QUARTERLY UPDATE ON CONFLICT AND DIPLOMACY

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

THE PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT

There was little significant diplomatic action on the Israeli-Palestinian front this quarter as regional and international focus remained on the fallout of last quarter’s Israel-Lebanon war and efforts to maintain the UN-imposed 8/14 cease-fire. Thus, the main issues of this quarter were, for Israel, to strengthen the government and to provide internal security, and for the Palestinians, to end Israel’s ongoing siege of Gaza and the Israeli- (and U.S.-) led boycott of the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority (PA) and to halt the consequent deteriorating humanitarian and economic conditions and growing intra-Palestinian violence in the territories, especially in Gaza. Israel and the U.S. continued to insist that restrictions on the Hamas-led PA would remain in place until Hamas as a movement met their demands (endorsed by the Quartet on 1/30/06) to recognize Israel, renounce violence, and adhere to previous agreements. (Israel also demanded that Hamas annul its charter and that the new PA government dismantle all Palestinian militant groups before contacts could resume.)

As the quarter opened, Israel’s blockade of Gaza entered its 6th month, with no goods or people allowed out (except for very limited medical emergencies) and only limited food and fuel supplies allowed in. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) was still engaged in Operation Summer Rains (see Quarterly Update in JPS 141), which began on 6/28 after the capture of an IDF soldier in a Palestinian cross-border raid from Gaza on 6/25, making occasional ground incursions into Gaza, maintaining troops at the Dahaniyya airport site outside of Rafah, and routinely conducting air and artillery strikes across the Strip with the stated aim of deterring Palestinian rocket fire into Israel. However, about a dozen rockets continued to be fired per week.

As a result of Israel’s siege and U.S.-led economic sanctions, conditions in the Strip were dire: Palestinians had on average 6–8 hrs./day of electricity and 2–3 hrs./day of water, food self-sufficiency was declining, and unemployment and the costs of basic goods were up. With the Hamas-led PA unable to pay government workers’ back salaries for the previous 5 mos. (see Quarterly Update in JPS 141), the economy was devolving into a barter system for lack of personal income, municipal functions such as garbage collection had ceased in many urban areas, concerns of a widespread health crisis were on the rise, and tensions on the ground were mounting. In the West Bank, the IDF maintained the separation between the north and south by keeping (since 4/12) the Zatara checkpoint s. of Nablus closed and severely restricting movement of Palestinian men ages 15–40, as well as movement into and out of the n. Jordan Valley. As of 8/15, at least 4,700 Palestinians (including 46 Israeli Arabs and 17 unidentified Arab cross-border infiltrators), 1,023 Israelis (including 315 IDF soldiers and security personnel, 208 settlers, 500 civilians), and 59 foreign nationals (including 2 British suicide bombers) had been killed since the start of the al-Aqsa intifada on 9/28/00.

Olmert’s Convergence Plan on Hold

In the wake of the Lebanon campaign, the government of Israeli PM Ehud Olmert was extremely weak domestically. Among the consequences of the war itself, as well as the ongoing violence from Gaza, was the widespread Israeli perception that unilateral withdrawals along the lines of the 5/00 pullout from s. Lebanon and the 8–9/05 disengagement from Gaza had been policy failures and that the government must develop
alternative plans for halting violence and providing public security without making concessions that might allow Israel's adversaries to rearm and grow stronger. Around 8/18, Olmert informed his cabinet and key legislators that in light of the Lebanon war, he had shelved his convergence plan for a limited removal of isolated Jewish settlements in the West Bank and unilateral declaration of Israel's borders by 2010 (see Quarterly Update in JPS 140), stating that Israel's money and efforts must be concentrated on repairing the damage to n. Israel. Israeli officials said they doubted that the plan would be revived.

With Olmert's public support dropping (as of 9/21, 68% of Israelis disapproved of his performance, up 28% from 8/11), the PM tried to solidify his political base, notably by escalating expansion of Jewish settlements, authorizing (9/4, 9/21) 854 new settlement housing units in Beitar Lilit (342 units) and Ma'ale Adumim (348 units) in the E-1 area outside Jerusalem, as well as in Ariel (88 units), Alfe Menashe (56 units), and Karnei Shomron (20 units) around Jerusalem. Olmert also sought to reinforce his coalition government by opening (9/1) talks with Avigdor Lieberman about bringing his right-wing Russian immigrant Yisrael Beiteinu party into the government. Lieberman, who has called for reducing Israel's Arab population and for annexing wide swaths of the West Bank, originally declined to join the coalition because of opposition to the convergence plan, but with the plan shelved, he agreed to reconsider. Talks dragged until mid-10/06, when the interest of both sides was reinvigorated amid a cascade of diplomatic scandals that further reduced public confidence in Olmert's government. These included charges that Olmert had purchased a Jerusalem residence at far below market value in return for helping developers get building permits; accusations that senior Kadima member Tshai Hanegbi made illegal political appointments during his tenure as a minister; and a police investigation of Pres. Moshe Katsav recommending (10/15) that he be charged with rape and sexual harassment as well as illegal wiretapping, fraud, and malfeasance in office. Lieberman and Olmert reached an agreement on 10/23 (approved by the Israeli cabinet on 10/30) for Yisrael Beiteinu to join the coalition, and Lieberman himself was made dep. PM in charge of Israel's Iran portfolio.

Meanwhile, Olmert told the Israeli public (9/9) that he wanted peace, but not at any price. He said he was prepared to meet with Abbas immediately without preconditions, but that there could be no diplomatic progress until captured IDF soldier Gilad Shalit was freed. In the interim, Israel continued to take steps to undermine the PA government headed by PM Ismail Haniyeh: The IDF, which had detained at least 36 Hamas-affiliated PA cabinet members and legislators last quarter (see Quarterly Update in JPS 141), arrested more officials, detaining PA Dep. PM and Education M Nasir al-Sha'ir (8/19), Palestinian Council (PC) secy. Mahmud Ramahi (8/20), and PC member Mahmud Muslih (8/27). Taking into account the handful previously released, with new arrests the number of Hamas-affiliated officials in Israeli custody as of 8/27 stood at 31. On 9/12, an Israeli military court ordered the release of 15 PC members and 3 PA cabinet members affiliated with Hamas, but the prosecution immediately appealed, and the decision was reversed on 9/25. Only Sha'ir was released, on 9/28.

**Palestinian National Unity Talks**

In an effort to counter Israeli and international pressures, PA Pres. Mahmoud Abbas (Fatah) and PM Ismail Haniyeh (Hamas-affiliated Change and Reform) announced (8/16) the reopening of talks (in consultation with all Palestinian factions) on forming a unity government in keeping with their agreement on a national unity platform last quarter (initially by the factions, excluding Islamic Jihad, on 6/27 but not formally adopted by Abbas; see Quarterly Update in JPS 141). The hope was that the creation of a new government would make the U.S. and Israel remove their restrictions on the PA and resume peace negotiations. Hamas's opening position demanded that it retain the PA premiership, that the distribution of cabinet portfolios reflect the parliamentary strength of the respective factions (giving Hamas a majority), and that formation of the unity government be contingent upon Abbas securing guarantees that the economic blockade on the PA would be lifted. (In support of the Fatah-Hamas talks, the Palestinian factions, excluding Islamic Jihad, pledged to Abbas on 8/17 that they would suspend attacks against Israel "that may give others a pretext to attack us" and observe a period of calm. Islamic Jihad stated on 8/27 that it would support formation of a Palestinian unity government but would not participate in it, since it had not taken part in the 1/06 legislative elections.)
Whereas the U.S. and Israel did not comment on these “internal Palestinian affairs,” EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana stated (9/1) that the EU would be willing to work with a Palestinian unity government even if it included members of Hamas. Positions of the individual EU states, however, varied significantly: France pressed (beginning by 9/6) EU colleagues to support easing restrictions if a national unity government renounced violence, while British PM Tony Blair said (9/10) on a visit to the region that Britain could support easing sanctions only if the new unity government met all of the 1/30 Quartet demands.

After nearly a month of talks in Gaza, Abbas and Haniyeh announced (9/11) that they had reached agreement on the principles of forming a national unity government: Abbas would dissolve the current PA cabinet within 48 hours and nominate Haniyeh to form a new government that would include members of Change and Reform, Fatah, and other parties, as well as technocrats unaffiliated with any party. According to details leaked to the press, Hamas as an organization would not explicitly recognize Israel or renounce violence but would “respect” previously signed agreements with Israel and the principles of the 2002 Arab League initiative (calling for full normalization in exchange for full peace), thereby implicitly recognizing a 2-state solution and Israel “in a manner that protects and safeguards the higher interests and the rights of the Palestinian people.” Demonstrating willingness to implement the agreement, Change and Reform cabinet ministers submitted their resignations to Abbas on 9/13, but Abbas did not accept them.

Within days, the agreement in principle stalled for two reasons: First, Israel and the U.S. stated (9/11, 9/13) that the suspension of negotiations and imposition of sanctions would continue until the new government explicitly accepted all three Quartet demands. (Israel added that Shalit must also be released.) EU FMs meeting in Brussels stated (9/15) a willingness in principle to support a national unity government, but said that they would not ease aid restrictions until the government was actually formed and its platform published to make sure it was in line with the Quartet demands. These reactions raised Palestinian concerns that formation of a unity government would not result in significant political movement forward, including an IDF withdrawal from Gaza and a declared end to Operation Summer Rains, the release of Hamas PC and cabinet members, a substantive Olmert-Abbas meeting, a prisoner exchange for Shalit involving a significant number of Palestinian prisoners, Israel's handover of VAT taxes owed the PA, and resumption of EU and U.S. aid. Second, Fatah and Hamas were unable to reach agreement over the distribution of cabinet portfolios in a new Haniyeh government, with both demanding the finance and interior portfolios.

Further talks were suspended while Abbas headed to New York to attend the annual opening of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) session, where the national unity prospects were a main issue of discussion on the sidelines among the Palestinian, Israeli, U.S., and EU reps. In his talks with U.S. Pres. George W. Bush (9/20), Secy. of State Condoleezza Rice (9/18), and Israeli FM Tzipi Livni (9/18), as well as in his statements to the press and his speech (9/22) to the UNGA (see Doc. B2), Abbas repeatedly stressed that Hamas would only agree to a unity deal that allowed some ambiguity on recognition of Israel, suggesting that it was Hamas that was holding up a final agreement for a new government. Abbas’s public discussion of the nuances of a national unity deal forced all parties publicly to harden their positions, with the U.S. and Israel stating that anything but explicit recognition of Israel would be unacceptable. Hamas was thus placed in an impossible position vis-à-vis its base: while most were willing to deal with Israel as a fait accompli, an explicit recognition of Israel or participation in a government that gave such recognition would alienate hard-line members and potentially fracture the movement.

Haniyeh consequently reiterated (9/22) Hamas’s long-standing position that it would not join a unity government that recognizes Israel before Israel recognizes Palestinian rights, though it would agree to “respect” previous agreements signed by the PLO. Although the position was not new, Abbas responded by declaring (9/23) that Hamas had “set back [national unity talks] to zero” and complained that Hamas had undermined his position with the U.S. and the EU.

Over the succeeding weeks, Egypt (ca. 9/25) and Qatar (ca. 10/1, 10/9–10) held talks with Abbas and Damascus-based Hamas leader Khalid Mishal in an attempt to mediate the national unity issue, but no progress was made. Abbas threatened (e.g., 10/4, 10/17) that if the political impasse continued, he would dismiss Haniyeh’s government and replace it with a government of technocrats,
though it was unclear how this could be
done legally since the Hamas-dominated PC
would have to approve any new government.

Meanwhile, the IDF was making near-
daily incursions into Gaza as part of Op-
eration Summer Rains, conducting ar-
rest raids and house searches, bulldozing
wide swaths of land allegedly providing
cover to rocket launchers, searching for
smugglers’ tunnels and arms caches, and
frequently firing on residential areas, stone-
throwing protesters, and militants who en-
gaged them, wounding 10s of Palestinians
(see Chronology for details). Most of these
actions were concentrated along the n. and
s. Gaza borders, where shelling continued
and air strikes destroyed the homes of lead-
ing al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade (AMB), Hamas,
and Islamic Jihad militants (usually phoning
in advance to warn residents to evacuate).
The IDF also assassinated 5 Hamas mem-
bers (1 was wounded on 8/23 and died on
8/30; 4 on 9/5), 3 Islamic Jihad members (2
on 8/17, 9/6), and 2 AMB members (9/30);
attempted unsuccessfully to assassinate an
Islamic Jihad member (9/11); and may have
made an attempt on another unidentified
wanted Palestinian (9/21).

Two major raids between 8/16 and 9/30
targeted Gaza’s interior:

• Gaza City (8/27–31): The IDF sent
troops, tanks, bulldozers, and heli-
copters into the eastern neighborhoods
of Gaza City, warning residents to evac-
uate, firing on residential areas, occu-
pying houses as observation posts, ex-
changing fire with and conducting air
strikes on Palestinian gunmen. Twelve
Palestinian gunmen and 7 bystanders
were killed and at least 2 gunmen and
28 bystanders were wounded in the
raid, during which 2 smugglers tunnels
near Qarni crossing were reportedly un-
covered.

• Khuza’a (9/5–7, 9/9): Sending in
troops, armored vehicles, and drones,
the IDF occupied Palestinian homes as
operational posts, fired on residential
areas, demolished at least 1 Palestinian
home, and bulldozed more than 200
dunams (d.; 4 d. = 1 acre) of agricul-
tural land (including 23 greenhouses,
3 poultry houses, water and electric-
ity networks), killing 2 Palestinians and
wounding 11.

In the West Bank, the IDF assassinated 3
wanted AMB members (8/28, 9/7, 9/18) and
made a failed assassination attempt on an Is-
lamic Jihad member (8/23); 3 AMB members
fatally shot by the IDF on 8/29 and 8/31 may
have been assassination targets. The IDF also
raided (9/20) a branch of the National Jorda-
nian Bank and 11 money exchanges in Jenin,
Nablus, Ramallah, and Tulkarm, confiscating
$1.34 m. in cash, plus jewelry and checks,
alleging that the businesses had funneled
cash used to carry out “terrorist” attacks.
The IDF conducted similar raids against 2
banks in al-Bireh on 2/25/04, confiscating
around $9 m.; see Quarterly Update in JPS
132.) A Democratic Front for the Liberation
of Palestine (DFLP) gunnan killed (8/19) an
IDF soldier near Nablus before being shot
dead.

