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QUARTERLY UPDATE ON CONFLICT AND DIPLOMACY

16 AUGUST–15 NOVEMBER 2005

COMPILED BY MICHELE K. ESPOSITO

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

THE PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT

This quarter marked Israel's completion of disengagement from Gaza and four settlements in the West Bank, begun at the end of last quarter. In the weeks following the disengagement, the outlines of Israel's future policy began to emerge: Israel showed little interest in pursuing further agreements with the Palestinian Authority (PA), moved decisively to entrench its settlement presence and to divide Palestinian enclaves in the West Bank, and demonstrated that it would take forceful military action against Gaza in response to attacks both from the Strip and the West Bank.

As the quarter opened, Israel was preparing to begin the withdrawal of settlers from Gaza. Until then, Israel had coordinated with the PA on disengagement as little as possible, emphasizing that the action was unilateral (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 137). As a result, many aspects, especially regarding border arrangements and postwithdrawal movement of Palestinian goods into and out of Gaza, had not been agreed to despite concerted efforts by Quartet special envoy James Wolfensohn (for economic aspects) and U.S. special envoy Lt. Gen. William Ward (for security aspects). Both stressed that disengagement would succeed only to the extent that the Palestinian economy in Gaza was allowed to recover, which in turn depended on Israel guaranteeing reliable movement of Palestinian people and goods.

Meanwhile, Israeli-Palestinian violence persisted at a moderate level, with Israel continuing an arrest and assassination campaign targeting Islamic Jihad, which had staged a suicide bombing in Netanya on 7/12 (see Chronology in *JPS* 137). As of 8/16, at least 4,132 Palestinians (including 46 Israeli Arabs and 17 unidentified Arab cross-border

infiltrators), 979 Israelis (including 304 IDF soldiers and security personnel, 195 settlers, 480 civilians), and 55 foreign nationals (including 2 British suicide bombers) had been killed since the start of the al-Aqsa intifada.

Israel Completes the Settler Disengagement

At midnight local time on 8/16, the grace period for the Jewish settlers voluntarily to leave Gaza and the four West Bank settlements ran out. By that time, at least 50% of the estimated 8,500 settlers had left, including all settlers from *Dugit* (est. 1990, pop. 70, size 245 d. [1 acre = 4 d.]), *Nisanit* (est. 1980, pop. 1,100, size 1,610 d.), *Pe'at Sadeb* (est. 1989, pop. 110, size 935 d.), *Rafiah Yam* (est. 1984, pop. 130, size 574 d.), and *Shalev* (est. 2001, pop. 50). IDF soldiers prepared to remove forcibly the remaining settlers and the estimated 5,000 disengagement protesters (mostly West Bank settler youths) who had sneaked into the Strip, assigning 16 soldiers and 1 commanding officer (all unarmed) to remove each settler family. Implementation was to be in three stages: Gaza settlers to be removed first, West Bank settlers second, and the IDF last. Israel anticipated (8/16) that vacated settlements would not be handed over to the PA until mid-10/05 and that the IDF military withdrawal would not be completed until the end of 2005.

The evacuation of Gaza settlers began on 8/17 and was completed, with very little violence, on 8/22, with a break over the Sabbath (8/19–20; see Chronology for details). The evacuations were completed as follows: **8/17: Bedolab** (est. 1986, pop. 220, size 1,456 d., hrs. to evac. 6), **Ganei Tal** (est. 1979, pop. 350, size 2,050 d., hrs. to evac. 11), **Kerem Atzmona** (est. 2001, pop. 24, hrs. to evac. 6), **Morag** (est. 1972,

pop. 220, size 1,300 d., hrs. to evac. 7), **Tal Katifa** (est. 1992, pop. 60, size 183 d., hrs. to evac. 5); **8/18: Gan Or** (est. 1983, pop. 350, size 1,692 d., hrs. to evac. 5), **Kefar Darom** (est. 1989, pop. 490, size 276 d., hrs. to evac. 12), **Kefar Yam** (est. 1983, pop. 15, hrs. to evac. 3), **Netzer Hazani** (est. 1973, pop. 460, size 250 d., hrs. to evac. 5), **Neve Dekalim** (est. 1983, pop. 2,700, size 1,443 d., hrs. to evac. 35), **Sbirat Hayam** (est. 2001, pop. 40, hrs. to evac. 5); **8/19: Gadid** (est. 1982, pop. 350, size 1,600 d., hrs. to evac. 3); **8/21: Aley Sinai** (est. 1983, pop. 407, size 488 d., hrs. to evac. 8), **Atzmona** (est. 1982, pop. 646, size, 882 d., hrs. to evac. 8), **Katif** (est. 1985, pop. 404, size 2,000 d., hrs. to evac. 6); **8/22: Netzarim** (est. 1972, pop. 496, size 1,760 d., hrs. to evac. 7). The IDF began dismantling settlement structures as the settlements were vacated.

