed until 11/05 elections in 27 of the 132 municipalities set for 9/29 because their proximity to the settlements slated for evacuation under disengagement.

After thousands of Hamas supporters demonstrated (5/23) in Gaza City against a PA court ruling (5/19) calling for partial recounts of ballots in Bayt Lahiya and Bureij, the CEC ordered (5/24) full revotes to be held on 5/31 in Attara, Bayt Lahiya, Bureij, and Rafah. When Hamas denounced (5/24) the ruling and threatened to boycott,

the Egyptian security delegation normally charged with facilitating disengagement issues made a special trip to Gaza (5/23-28) to mediate a resolution between Fatah and Hamas. As a result, Fatah and the NIHC urged the CEC to postpone the revote until tensions with Hamas eased, which the CEC did on 5/30. A new date had not been set by the end of the quarter. By 6/28, newly elected municipal officials were in place in all areas where the 5/5 voting was uncontested, with the incumbent municipal officials remaining in place in the 4 contested districts.

Legislative Elections

In a bid to force legislative elections to be held as planned on 7/17, the PC rejected further amendments to the election law and sent the bill to Abbas on 5/18 for ratification as is, calling for increasing the number of PC seats from 88 to 132, with 88 members to be elected on a constituency basis and 44 to be chosen from party lists (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 136). Abbas refused to sign the bill on 5/23, and when several rounds of Fatah Revolutionary Council (FRC) meetings in Ramallah failed to produce an agreement on the draft between Abbas and the Fatah deputies that dominate the PC, he announced (6/4) the postponement of parliamentary elections until at least 11/05 to leave more time to resolve differences. Hamas strongly protested (6/4) the move, calling it a ploy aimed at giving Fatah more time to halt political infighting and restore its popular support. The fact that Abbas's decision came so soon after his meeting with Bush on 5/26 also raised speculation that the U.S. applied pressure to delay elections. Officially the White House stated "no comment" when asked, though unnamed diplomats were quoted (*al-Abram* 6/10) as stating that "the news was greeted in the White House with responses that ranged from 'quiet relief to elation'." The source further stated that the EU and Egypt had also been quietly pushing for the delay, hoping that the PA's consolidation of its rule in Gaza after disengagement could "win back" support from Hamas. Abbas made (6/8) a special trip to Gaza to consult with the NIHC on the elections, but Hamas and Islamic Jihad sent low-level delegations in protest, precluding substantive talks.

On 6/18, the PC passed (43-13) a new draft election law raising the number of seats from 88 to 132, with 50% elected in constituencies and 50% chosen from party lists. At the close of the quarter there was no

word on whether it had been sent to Abbas. He did, however, ratify (8/14) an amendment to the Basic Law calling for presidential and legislative elections to be held every 4 years.

Meanwhile, the CEC, which had reopened voter registration throughout the territories 5/7–21 in preparation for legislative elections, extended the registration period to 5/27 after Israeli border police raided (5/22) CEC registration centers in Nabi Samuel outside Jerusalem and in Harmalah near Bethlehem, detaining and checking the IDs of staff.

As of 8/15, Abbas had secured the PLO Executive Committee's agreement to hold legislative elections in 1/06 but had not settled on a precise date.

Reform Efforts and Governance

Following his emergency angioplasty in Amman on 6/1, Abbas proposed (6/3) to the FRC that the post of PA VP be created to assure smooth governance in case the president is incapacitated. After the FRC agreed (6/6) in principle, Abbas sent a letter to the PC requesting an amendment to the Basic Law. The PC debated the matter on 7/28 but did not reach a decision. The DFLP protested (6/6) that the post of VP was unnecessary since provisions exist in the Basic Law for the PC speaker to take over and for elections to be held within 60 days if the president is incapacitated, as occurred smoothly after Arafat's death. There was some speculation that Abbas moved to create the post in order to bring his rival, Fatah chairman and PLO Political Dept. head Faruq Qaddumi, inside the PA and under his authority, thereby making it more difficult for Qaddumi to challenge him within Fatah as was increasingly the case (see below). Rumor suggested that Abbas may in fact have offered the position to Qaddumi when they met in Tunis to discuss their differences on 5/31 but that Qaddumi turned him down.

After the PC approved a new diplomatic law, PA FM Nasser al-Kidwa announced (6/27) that major staffing changes in Palestinian embassies worldwide, affecting some 122 diplomatic officers, would be implemented in 2/06. Qaddumi, in his role as PLO Political Dept. head, protested that the embassy staffing decisions were the purview of the PLO, not the PA, making the diplomatic law and Kidwa's actions illegitimate.

On 6/14, PM Qurai' threatened to suspend all government functions if lawlessness in the PA areas (see below), especially by PA security officers, did not cease. On

6/18, 44 of 83 active PC members signed a petition demanding that Qurai' face a hearing on what they termed his "unsatisfactory policy-making" and threatened to call a no-confidence vote if he did not agree. Qurai' defended his government's record in a closed-door PC session on 7/7, without outlining specific plans for reform or security. He challenged PC members to proceed with a no-confidence vote if they believed he was not doing his utmost. The PC did not follow through.

Abbas issued (6/22) a presidential decree ordering all Palestinians convicted in PA security courts, particularly those given death sentences, to be retried in civil court. The PA went ahead, however, with 4 executions of convicted murderers (3 by hanging, 1 by firing squad) on 6/12, marking the first time in 3 years that the PA had carried out the death penalty. A fifth murderer was hanged on 7/27. The PA courts reportedly have handed down 73 death sentences since the PA's inception, of which 10 (including these 5) have been carried out. As many as 50 of the 73 were convicted of collaboration.

PA Atty. Gen. Hussein Abu Assi instructed (6/28) PA police to detain more than 5 former PA officials on charges of misuse of public funds. Some of the officials may have to be extradited from Arab countries. On 8/1, unidentified assailants threw a grenade at Abu Assi's Gaza City home, causing damage but no injuries.

The PA announced (6/8) a salary increase of 8% for all public sector employees beginning in 7/05. After 3 weeks of observing occasional strike days, some 10,000 Palestinian health workers in PA government clinics started an open-ended strike on 7/30, demanding an increase in pay; it was not clear whether they were covered by the 6/8 increase or if the strike was precipitated because they were excluded from it.

National Unity and Power Struggles

Given the PA's increased coordination with Israel on disengagement and postdisengagement scenarios, Abbas (in his various roles as PA pres., PLO chairman, and senior Fatah official) increasingly sought during the quarter to create a mechanism for bringing factions other than Fatah, particularly Hamas, into the Palestinian decision-making process to give them a vested interest in (and responsibility for) the outcome of decisions. With time running out, efforts begun last quarter to bring Hamas and Islamic Jihad into the PLO (see Quarterly

Update in *JPS* 136) were apparently set aside in favor of creating a temporary national unity government to remain in place through disengagement until legislative elections.