By 9/30, during the first half of the quarter
70 Palestinians and 1 Israeli had been killed,
bringing the comprehensive death toll to
4,770 Palestinians and 1,024 Israelis since
the start of the al-Aqsa intifada on 9/28/00.

The U.S. Adjusts Its Policy
By mid-9/06, the State Dept. was report-
edly reviewing its policy on Israel-Palestine
in the wake of Israel’s Lebanon failure and
Iraq’s devolution into civil war, seeking a
way to reduce Israeli-Palestinian violence
to more moderate levels so that the Israeli-
Arab conflict would not interfere with U.S.
attempts to pursue other policy issues (espe-
cially efforts to rally international pressure
on Iran to halt its nuclear program; see Iran
section below). On 9/28, the State Dept.
announced that Secy. Rice would make a
“stock-taking” tour (10/1–5) of Saudi Ara-
bia, Egypt, Israel, and Ramallah to seek ways
to revitalize the peace process. The state-
ment emphasized the U.S. belief that the
region’s conflicts are rooted in the strug-
gle between “moderates” and “extremists”
and that Rice’s main goal would be to unite
moderates (specifically identified as the Gulf
states, Egypt, and Jordan, referred to for the
first time as the “G8 + 2”) to confront the
“forces of extremism and violence” (identi-
fied as Hamas, Iran, Syria). The State Dept.
stressed that Rice’s trip was not expected
to produce major breakthroughs but was
meant to show support for U.S. allies.

Specifically regarding the Palestinians,
the Bush admin. planned to increase sup-
port for the “moderate” Abbas as the only
currently “acceptable” peacemaker with
Israel and to encourage active opposition to
the “extremist” Hamas. Support for Abbas
would include additional backing for PA se-
curity and Fatah forces under his control to
guarantee that they could overpower forces
aligned with Hamas. (Of note: By 10/06, the Hamas-dominated Executive Support Force [ESF] had 3,000 members in Gaza, officially integrated into the PA police, and 2,600 members volunteering in the West Bank, outside the PA security structure. The Interior Min. planned to recruit another 1,500 ESF members.) Efforts would also be made to bolster the popularity of Abbas and Fahmi in advance of early elections proposed by Abbas (supported by the U.S. if a national unity government acceptable to the Quartet and Israel could not be formed). Concerned, however, that Abbas was unwilling or unable to take steps to quell intra-Palestinian violence or make further moves toward Israel, the U.S. simultaneously revived support for former Gaza security chief, Fatah strongman, and U.S. ally Muhammad Dahlan, grooming him as a counterweight to Hamas and a potential alternative to Abbas. (Anonymous U.S. officials confirmed that this was underway in late 10/06, admitting in the Washington Times on 10/21 that Dahlan “can be viewed as a thug, but he is one of a very few people who has authority and can impose some order on the ground who is not Hamas.”)

The U.S. intended to press Israel to implement the Rafah arrangements brokered by Rice in 11/05 to guarantee Palestinian movement into and out of Gaza. The hope was that this would improve the economic situation in Gaza and would lead to a halt to Palestinian rocket fire on Israel, improving security there, and thereby marking significant progress toward revival of the peace process.

In advance of Rice’s visit, intelligence officials from Egypt, Jordan, and some Gulf nations reportedly met (ca. 9/25) in Aqaba, Jordan, with their Israeli counterparts to “discuss the confrontation with the extreme Middle Eastern states and how to handle the threat of terror.” Olmert also reportedly (Ha’aretz, Yedi’ot Aharonot 9/26; London Times 12/3) made (ca. 9/13) a secret trip to Amman to meet with Saudi Arabia’s Prince Bandar Bin Sultan, the former ambassador to the U.S. and a close adviser to Saudi King Abdullah, where he proposed forming a group of moderate Arab countries (Bahrain, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, the UAE) to negotiate the future of the Middle East with Tel Aviv and for the first time expressed willingness to consider the 2002 Saudi-sponsored Arab League initiative as the basis of discussions.

Around the same time, U.S. security envoy Maj. Gen. Keith Dayton launched (ca. late 9/06) efforts to open low-level Israeli-Palestinian security talks to improve the flow of imports and exports from Gaza through the Qarni crossing to ease the economic crisis there, suggesting that an international observer mission similar to the EU monitoring unit at Rafah could be instituted. Though no Israeli-Palestinian meetings were held this quarter, Abbas and Haniyeh reportedly gave tacit approval to the idea, and Israel reportedly was considering it.

In her meetings with Saudi leaders in Riyadh and Arab FMs (including Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE) in Cairo, Rice received (10/2, 10/3) an uncharacteristically united, hard-line response to the reformulated U.S. policy line envisioning positive change in the region being spearheaded by “moderate” U.S. allies combating renegade “extremist” forces. The Arab leaders rejected the idea of uniting as a formal bloc against other Arab governments and movements, particularly with the open encouragement of the U.S. They also stressed that the solution to growing militancy in the region was for the U.S. to take a leadership role in achieving a just solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, expressed frustration with the U.S. focus on Iran, denounced U.S. policy in Iraq, and called the U.S.’s “democratization” agenda misguided and contrary to its policy of promoting “moderation.” Rice responded that it was the Arab states’ duty to take “difficult steps” to create conditions “more conducive” to U.S. intervention in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, particularly by suspending aid and ties to the Hamas-led PA and by promoting Abbas.

In her meeting with Abbas on 10/4, Rice pledged to “redouble” U.S. efforts to ease economic conditions in Gaza by pressuring Israel to observe the 11/05 arrangements. She also raised the possibility that the U.S. would donate $9 m. toward a $26-m. fund to finance a U.S.-drafted plan to double the size of Abbas’s elite presidential guard to 6,000 members to counterbalance security forces under the control of Hamas-affiliated Interior M Said Siyam. (The U.S. reportedly encouraged the Netherlands and other countries to help fund the presidential guard expansion, but they turned it down on the grounds that backing a large-scale project that did not involve the other security services would constitute an inappropriate attempt to intervene in the Fatah-Hamas power struggle.)

In her meeting with Olmert on 10/5, Rice pushed Israel to ease restrictions on Gaza
and transfer some $500 m. in VAT taxes owed the PA to specific humanitarian projects, but Olmert was noncommittal.

Soon after Rice’s tour, U.S. officials confirmed (10/13) reports that the U.S. had launched a $42 m. campaign to support Hamas’s political opponents ahead of possible early elections, particularly by aiding Abbas in restructuring and retraining Fatah, providing “strategic advice” to politicians and secular parties opposed to Islamism, funding “watchdog” groups and local journalists to monitor and investigate activities of the Hamas-led government, and funding private Palestinian schools that would serve as alternatives to the public schools now controlled by the Hamas-led PA. According to documents outlining the program obtained by Reuters (10/13), the projects outlined had all been formulated in recent weeks and supported the U.S. “objective to create democratic alternatives to authoritarian or radical Islamist political options.”

U.S. Consul General Jacob Walles stressed that there would be no direct funding to political parties. Among the contractors to receive funds to execute the program were the Washington-based National Democratic Institute and International Republican Institute; the Palestinian organization Arab Thought Forum said that it was approached by the U.S. but turned down funding because it would have required excluding anyone affiliated with Hamas from democratization projects.

As the U.S. stepped up efforts to buttress Abbas, Hamas made additional gestures aimed at reviving the national unity talks and precluding early elections: On 10/12, Hamas leader Mishal called for the formation of a Palestinian state on the territories occupied by Israel in 1967, marking Hamas’s clearest recognition of Israel to date. In an open letter to the New York Times, Haniyeh adviser Ahmad Yousef called (11/1) on Israel to join a 10-year truce (budna) and immediately open final status talks.

Abbas and Haniyeh resumed (11/6) near daily talks on a new proposal for national unity government in which Hamas and Fatah would each appoint several professionals and technocrats “aligned but not directly affiliated” with their movements as ministers to the cabinet; several smaller factions would also be allowed to choose a handful of cabinet ministers; and Hamas would choose a PM acceptable to Fatah. (Haniyeh stated on 11/10 that he would agree to step down as PM as part of a national unity deal if the international community provided guarantees that full aid to the Palestinians and PA would be restored.) The Abbas-Haniyeh talks continued through the end of the quarter, but no agreement was reached on a final allocation of cabinet portfolios, with both men demanding the Finance and Interior Mins. (i.e., control of money and the security forces). Abbas also briefed (11/14, 11/15) U.S. Asst. Secy. of State David Welch, King Abdallah of Jordan, Pres. Husni Mubarak of Egypt, and Quartet reps. on the talks, urging their backing for a professional/technocratic government.

Meanwhile, Olmert made (11/12-16) a low-key trip to the U.S. where he met with Pres. Bush on 11/13. Talks focused mainly on Iran, though Olmert agreed to consider allowing some VAT taxes to be transferred to humanitarian aid programs for the Palestinians as a good-will gesture to strengthen Palestinian support for Abbas.

**Operation Autumn Clouds**

On the ground, **Operation Summer Rains** in Gaza continued through 10/06 before giving way to 11/06’s **Operation Autumn Clouds**. Summer Rains’ major operations included assaults on n. Gaza (10/1-3; bulldozing at least 20 d. of agricultural land and demolishing several homes and a factory), Abasan near Khan Yunis (10/12-14; killing 6 Palestinians, wounding 8, and bulldozing 120 d.), and along the Rafah border (ca. 10/18–21; demolishing at least 13 Palestinian homes). Cross-border firing increased (beginning 10/9, killing 2 Palestinians, wounding at least 6 Palestinians), and air strikes on Palestinian homes were stepped up (beginning 10/11; see Chronology for details). After Palestinian rocket fire injured (10/13) 3 Israelis in Sederot, Israeli DM Peretz authorized (10/14) an escalation in IDF border operations in Gaza, resulting in the reoccupation of a section of Gaza’s Rafah border between Kerem Shalom and the Rafah crossing, the dispatch of tanks and troops into n. Gaza, an increase in the shelling of n. Gaza, rounding up Palestinians for questioning, and fire exchange with Palestinian gunmen (see Chronology). The IDF also assassinated 1 Abu Rish Brigades member (10/4), 1 AMB member (10/17), 1 Islamic Jihad member (10/4), and 1 senior Popular Resistance Committees (PRC) member (10/23); made a failed assassination attempt on 3 AMB members (10/3), a Fatah Mujahiddin Brigades member (10/13), and a Hamas commander (10/12); and fatally
shot (10/30) an AMB member in n. Gaza in what may have been an assassination. In the West Bank, the IDF made raids on the offices of Change and Reform PC members in Ramallah (10/17) and fatally shot (10/11) a wanted Palestinian in Nablus in what may have been an assassination.

The 10/12 IDF assassination attempt on the Hamas commander prompted Hamas to fire (10/12) rockets into Israel for the first time in over a month, causing damage to a power line but no injuries. Over the next 2 weeks, Palestinian rocket fire increased from an average of 1 rocket/day to 6–7/day, with 4 Israelis lightly injured during the period. In response, the IDF launched a major raid into Gaza on 11/1, dubbed Operation Autumn Clouds, which superseded Operation Summer Rains. Hundreds of infantry soldiers, tanks, and helicopters were sent into Bayt Hanun, imposing a curfew on the town and sealing it, rounding up men ages 16–45 for questioning, clashing with Palestinians, dramatically escalating air strikes (from around 40/week to nearly 240/week), and occupying Palestinian homes as operational bases and sniper posts. Operations expanded to Bayt Lahiya and Jabaliya refugee camp (r.c.) on 11/3 and to Gaza City on 11/4. Elsewhere in Gaza, the IDF also assassinated 9 Hamas members (4 on 11/3, 3 on 11/4, 2 on 11/8) and an AMB member (11/7) and killed another 2 Hamas members (2 on 11/4) in what may have been an assassination. In response, the rate of Palestinian rocket fire doubled through the end of the quarter, injuring another 8 Israelis, and a female Palestinian suicide bomber detonated (11/6) a device nr. IDF troops in Bayt Hanun, lightly wounding 2 IDF soldiers. On 11/6, the IDF began withdrawing troops from Bayt Hanun but escalated its shelling of n. Gaza, killing 19 Palestinian civilians and wounding 60–80 in an errant strike on a residential neighborhood of Bayt Hanun on 11/8. The IDF pulled its last troops back from n. Gaza population centers into the new border area between the Strip and Israel late in the evening of 11/8, officially ending Operation Autumn Clouds. During the week-long expedition, the IDF killed at least 82 Palestinians (including 2 medics, 2 PA security officers, and 50 civilians, including 10 women and 16 children), wounded at least 262 (including at least 58 women and 67 children), and caused an estimated $23 m. in damages. These included bulldozing at least 250 d. of land, demolishing 16–30 homes and the 12th century al-Nasir Mosque in Bayt Hanun, and severely damaging at least 120 homes, 3 mosques, several schools, and a hospital. An IDF soldier was killed, and 3 were wounded. Meanwhile, the IDF also assassinated 4 AMB members near Jenin on 11/7.

Israeli attacks slowed after Operation Autumn Clouds, although occasional IDF artillery and air strikes on Gaza border areas and Gaza City continued (see Chronology). Palestinians also kept up rocket fire, killing 1 Israeli on 11/15, marking the first fatality in a rocket strike since 7/05 and the 7th fatality since rocket strikes began in 1/02. At the close of the quarter, intra-Palestinian violence also had risen significantly (see intra-Palestinian section below), most dramatically with an assassination attempt against Haniyeh in a shooting by suspected Fatah gunmen in Gaza on 10/20 that caused no injuries.

**Intifada Data and Trends**

During the quarter, at least 236 Palestinians and 3 Israelis were killed (compared to 314 Palestinians and 6 Israelis last quarter), bringing the toll to 11/15 to at least 4,936 Palestinians (including 46 Israeli Arabs and 17 unidentified Arab cross-border infiltrators), 1,026 Israelis (including 317 IDF soldiers and security personnel, 208 settlers, 501 civilians), and 59 foreign nationals (including 2 British suicide bombers) since the start of the al-Aqsa intifada on 9/28/00.