To this end, Abbas proposed (ca. 6/28) expanding the PA cabinet to give seats to the Islamist groups. The Fatah Central Committee (FCC) (7/2) and the NIHC (7/4) endorsed the idea, but Islamic Jihad rejected (7/2) it on the grounds that it could not join a body using the Oslo accords as its terms of reference, and Hamas rejected (7/4) it as a ploy to make it accountable for PA mistakes while denying it real power and said it would wait to participate in legislative elections. The idea was never acted upon by the PC itself. Instead, Hamas called (7/9, 7/11) for forming a joint committee of all Palestinian factions to oversee security and maintain order in Gaza during and after disengagement, but the PA rejected this (7/9, 7/11) on the grounds that there could be only one authority in the territories and that consultations among factions could continue within the framework of the NIHC. After further meetings, Abbas made a concession, allowing the factions to form (8/15) a joint committee to oversee the PA's disposition of the settlement land evacuated. (The PA expected 5% of the land to revert to individual Palestinian ownership and the rest to fall under PA jurisdiction as state land.)

Throughout these discussions Abbas and senior PLO officials maintained high-level contacts with the Damascus-based opposition groups, the factions in Lebanon, Syrian pres. Bashar al-Asad, and Lebanese pres. Emile Lahoud to ensure that no party felt threatened or excluded from the process. These contacts included high-profile meetings in Damascus (6/29, 5/22, 7/4, 7/7) and Lebanon (7/8-9).

As disengagement approached, the PA and Hamas launched rival media campaigns to take credit for Israel's withdrawal from Gaza. The PA opened its campaign, with \$1.7 m. of financing from the UN Development Program, on 7/21. The initiative included a special press office to handle international journalists' queries and 10,000s of flags, banners, mugs, bumper stickers, and posters with the slogan "Today Gaza, Tomorrow the West Bank and Jerusalem." The PA simultaneously banned the display of any flag but the Palestinian flag, began removing all factional flags from public spaces in Gaza, prohibited PA employees from criticizing the PA, and banned reporting on the

PA security services without advance written approval of the Interior Min. On 8/4 (Arafat's birthday), the PA opened a 2-week long "victory festival" in Gaza City to celebrate disengagement, with speeches by Abbas, Qurai', and Dahlan calling for national unity and encouraging Palestinians not to take any actions that could "jeopardize the national image." On 8/13, Hamas opened its campaign with a press conference in Gaza City by 10 of its founding members and senior political leaders (publicly together for the first time in recent memory) to hail the forthcoming disengagement as the result of Palestinian resistance. The leaders also vowed to continue armed struggle until all occupied Palestinian territories are liberated, repeated their refusal to disarm, and stated that Fatah (which dominates the PA) cannot be the sole decision-making party. Hamas also released (8/13) the contact information of 34 multilingual spokesmen hired to give press interviews to foreign journalists regarding the disengagement.

Fatah did not hold party primaries on 5/27 as planned to select 132 candidates for the PC elections; according to the *Guardian* (6/10), they were canceled "due to bitter opposition from Fatah's 'old guard' leadership." Immediately after Abbas delayed legislative elections on 6/4, the FCC postponed (6/5) indefinitely the 6th General Conference set for 8/4 that was to elect a new Fatah leadership (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 136), citing logistical difficulties in bringing Fatah members from abroad for a vote and disagreements over voting procedures.

The FCC met (6/30-7/2) in Amman to discuss the General Conference but did not set a new date. Members agreed that local and then regional Fatah elections should be held first to reform the lower levels of the movement. In a reversal of position, the FCC agreed that the current Fatah leadership should have "the opportunity to select its candidates" for the legislative elections before the General Conference is held. Abbas pledged meanwhile to make "real" reforms in the PA (including allowing the "younger generation" to take part in decision making and investigating corruption) and to crack down on Palestinian gangs hampering efforts to restore stability in the territories. At the end of the quarter, the General Conference was not expected to be held until at least 4/06.

The day the FCC decisions were announced, Fatah head Qaddumi opened (7/2) a media office in Khan Yunis charged with

providing information to local Palestinians about the Fatah leadership abroad; some 150 armed AMB members held a parade in celebration. (Qaddumi apparently took the step without consulting Abbas, even though they had met in Amman on 6/29 to iron out differences prior to the FCC meeting; no details of their talks were released.) On 7/16, gunmen associated with an unnamed Fatah splinter group set fire to the new media office, causing some damage, and fired on PA security forces in the area. On 8/1, the Khan Yunis office head Sulayman al-Farah announced that Qaddumi had ordered him to recruit a 1,500-man force to help the PA maintain order during disengagement; anyone could join and receive a monthly stipend, whether or not a Fatah member, as long as they pledged allegiance to the PA. On 8/7, the PA arrested Farah on charges of building a local militia. Qaddumi reportedly issued (8/7) a handwritten statement threatening harsh action if Farah were not released immediately. Palestinian gunmen kidnapped 2 UN workers on 8/8 to exchange for Farah, but PA security forces stormed their hideout, freed the workers, and refused to release Farah.

On 6/1 in Yabad, near Jenin, 48 DFLP members announced their mass resignation from the DFLP, complaining that the party had ignored local concerns for at least 8 years.

Meanwhile, lawlessness and infighting continued to escalate. As PA security forces attempted to assert their authority in Gaza, preventing mortar fire and cracking down on the display of illegal weapons in public, they occasionally clashed violently with armed militants (5/18, 6/9, 6/10, 6/23, 7/14, 7/15, 7/16, 7/19, 7/20) and angry bystanders (5/18, 7/16, 7/19) who protested their use of force against fellow Palestinians. The incidence and severity of these clashes escalated after the PA stepped up efforts to contain militant groups following the 7/12 suicide bombing noted above. In addition, rival PA security groups exchange fire in Ramallah and Rafah (both on 5/26), leaving 1 wounded; and rival AMB factions exchanged fire in Ramallah (6/12), leaving 2 wounded.

As in previous quarters, there were a number of demonstrations by members of the PA security forces protesting the reorganization of the security branches as part of Abbas's reform efforts. While some protests were peaceful (e.g., 7/30), most involved raiding or vandalizing PA offices (6/1, 6/4, 6/5), temporarily detaining PA officials (6/3,

7/28), or firing in the air (6/2). AMB members also held demonstrations (e.g., 6/2, 6/15, 7/2, 8/9, 8/13) demanding to be integrated into the security forces or provided with PA jobs. (On 6/22, the PA announced an agreement to bring some 700 Palestinian militants from Nablus, mostly AMB members, into the security services if they turned in their weapons.)