The IDF continued to impose severe restrictions on Palestinian movement this quarter. In Gaza, Rafah (closed since 8/11) and Erez (closed since 3/12), the main crossings for individuals, remained almost completely closed, with Rafah partially open for only 14 of 91 days, and Qarni open only for select VIPs and medical cases. Qarni, the main industrial transport point, was reopened on 9/3 and stayed open through most of the quarter for limited imports and very restricted exports. The Kerem Shalom and Sufa crossings (the latter the sole import point for construction materials) were partially opened for import of humanitarian goods and food, with construction imports limited to what was needed to rebuild the Gaza electricity plant, destroyed by the IDF on 6/28. As of 11/1, however, Qarni, Kerem Shalom, and Sufi crossings were allowed to resume more regular schedules, though the IDF still inhibited the transportation process by subjecting haulers to detailed security checks. Palestinian fishermen continued to be barred (since 6/25) from sailing, and Palestinians in the Strip were still receiving only
6–8 hrs./day of electricity and 2–3 hrs./day of running water due to damage inflicted at the start of Operation Summer Rains. The Nahal Oz pipeline, however, was open for regular imports of fuel as of mid-9/06. In the West Bank, IDF restrictions on movement continued to increase, reaching their highest level in 2006 according to the UN (up 40% between 8/05 and 9/06, from 376 checkpoints and physical barriers to 528). The IDF continued to bar all Palestinian males from Jenin, Nablus, and Tulkarm between the ages of 16 and 30 (some 106,000 men) from traveling south of Nablus without special permission. By 10/11, the Jordan Valley was entirely off limits to nonresident Palestinians, except for those with permits to work in Jewish settlements there. Overall, on 11/15, the first anniversary of the U.S.-brokered Rafah arrangements guaranteeing Palestinians movement into and out of Gaza, the UN reported that “access to either the West Bank or the outside world remains extremely limited and the flow of commercial trade is negligible” (see Doc. A5), noting that humanitarian conditions had declined significantly in Gaza and that movement within the West Bank also was more restricted.

This quarter, at least 30 deaths were clear assassination attempts (up from 16 last quarter) that also killed 6 bystanders and wounded 53. Those assassinated this quarter were the AMB’s Rashid Zakarna (9/7), Nabil Hanani (9/18), Bassam Bin Hamad (9/30), Hussam Ghayad (9/30), ‘Adil Abu al-Rish (10/17), Tahir ‘Abahra (11/7), Salim Abu al-Hayja (11/7), Mahmud Abu Hasan (11/7), and ‘Ala’ Khamaysa (11/7), plus 2 unidentified members on 8/24 and 11/7; the Abu Rish Brigades (ARB’s Omar al-Zaquq (10/4); Fatah’s Raja’i al-Laban (10/13); Islamic Jihad’s Ula’a Shanayta (8/17), Khalid Shanayta (8/17), Hussam Jaradat (wounded on 8/25, died on 8/30), Mujahid al-Sabi’ (9/6), and Yasir al-Banna (10/4); Hamas’s Ahmad Arqan (9/5), Ahmad Ashur (9/5), A’id al-Bashiti (9/5), Ali Nashar (9/5), Muhammad Farhat (11/3), Tamir Hllis (11/3), Imad Mushtaha (11/3), Ahmad Abu Humayd (11/3), Luay al-Brunu (11/4), Ahmad Awad (11/8), and Razmi Shuhaybír (11/8); and the PRC’s Atta al-Shinbari (10/23). The IDF also carried out attempted assassinations on an Islamic Jihad member on 9/11, 3 AMB members on 10/2, and a Hamas member on 10/12; 3 bystanders were killed and 17 wounded in these attempts. Incidents on 8/29, 8/31, 9/21, 10/11, 10/30, and 11/4 may have been assassination attempts targeting 4 AMB members, 2 Hamas members, 1 PRC member, and 2 other wanted Palestinians.

There was one Palestinian suicide bombing this quarter (11/6) by a woman affiliated with Hamas that wounded 2 IDF soldiers in Bayt Hanun. (There were no suicide bombings last quarter.) On 8/19, a DFLP member fired on an IDF patrol outside Nablus, killing 1 IDF soldier before being shot dead; the incident could be considered a suicide attack in that it was almost certain the gunman would die.

Palestinian use of mortars and rockets overall was lower this quarter, averaging around 15/week until mid-10/06, when incidents rose to around 23/week and then spiked to more than 70/week from 11/1 to 11/15, after Israel launched Operation Autumn Clouds (see Chronology for details). Israeli artillery and air strikes on Gaza were heavy in late 8/06, dropped to an average of 60/week in early 9/06, spiked to 330 the week of 9/13–19 as the IDF intensified border operations in Gaza, dropped to 42/week in 10/06, and spiked again to 239 the week of 11/1–7, during Operation Autumn Clouds; on 11/8, the IDF suspended artillery strikes on Gaza, pending an investigation into the errant strike on a residential area of Bayt Hanun that killed 19 Palestinian civilians and wounded as many as 80. (The IDF was already ending the Autumn Clouds ground operation when the strike occurred.) The Israeli Foreign Min. reported (11/21) that in the 14 months between the disengagement and 11/15, Palestinians fired 1,201 rockets into Israel. The UN put (11/9) the figure at 1,700, noting that the IDF fired about 15,000 artillery shells and made more than 550 air strikes during the same period; the UN estimated that 41 Israelis had been injured and at least 525 Palestinians killed and 1,527 wounded in the exchanges since Israel’s 9/05 pullout.

The number of Palestinian house demolitions continued to be high this quarter, especially in Gaza, where at least 49 were destroyed in the northern district, 43 in the southern district, and 1 in the central district. At least half the house demolitions in Gaza were done by Israeli air strikes targeting the homes of members of the Palestinian resistance (most often from the AMB, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad). In these cases, the IDF phoned residents in advance to warn them to evacuate—a new policy first adopted by the IDF in Lebanon last quarter (see Quarterly Update in JPS 141). In the West Bank,
at least 4 houses were bulldozed in Nablus and 2 in Bethlehem.

Jewish settler violence against Palestinians was up significantly this quarter. Incidents included settlers occupying or raiding Palestinian homes, stores, and religious sites (8/27, 9/9, 9/15), bulldozing land for expansion of settlements or creation of new settler-only bypass roads (9/7, 10/18, 11/14), preventing farmers from collecting the olive harvest and/or stealing their olives (10/8, 10/12, 10/13, 10/24, 10/25, 10/28, 10/29, 11/11, 11/12, 11/13), beating or otherwise attacking Palestinians (8/25, 9/14, 9/15, 9/19, 10/17, 10/18, 10/19, 10/24, 10/25), vandalizing property (9/14, 9/15, 10/11, 10/12, 10/13, 10/22, 10/27, 10/28, 11/13), and setting fire to groves (9/2, 10/10). Settlers also injured 3 Palestinians in 2 deliberate hit-and-run incidents (2 on 8/21, 9/10) and opened fire on children (8/26), wounding a 12-year-old boy. Of 35 reported incidents (up from 26 last quarter), most continued to occur in Hebron (24), with a handful of incidents in Nablus (5), Qalqilya (5), and Ramallah (1).

A study by the Ramallah-based Near East Consulting reported (10/10) that the overall percentage of Palestinians living below the poverty line increased from 50% in 3/06 to 67% as of 10/06; cases of “extreme poverty” increased from 21% to 34% during the same period. An estimated 72% of refugees and 63% of nonrefugees were currently living below the poverty line. By region, 57% of West Bankers (31% in poverty, 26% in extreme poverty [up from 22% in 3/06]) and 76% of Gazans (34% in poverty, 42% in extreme poverty [up from 21% in 3/06]) were currently living below the poverty line. By place of residence, poverty among city dwellers had risen from 44% to 60% during the period 3–10/06; village dwellers from 60% to 71%, and camp dwellers from 64% to 86%; in each category, around half of those living below the poverty line were living in extreme poverty. By faction, poverty among Hamas members had risen from 56% to 66% (extreme poverty from 25% to 33%) during the period; among Fatah members the rate had risen from 38% to 71% (extreme poverty from 13% to 39%). Fatah members were the most affected by the cut-offs in international budget support for the PA since they were the highest percentage of PA employees.

Visa and Permit Restrictions

On 9/6, U.S. consulate official Muhammad Husseini reported that each day up to a dozen U.S. citizens were being barred from entering Israel because of Israel’s new visa restrictions on anyone deemed potentially supportive of the Palestinians (see Quarterly Update in JPS 141). He said that the U.S. was in discussions with Israel about the issue, but it remained unresolved. Israeli officials confirmed (ca. 9/6) that the tightening of restrictions might force 1,000s of Palestinians with dual citizenship to leave the territories, where some 35,000 U.S. citizens of Palestinian descent live. Rice acknowledged (10/12) Israel’s escalating restriction policy, vowing to “continue to do everything in my power . . . to ensure that all American travelers receive fair and equal treatment.” The State Dept. confirmed (10/12) that Rice had asked Israel for an explanation, stating “there is more than a handful of these cases, and it’s something that has got our attention.” By 11/15, the EU and at least 1 Latin American country (not specified) had also formally protested to Israel. As the academic year got underway in Israel at the end of 10/06, new Palestinian students from the occupied territories admitted to Israeli universities found that the IDF has imposed a ban on issuing them entry permits on security grounds. The IDF began reviewing student permits on a case-by-case basis in 2001, after the outbreak of the intifada, and has not granted any new student permits since, but this marked the first time that the IDF had declared a blanket ban without agreeing to review applications. Currently enrolled Palestinian students who obtained their initial permits before 2001, of whom there were 14, were still allowed into Israel.

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem also initiated an apparent new policy when it reopened for the fall term. By 10/19, Israeli Palestinians were required to present a character reference from the police as a condition for entrance to any of its campuses. The university already required such references from Palestinian residents of Jerusalem who are not citizens of Israel.

Separation Wall

This quarter, construction of the West Bank separation wall concentrated on segments west, northwest, and south of Bethlehem; north of Jerusalem, separating Da’hiyat al-Barid and al-Ram from the city; west of Ramallah; northwest of Hebron; and south of Qalqilya, including a new segment expected to isolate at least 4,000 d. and 10 houses between the wall and the Green Line.
The Israeli High Court rejected (9/10) 7 Palestinian petitions regarding the route of the separation wall northwest of East Jerusalem. In confirming the existing plan, it stated that “the purpose of the construction of the wall is to protect the lives of Israeli citizens from terrorist attacks, so its expected benefit is great” and that Palestinian needs had been adequately addressed.

The UN outlined (10/27) the institutional framework for a register of damages incurred by Palestinians to their homes, business, and agricultural holdings as a result of Israel’s construction of the separation wall. Secy.-Gen. Kofi Annan stressed that the purpose of the register would be “to document damages for possible future international adjudication, not to settle claims,” stressing that it “would not be a compensation commission or a claims-resolution facility, nor would it be a judicial or quasi-judicial body.” The UNGA called for the formation of a registry in 2004 after the International Court of Justice ruled construction of the wall illegal under international law. The Register of Damage is to be overseen by a three-member independent board appointed by the secy.-gen. and run by a small secretariat in Vienna.

**Independent Initiative**

The Brussels-based International Crisis Group launched (9/22) a project to jumpstart the peace process (see Doc. A4). The initiative’s 5 components included an international PR campaign mobilizing former presidents, PMs, FMs, DMs, congressional leaders, heads of international organizations to make public statements supporting a comprehensive peace; brainstorming sessions with officials and regional experts to develop policy suggestions for the UN, the Quartet, and relevant regional countries (1st sessions convened on 9/1, 9/13 in New York); a high-level group of former U.S. government officials to engage the U.S. admin. (1st consultations took place on 9/18 in Washington); a task force of international figures to travel to international capitals and build support for proposals drafted in the brainstorming sessions (yet to be formed); and continued production of reports and briefings on regional issues. The first $400,000 of annual funding was provided by the Clinton Global Initiative. The first public statement issued under the ICG effort was issued (10/4) by 135 former presidents, PMs, and Nobel Peace Price laureates from the U.S., Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, calling for a concerted effort to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict (see Doc. A3).

**INTRA-PALESTINIAN DYNAMICS**

Intra-Palestinian political violence in Gaza escalated sharply this quarter, becoming a near daily event and leaving at least 30 Palestinians dead (see Chronology for details), for the first time seriously raising the specter of civil war. Most incidents involved clashes between Fatah and Hamas, including between members of the Fatah-dominated PA security forces (especially the Preventive Security Force [PSF]) and the Hamas-dominated ESF controlled by the PA Interior Min. While many incidents were localized territorial skirmishes meant to demonstrate one group’s security control over a particular neighborhood or area, or to settle personal scores, some incidents were a clear effort by Fatah to destabilize Haniyeh’s Hamas-led government.

In late 8/06, even as national unity talks got underway, Fatah cadres (including members of the PA security forces and the AMB) coordinated protests (see Chronology) blaming Haniyeh’s government for failure to pay back salaries owed PA civil servants in an effort to shift public opinion against Hamas and undermine the government. The campaign ignored that the U.S.-Israeli boycott was to blame for the lack of PA funds available to make the payments, that Haniyeh had ordered members of his government to go without pay until civil servants received their salaries (see Quarterly Update in JPS 140), and that the PA had made partial payments of back salaries a priority as funds came in (see Quarterly Update in JPS 141). (On 8/18 and 9/28, using donations from Arab states sent through accounts controlled by Abbas’s office, the PA made additional partial payments of $260 and $350 respectively to each PA employee. With these transfers, civil servants with salaries under $330/mo. had received the equivalent of around 4 mo.’s pay since 3/06; those with salaries of $330–$550/mo. had received around 2 mo.’s pay; and those with salaries over $550/mo. had received around 1.5 mo.’s pay.) Fatah protests included a series of localized civil servants strikes and marches protesting the salary issue (e.g., Gaza City municipal workers 8/23, government workers in Ramallah 8/28, PA-salaried hospital workers in Nablus 8/28, the children of civil servants
in Gaza City on 8/30) and large demonstrations by Fatah-affiliated security forces (e.g., 8/19, 9/28, 9/30). Hamas supporters held one major counterdemonstration on 9/29.