Some politically motivated attacks were carried out by unknown groups. In the most serious incident, Palestinian gunmen fired (6/22) on a building in Balata r.c. where PM Qurai' was giving a speech and detonated a roadside bomb as he and his convoy left the area, causing no damage or injuries; no group claimed responsibility. Unknown assailants detonated a bomb outside the Gaza City home of PA Higher Judicial Council head Zuhayr Surani (causing damage but no injuries) and threw a grenade at the home of Atty. Gen. Abu Assi (as mentioned above). Unidentified gunmen ambushed and beat (7/12) senior PA Interior Min. official Ibrahim Salama in Ramallah and wounded (8/1) 2 PA military intelligence officers in a drive-by shooting in Gaza City.

In addition, unidentified gunmen fatally shot (5/29) Palestinian journalist Samir Rantisi, an aide to former PA information minister Yasir 'Abid Rabbuh; the PA suspected a criminal motive, while the family believed he was killed because of involvement in an investigation into corruption on the part of certain unnamed PA officials. Palestinian gunmen fatally shot (6/3) Fatah regional head Ali Faraj and his brother, charging that Faraj had ordered their father's killing as a collaborator in 1991.

For the first time this quarter, Palestinians kidnapped foreigners as bargaining chips in internal Palestinian disputes. In addition to the incident involving Sulayman al-Farah, most individuals were taken by families seeking to free relatives jailed by the PA and were released within hours, after the PA agreed to review the cases: these kidnappings involved 2 international aid workers in Bureij r.c. (7/13), 2 foreign UN workers in Khan Yunis (8/8), and a French journalist in Gaza (8/14; not released until 8/22). The security forces also negotiated the release (7/29) of 2 foreign UN workers kidnapped by a family seeking the PA's intervention to free their relative, a PA military intelligence officer, taken hostage by PRC members in a separate political dispute on 7/28. In addition, armed Palestinians in fatigues raided (7/24) the Rafah apartment of 3 American International

Solidarity Movement workers, kidnapped 1 of them (a 75-year-old man) and held him at a local school for an hour before releasing him unharmed and without explanation. Unidentified gunmen also harassed and threatened (5/18) UNRWA workers in Fara' r.c. and fired (8/7) on the offices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Khan Yunis. In light of the attacks, the ICRC temporarily shut (8/8-15) its Gaza offices, and the UN moved (8/14) all nonessential foreign staff in Gaza to Jerusalem until further notice.

Palestinian lawyers staged (6/4) a one-day strike to protest the PA's failure to protect judges, prosecutors, and defense lawyers from increasing vigilantism. Similar demonstrations were staged by lawyers in Ramallah (6/16) and judges in Gaza (8/6).

PALESTINIAN OPINION

The following data are excerpted from a poll conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy Survey and Research (PCPSR) on 9-11 June 2005. Results are based on a survey of 1,320 men and women from the West Bank and Gaza. The poll, the 16th in a series, was taken from PCPSR's Web site at www.pcpsr.org.

1. If you participate in the legislative elections and if you were asked to vote for a factional list, for which of the following would you vote?

	West Bank	Gaza	Total
a. Hamas and Islamic Jihad list(s)	30.9%	36.2%	33.0%
b. Fatah list	44.7%	43.2%	44.1%
c. Leftist list (DFLP, PFLP, PPP, and al-Mubadara)	4.4%	1.2%	3.1%
d. New lists that might include independents and others	8.7%	5.8%	7.6%
e. Other lists (specify)	3.2%	4.4%	3.7%
f. No opinion	8.1%	9.0%	8.4%

2. The following is a list of problems confronting the Palestinians today.

Tell us which one is the most important.

	West Bank	Gaza	Total
a. Spread of unemployment and poverty	30.2%	40.4%	34.0%
b. Continuation of the occupation and daily practices	36.8%	25.8%	32.6%
c. Internal anarchy/chaos	8.9%	6.7%	8.0%
d. Spread of corruption/lack of internal reforms	22.8%	26.6%	24.2%
e. Others (specify)	1.0%	0.4%	0.8%
f. No opinion	0.4%	0.2%	0.3%

3. If we consider the following political factions/parties, which one is the most able to:

a. Improve economic conditions?

	West Bank	Gaza	Total
a. Hamas/Islamic Jihad	30.4%	39.1%	33.7%
b. Fatah	46.9%	44.9%	46.2%
c. Leftist list (DFLP, PFLP, PPP, and al-Mubadara)	3.9%	0.8%	2.7%
d. New lists that might include independents and others	8.2%	4.5%	6.8%
e. Other lists (specify)	10.5%	10.7%	10.6%

b. Fight corruption and implement reforms?

	West Bank	Gaza	Total
a. Hamas/Islamic Jihad	43.0%	53.5%	47.0%
b. Fatah	38.9%	32.5%	36.5%
c. Leftist list (DFLP, PFLP, PPP, and al-Mubadara)	3.5%	0.8%	2.5%
d. New lists that might include independents and others	6.8%	4.6%	6.0%
e. Other lists (specify)	7.8%	8.5%	8.0%

c. Push the peace process forward?

	West Bank	Gaza	Total
a. Hamas/Islamic Jihad	20.0%	24.4%	21.7%
b. Fatah	64.4%	65.9%	64.9%
c. Leftist list (DFLP, PFLP, PPP, and al-Mubadara)	2.1%	0.6%	1.5%
d. New lists that might include independents and others	4.8%	3.4%	4.3%
e. Other lists (specify)	8.7%	5.7%	7.6%

4. Do you see Sharon's plan to evacuate the Israeli settlements from Gaza as a victory for the Palestinian armed struggle against Israel?

	West Bank	Gaza	Total
a. Definitely yes	30.8%	43.8%	35.7%
b. Yes	36.7%	35.6%	36.3%
c. No	23.6%	14.1%	20.1%
d. Definitely no	6.5%	4.8%	5.9%
e. No opinion	2.2%	1.6%	2.0%

5. If Israel disengages fully in the Gaza Strip, including the evacuation of all settlements and the Philadelphi Route, and if it lifts the air and sea blockade on the Gaza Strip, would you under these conditions support or oppose carrying out armed attacks against Israeli targets from the Gaza Strip?

	West Bank	Gaza	Total
a. Definitely support	7.4%	6.1%	6.9%
b. Support	23.5%	23.1%	23.4%
c. Oppose	53.9%	51.6%	53.1%
d. Definitely oppose	11.4%	16.8%	13.4%
e. No opinion	3.8%	2.4%	3.3%

6. Palestinians are currently debating the issue of the collection of arms from armed Palestinian groups and factions, stipulated in the road map as a PA commitment. Do you support or oppose such a collection of arms?