Abbas actively encouraged Fatah members to participate in such actions while national unity talks were underway: When some 3,000 Fatah-affiliated civil servants rallied in Ramallah on 8/30, denouncing Haniyeh’s government for nonpayment of salaries and announcing plans by the Fatah-aligned PA Government Employees Union (GEU; comprising some 80,000 members, about half of all public workers, including 25,000 healthcare workers and 37,000 teachers) to escalate protests by observing an open-ended strike beginning 9/2, Abbas addressed the crowd and endorsed their plans. Separately, Fatah leader Qaddura Faris acknowledged (9/2) that Fatah’s “young guard” reformists were behind the strikes in hopes of pressuring Haniyeh’s government to resign. As soon as the GEU strike began on 9/2 (it continued through 11/15), Fatah legislators stopped (9/18) attending PC sessions, leaving the PC unable to meet through the end of the quarter. In the West Bank, Fatah gunmen enforced the strike by keeping children and teachers away from schools and preventing stores from opening, in one instance (10/2) fatally shooting a restaurant owner and in another (9/4) shooting and wounding a 12-yr.-old boy.

The Fatah-Hamas violence peaked on 10/1–2, when some 3,000 PSF officers demonstrating in Gaza City attacked ESF members, sparking clashes that left 8 Palestinians (3 bystanders, 2 Force 17 officers, 1 PSF officer, 1 ESF member, 1 Fatah member) dead and around 61 wounded. Clashes quickly spread across the Strip and to Bethlehem, Hebron, Nablus, Ramallah, and Salit, with Fatah and AMB members attempting to assassinate PA Dep. PM Sha’ir (wounding his 2 bodyguards), kidnapping and quickly releasing a Hamas-affiliated Finance Min. official, partially burning the empty PC building in Ramallah, occupying the PA Education Min., forcing the closure of several other ministries, and vandalizing the offices of Hamas-affiliated PC members and numerous Hamas-affiliated schools and businesses. ESF members traded gunfire with PSF protesters and fired grenades and antitank rockets. In total, 11 Palestinians were killed and dozens wounded over the 2 days.

Serious incidents continued in the following days that were attributed to Hamas-Fatah rivalries. In addition to the 10/20 assassination attempt on Haniyeh in which suspected Fatah gunmen fired on Haniyeh’s 10-car convoy in Gaza City, setting fire to 1 PA security vehicle but causing no injuries, these included the fatal shooting of a PA General Intelligence officer in Gaza (10/12), the retaliatory assassination of a local Hamas leader in Bayt Lahiya (10/12), the attempted assassination of a local Hamas official in Qalqiliya (10/4), gunfire on a car carrying Hamas-affiliated PC members in Gaza City (10/4), and the assassination of a senior AMB member in al-Bureij r.c. (10/22). Gun battles were also reported in Bayt Lahiya (10/7, 10/13, 10/16), Bayt Hanun (10/20), al-Bureij r.c. (10/22), and Rafah (10/23). The escalating incidents prompted Abbas to revive (10/28) appeals to Israel to allow members of the PLO’s Jordan-based Badr Brigade to enter Gaza to augment his presidential guard; Israel agreed to consider the request.

Intra-Palestinian violence was not restricted to Hamas-Fatah disputes. For instance, rival Fatah factions exchanged (8/20) fire in Gaza’s al-Maghazi r.c., killing 1 bystander. Several days later, unidentified gunmen wounded (8/26) a local Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) leader in Gaza’s Jabaliya r.c., where a roadside bomb was detonated outside the home of a PFLP commander on 11/9, seriously injuring a bodyguard. Among the most serious crime-related incidents, unidentified gunmen fatally shot (9/15) senior PA intelligence official Brig. Gen. Jad Tayih (the intelligence services’ international coordination chief) and his 4 bodyguards yards from PM Haniyeh’s residence, seizing their weapons and a briefcase suspected to contain thousands of dollars.

A previously unknown group calling itself the Holy Jihad Brigade declared (8/23) responsibility for the 8/14 kidnapping of 2 Fox News journalists in Gaza City, demanding that the U.S. release all Muslims from its jails within 72 hrs.; this was the first time that a Palestinian militant group made demands of a foreign country other than Israel (which was not mentioned in the statement). The PA brokered the journalists’ release unharmed on 8/27, declaring that the Holy Jihad Brigades gained nothing in exchange and stating that the group was a collection of young men acting on “private beliefs.” Palestinians in Gaza City suspected
that the kidnappings were the work of the Daghmash clan (believed to have ties with criminal enterprises and both Hamas and the PRCs) in a muscle-flexing bid by Mumtaz Daghmash to secure control of Jamal Abu Samhadana’s PRC faction after his assassination by Israel on 6/8 (see Quarterly Update in JPS 141).

Similarly, a previously unknown group called Ansar al-Sunna (the same name as a group that operates in Iraq, though there is no known connection) kidnapped (10/11) in Nablus an American English teacher working for a pro-Palestinian charity, demanding the immediate release of Palestinian women and children held in Israeli prisons and saying that it aimed to confront the U.S. war on Islam. The teacher was released unharmed and unconditionally several hours later, after local officials intervened. In addition, unidentified Palestinians kidnapped and quickly released unharmed a Spanish Associated Press photographer in Gaza City (10/24) and a Spanish aid worker in Khan Yunis (10/30).

Also of note: Palestinian Muslims attacked (9/16, 9/17) 7 West Bank churches (4 in Nablus, 1 in Gaza City, 1 in Tubas, 1 in Tulkarm) with fire bombs and gunfire to protest a statement by Pope Benedict on 9/12 referencing in a supportive manner a 14th century Byzantine text stating that Muhammad had brought things “only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached.” (The Vatican issued a series of statements in mid-9/06 saying that the pope “regrets that certain passages of his address could have sounded offensive.”) The acts were condemned by the PA and Palestinian Muslim community: PM Haniyeh denounced (9/17) the attacks “against our Christian brothers” as “totally unacceptable.” The Muslim mayor of Tubas immediately (9/16) led a delegation of local Muslims and other community leaders to meet with the officials of the local damaged church to denounce the attack and express solidarity. PC members and 100s of Palestinian Muslims rallied (9/17) in Nablus to express solidarity with the churches and to denounce the attacks. More than 30 Palestinian Christian dignitaries, including Christian PC members, met (9/23) with the newly appointed mufti of Jerusalem, Shaykh Muhammad Hussein, to hold talks on Muslim-Christian understanding and to express thanks for the mufti’s strong denunciation of the 9/16–17 attacks.

PALESTINIAN OPINION

The following data are excerpted from a poll conducted by the Palestine Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR) from 14 to 16 September 2006. Results are based on a survey of 1,270 men and women from the West Bank and Gaza. The poll, the 21st in a series, was taken from the PSR’s Web site at www.pcpsr.org.

1. For international assistance to continue, the donor community demands that Hamas must recognize the State of Israel. Do you think Hamas should accept this demand and recognize Israel?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>West Bank</th>
<th>Gaza</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Certainly yes</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Yes</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. No</td>
<td>43.1%</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Certainly no</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. No answer/ Don’t know</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Five to ten years from now, how do you see relations between Palestinians and Israelis?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>West Bank</th>
<th>Gaza</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. As they are now</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. More peace and cooperation</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Less peace and cooperation</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Conflict and violence</td>
<td>55.9%</td>
<td>57.0%</td>
<td>54.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Other</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. No answer/ Don’t know</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. If Israel agrees to conduct peace negotiations with a Hamas-led PA, do you think the Hamas-led PA should or should not negotiate with Israel?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>West Bank</th>
<th>Gaza</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Certainly it should</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. It should</td>
<td>42.6%</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. It should not</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Certainly it should not</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. No answer/ Don’t know</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. With regard to relations with Israel, what do you think the goal of Hamas is?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>West Bank</th>
<th>Gaza</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Reach a permanent peace with Israel after the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with East Jerusalem as its capital</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Reach a long-term hudna (truce) after the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with East Jerusalem as its capital</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
<td>56.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. The continuation of conflict and armed confrontations with Israel</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. No answer/Don’t know</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FRONTLINE STATES

JORDAN

This quarter was marked by quiet diplomatic activity by the Jordanian government as it sought to weigh in on regional developments that risked unleashing significant popular backlash at home. To this end, Jordan reportedly was involved behind the scenes in efforts to calm intra-Palestinian violence in Gaza, ease Israeli restrictions on Palestinian movement, and revive Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, most notably by hosting secret contacts between Israel and the Gulf states in advance of Rice’s regional tour (see above). In an interview with *Time* magazine, King Abdallah of Jordan warned (9/12) that unless serious progress was made by 2007 toward setting up a viable independent Palestinian state, there could be another decade of violence in the region.

Jordan also felt some effects of last quarter’s Lebanon war: At the Roman amphitheater in Amman, a Jordanian gunman avenging the IDF killing of his 2 brothers during the 1982 Lebanon war fatally shot (9/4) 1 British tourist and wounded a Jordanian policeman and 6 other tourists (2 British, 2 Australian, 1 Dutch, 1 New Zealander) before being subdued.

LEBANON

As the quarter opened, the delicate truce between Israel and Hizballah imposed by UN Res. 1701 on 8/14, ending 34 days of war (see Quarterly Update in JPS 141), was holding as the international community worked to help the sides translate the cessation of hostilities into a permanent cease-fire. The first step was to flesh out how the parties—including Israel, the Lebanese government, Hizballah, and the UN—interpreted the resolution’s requirements. (For the text of the res., see Doc. A2 in *JPS* 141.)

**Implementation of UN Res. 1701**

**Disarming Hizballah**

Two clauses in Res. 1701 arguably called for the disarming of Hizballah, particularly in s. Lebanon: article 8, which called for “the establishment between the Blue Line and the Litani River of an area free of any armed personnel, assets, and weapons other than those of the Government of Lebanon and of UNIFIL [the UN Interim force in Lebanon] . . . deployed in this area”; and article 2, of greater importance but more vaguely worded, which stated that there should be “no weapons [in Lebanon] without the consent of the Government of Lebanon.” On 8/16, the Lebanese government and Hizballah reportedly reached an unwritten understanding that this meant that only the Lebanese army would be allowed to carry weapons s. of the Litani but that Hizballah was allowed to maintain weapons stores. The army would not search out weapons caches or Hizballah’s core cadres but would confiscate any weapons that happened to come into its view.

Israel, which interpreted the res. as requiring the Lebanese government and/or UNIFIL to disarm Hizballah and remove it entirely from s. Lebanon, by force if necessary, called (8/16) on Secy.-Gen. Annan to guarantee Hizballah’s complete, permanent disarmament. Annan did not respond, but the U.S. stated (8/16) that it was up to the Lebanese, not the international community, to disarm the movement. Israeli FM Livni...
15,000 Lebanese troops had been deployed 1,000 along the coast. By the end of 9/06, 2,000 troops along the border with Syria and began (8/17) deploying s. of the Litani, placing with diplomatic ties, Qatar with trade ties). tries having relations with Israel (e.g., Jordan of flights into Lebanon by carriers of coun-
tries or exercise its sovereignty.

At the same time, Olmert suggested (8/30) that the Israeli-Hizballah truce could be “a cornerstone to build a new reality between Israel and Lebanon,” hinting at the possibility of talks. But Lebanese PM Fuad Siniora declared (8/30) that Lebanon would be the last Arab country to conclude a peace agreement with Israel and that direct contacts would not be permitted until then, stating, “we are not seeking any agreement until there is just and comprehensive peace based on the Arab initiative;” referring to the 2002 Arab League initiative that calls for Israel to return to the 1967 borders, the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, and a solution to the Palestinian refugee problem in exchange for full peace and normalization of Arab relations with Israel. In his speech to the UNGA opening session, Olmert repeated (10/16) his invitation to Siniora to open peace talks, but Siniora rebuffed (10/16) him again.

Isreali Withdrawal and UNIFIL Expansion

In keeping with Res. 1701’s call for an immediate IDF withdrawal in parallel with the deployment of Lebanese and UN forces in the south, Israeli forces began withdrawing from Lebanon in significant numbers on 8/17, pulling out all reservists by 8/21 and turning over control of vacated areas to UNIFIL. (Israel never officially confirmed the number of troops it had inside Lebanon, but estimates, even from off-the-record IDF sources, went as high as 30,000 at the peak.) Israel also quickly granted (8/18) safe passage to fuel tankers, allowing the first fuel supplies to enter Lebanese ports since the conflict began and ending the fuel crisis, but maintaining a general naval blockade. Similarly, Israel allowed the first flight into Beirut airport on 8/17 but continued to impose air restrictions, allowing only a handful of flights into Lebanon by carriers of countries having relations with Israel (e.g., Jordan with diplomatic ties, Qatar with trade ties).

Simultaneously, the Lebanese army began (8/17) deploying s. of the Litani, placing 2,000 troops along the border with Syria and 1,000 along the coast. By the end of 9/06, 15,000 Lebanese troops had been deployed in s. Lebanon as promised, while additional special forces were sent to the Syrian border. Siniora confirmed (8/29) that troops had confiscated the Hizballah weapons (including heavy weapons) that they had come across.

On 9/6, Israel announced that it would lift its air and naval blockade as of 6:00 PM, local time on 9/7 under a deal brokered by Annan. Under the arrangement, British, French, Greek, and Italian ships already off the coast were to take over naval patrols until a large German contingent could deploy to the area within 2 weeks. (In a face-saving gesture for Lebanon, Israel agreed, after receiving UN assurances, to announce the lifting of the blockade before Lebanon formally requested German assistance in patrolling the coast.) Meanwhile, German border and customs officials already in Beirut would assist Lebanese officials with security at Beirut airport. Israel lifted the air blockade as agreed but continued to patrol the coast after the deadline passed, stating that too few international vessels were in place to enforce an arms embargo and vowing to continue surveillance overflights of Lebanon indefinitely. Under strong pressure from the UN, Israel withdrew its navy on 9/8.

The IDF withdrawal was supposed to take place at the same time as an expanded UNIFIL force of up to 15,000 troops deployed with the Lebanese army in the south. Deployment of the UN force was delayed, however, as Res. 1701’s clauses on the make-up and mandate of the contingent were debated. While some 49 nations had expressed interest in joining an expanded UNIFIL before passage of the res., the majority initially held back approving troops on the grounds that the res. and its follow-up documents presented by the UN on 8/18 did not set out the contingent’s mandate in enough detail, thus scuttling UN hopes of deploying a “spearhead force” of several thousand troops within 10 days. The UN wanted the core force to comprise European units, which were better trained and equipped to execute a mandate that allowed for use of force to maintain the peace and required credible deterrence to help maintain border security. But these were precisely the countries (e.g., France, Germany, Italy, Spain) that wanted further assurances before committing troops, fearing a Bosnia-like scenario in which a vague mandate precluded troops from taking decisive action against warring factions, leaving them unable adequately to protect civilians or themselves. The
countries that did step forward (e.g., Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal) were small, comparatively ill prepared for heavy duty, and sometimes objectionable to Israel, which did not want Muslim countries without diplomatic ties to Israel to participate.

By 8/21, diplomats involved in ongoing discussions at the UN had downgraded their expectations for the expanded force, believing it would be possible to build up only 6,000–7,000 troops and not the 15,000 desired. Separately, UN envoy Terje Larsen, on a tour to the region, warned (8/22) that it could take months for an expanded UNIFIL to reach full operational capability. Threatening to draw out implementation further, Syria stated (8/22) that it would not accept foreign troops stationed on its border without prior coordination, threatening to seal its border with Lebanon (which would severely hamper the Lebanese economy) if international forces were deployed unilaterally.

After further debate (ca. 8/21–22), the UN and prospective participant nations agreed on a confidential “concept of operations” document for the mission that reportedly envisioned a UNIFIL force comprising mechanized infantry, reconnaissance, and engineering battalions as well as military police companies: troops would have tanks, heavy artillery, short-range anti-aircraft missiles, radar, and helicopters with night vision for observation and search-and-rescue operations. UNIFIL troops would be authorized to monitor, investigate, and report on truce violations; assist the Lebanese in securing borders and ports; conduct mobile, long-range patrols; escort aid shipments; and use force to prevent an area from being used for hostile activities, to resist efforts to prevent them from carrying out their mandate, in self-defense when under attack, and in “preemptive self-defense” when an attack is clearly imminent. UNIFIL would also report directly to a military command in New York, rather than to a political rep. of the secy-gen. on the ground in Lebanon.

With the concept of operations document in place, the European states agreed on 8/25 in meetings with Annan in Brussels to contribute the bulk (5,600–6,900) of troops to expand UNIFIL, with Italy committing 3,000 units; France 2,000; Spain 1,100; and Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, and Hungary promising small contingents. Annan said he would consider offers from Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Malaysia for the remainder of the force, despite Israeli protests, saying that in light of the “struggle” to get troop commitments, “we will take the best peacekeepers where we can find them.” Israel quickly moderated its position, accepting Indonesia’s 9/1 offer of 1,000 troops, stating that some Muslim countries were more acceptable than others.

In light of the UNIFIL expansion difficulties, Israel announced (9/8) that it would complete its withdrawal when UNIFIL forces reached 5,000 instead of 15,000. The first 880 UNIFIL troops arrived from Italy on 9/2 and the force reached 5,000 by 9/19. After several delays, the IDF declared on 10/1 that it had completed its withdrawal from Lebanon, with the UN confirming (10/1) the pullout from all areas except the disputed town of Ghajjar, straddling the Blue Line, where the IDF maintained a presence in the northern half of the town through the end of the quarter, building a new fence around the northern border of the village.

By 8/15, the UNIFIL force had reached 10,480 military personnel, including 8,391 troops, 1,950 maritime task force members, and 139 staff officers. Belgium, Bulgaria, China, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, Nepal, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and Turkey contributed military personnel. The German naval detachment marked Germany’s first deployment in the Middle East since World War II.

While the U.S. urged (e.g., 9/25) UNIFIL to take advantage of the “very robust” mandate given it under Res. 1701, UNIFIL participants, highly concerned that it not be viewed by Lebanese as an occupying force, repeatedly stressed (e.g., 9/19, 9/25) their view that Res. 1701 clearly placed Lebanese sovereignty as paramount, meaning that UNIFIL could operate only at the request of and in coordination with the Lebanese government and could not fully execute its mandate unless the Lebanese government were in agreement. As such, UNIFIL stated (9/19) that troops had been unable to set up checkpoints, search cars or buildings, or detain suspects because the Lebanese government had not explicitly asked them to do so. No effort was made this quarter to draft a second UN res. expanding UNIFIL’s mandate, as was anticipated last quarter and was provided for under Res. 1701, article 16.

Truce Violations

Meanwhile, the UN recorded the first violation of the truce on 8/19, when the
IDF staged an overnight helicopter raid on Budai village near Baalbek, dropping 2 Humvees and more than 100 IDF commandos in Lebanese army uniforms under the cover of sonic booms from Israeli war planes. The IDF troops attempted to run a Hizballah checkpoint outside Budai, but Hizballah members engaged them, forcing the unit to retreat, killing 1 IDF soldier and wounding 2; 3 Hizballah members were reportedly killed. In evacuating its team, the IDF made air strikes destroying a recently renovated bridge. While most Lebanese and international analysts believed the aim of the mission was either to assassinate or capture senior Hizballah leader Shaykh Muhammad Yazbek, a Budai resident, or to free the 2 captured IDF soldiers, Israeli analysts believed the purpose was to secure unequivocal evidence that Syria, Iran, or possibly Russia was rearming Hizballah, though no such evidence was produced. Israel indeed claimed that the strike was a defensive action (and therefore permissible under UN Res. 1701) to prevent arms smuggling from Syria to Hizballah and vowed to continue to conduct such raids until “proper monitoring bodies are established on the Lebanese border” Lebanon and the UN denounced the attack, which the UN deemed a truce violation not within permissible defensive action, and Lebanon threatened to halt deployment of the army to the south.

By 8/29, 2 weeks into the truce, Annan reported that UNIFIL had recorded nearly 70 official truce violations by Israel, compared to 4 by Hizballah. (Annan praised Hizballah on 8/29 for “showing incredible discipline.”) Israeli violations included resupplying troops, attacking Hizballah without provocation, conducting daily surveillance overflights, setting up checkpoints, firing into fields, bulldozing houses and other structures, planting Israeli flags on buildings and bluffs, and occasionally detaining Lebanese men for several days, sometimes taking them to Israel for interrogation. (An Israeli spokeswoman responded on 8/29 that there was no cease-fire to violate, noting that “we are at a cessation of hostilities in Lebanon, not a cease-fire.”)

Following a tour (8/25–9/6) of the region, Annan issued (9/13) a report to the UN as required under Res. 1701, stating that Israel and Hizballah had both generally adhered to the 8/14 truce agreement, except for the major IDF raid on 8/19—a significant reversal of his 8/29 statements noting near daily Israeli violations. He also praised the Lebanese army’s significant progress in deploying to the south and called on Lebanon and Syria to open talks immediately on establishing diplomatic relations.

On 9/19, IDF chief of staff Lt. Gen. Dan Halutz acknowledged that Hizballah had fully abided by the cease-fire to date and that Israel had detected no significant resupplying of weapons and missiles from Iran or Syria.

Through the end of the quarter, UNIFIL reported near daily IDF surveillance overflights of Lebanon, including occasional buzzing of its UN posts. Israel vowed to continue the flights until Hizballah was disarmed and its 2 captured soldiers released. The UN also reported several incidents (e.g., 9/11) of the IDF moving into Lebanese territory to erect new security fences as deep as 50 meters n. of the Blue Line.

In the two most serious Israeli truce violations, the German Defense Min. reported (10/24) that 2 Israeli F-16s fired twice and released antimissile flares over a German ship off the Lebanese coast. Israel denied (10/24) the claim, saying that jets were sent when a helicopter took off from a German boat without identifying itself, but as soon as Israel realized the mistake, the jets broke off. On 11/9, French DM Michèle Alliot-Marie announced that French forces in s. Lebanon the previous week had come within seconds of firing on IDF F-16s that repeatedly dived on their positions. The IDF promised (11/9) an investigation.

**Unexploded IDF Ordnance**

By 8/20, most of the estimated 180,000 Lebanese who had taken refuge in Syria during the war and around 400,000 of the estimated 1 m. internally displaced people had returned to their villages. During the first days of the truce Lebanese returning to their homes in s. Lebanon were confronted with a devastating hazard—unexploded IDF ordnance (UXO), particularly live bomblets from 1,000s of IDF cluster munitions, 90% of which (according to the UN on 9/25) Israel fired on fields, farms, and residential areas in the last 72 hours of the war, as cease-fire negotiations neared completion. (On 9/12, the Israeli daily Ha’Aretz quoted an anonymous IDF commander as stating that the IDF “covered entire villages with cluster bombs” and that to compensate for their imprecision, orders were to “flood” target areas with them. The IDF would not comment except to claim that its fire was in self-defense and in keeping with international law.) During the quarter, at least 18 persons were...
killed and an average of 3 persons/day were wounded by UXO. Among the first casualties were 2 Lebanese children killed on 8/17 in Naqura when they picked up a bomblet they thought was a toy. 3 Lebanese soldiers killed on 8/23 when they accidentally detonated an unexploded IDF missile they were trying to disarm, and 1 IDF soldier killed and 3 wounded on 8/23 when they accidentally triggered 1 of the 400,000 landmines left over from Israel's 1978–2000 occupation. As of 9/25, the UN estimated that around 200,000 displaced people would be unable to return to their homes, which had been destroyed, heavily damaged, or rendered too dangerous to inhabit by UXO.

By 8/24, the UN Mine Action Coordination Center reported finding 559 unexploded U.S.-made M-42s (an antipersonnel bomblet used in 105mm artillery shells), 663 unexploded M-77s (a submunition found in M-26 artillery rockets, a cluster device), and 5 unexploded BLU-68s (found in CBU-26 cluster bombs), as well as 608 unexploded M-85s, an Israeli-made submunition. The State Dept. confirmed (8/24) that it was investigating whether Israel had used U.S.-supplied cluster bombs in Lebanon in violation of secret agreements with the U.S. (dating back to the 1970s and reaffirmed in 1988) that require Israel to use them only against organized Arab armies and clearly defined military targets in a defensive capacity. (In 1982, Congress ordered sales of cluster munitions to Israel suspended for 6 years after determining that Israel had used them against Lebanese civilians during its 1982 invasion.) Although the U.S. was delaying a further shipment of M-26s as of late 8/06, anonymous U.S. officials said (8/24) that even if the investigation corroborated UN reports, Israel was unlikely to be sanctioned either under the secret agreements or under the Arms Export Control Act (which requires foreign governments receiving U.S. weapons to use them only in self-defense), noting that the findings of a State Dept. investigation confirming Israel’s misuse of Apache helicopters in assassinations of Palestinians during the al-Aqsa intifada had been quashed “at a more senior level” during Bush’s first term. According to these officials, the investigation was intended only to curb Arab states’ anger with the U.S. over its overt support of Israeli actions. No conclusions were released as of 11/15.

By the end of the quarter, the UN had identified an estimated 2 m.–5 m. unexploded bomblets at 745 sites (a “site” being as small as a single house or as large as an entire village) and had removed 40,000. Chris Clark, program manager for the UN Mine Action Coordination Center, stated (9/25) that the intensity of Israel's cluster bombing was such that "What we've seen are strikes on top of strikes on top of strikes. It's tantamount to shooting a dead body 20 times." According to the Washington Post (9/26), the density of unexploded munitions was higher than that left in Kosovo in 1999 and in Iraq after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion. By 9/28, Israel provided Lebanon with maps of likely areas targeted with cluster munitions to aid in clean-up efforts, but UN officials said (9/28) that the maps were so general as to be useless.

Human Rights Watch confirmed (10/19) that Hizballah had also used cluster munitions (Chinese-made Type-81 122mm rockets carrying 100s of submunitions) against Israel on a number of occasions during the war, killing at least 1 Israeli and wounding 12; the report did not estimate how many cluster munitions Hizballah fired but cites hard proof of 2 instances. Israel claimed to have evidence of 113 Hizballah cluster munitions. By comparison, the organization estimated that Israel fired as many as 4 m. cluster submunitions on Lebanon.

Also of note: Israel confirmed (10/22) reports that it had fired white phosphorus shells on Lebanon. Use of the shells against military targets, but not civilians, is permissible under international law.

Reconstruction

At the opening of the quarter, Hizballah teams were surveying s. Lebanon and s. Beirut to assess the damage and draw up plans for reconstruction, with the aim of clearing the rubble and getting residents back into their homes within a year, at Hizballah's expense, which observers viewed as optimistic. By 8/18, Hizballah was distributing cash payments of up to $12,000 to displaced families. The Lebanese daily al-Safir estimated (8/16) that Hizballah was saving the government as much as $100,000/day in reconstruction costs simply based on Hizballah's volunteering architects, civil engineers, and people to remove rubble (all of them paying their own fuel costs to move around), not including the $150 m.–$180 m. in financial compensation that Hizballah expected to pay out in the initial stages of its rebuilding efforts. By comparison, the Lebanese government was slow to react. By 8/23, it had...
projected reconstruction costs at $3.5 b., which it hoped to cover with international aid donations. Siniora promised (8/31) that the government would compensate families who lost their homes to Israeli attacks with $33,000 (nearly 3 times the amount provided by Hizballah). A government program announced on 10/5 would also pay a one-time compensation of around $10,000 to those wounded during the war, $13,250 to the families of those over age 10 killed, and $6,600 to the families of those age 10 and under killed. As of 10/28, the Lebanese government, which estimated that 70,000 housing units across Lebanon might qualify for compensation, had provided compensation of around $50,000/home to only 627 families in 9 villages (Alman, Berghlie, Be-stat, Dayr Amis, Hmeiry, Janatta, Knisse, Ma-likiyeh, Yanouh), 23 families whose homes were totally demolished, and 624 families whose homes were heavily damaged. The government blamed the delays on the need to set up a transparent, accountable mechanism for distributing the aid.