	West Bank	Gaza	Total
a. Definitely support	9.0%	11.5%	9.9%

b. Support	29.5%	25.1%	27.8%
c. Oppose	43.3%	42.1%	42.9%
d. Definitely oppose	15.7%	19.0%	16.9%
e. No opinion	2.5%	2.0%	2.4%

7. Who came out the winner in the ongoing armed conflict that started in September 2000 between Israel and the Palestinians?

	West Bank	Gaza	Total
a. Israel	22.2%	9.1%	17.3%
b. The Palestinians	25.0%	50.4%	34.5%
c. Both	4.7%	5.1%	4.9%
d. Neither	46.8%	33.4%	41.8%
e. No opinion	1.3%	2.0%	1.6%

8. What are your expectations regarding the future of the peace process if Hamas wins the majority of the PC seats in the legislative council?

	West Bank	Gaza	Total
a. The peace process will slow down or stop	38.1%	41.5%	39.3%
b. The peace process will accelerate	27.4%	33.2%	29.6%
c. The peace process will not be affected	27.8%	18.4%	24.3%
d. No opinion	6.8%	6.9%	6.8%

9. What are your expectations regarding the future of democracy in Palestine if Hamas wins the majority of the PC seats in the legislative council?

	West Bank	Gaza	Total
a. Democracy will become better	37.7%	53.8%	43.7%
b. Democracy will become worse	19.6%	24.1%	21.3%
c. Democracy will not be affected	34.2%	15.8%	27.3%
d. No opinion	8.5%	6.3%	7.7%

FRONTLINE STATES

JORDAN

Jordan remained in close contact with Israel and the PA regarding disengagement throughout the quarter but played no major role. Israeli DM Mofaz informed King Abdallah that Israel would be willing to allow Jordan to send a handful of Badr Brigade officers to the West Bank to help train PA security forces, but there was no follow-up.

As of 7/5, Israel was in talks with Jordan regarding deporting 2 Palestinians with Jordanian citizenship who had been held in Israeli prison since 2003. Israel did not inform Jordan until 6/05 that the men were being held. Their deportation was delayed in a dispute over whether Israel or Jordan would pay their transportation fees to the border.

The Israeli-Jordanian Economic Cooperation Forum met (ca. 7/4) in Germany to promote joint tourism projects and encourage stronger bilateral economic relations. Talks focused on facilitating visas for Jordanian businessmen and tourists seeking to enter Israel and shortening delays at border crossings. This was the third meeting of the forum, which is held under the auspices of the Peres Center for Peace.

LEBANON

Lebanon continued to feel the effects of the 2/14/05 assassination of former PM Rafiq Hariri and the withdrawal, under stiff international pressure, of Syrian military and intelligence forces from the country. Lebanon's focus continued to be internal, and it did not play a role this quarter in Israeli-Palestinian affairs.

Lebanese parliamentary elections—held in different regions of the country in 4 rounds: Beirut on 5/29 (voter turnout 27%), South Lebanon on 6/5 (voter turnout 45%), Mount Lebanon and the Biqā' Valley on 6/12 (voter turnout not reported), and Biqā' Valley and northern Lebanon on 6/19 (voter turnout 49%)—were strongly affected by the Hariri assassination and the backlash against Syria. Many had expected the anti-Syrian coalition comprising the Sunni-dominated Future Party headed by Saad Hariri (son of Rafiq), the Democratic Coalition headed by Druze leader Walid Junblatt, and the Lebanese Forces headed by jailed Christian ex-militia leader Samir Ja'ja' (imprisoned since 1994; released 7/26/05 after a parliamentary pardon), to win an absolute major-

ity of seats. Such expectations did not materialize, mainly because of the late entry into the elections of the Maronite leader General Michel Aoun, who had led an insurrection against the Syrian presence in 1989-90 and who returned from exile in France after the Syrian withdrawal (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 136). Aoun, who criticized not only the Syrian presence but also the anti-Syrian opposition for being "part of the system" and corrupt, split the Christian vote. When the final election results were released on 6/20, the anti-Syrian ticket captured 72 of the total 128 parliamentary seats, the Aoun slate won 21 seats, and the pro-Syria Hizballah-Amal-independent slate took 35 seats (Hizballah itself winning 14 seats, up from 12 in the previous government). Still, the new balance of power forced President Emile Lahoud to name (6/30) Fuad Saniora, an anti-Syrian opposition member and former Hariri aide, as prime minister. Saniora's new cabinet, inaugurated 7/19, was dominated by opponents of Syria but included for the first time a Hizballah member (as energy minister).

While Saniora was trying to form a government, the U.S. accused Syria (7/15) of trying to influence its composition by closing (ca. 7/1) Syria's borders to Lebanese imports, threatening 50,000 Lebanese jobs and costing Lebanon \$300,000/day in economic losses, to force Lahoud to veto 3 proposed cabinet slates before allowing him to approve the 7/19 slate. Syria denied (7/15) this, claiming the restrictions were the result of new security measures to prevent infiltrations to Iraq through Syria, but the restrictions were removed on 8/1.

Rice made a surprise visit to Lebanon on 7/22 to express solidarity with the new government, meeting with Aoun, Hariri, Lahoud, and Saniora. She warned Syria to stop interfering in Lebanon and stated that the U.S. would not deal with the Hizballah members elected to parliament. Hours after her visit, a bomb exploded on a busy street in a Christian section of Beirut, wounding 12 Lebanese; no group claimed responsibility.

On 6/27, 2 months after Syria completed its withdrawal from Lebanon, reportedly triggering the exodus of 10,000s of foreign workers, Lebanon announced that it would partially lift the 1983 ban prohibiting Palestinian refugees from being employed in a wide range of jobs and professions. Under the plan, Lebanese-born Palestinians registered as refugees would be permitted to hold unskilled jobs in the private sector as well as clerical and secretarial jobs, though the

ban on Palestinians in certain professions (legal, medical, etc.) remained in place. In another development, when Abbas visited Lebanon 7/8–9 to meet with Lahoud and leaders of the Palestinian factions, Lahoud reportedly agreed to declare an amnesty for wanted Palestinians. However, neither the lifting of the ban on work restrictions nor the amnesty occurred, reportedly because of suspicions that Palestinians were behind the attempted assassination of Lebanon's outgoing pro-Syrian DM and dep. PM Elias Murr in a car bombing in Beirut on 7/12. No one claimed responsibility for the attack, which wounded Murr and killed 2 bystanders.

Other bombings related to Lebanese-Syrian tensions this quarter included car bomb assassinations in Beirut of anti-Syrian *al-Nabar* columnist Samir Kassir on 6/2 and former leader of the Lebanese Communist Party George Hawi, an opponent of Syria's presence in Lebanon, on 6/21. A booby-trapped car exploded near a Beirut hotel on 7/1, killing a passerby. No group claimed responsibility for any of the incidents.

Sporadic violence was reported on the Israel-Lebanon border this quarter. The IDF fired (5/21) warning shots across the border at shepherds who strayed too close to IDF positions in the disputed Shaba' Farms area. In response, Hizballah fired 8 missiles at the IDF position, causing no damage or injuries. The IDF retaliated with heavy machine gun fire directed at facing residential areas; no casualties were reported. On 6/29, Hizballah fired at least 15 mortars at 3 IDF posts in Shaba' Farms, killing 1 IDF soldier and wounding 5. The IDF responded with air strikes and artillery fire, killing at least 1 Hizballah member. The IDF and Hizballah traded fire again on 6/30 (leaving 1 Hizballah member wounded) and 7/12 (causing no damage or injuries). On 7/28, Hizballah pledged to keep the border with Israel quiet during the disengagement from Gaza; no further incidents were reported through the end of the quarter.

Also of note: Without explanation, Israel officially called off (8/9) the last stage of the prisoner release agreed with Hizballah in 1/04 (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 131), which was to have been completed by 4/26/04. Under the deal, Israel was to release Lebanese prisoner Samir Kantar (considered by Israel to have "blood on his hands" for his participation in a 1979 Palestinian Liberation Front raid into Israel) and provide information regarding 4 missing Iranians (including 2 diplomats) kidnapped in Lebanon in 1982

in an area controlled by Israel's Lebanese allies the Phalange in exchange for information on missing Israeli pilot Ron Arad (downed over Lebanon in 1986). Quiet talks mediated by Germany were last reported in 8/04 (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 133).

SYRIA

Syria continued to come under stiff international pressure in the wake of the 2/14/05 assassination of former Lebanese PM Rafiq Hariri.

On 5/20, Syrian amb. to the U.S. Imad Mustapha announced that in the previous week, Syria had "severed all links" with the U.S. military and CIA because of "unjust American allegations" that Syria was not doing enough to halt the flow of insurgents and money into Iraq. Mustapha said that Syria had reached the point at which "we thought, why should we continue to cooperate" when the U.S. was seen as being deliberately provocative. The same day, U.S. Secy. of State Rice, in her address to the World Economic Forum in Amman, reiterated accusations that Syria was "allowing its territory to be used to organize terrorist attacks against innocent Iraqis" and was continuing to meddle in Lebanon despite withdrawing its intelligence and military forces (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 136).

UN Secy.-Gen Kofi Annan declared (5/23) that a UN monitoring team had verified that Syria had withdrawn all its troops and intelligence officials from Lebanon. On 6/9, however, a senior U.S. official, speaking with government permission but on condition that he not be identified by name or agency, cited "a variety of credible Lebanese sources" to allege that Syrian intelligence officers had returned to Lebanon and were basing themselves in Palestinian refugee camps, which are not fully under Lebanese government control, and that Syria had drawn up a "hit list" targeting senior Lebanese officials and figures opposed to its presence in Lebanon. U.S. intelligence officials said (6/9) that the official's charges could not immediately be substantiated, and the State Dept. admitted (6/9) that no one in the administration had actually seen a hit list or been able independently to verify that one existed. A spokesman for the unnamed senior official explained (6/9) that the U.S. "thought it would be useful to make this [information] public as a deterrent to the Syrians" but that it could not be transparent because of "diplomatic sensitivities" and the need to protect intelligence sources. In light of the

U.S. claims, denied by Syria, Annan agreed (6/10) to send the UN verification team back into Lebanon to confirm that Syrian intelligence had left the country, and dispatched UN special envoy Terje Larsen, charged with overseeing UN Res. 1559 implementation, to meet (6/12) with Pres. Asad.

Israel reported (6/3) that Syria had test fired 3 Scud missiles with air-burst warheads, one of which landed in Turkey, and warned that Syria could outfit the Scuds with chemical weapons for strikes against the Jewish state. Syria denied (6/4) test firing any Scuds, saying that the accusations were meant to put international pressure on Syria and that the shrapnel that fell in Turkey was from old missiles fired during routine military training. The U.S. confirmed (6/3) Israel's account.

At an international conference on Iraq in Brussels on 6/22, Rice focused pressure on Syria, blaming Damascus for aiding the Iraqi insurgency and demanding that it take immediate steps to halt insurgents, stating "Let's not have more words about what they [the Syrians] are prepared to do. Let's have action." Rice refused to meet with a Syrian delegation to the conference. The next day, Rice told the G-8 FMs meeting in London that Syria bore major responsibility for regional instability in the Middle East. Afterward, a State Dept. official speaking on condition of anonymity stated (6/23) that in light of talks in London and Brussels and the U.S.'s own intelligence information and ongoing diplomatic contacts, the Bush administration believed there was "international consensus" that Syria was promoting violence in Iraq and Lebanon and against Israel.

On 7/6, another U.S. official speaking anonymously stated that recent intelligence showed that Syria was providing "barracks-like housing," weapons, money, passports, and training for Moroccans, Saudis, Yemenis, and others who wanted to go to Iraq to fight American forces. Syria denied the charges.

Meanwhile, to increase pressure on Syria, the U.S. froze (6/9) the U.S. assets of a Syrian company and 2 Syrian officials (unnamed) on the grounds that they acted on behalf of former Iraqi pres. Saddam Hussein's government. On 6/30, it froze the assets of Syrian intelligence officials Rustum Ghazali (chief of Syrian military intelligence in Lebanon) and Ghazi Kanaan (former chief of military intelligence in Lebanon and former interior minister) for meddling in Lebanese affairs. Freezing assets was one of the options that Congress recommended in the 12/03 Syria

Accountability Act (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 131) and that Bush agreed to consider under an executive order he signed in 5/05 (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 132).

U.S.-based Syrian opposition leaders meeting (6/18-19) in Washington set up a "Syrian national council" (participants considered but decided against the more provocative title "transitional governing council"). Bush political adviser Richard Perle and Dept. of Defense Middle East specialist Harold Rode attended the sessions. Perle addressed the group, encouraging them to guide the future of Syria, saying their meeting marked a historic moment that "one day, you will remember." Asked by participants the level of U.S. seriousness in ousting the Syrian regime, Perle reportedly (*al-Sbarq al-Awsat* 7/6) said that regime change should be led by Syrians themselves and that the greater the move to do so, the greater the chance the U.S. would provide effective support. He also reportedly acknowledged the Bush administration's interest in removing the Syrian Ba'th Party, seeing it (incorrectly) as the twin of the Ba'th Party in Iraq. The Syrian opposition figures also held side meetings at the State Dept., attended by 10 U.S. officials representing the State Dept., Defense Dept., and White House. The Defense Dept. confirmed (7/6) the meetings took place.