Sweden, Spain, and Norway jointly hosted (8/31) a donor conference in Stockholm for the reconstruction of Lebanon. Some 60 governments and international organizations pledged more than $940 m. (exceeding the hosts' target of $500 m.). Though details of the pledged amounts were not released, the hosts said the money would be used for housing, clearing mines and unexploded ordnance, infrastructure, water and sanitation, health, education, environmental clean-up, short-term job creation, revival of agricultural and industrial production, and emergency assistance to Palestinian refugee camps. The pledges brought to $1.2 b. the amount promised by the international community. Pledges for specific projects included $64 m. from the UN (8/17) and $200,000 from OPEC, plus technical assistance from several Mediterranean countries, Kuwait, and Norway to clean up the 87-mi-long Jiye oil spill (see Quarterly Update in JPS 141); and unspecified sums from Qatar (8/20) to rebuild Bint Jubayl and from the UAE (8/20) to rebuild schools, hospitals, and clinics in s. Lebanon and to help remove landmines. The U.S. “promised to earmark” (8/21) $230 m. in aid for Lebanon (including 25,000 tons of wheat as well as money to rebuild the key Fidar Bridge on Lebanon’s coastal highway, repair roads, assist Lebanese who lost their homes), but the House International Relations Comm. put (9/13) tens of millions of the amount on hold, saying that the Lebanese government was not adhering to the “spirit of relevant [UN] resolutions” and that the money would be released only after an international force began patrolling the border with Syria.

By 11/15, the Lebanese Finance Min. and Higher Relief Commission (an interministerial body) had received donations of around $106.5 m. The largest payments include those from Saudi Arabia ($50 m.), the Iraqi Development Fund ($35 m.), Kuwait ($15 m.), the Islamic Development Bank ($1.3 m.), Union Tunisienne de Solidarité Sociale ($829,735), the Republic of Korea ($500,000), and the Czech Republic ($223,604). In addition, 95 out of 251 Lebanese towns and villages that sustained heavy damage during the war with Israel had been “adopted” by donors willing to finance their reconstruction (estimated at $640 m.).

Of note: As of 8/22, international aid organizations working in Lebanon that received funding from the U.S. (e.g., International Medical Corps, Mercy Corps) noted significant problems in distributing humanitarian aid due to U.S. restrictions on dealings with Hizballah. The groups argued that some contact with Hizballah was almost unavoidable, since it had been the most organized and effective humanitarian provider since the truce came into effect and was reputed to be the most honest in overseeing aid distribution. The U.S. government reportedly was frustrated over the lack of a viable alternative to Hizballah but nonetheless opposed funneling U.S. aid in a way that could strengthen the movement.

**Investigations**

The new UN Human Rights Commission (UNHRC) appointed (9/1) a committee to investigate whether Israel had committed systematic human rights abuses in Lebanon during the war. The team released its report (see Doc. A2) on 10/2, concluding that Israel had committed “serious violations of both human rights and humanitarian law,” particularly by failing to distinguish between military and civilian targets, using disproportionate force, and failing to “take all feasible precautions to minimize injury to civilians and damage to civilian objects.” Hizballah also “in many instances . . . violated the applicable principles of humanitarian law” by targeting civilians and failing to distinguish between military and civilian targets. The report concluded that Israel did not offer its Palestinian citizens the same protection as it did Jewish citizens as part
of ongoing institutionalized discrimination against Arabs in Israel.

UN investigators also released (9/29) a report on the 7/25 IDF attack on a UNIFIL post in al-Khiyam that killed 4 UN soldiers. They determined that the UNIFIL post was hit by precision-guided missiles, but concluded that it was impossible to assign blame because Israel denied them access to the military commanders who directed the attack.

The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) opened (ca. 10/15) an investigation into claims, first publicly reported in the Independent on 10/28, that Israel may have used uranium-based weapons during the war in Lebanon. Although media reports stated that a British lab had found traces of enriched uranium in soil samples from 2 bombing sites in al-Khiyam and al-Tiri, the final UNEP report released on 11/7 concluded there was no evidence that Israel used munitions containing depleted uranium or other radioactive materials.

In addition, several international organizations conducted their own investigations into the Lebanon war. After a tour of the region, a World Council of Churches delegation issued (8/17) a statement concluding that Israel’s destruction of Lebanon was “deliberate and planned” well in advance, with the intention of aggravating sectarian divisions, and that Hizballah’s 7/12 attack offered Israel the pretext to implement its plans. The delegation was received by Lebanese PM Siniora and Palestinian officials but not by the Israeli government.

Amnesty International released reports (8/25, 9/14) concluding that both Israel and Hizballah had committed war crimes during the month-long conflict. It accused Israel of deliberate, disproportionate, and indiscriminate attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure. It accused Hizballah of indiscriminate rocket attacks and “deliberate attacks on civilians and civilian objects,” but rejected Israel’s assertions that Hizballah deliberately hid among the Lebanese population and therefore was responsible for injuries to Lebanese civilians caused by Israeli attacks.

**Lebanese Internal Politics**

Soon after the halt to fighting, Hizballah leader Shaykh Hasan Nasrallah stated (8/27) that Hizballah had not anticipated even “1 percent” of Israel’s response to its 7/12 cross-border raid, stating that “if I had known that the operation to capture the soldiers would lead to this result, we would not have carried it out.” At the same time, however, he moved quickly to capitalize on the increased public support for Hizballah following the war. At a rally (9/22) in Beirut of some 800,000 supporters marking the first Friday of Ramadan (his first public appearance since the violence began on 7/12), he stated that Hizballah was stronger than before the war, still had some 20,000 rockets, and would disarm only if a strong Lebanese government capable of protecting the country were in place. (On 9/24, 10,000s of supporters of anti-Syrian Lebanese Christian leader Samir Ja’ja’ held a counterdemonstration north of Beirut, denouncing Hizballah’s claims to have scored a victory against Israel.) After 2 national polls suggested that a unity government with a larger Hizballah membership would have the support of about 70% of the population, Nasrallah demanded (10/31) that Siniora agree to form a new unity government giving Hizballah control of 30% of the 24-member cabinet, which would give Hizballah veto power over any major government decision, and vowed to rally large public demonstrations if Siniora balked.

Nasrallah’s actions prompted the U.S. to make several claims (e.g., 10/30, 10/31), without providing intelligence details, that there was increasing evidence that Iran and Syria were planning to overthrow PM Siniora’s government by “trying to engineer the creation of a new ‘unity’ government that they could control, partly through Hizballah.” The U.S. also claimed that Iran and Syria, through Hizballah, planned violent attacks against the government if the unity approach did not work. (Of note: The White House talking points were the same as those of anti-Syrian Lebanese Druze leader Walid Jumblatt, who was then in Washington for consultations and had previously alleged that Syria was resupplying Hizballah.) Israeli Dep. PM Shaul Mofaz made similar accusations during his visit to Washington on 10/24. Nonetheless, some anonymous U.S. officials and UN diplomats stated (see New York Times, Washington Post 11/2) that there were no signs that a violent overthrow of the Lebanese government was planned.

On 11/6, Lebanese political factions reopened a week of national dialogue talks to discuss Hizballah’s demand for a new unity government. When no power-sharing agreement was reached after 4 days of talks (Siniora’s faction would agree only to allow members of Hizballah’s ally, the Free Patriotic Movement led by Christian leader Michel
Aoun, to enter the cabinet but would not give the Hizballah-led coalition enough seats to have automatic veto power), 5 Hizballah and Amal cabinet members resigned (11/11), followed by a 6th independent cabinet member on 11/13. (Eight resignations were needed to collapse the government.)

Meanwhile, the UN investigation into the 2/05 assassination of former PM Rafiq Hariri was progressing. Lead investigator Serge Brammertz released (9/25) an interim report stating that he was close to having enough evidence to bring a case to trial, but he did not identify suspects. (Brammertz praised Syria's cooperation as "an important component of the ongoing work.") Soon after, the UN presented (11/10) Siniora with a proposal to set up an international war crimes tribunal to try the suspects, suggesting that the court might also be given jurisdiction to deal with other bombings targeting anti-Syrian figures. Siniora's cabinet, followed by the full parliament, would have to approve the plan before Annan would present it to the UN Security Council (UNSC) for adoption. The issue of the tribunal, which was opposed by Hizballah and other pro-Syrian factions, intensified the Hizballah-Siniora fight over the national unity government. (Siniora convened (11/13) the reduced Lebanese cabinet, which unanimously approved the plan, Hizballah, its allies, and pro-Syrian Pres. Emile Lahoud denounced (11/12, 11/13) the vote as illegitimate given the cabinet's lack of sectarian balance, formally protesting to Annan on 11/14.

Also of note: Unknown assailants detonated (9/5) 2 roadside bombs in Sidon near the convoy of one of Lebanon's lead investigators in the Hariri case, dep. intelligence head Lt. Col. Samir Shihadeh, wounding him and killing his 4 bodyguards. Unidentified assailants fired 2 rocket-propelled grenades at the UN headquarters in Beirut, hitting a neighboring building and lightly injuring 4 people in an incident that might have been connected to the Brammertz investigation.

**Domestic Fall-Out in Israel**

Under public pressure, Israeli DM Peretz announced (8/16) plans to form an independent investigative comm. into the government and military's handling of the Lebanon war. Days later, under pressure from Olmert, who sought a quick internal investigation that could be controlled, Peretz suspended his plans. In response, 100s of angry Israeli reservists demanded (8/21) the resignations of Olmert, Peretz, and IDF Chief of Staff Dan Halutz and called for an independent state investigation into why the reservists had been sent into battle without adequate food, water, or equipment. Separately, IDF paratroopers issued (8/21) an open letter to Olmert, signed by 100s of soldiers, complaining about the senior military's conduct of the war. Although Halutz acknowledged (8/24) IDF "shortcomings in various areas—logistical, operational, and command" during the offensive and promised a full IDF internal investigation, Olmert rejected (8/21) the criticisms, stating "we don't have a lot of time to talk about what happened. We have to talk about what will happen," adding (8/28) that an independent state commission was "not what the country needs."

Although Peretz broke with Olmert on this issue and declared (9/1) his support for a fully independent investigation, raising concerns that Labor might leave the governing coalition, the Israeli cabinet approved (9/17) the formation of a committee nominated by Olmert to examine the conduct of the political leadership and the military establishment during the Lebanon war. The committee was headed by retired judge Elyahu Winograd and comprised 2 retired IDF maj. gens. and 2 academics. Neither the Winograd investigation nor the IDF internal investigation ordered by Halutz were completed by the end of the quarter.

IDF Maj. Gen. Udi Adam, who commanded IDF forces in Lebanon during Operation Change of Direction, became (9/13) the 1st Israeli official to resign in the fallout over the war. IDF Chief of Staff Halutz had differed with Adam on the conduct of operations and appointed his dep. to oversee him toward the end of operations (see Quarterly Update in JPS 141). Adam reportedly had decided to step down immediately after being effectively demoted by Halutz, but he decided to delay his departure until after the last IDF soldier had returned from Lebanon. IDF Brig. Gen. Gal Hirsch, in charge of troops along the Lebanese border, resigned on 11/12 after being accused of failing to prevent the 7/12 capture of 2 IDF soldiers that sparked the war.

Meanwhile, the Washington Post revealed (10/21) that it was Halutz, an air force general, who after the outbreak of hostilities on 7/12 made the decision to set aside a long-standing plan, "Stones of Fire," for a ground offensive on Lebanon, opting instead for an air war, which he believed would turn
Sunnis and Christians against Hizballah. The paper cited anonymous Israeli FMin. officials as stating that a classified Israeli military intelligence report issued 2 days after the start of the Lebanon war questioned the Halutz plan’s ability to achieve stated goals, accurately concluding that the war would show “diminishing returns” within days, could not win the release of the captured IDF soldiers or reduce rocket attacks on Israel to fewer than 100/day, and had no viable exit strategy.

The Israeli government brought (9/18) charges in an Israeli court of murder, attempted murder, and membership in an enemy organization against 5 Hizballah mbrs. captured in Lebanon during Operation Change of Direction, arguing that the men were not prisoners of war since “Hizballah does not abide by the rules of war.” One of the men, Husayn Sulayman, was accused of direct involvement in the 7/12 cross-border incident that sparked the fighting, while the other 2, Muhammad Sarur and Mahir Qurani, were accused of participating in attacks on IDF soldiers on the Israeli border. Also of note: The IDF released (8/22) to the UN 5 Lebanese detained in a major raid on Baalbek on 8/1 (a local store owner named Hasan Nasrallah and 4 relatives; see Quarterly Update in JPS 141) on suspicion of being senior Hizballah members.

With regard to damages, several Israeli Palestinian businesses in n. Israel filed (9/24) a motion in the Israeli High Court protesting an Israeli government war compensations package as racist. Under the recently enacted plan, the Israeli FMin. had pledged to cover 100% of losses incurred during the 34-day Lebanon war by Israeli business in a “frontline zone” stretching up to 6 mi from the border, but in implementation paid out only 40%–60% of losses claimed by businesses in 4 Israeli Palestinian villages 2 mi from the border.

Other Events of the Quarter

Lebanese filmmakers producing a documentary on 3 IDF soldiers captured in 2000 and Israeli pilot Ron Arad, shot down over Lebanon and captured in 1986, revealed (9/6) previously unseen footage of Arad that proved he was alive some 18 mos. after his capture. The tape, apparently recorded by Arad’s Amal captors around 1988, was obtained from individuals with ties to Amal. The film would have been shot around the time Israel was negotiating for his release. Soon after, all contacts were terminated. It is suspected that Arad was turned over to a contingent of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards and later died.

SYRIA

During his regional tour, UN Secy.-Gen. Annan met (9/1) with Syrian pres. Bashar al-Asad in Damascus and demanded that Syria take steps to halt arms transfers across the border to Hizballah, delineate its border with Lebanon, and establish diplomatic ties with Beirut. Annan stated afterward that Asad had welcomed implementation of UN Res. 1701, endorsed the res’s calls for the disarmament of militias in the context of Lebanon’s national dialogue, promised to enforce the arms embargo on Hizballah in keeping with article 15 of Res. 1701, agreed to deploy an additional troop battalion to run joint patrols with the Lebanese army along the common border to prevent arms smuggling to Hizballah, and agreed to open bilateral negotiations with Lebanon on establishing diplomatic relations and delineating the border. Asad remained opposed to the positioning of international troops on the Lebanese side of the border without coordination with Damascus.

Responding to rumors reported (ca. 8/20) in the Israeli media that Israeli officials were quietly debating reopening peace talks with Syria, Olmert publicly rejected (e.g., 8/21, 9/26, 9/27, 10/16) the possibility, stating (8/21) that Syria had supplied the weapons that Hizballah used in the Lebanon war and that Syria is a “committed, aggressive member of the axis of evil.” Asad reiterated, in interviews with the German daily Der Spiegel (9/25) and the BBC (ca. 10/7), Syria’s offer, first made 3 years ago, to negotiate a normalization of relations with Israel. Olmert and Livni responded (10/7) that Syria would first have to shut Hamas offices in Damascus and halt all support for Hizballah to prove that it was serious. On 9/26, Olmert vowed that “as long as I serve as prime minister, the Golan Heights will remain in our hands because it is an integral part of the State of Israel.” Other officials, led by DM Amir Peretz and Public Security M Avi Dichter, cautioned that Israel could be missing a historic opportunity to achieve a comprehensive peace and weaken Syria’s ties with Iran and Hizballah.