On 7/11, a new party called the Coalition of Free Patriots was announced in Syria. The group reportedly is made up of middle-class and bourgeois industrialists and businessmen.

REGIONAL AFFAIRS

RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL

Israeli FMin. spokesman Liur Ben Dur stated (7/12) that Israel hoped to "take advantage of the positive effect of the disengagement plan in Gaza in order to push forward the normalization of relations with Arab and Islamic countries"—which the U.S. has long advocated as a way of moving the peace process forward (e.g., see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 130). As of mid-7/05, Israel reportedly was holding "semi-secret" talks with several Arab countries (including Bahrain, Kuwait, and Morocco) regarding opening or expanding diplomatic relations. Qatar, Morocco, Oman, and Tunisia have suspended ties with Israel since the outbreak of the intifada; Egypt, Jordan, and Mauritania have full diplomatic relations.

The tourism ministers of Israel and the UAE met (5/22) on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Amman to discuss ways to promote tourism in the region. The meeting came a week after Israel reported (and the UAE denied) plans to open an economic interest section in Dubai in the near future. The Israeli tourism minister also met with his Jordanian and Palestinian counterparts.

The Algerian government allowed the first group visit by some 130 Algerian-born French Jews returning to Algeria for the first time since they fled when independence was declared in 1962. The group visited their hometown and made a pilgrimage to the tomb of a 14th century Jewish sage that was recently renovated by the Algerian government.

Egypt and Israel signed (6/30) a 15-year, \$2.5-b. deal for Egypt to sell 1.7 b cubic meters of natural gas per year to the Israel Electric Corporation starting in 10/06.

INTER-ARAB HIGHLIGHTS

The Arab League held (7/18–21) meetings on the Palestinian situation, focusing on the separation wall and disengagement. No new positions or significant statements were released. Reps. from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, the PLO, and Syria attended.

In an interview with Dubai TV on 7/12, Abbas called on Arab states to grant citizenship to Palestinian refugees, saying it would not undermine the right of return.

Egypt and the PA signed (6/29) a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to cooperate on oil and natural gas exploration off the Gaza coast. Egypt and the PA also signed (7/22) a MOU to study building a natural gas pipeline to Gaza.

INTERNATIONAL

UNITED STATES

U.S. efforts on the peace process this quarter primarily involved facilitating implementation of Israeli disengagement from Gaza. Though the U.S. repeated hopes that disengagement would be the first step toward reviving road map implementation and final status talks aimed at reaching an agreement on a two-state solution, officials made a point of not pressuring Israel regarding further steps. For example, while Secy. of State Rice was touring the region (6/17–23) to promote the revival of road map implementation after disengagement, National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley

met (6/19) with reps. of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations (CMPAJO) to assure them that the White House had rejected Abbas's demands to move into final status talks quickly after disengagement, stating that the U.S. was "opposed to skipping over stages in the road map and would insist that Abbas dismantle the terrorist infrastructure."

An Israeli delegation officially submitted (7/11) a request for \$2.2 b. over 3 years to help defray the cost of disengagement. If approved, it would mark the largest 1-time aid grant to Israel since 1992, when the U.S. provided \$3 b. to compensate Israel for damages caused by Saddam Hussein's missiles during the 1991 Gulf War. One-third of the \$2.2 b. would be used to help cover the costs of the IDF redeployment from Gaza; the other two-thirds would be used to develop the Galilee and Negev to house the evacuated settlers. At the same time, Israel began (7/11) a series of conference calls with major U.S. Jewish organizations to urge them to support disengagement "unequivocally"; Israel noted that there was a "very strong right-wing American influence" on the anti-disengagement movement in Israel and that many U.S. Jewish groups had not taken a public stand on the issue, expressing concern that their ambivalence could make it harder to secure the \$2.2 b. in aid from Congress.

Aware that Palestinians would have to see an immediate improvement in their conditions following disengagement for calm to be maintained and peace efforts to move forward, the U.S. made several small but significant gestures to the PA. In his meeting with Abbas on 5/26, Bush announced that the U.S. would give the PA \$50 m. in direct aid for construction of homes, schools, and roads in Gaza; the money was set aside for the Palestinians in the original FY 2005 budget but had not been allocated or disbursed. On 5/20, USAID launched a \$12 m. road reconstruction project to create 500 Palestinian jobs and improve movement of Palestinians and goods across the West Bank, focusing on roads in Hebron, Jenin, Ramallah, Tubas, and Tulkarm. USAID also opened (6/1) an Office of Transition Initiatives (USAID/OTI) branch for the West Bank and Gaza, with satellite offices in Gaza City, Hebron, Jerusalem, Nablus, and Ramallah. The USAID/OTI program offers grants of \$10,000–\$100,000 for projects that "promote good governance and youth empowerment" by improving coordination among the PA, municipal councils,

and citizens groups and increasing youth participation in social, political, and economic life, particularly if the projects foster "multiple viewpoints."

The Pentagon said (6/20) that it had curtailed its weapons technology transfers to Israel in light of its dispute over Israel's arms sales and suspected transfer of proprietary U.S. radar technology to China (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 136). Israel canceled (6/26) its controversial contract with China and agreed in principle to sign a MOU with the U.S. giving the U.S. significant discretion over the terms of future Israeli arms exports. The U.S. said that joint security projects and transfers of defense equipment to Israel would remain frozen until the MOU is signed. Negotiations on a text continued through the end of the quarter but were not completed. Israel annoyed the U.S. by postponing a visit to Washington in late 7/05 by DM Shaul Mofaz to iron out the final details.

The American Israel Public Affairs Comm. (AIPAC) held its annual policy conference in Washington 5/22-24. In opening the event, AIPAC announced that its membership had nearly doubled in the past 4 years to 100,000 and that this year's conference, attended by 5,000 members, was the largest held, noting that its "political gala" banquet on 5/23 would be "the largest annual seated dinner in Washington" attended by "more members of Congress than almost any other event, except for a joint session Congress or a State of the Union address." Sharon addressed the conference on 5/24, calling on the PA to follow through on its security reform pledges.

During his visit to the U.S. (5/22-25), Sharon lobbied for support for his disengagement plan among American Jewish organizations. To this end, he addressed (5/22) 1,000s of Jewish leaders in New York at an event sponsored by the CPMAJO, the United Jewish Appeal-Federation of New York, and the United Jewish Communities; and met (5/23) with the Israel Bonds forum in New York, where he pledged that Israel would keep Ariel, Gush Etzion, and Ma'ale Adu-mim settlement blocs "forever" and that there would be no final status talks until the PA disarmed militant groups. Abbas similarly met (5/26) with Jewish leaders during his visit to Washington to stress his success in reducing Palestinian violence and the need for coordination on disengagement. Jewish leaders said they were pleased with Abbas's words and hoped his actions would follow.

AIPAC policy dir. Steve Rosen and senior analyst Keith Weissman were indicted (8/4) on charges of conspiring to gather and disclose classified national security information to journalists and an unnamed foreign power (i.e., Israel). The men allegedly were in contact with 3 U.S. government officials, including Pentagon analyst Larry Franklin, who was charged on 5/4 with passing classified information; the other 2 U.S. officials were not named in the indictment. Meanwhile Franklin was further charged (5/24) with possessing classified documents concerning al-Qa'ida, Osama Bin Laden, and Iraq. While the official indictments last quarter did not give many details regarding the classified material involved (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 136), sources close to Rosen said (5/22) that the initial charges regarded "threats to Israeli operatives who were working in northern and southern Iraq."

Israeli amb. to the U.S. Danny Ayalon visited (5/17) convicted spy for Israel Jonathan Pollard in prison, in what Pollard denounced as a show meeting meant to bolster right-wing support for Sharon, in decline because of the disengagement plan. According to Israeli FM Silvan Shalom (5/9), Sharon's government agreed in 4/05 to step up high-profile visits to Pollard, beginning with Ayalon's trip, as a first step in increasing lobbying for his release (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 136). Ayalon is the most senior Israeli official to have visited Pollard.

The trial of former Florida professor Sami al-Arian, charged in federal court as the American leader of a terrorist organization (Islamic Jihad), opened in Tampa on 6/5. Arian's lawyers argue that he is being persecuted for airing his anti-Israel views, which are protected under the First Amendment. The prosecution acknowledges that the government's investigation, which began in 1993, has turned up no evidence directly linking Arian or his associates to any specific terrorist attack, though it claims that he raised money "so they [Islamic Jihad] could kill more people." As a prominent Muslim leader, Arian met with many senior U.S. officials, including Pres. Bill Clinton and George W. Bush (before his election as pres.). He was arrested soon after the 9/11 attacks under the provisions of the newly passed Patriot Act.

A federal court in Brooklyn sentenced (7/28) prominent Yemeni cleric Shaykh Muhammad Ali Hassan al-Moayad to the maximum 75 years in prison after convicting him in 3/05 of conspiracy to support

terrorism (i.e., al-Qa'ida and Hamas). The FBI lured Moayad from Yemen to Germany in 1/03, where German authorities arrested him and extradited him to the U.S. The FBI's case initially rested on an informant's testimony that Moayad had boasted of personally delivering \$20 m. to Osama Bin Laden before 9/11. When those charges proved difficult to substantiate, focus shifted to charges that the shaykh (operating from Yemen) oversaw efforts to fundraise for Hamas in Brooklyn mosques; the jury ruled the charges were true and constituted material support for terrorism, ignoring defense arguments that Moayad was operating within the law in Yemen, where Hamas is legal.

A *Washington Post* report released 6/12 showed that of the 330 suspects charged by the Justice Dept. with connections to a terrorist group since institution of the Patriot Act, 180 have been cleared. Of the 142 with a "demonstrated connection to a terrorist group," the largest subset (39 individuals) was linked to Palestinian groups, compared to 35 persons linked to al-Qa'ida, 9 to Iraq-related groups, and 9 to the Taliban. Of the 39 individuals actually convicted of terrorism or national security crimes, 9 were linked to Palestinian groups, 14 to al-Qa'ida, 5 to the Taliban, and 2 to Iraq-related groups.

RUSSIA

Russia's involvement in the peace process this quarter was limited largely to participation in Quartet consultations. Israeli FMin. Dir. Gen. Ron Prosor held (7/13) talks in Moscow with Russian FM Sergey Lavrov and Dep. FM Aleksandr Saltanov on bilateral relations and the peace process, during which Russia urged Israel to coordinate closely with the PA on disengagement.

As of early 6/05, Russia was reportedly urging that an international conference be held on the sidelines of the opening of the UNGA session in New York in 9/05 to show that diplomatic activity was continuing after the initial phase of disengagement implementation. Russia proposed that the meeting comprise senior government officials of the Quartet states, plus Israel, the PA, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and perhaps others.

EUROPEAN UNION

The EU revealed (6/16) that low-level EU officials had held formal contacts with Hamas members since PA municipal elections got underway. Britain similarly acknowledged (6/7) that mid-level diplomats had met Hamas members elected to mu-

nicipal councils and had opened channels to Hizballah since Lebanese parliamentary elections, saying such talks would continue; and senior German officials met with Hamas leaders Mahmud Zahhar in Gaza and Shaykh Hassan Yusuf in the West Bank on 6/18. Israel expressed concern (6/16) that the EU and its member states were making a "substantial shift" in their policies on Hamas and Hizballah, but the EU denied this, stressing that practical contacts with elected representatives from Hamas and Hizballah were almost inevitable and that none of the individuals that officials met appeared to have been involved in militant activity. (Indeed, Israel's Civil Administration officials stated [5/27, 5/26] that they had been working closely with Hamas members elected to municipal councils on issues regarding provision of basic services, stating "such interactions do not contradict Israel's policies" provided the individuals did not themselves take part in attacks on Israelis.) EU diplomats did state (7/2) that they would be less likely to put Hizballah on the EU terrorism list following its strong showing in Lebanese elections.

After the elections, Conflicts Forum, headed by Alistair Crooke, the former British MI6 official and security liaison between EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana and Palestinian Islamist groups, organized 2 days of meetings in Beirut bringing U.S. and EU figures with access to decision-making circles together with senior Hamas (7/23) and Hizballah (7/24) political leaders. (Preliminary talks were held in Beirut in 3/4; see Quarterly Update under "Lebanon" in *JPS* 136.) The sessions were meant to foster better understanding among Western experts of Islamist groups, their worldviews, and goals. The Hamas and Hizballah delegations stressed their desire for democratic elections, political reform, and anticorruption measures within their societies, as well as their aims for strengthening their political legitimacy, integration into the political process, and ties with Western governments.

Sharon made (6/27-29) a trip to France, where he met with French pres. Jacques Chirac. Both leaders hailed the visit as marking a reconciliation between Israel and France after months of tensions over accusations by Israel that French foreign policy has a pro-Arab bias (see Quarterly Updates in *JPS* 133, 134).