In late 10/06, British PM Tony Blair reportedly sent his most senior foreign policy adviser, Sir Nigel Sheinwald, to Damascus for talks with Asad to assess whether Syria was serious about resuming final status talks with Israel. The meeting marked the highest
level contact between the countries since 2003, before the Iraq war.

Also of note: On 9/12, 4 Syrian gunmen attacked the U.S. emb. in Damascus, throwing grenades and attempting to detonate 2 car bombs in a 15–20 min. assault. One Syrian guard and 3 of the gunmen were killed in the exchange (the 4th gunman died in custody on 9/13), and at least 13 people were wounded (including a 2d Syrian guard, 3 Syrian security officials, a senior Chinese diplomat in the Chinese emb., nearby, 7 Syrian telephone workers, and an Iraqi couple, but no Americans). No group took responsibility, but Syrian officials suspected the Islamist Jund al-Sham. U.S. Secy. of State Condoleezza Rice praised (9/12) Syria’s handling of the incident, saying that “the Syrians reacted . . . in a way that helped to secure our people and we very much appreciate that.” Syria, however, issued (9/12) a pointed statement, saying that “it is regrettable that U.S. policies in the Middle East have fueled extremism, terrorism, and anti-U.S. sentiment. . . . The U.S. should take this opportunity to review its policies in the Middle East and start to look at the root causes of terrorism and broker a comprehensive peace in the Middle East.”

REGIONAL AFFAIRS

The most important regional event of the quarter was Rice’s 10/1–5 visit, mentioned above, during which Egypt, Jordan, and the GCC states rejected U.S. efforts to enroll them in a moderate grouping to confront “extremist” states and movements in the region, calling instead on the U.S. to take the lead on solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The united front was uncharacteristic of the moderate states, which have not taken decisive stands in Arab League sessions in recent years (see previous Quarterly Updates).

In addition to Egypt and Qatar’s efforts to advance Palestinian national unity talks (see above), Pres. Husni Mubarak of Egypt and King Abdullah of Jordan met (9/10) in Jordan to discuss ideas for a new peace initiative reportedly based on fixing the borders between Israel and Palestine and other details of a Palestinian state in anticipation of resuming final status negotiations, so that everyone would have a clear picture of the endgame. Negotiations could then focus on implementation, rather than the dimensions of final status (i.e., the reverse of the roadmap plan, which focused on the process of resuming talks and left the details to future negotiations). No plan was presented this quarter.

The Arab League held (11/12) an emergency meeting in Cairo to discuss how to respond to Israel’s continuing operations in Gaza in light of the 11/11 U.S. veto of a UN resolution condemning Israeli actions (see below). FMs voted to end the financial blockade on Palestinians (without explaining how the U.S.-led sanctions could be circumvented) and called for the immediate convocation of an international peace conference with Israel. Kuwait said it would immediately send $30 m. to the PA, while Bahrain pledged to contact international financial institutions immediately to find a way to transfer the money to the PA. Haniyyeh’s government endorsed (11/12) the conference idea, but Israel said (11/12) that it would not hold talks with Hamas until it met the 1/30 Quartet demands to recognize Israel, renounce violence, and abide by existing agreements. Also of note: For the first time since the 3/06 elections, PA FM Mahmoud al-Zahhar (instead of PLO External Affairs head Faruq al-Qaddumi) led the Palestinian representation to the Arab League FMs session (see Quarterly Update in JPS 141).

Arab League FMs also held (8/20) an emergency session in Cairo to discuss creating a fund to rebuild Lebanon. Although no agreement was reached, the UAE pledged to rebuild schools, hospitals, and clinics in S. Lebanon and to help remove landmines; Qatar pledged to rebuild Bint Jubayl; and Kuwait pledged $800 m. toward general reconstruction.

According to the UNHCR (10/3), the situation of Palestinian refugees in Iraq continued to deteriorate this quarter, raising concerns for their safety, particularly the 330 who have been stranded for more than 4 months on the Syrian border seeking to leave Iraq (the border camp is visited frequently by Iraqi security forces). The UNHRC also expressed concern for some 300 Palestinians allowed into Syria (al-Hul r.c.) in 5/06 (see Quarterly Update in JPS 140), with “temporary status, limited freedom of movement, and no clear prospects as to their future;” as well as for 150 Palestinians stranded since 2005 in al-Ruwayshid r.c. in Jordan, which the kingdom was threatening to close by the end of 2006. (On 10/10, Canada agreed to grant asylum to 46 al-Ruwayshid refugees.) The UNHCR estimates that 20,000 Palestinians remain in Iraq, compared to 34,000 before the 2003 Iraq war. (Of these, 25,000
were registered refugees.) Human Rights Watch also issued (9/10) a report highlighting ongoing attacks on Palestinian refugees in Iraq, predominantly by Shi’i groups and government forces (see Doc. C1).

INTERNATIONAL

UNITED STATES

There was comparatively little U.S. action on the Arab-Israeli conflict this quarter as the U.S. prepared for mid-term elections that could sway control of Congress from Republicans to Democrats. The Bush administration also paused briefly to reassess its policy in light of setbacks to its regional position resulting from its strong support of Israel’s war in Lebanon, the deteriorating civil conflict in Iraq, and its failure to secure international sanctions on Iran. By mid-9/06, the Bush administration was considering shifting its attention back to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, where some progress at least in the humanitarian situation could perhaps be achieved by pressuring the Palestinians to halt rocket fire and the Israelis to ease restrictions on Palestinian movement, especially into and out of Gaza in keeping with the 11/05 Rafah arrangements brokered by Rice.

As noted above, the U.S. at the same time pressed its “moderate” Arab allies (particularly Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia) to unite against Arab “extremists,” including Hamas and Hizballah, and particularly to promote Abbas. While these Arab allies genuinely supported the U.S. goals and acted accordingly (particularly by observing the boycott on the Hamas-led PA), they publicly balked at forming an overt alliance against other Arab states (which could spark domestic unrest in their own countries), counseling instead that Washington lead serious effort to achieve a just solution to the Israeli-Arab conflict—a reaction that seemed to catch Washington off guard and caused a touring Secy. of State Rice some embarrassment.

Important Legislation

On 9/6, the Senate rejected (30–70) an amendment (S. Amdt. 4882) to the FY 2007 defense appropriations bill that would have prevented the use of funds to purchase or transfer cluster munitions without a Defense Dept. guarantee that the weapons would not be used in or near civilian concentrations. The amendment, proposed by Sens. Dianne Feinstein (R-CA) and Patrick Leahy (D-VT), was inspired by reports of Israel’s use of U.S.- supplied and Israeli-made cluster devices.

The Pro-Israel Lobby

The newly formed Christians United for Israel (CUFI; see Quarterly Updates in JPS 140, 141) made a donations appeal to support Israel during the Lebanon war that reportedly added 30,000 new members to its rolls, putting it on track to reach its goal of raising $80 m. for the year.

The Jewish Telegraphic Agency reported (10/10) that dovish American pro-Israel supporters were planning to launch an alternative pro-Israel lobbying organization to the right-wing AIPAC, believing that AIPAC’s hard-line pro-Israel policy harms not only the U.S. but Israel. The initiative reportedly was launched by Israel Policy Forum Exec. Dir. David Elcott with the backing of billionaire philanthropist George Soros, philanthropists Edgar and Charles Bronfman, and former Democratic congressman and lawyer Mel Levine, among others, who together pledged more than $10 m. toward an endowment. A founding ceremony for the new organization was planned for 10/26 in New York but was not held.

The New York City Council’s education comm. approved (9/8) a curriculum on Israel, initiated by the public relations dept. at the Israeli consulate in New York, to be integrated into the teacher training program for all 1,400 public high schools in New York City. Teachers who opt to take the training class will receive credit toward an academic degree. The program, according to Israeli Consul General Aryeh Mekel, is based on the idea that “through the teachers a generation of leaders will be educated to maintain the special relations between the United States and Israel.”

Legal Actions

In Chicago, New York Times journalist Judith Miller testified (11/13) against Palestinians Muhammad Salah and former Howard University prof. Abdelhaleem Ashqar, on trial on federal racketeering charges of providing money and recruits to Hamas to stage terrorist attacks on Israel. Miller stated that she had been allowed to view the Shin Bet interrogation of Salah in 1993 and saw no evidence that he confessed to the charges under torture. Miller was personally invited to view the interrogation by then PM Yitzhak Rabin and Shin Bet head Yaakov Perry provided that she not reveal that she had been there in her writings.
The U.S. Treasury Dept. froze (8/29) the U.S. assets of the Islamic Resistance Support Organization, claiming to have proof (including unclassified Israeli intelligence reports) that the money raised in the U.S. goes to support Hizballah. The U.S. argued that "there is no separation" between money raised by Hizballah for social services and that raised for "terrorism."

A New York man, Javed Iqbal, was arrested (8/23) on charges of conspiring to support a terrorist group for providing cable access to Hizballah’s al-Manar TV, which the U.S. Treasury Dept. designated a “global terrorist entity” in 3/06. The charges were based on information from a paid FBI informant that Iqbal, who runs HDTV Corp., had offered clients access to al-Manar with the standard HDTV Arabic service package. Iqbal’s lawyers and the American Civil Liberties Union say they are “deeply troubled” by the fact that a TV distributor would be prosecuted for enabling access to a news outlet and for the content of a broadcaster, saying it could be a freedom of speech issue.

RUSSIA

Although Israeli PM Olmert and Russian pres. Vladimir Putin met in Moscow on 10/18 to mark the 15th anniversary of the resumption of relations between the countries, relations between Israel and Russia remained slightly tense this quarter due to Russia’s opposition to UN sanctions on Iran to halt its nuclear program (see the Iran section below).

Israel sent (ca. 8/18) a delegation to Russia to protest Hizballah’s use of advanced Russian antitank weapons during the Lebanon war, believing the arms were transferred via Iran or Syria. Russia stressed (8/18) that its arms sales are strictly controlled and that “any accusations alleging Russian or Syrian deliveries of antitank weapons to any forces in Lebanon are unfounded. The Israeli side has not presented any evidence of this, and it is unlikely that they will.”

EUROPEAN UNION

This quarter, the EU took little action on the Arab-Israeli conflict as EU uneasiness with the U.S.’s hard-line policy positions persisted. As in previous quarters (see Quarterly Updates in JPS 140, 141), the EU particularly diverged from the U.S. regarding economic and political sanctions on the Hamas-led PA. In a new sign of push-back against the U.S., EU FMs meeting in Brussels on 9/1, the same day that EU foreign policy chief Solana declared the EU’s willingness to work with a Palestinian unity government, issued a statement saying that “the time is ripe for the European Union to act decisively to approach the United States” regarding jumpstarting the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

In line with this, British PM Tony Blair, historically a close Bush ally on the Middle East and who recently announced he would not run again for PM, declared a major policy shift in an address in London on 11/13 in which he called on Bush to adjust the U.S.’s Middle East policy by initiating and supporting a serious Palestinian-Israeli peace initiative as a step to help stabilize Iraq. To that end, he also urged the U.S. to open dialogues with Iran and Syria.

Two months earlier, when Blair made (9/9–10) a high-profile visit to the region, PA PM Haniyeh published (9/9) a letter in the Guardian denouncing the British government’s alignment with the Clinton and Bush administrations in support of Israel, accusing Britain of adding to the injustices against the Palestinians and calling on the British people to press their government to change its policies. In addition, 100s of prominent Palestinians, including senior intellectuals and politicians, signed (9/7) an open letter in the Palestinian daily al-Ayyam calling on Abbas to cancel plans to receive Blair on 9/10 and denouncing Blair’s support of Israel’s offensives in Gaza and Lebanon. Abbas ignored the statement and met with Blair as planned.

Europeans continued to register some protest this quarter over the U.S. decision to resupply Israel with bunker buster bombs and other weapons during its offensive in Lebanon (see Quarterly Update in JPS 141). The Israeli airlines El Al reported (9/4) that several EU states (including Britain, Germany, Italy) had recently denied stopover and refuel permission to its cargo planes arriving from U.S. military bases carrying heavy loads, claiming that the “political boycott” was slowing Israel’s resupply of military equipment and damaging its defensive capabilities.

European support for Israel, however, remained strong. On 9/13, some 200 EU parliamentarians, diplomats, and senior officials, as well as Israeli FM Livni and Knesset speaker Dalia Itzik, attended a gala at the EU parliament in Brussels launching the European Friends of Israel (EFI), a pan-European pro-Israel parliamentary grouping modeled on AIPAC. (Israeli PM Olmert addressed the ceremony by videotape.) EFI dir. Dimitri
Dombret stated (9/13) that the group “exists to improve Israel’s image and help members if they need information about Israel. We will also network and organize missions of MEPS [Members of the European Parliament] and national MPs and take them out to Israel.” EFI, with prestigious offices near the EU parliament financed by prominent Jewish businessmen across Europe, is expected to have an initial membership of some 1,500 from all of Europe’s mainstream political parties, making it one of the largest pan-European parliamentary groups.

**UNITED NATIONS**

With Kofi Annan’s term as UN secy-gen. ending on 12/31/06, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency reported (9/18) that at least 5 candidates to replace him (UN disarmament official Jayantha Dhanapala of Sri Lanka, Jordanian envoy to the UN Prince Zaid al-Hussein, South Korea’s FM Ban Ki-Moon, Thailand’s Dep. PM Surakarti Sathirathai, UN Undersecy.-Gen. Shashi Tharoor of India) had recently met with leaders of U.S. Jewish organizations. Jewish groups also reported that many foreign diplomats attending the UNGA session in late 9/06 planned to meet with the candidates on the sidelines, with the American Jewish Comm. (AJC) saying it had arranged at least 60 such meetings. AJC head David Harris stated, “It’s a recognition that we’re part of the equation and the political calculus. . . . It’s clear that no candidate can win without the support of the five permanent members, and there is thinking that American Jewry would have some impact on the thinking of the United States.”