UNITED NATIONS

The new UN special envoy for the peace process, Alvaro de Soto, appointed in 5/05,

made his first visit to the region beginning on 7/10. He replaced long-time special envoy Terje Larsen, who was moved to the position of special envoy overseeing implementation of UN Res. 1559 in 1/05 (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 135).

Israeli FM Shalom met with UN Secy-Gen. Kofi Annan on 6/3 to request that the UN consider allowing Israel a rotating seat on the UN Security Council (UNSC) in an effort to "normalize our status" at the UN. Nominations for rotating seats are usually put forward by the 5 regional groupings. Israel had been allowed to join the Western Europe and Others grouping in 2000 on condition that it not seek a UNSC seat, or any other rotating seat, for at least 2 years (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 116).

Israel gained two important positions in the UN, however. Israeli amb. to the UN Dan Gillerman was elected (6/13) as one of 21 VPs to the 60th UNGA session, and Israel's Meir Itzhaki was elected (7/27) as one of 4 vice chairmen of the UN Disarmament Committee. Israel heralded Gillerman's election as a "historic moment," even though Israeli diplomat Abba Ebban held the post in the early 1950s. VPs are responsible for running UNGA discussions in the president's absence and deciding on the daily agenda.

A UNSC debate (7/21) on the situation in the Middle East was dominated by criticism of Israel's separation wall in light of the 1-year anniversary of the ICJ's ruling of the wall as illegal and Israel's 7/10 approval of the final wall route (see above). The UNSC also called on Israel and the PA to show restraint and curb violence in advance of disengagement, in hopes that disengagement would pave the way to a just peace.

UNRWA named (6/27) acting UNRWA commissioner-gen. Karen Abu Zayd as head of the UNRWA for a 3-year term. Abu Zayd previously served many years in the UN Human Rights Commission. In one of her first public statements, Abu Zayd commented in an interview (ca. 8/5) that Abbas's 7/12 statement (see above) that the refugee right of return would not be undermined if host countries granted citizenship to Palestinian refugees was correct. According to Abu Zayd, most refugees realize that they will not return to their homes and that the right of return is not a practical possibility but simply want the acknowledgement of the right of return. The PA denounced her statements on 8/11. On 8/16, King Abdallah of Jordan, whose country hosts 1.8 m. refugees, indirectly responded by saying that any plan that

aims to "deprive Palestinians of their right to return to their homeland or establish their independent state on Palestinian soil and nowhere else" should be confronted as "a plot against the Palestinian people as much as a plot against Jordan."

UNRWA also began (8/14) a major field survey of 4.5 m. Palestinian refugees in camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip to provide 62 donor countries and 30 international refugee organizations with solid data on the needs of Palestinian refugees. The project will begin with the 1.8 m. refugees in Jordan, then spread to other host countries and finally the occupied territories.

UNICEF issued (7/8) an emergency appeal seeking \$8.2 m. for health services and educational and psychological support for Palestinian children in the occupied territories. UNICEF's original funding appeal, made in 1/05 for \$12.7 m., had already been increased to \$14.2 m., but as of 7/05 only \$5.1 m. had been received.

The UN's World Food Program received (8/1) \$10 m. from the EU toward a new 2-year, \$80-m. program to provide food aid to 135,000 poor Palestinians in Gaza and 344,500 in the West Bank. The U.S. has already given \$1 m. to the program, which the UN hopes to launch in 9/05.

TURKEY

Israeli, Palestinian, and Turkish businessmen met (6/8) in Jerusalem to discuss ways of boosting economic cooperation and joint projects. This was the second meeting of what is called the Ankara Forum; the first meeting was held 4/27-28/05. The PA and Turkey also signed (7/14) a new tourism agreement, but no details were released.

VATICAN

On 7/25, Israel summoned the Vatican ambassador to demand an explanation of why newly inducted Pope Benedict XVI did not mention the 7/12 Islamic Jihad attack in Netanya in a 7/24 sermon voicing sympathy for nations struck by terrorist attacks, suggesting that he "deliberately failed" to refer to Israel. The pope had deplored the "death, destruction, and suffering in countries including Egypt, Turkey, Iraq, and Britain" and asked God to "stay the hands of assassins . . . driven on by fanaticism and hate." The Vatican replied (7/25) that it was "surprising that one would have wanted to take the opportunity to distort the intentions of the Holy Father. . . . Obviously the other

week's grave attack in Netanya referred to by Israel falls under the general and unreserved condemnation of terrorism." The Vatican noted that Benedict had given special prominence to relations with Jews since being elected pope in 4/05: Judaism was alone among the world's other major religions that he mentioned when he was installed, he met with Jewish leaders in 6/05, and he was already scheduled to visit a synagogue rebuilt after the Holocaust during his planned visit to Cologne, Germany, in 8/05. (His predecessor, Pope John Paul II, was the 1st modern pope to visit a synagogue.)

In light of Israeli reprisals following the 7/12 Netanya bombing, the Vatican denounced (7/28) Israel for responding to Palestinian violence in ways "not always compatible with international law," saying it could not protest every Palestinian attack if Israel did not adhere to international law in its response.

OTHER

NATO continued to expand its Middle East ties this quarter (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 136). On 5/31, Algeria, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, and Morocco were inducted as Mediterranean associates of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, while the Palestinian Council was granted observer status. The Parliamentary Assembly has 26 member countries and, prior to 5/31, 13 associate countries, none of them from the Middle East. Israel previously was an observer of the assembly, which is a forum for international parliamentary dialogue. A NATO delegation visiting Ramallah reiterated (6/16) that NATO would not assume

any security role in the territories until a final status agreement is reached and that any role would have to be at the invitation of both Israel and the PA, with the approval of the UN. In 6/05, Israel for the first time took part, along with 14 other countries, in NATO's tri-annual submarine escape and rescue exercises.

South Korea and Palestine agreed (6/24) to establish diplomatic relations and exchange representatives.

DONORS

Most efforts of the donor establishment this quarter were in support of Wolfensohn's mission to bring the PA's medium-term development plan in line with the proposed 3-year, \$3 b. international aid package in support of disengagement and to outline steps needed after disengagement to ensure Gaza's economic recovery and reconstruction. Consequently, the Local Aid Coordination Committee (LACC), which tries to meet monthly, held only one regular formal session this quarter on 6/17; no details were released. The Humanitarian and Emergency Policy Group, established in 2002 to monitor the humanitarian situation and make policy recommendations to the LACC, did not meet as planned this quarter.

The EU agreed (ca. 7/22) to finance a \$31 m. project to build a cargo terminal on 35 d. at the Gaza airport that would be able to export 90,000 tons of merchandise per year, particularly perishables (e.g., fruit, flowers), to the EU market. Japan pledged (5/16) \$100 m. in aid to the Palestinians after implementation of disengagement.