In his final speech to the UNGA, Annan stated (9/19; see Doc. A1) that the unresolved Arab-Israeli conflict has so inflamed tensions that it is constantly refueling “a climate of fear and suspicion” around the world, stating that “as long as the Security Council is unable to end this conflict . . . so long will respect for the United Nations continue to decline.” He also criticized the Bush admin.’s counterterrorism strategy, stating that the “necessary and legitimate struggle” against terrorism has been used as a “pretext to abridge and abrogate fundamental human rights, thereby ceding more moral ground to the terrorists and helping them find recruits.”

As noted above, Annan toured (8/25-9/6) the region in keeping with UN Res. 1701 demands that he draft a report by 9/12 on a permanent political solution to the Lebanon crisis. To this end, he met in Brussels with EU leaders on the expanded UNIFIL (8/25); Beirut with the Lebanese full cabinet and the UNIFIL contingent (8/28-29); Israel with PM Olmert, FM Livni, and DM Peretz (8/29-30); Ramallah with Abbas for talks on the Palestinian humanitarian crisis (8/30); Jordan with King Abdullah (8/31); Syria with Pres. Asad (9/1); Qatar (9/1, 9/4); Iran (9/3-4), Saudi Arabia with King Abdullah (9/4-5), Egypt with Pres. Mubarak (9/5); and Turkey with PM Tayyip Recep Erdogan and FM Abdallah Gul (9/6).

Annan also sent (8/16-22) UN envys Terje Larsen and Vijay Nambiar to the region to explore resolutions to the immediate Lebanese and Palestinian crises, proposing that prisoner exchanges be considered by the parties for the release of 3 IDF soldiers. The envys also pressed Israel to remove the air and naval blockade on Lebanon, lift the siege on Gaza, and agree to a mutual ceasefire between the IDF and the Palestinian factions; Israel responded that it would not lift the air and naval blockade until a credible international force was in place on Lebanon’s borders or make gestures toward the Palestinians until Palestinian violence ceased.

At the request of the Arab League states, the UNSC held (9/21) a debate on the Middle East situation concurrent with the UNGA opening session, with the aim of finding ways to resume direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. At the meeting, the Arab states reiterated their commitment to the 2002 Arab League initiative, and Abbas restated the Palestinians commitment to peace through negotiations and the road map, but Israel said that the Palestinians must implement the 1/30 Quartet demands and that the 3 captured IDF soldiers must be released before negotiations could begin. The U.S. expressed its willingness to work with Olmert and Abbas toward a two-state solution, but stated that progress depended on “a true Palestinian partner committed to peace.” The U.S. blocked issuance of a final statement at the close of the meeting.

The U.S. also vetoed (11/11) a UNSC res. condemning Israel’s Operation Autumn Clouds in Gaza, demanding that Israel withdraw troops from Gaza immediately. The measure was significantly watered down before it came to the vote (10 votes in favor; abstentions by Britain, Denmark, Japan, and Slovakia; the U.S. veto), referring to Israel’s “disproportionate” (instead of “indiscriminate”) violence, “military operations” (instead of a “military assault,” “aggression,”...
and “massacre” of Palestinian on 11/8 in Bayt Hanun). The final draft also dropped a call for a UN observer force to be sent to Gaza, instead calling for “an international mechanism for the protection of civilians.” The U.S. ambassador said the res. was vetoed because it was “biased against Israel and politically motivated” since “it does not display an even-handed characterization of recent events in Gaza, nor does it advance the cause of Israeli-Palestinian peace to which we aspire,” since it did not mention Palestinian rocket strikes.

The U.S. stated (9/6) that the new UNHRC had failed to meet reformers’ expectations, noting that its first 2 special sessions focused on criticizing Israel’s actions in Lebanon instead of dealing with issues such as Darfur (which the U.S. itself had long ignored), stating that the “machinery remains broken, in need of serious repair and fundamental reform.”

The UN-sponsored International Conference of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People held (9/7–8) a 2-day conference in Geneva, issuing a statement and action plan condemning Israeli apartheid practices in the occupied territories and calling for boycott, divestment, and sanctions against Israel in protest.

The UN also detailed (10/27) plans for creation of a registry of damages sustained by Palestinians as a result of the separation wall (see separation wall section above).

IRAN

As the quarter opened, Iran faced an 8/31 UN deadline to halt uranium enrichment in exchange for negotiations with and economic incentives from the 5 UNSC permanent members plus Germany (P5 + 1; see Quarterly Update in JPS 141) or to face possible economic and political sanctions. On 8/22, Iran told the EU that it was willing to enter serious negotiations with Israel’s apartheid practices in the occupied territories and calling for boycott, divestment, and sanctions against Israel in protest.

The UN also detailed (10/27) plans for creation of a registry of damages sustained by Palestinians as a result of the separation wall section above.

The opening of the new UNGA session in New York (mid-9/06) focused primarily on Iran. In his speech to the UNGA, Bush softened his rhetoric considerably, assuring the Iranian people that he seeks a diplomatic solution to the nuclear issue and stating that the U.S. has no objection to Iran establishing a “truly peaceful nuclear power program,” though he directly accused Iran of pursuing a weapons program. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in his speech (9/19) accused the U.S. of manipulating the UN to advance its own military and economic interests and to oppress weaker adversaries, stating that U.S. policies in the region, especially support of Israel, had furthered human suffering.

On the sidelines of the session, Bush held (9/19) talks with French pres. Jacques Chirac in which they reportedly agreed on a plan of action to urge Iran into negotiations on a permanent halt to uranium enrichment, though no details were released. Bush administration officials soon after reported (9/25) that Iran was considering an EU proposal to suspend uranium enrichment for 90 days while negotiations on a permanent halt were held, but wanted the temporary halt kept secret. While some in the State Dept. reportedly supported the idea, others in the administration were strongly opposed, saying the agreement would be “a further concession” to Iran. There was no information on whether or not the arrangement was ultimately accepted, though the U.S. soon
after said (9/27) that it was postponing efforts to secure sanctions for “a few weeks” to give EU efforts time to work.

When EU talks had not produced any movement by Iran by the end of 10/06, the U.S., Britain, France, and Germany presented (10/25) China and Russia, who opposed sanctions in general, with a draft UNSC sanctions res. on Iran that would include preventing Iranian students from studying nuclear physics at foreign universities and colleges, imposing visa bans on Iranians involved in nuclear activities, and barring technical and financial assistance that could benefit Iran’s nuclear program. At the close of the quarter, debate was still underway, with China and Russia demanding that military options favored by the U.S. be taken off the table so that they could not be used as a pretext for launching a strike on Iran.

Meanwhile, in what was seen as another unilateral attempt to pressure Iran (see Nation 9/25), the U.S. issued (before 9/25) “prepare to deploy orders” (PTDOs) to a major strike group of naval vessels (including the aircraft carrier Eisenhower, a cruiser, a destroyer, a frigate, a submarine escort, a supply ship) for departure to the Gulf around 10/1 for arrival ca. 10/21. The strike group would be capable of imposing a naval blockade on Iran to punish it for failing to halt uranium enrichment and/or of striking Iranian nuclear sites with Tomahawk missiles. (According to former military officials, a PTDO is “a very significant order, and it’s not done as a training exercise.” Moreover, the Eisenhower had been docked for upgrades and had not been expected to receive deployment orders until spring 2007—another factor leading observers to believe that military action was a serious possibility.)

Also of note: On the sidelines of the UNGA session, Ahmadinejad accepted an invitation from the New York–based Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) to meet (9/20) with journalists and CFR members (many of them former government officials). Israel sent (9/22) a harshly worded letter to CFR Pres. Richard Haass denouncing his decision to host the Iranian pres., claiming that hosting Ahmadinejad was worse than “hypothetically inviting Hitler to a meeting in the 1930s,” stating that “appeasing fanatics like Hitler and granting them legitimacy leads to genocide and war.”

UN Secy.-Gen Annan told Annan that Iran supported implementation of UN Res. 1701 and would encourage Hizballah and the Palestinians to undertake a prisoner exchange with Israel for the release of the 3 captured IDF soldiers.

On 11/14, details were leaked to the media of a confidential report by a UN committee on Somalia that accused Iran of seeking an arms-for-uranium trade deal with Somalia’s Islamic Courts Union (ICU; the main rival of the UN-recognized Transitional Federal Parliament for control of Somalia’s political system, destroyed by civil war since 1991). The report also cited unconfirmed intelligence that Iran had financed and facilitated the transport of some 720 ICU fighters to Lebanon in 7/06 to fight alongside Hizballah against Israel during the 7–8/06 war. The UN’s intelligence sources were not revealed.

After 2 months of heavy patrols in the southern Iraq deserts aimed at finding and halting illicit arms traffic into the country from Iran, British commandos said (10/3) that they had found no evidence of cross-border activity, with unit commander Lt. Col. David Labouchere stating, “I suspect there is nothing out there.” Britain had launched the patrols based on weekly U.S. reports of “irrefutable” intelligence showing that Iran was secretly supplying weapons, parts, funding, and training for Iraqi attacks on U.S. targets.

OTHER

New Pres. of Costa Rica Oscar Arias announced (8/16) that his government would move its emb. in Israel from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv to bring his country in line with UN resolutions and to promote new alliances with the Arab world, stating that “it’s time for us to correct a historic mistake that hurts us internationally.” Arias, whose election platform included pledges of solidarity with the Palestinians, stressed that the decision was made before Israeli-Lebanese violence broke out and that he delayed announcement of the decision until a truce was in place. Costa Rica’s emb. had been in Jerusalem since 1982.

El Salvador, the only other nation that still had its emb. in Jerusalem, followed Costa Rica’s lead, announced (8/25) that it would also transfer its emb. to Tel Aviv, though the Salvadoran FMin. reaffirmed Israel’s right to exist and said that the move was not “against Israel.” Off the record, Salvadoran officials cited pressure from Arab states in light of Costa Rica’s decision. The rest of the
international community, including the U.S., recognizes Tel Aviv as Israel’s capital and Jerusalem as occupied (or in the U.S. case “disputed”) territory.

Dep. Secy.-Gen. of NATO Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo visited (10/22–24) Israel as part of a tour aimed at strengthening relations with Mediterranean nations. The visit followed approval of a framework plan for special cooperation with Israel (the Individual Cooperation Program or ICP) on political, military, and strategic issues that was concluded at NATO headquarters in Brussels on 10/16, the first such agreement that NATO has concluded with a Mediterranean state. Under the accord, Israel will begin taking part in NATO’s Active Endeavor exercises in the Mediterranean Sea and other regional cooperation programs.

**DONORS**

Donor efforts picked up this quarter as the final stages of the reorganization of the donor bodies was completed (see Quarterly Updates in *JPS* 140, 141) and as donors began to address the Palestinian economic crisis following the 1/06 elections and the 3/06 imposition of U.S.-led sanctions on the PA, particularly by getting fully operational the EU-organized Temporary International Mechanism (TIM) for funneling aid to the Palestinians by bypassing the Hamas-led PA.

In 8/06, the TIM transferred its first payments of $260 to 42,983 PA employees qualifying as low income cases, as well as $440 payments to 11,562 PA Health Min. employees, with the total amount disbursed reaching nearly $16 m. A second round of payments to the same group of civil servants was made in 10/06. On 9/20, the Quartet approved a 3-mo. extension of the TIM mandate and called on Israel to release $500 m. in VAT taxes withheld from the PA.

The major donor event of the quarter was a pledging conference hosted (9/1) in Stockholm by Sweden, Spain, and Norway that raised $260 m. for Palestinians. Of the total pledged, $114 m. (including $64 m. from the EU) would be allocated to humanitarian assistance for the most needy Palestinians, $57.8 m. of which would be run through the UN’s emergency appeal. The remaining pledges would go to rebuilding infrastructure (including $7.7 m. from Sweden to rebuild the Gaza power plant destroyed by Israel on 6/28) and other projects. It was uncertain how the money not run through the UN would reach the Palestinians given the sanctions; some could be run through the TIM or be given directly to NGOs, though Arab donors, who pledged the largest amounts (including $250 m. from Saudi Arabia), preferred that their money be routed to the PA through the Arab League.

In advance of the 9/1 conference, the World Food Program (WFP) warned (8/18) of deteriorating humanitarian conditions in Gaza, stating that “the economy is really reaching rock bottom. Industries that were once the backbone of Gaza’s economy and food system, such as the agricultural and fishing industries, are suffocated by the current situation and risk losing all viability,” and noting that Gaza remains “totally reliant” on an external food supply. As of 9/7, the WFP was providing assistance to 830,000 Palestinian refugees in Gaza (an increase of 100,000 since 3/06, mostly comprising refugee who had been working for the PA who had come to need assistance since salaries were cut off).

At the local level in the territories, major donor meetings included a Local Development Forum (LDF, which replaced the Local Aid Coordination Comm.) meeting on 11/15, 2 donor coordination meetings to discuss running aid through Abbas’s office (8/23, 9/28), and a donor reference group meeting to discuss “drivers of change” for the economy in the territories (9/19). The Task Force on Project Implementation (TFP) met on 8/21 and 10/31. The main donor working groups focused on humanitarian assistance, economics (e.g., 10/4, 11/1), infrastructure, and governance and reform continued to meet regularly, with subgroups meeting on security (9/29), judicial reform (11/14), election reform (11/7), private sector trade and development (10/3), the health sector (9/20), and food security (9/20, 10/30). An emergency meeting on the availability of electricity in Gaza was held on 8/22. No details of these meetings were publicly released.

At the close of the quarter the joint PA-donor Local Aid Coordination Secretariat (LACS; the donor coordination and oversight body) and the PA Finance Min. were unable accurately to track donations to the PA. They cited as the cause the U.S.-led sanctions on aid to the Hamas-led government, which directly threatened donors, prompting them to run money through Abbas’s office instead of the unified Finance Min. account, and which forced PA cabinet and PC members
to carry tens of millions of dollars in aid into Gaza across the Rafah crossing rather than sending them through easily monitored bank transfers.

On a positive note, the IMF reported (11/1) that while PA government revenue had fallen by 60% (from $1.2 b. to $500 m.) since the Hamas-led government took power in 3/06, the decline had been partially offset by increased donor aid from $230 m. for the period 4–9/05 to $420 m. for the period 4–9/06.