The speed and ease of the withdrawal surprised even the IDF. Most of the actual residents of the settlements still in their homes on 8/17 were resigned to leaving; when soldiers arrived, they typically held emotional prayer services and voluntarily boarded IDF buses to Israel or had soldiers carry them out of their homes in a nonviolent, symbolic protest. Some vandalized or set fire to their property to leave nothing of value for the Palestinians. (On 8/24, the Jewish National Fund stated that it would, in coordination with the IDF, remove some 1,000 olive, palm, and cypress trees from Gaza settlements and transplant them in new communities in Israel.) The settlers who erected roadblocks, occupied buildings and refused to leave, and occasionally scrapped with soldiers reportedly were largely infiltrators from the West Bank and occasionally American Jews. Even these rarely went beyond burning barricades and rampaging through nearby Palestinian areas in an attempt to provoke the Palestinians. In several cases, protesters refusing to leave rooftops ordered the IDF to bring in cages on cranes to remove them in what were clearly bids to provide dramatic photo opportunities for the press imbedded with the soldiers. (Only a handful of journalists, Israeli or other, were bussed into Gaza each day and were only allowed to go to specific settlements, always accompanied by troops.) The IDF responded to protesters with water cannon on a few occasions. Overall, only a handful of serious incidents were reported: 1 soldier was stabbed and lightly injured by a protester on 8/17, and 1 soldier was seriously injured (8/18) attempting to

evacuate settlers from the roof of a building when he slipped on vegetable oil poured by protesters. In total, several dozen soldiers, border police, and protesters were lightly injured in scuffles during the week, and more than 830 protesters were arrested. At least 2 IDF soldiers refused to serve and were sent back to Israel. The serious acts were in the West Bank, where a settler apparently angry over disengagement fatally shot (8/17) 5 Palestinian workers in the Shilo industrial zone, and inside Israel, where a female settler from Keddumim set herself on fire (8/17) at an anti-disengagement rally and later died (marking the only disengagement-related fatality), and where a disengagement protester tossed (8/17) a grenade at an IDF post in s. Israel, wounding 5 soldiers.

During the Gaza pullout, Palestinians were generally quiet. On 8/18, unidentified Palestinians fired 1 rocket at Netzarim (still inhabited), injuring 1 IDF soldier, and fired 2 mortars at Gadid (still inhabited) and 3 at Morag (evacuated), causing no damage or injuries. On 8/18 and 8/20, Palestinian gunmen fired at IDF troops in Kefar Darom, lightly injuring 2 soldiers. These incidents seemed to be the only attempts to portray Israel as withdrawing under fire. Otherwise, Palestinians held parades and celebrations. As settlements were vacated, Palestinians who had abandoned adjacent houses because of settler violence over the years returned to their homes.

On 8/21, the Israeli cabinet gave the necessary approval (16-4) for the disengagement from the 4 tiny West Bank settlements. Two had been voluntarily evacuated by 8/15: **Ganim** (est. 1983, pop. 172) and **Qadim** (est. 1983, pop. 169). The remaining two were evacuated on 8/23: **Homesb** (est. 1980, pop. 228, hrs. to evac. 7) and **Sanur** (est. 1982, pop. 105, hrs. to evac. 8). Once again, the residents, largely resigned, left peacefully, with the protest coming from nonresident settlers (see Chronology for details). Since settler violence in the vicinity of Homesb and Sanur had been high in the week preceding their evacuation, the IDF dispatched 6,000 troops to each settlement on 8/23. The 2,000 disengagement protesters at the sites ultimately put up mild resistance, though one female protester stabbed and lightly wounded a female soldier.

The Military Disengagement

With the settlers gone, the IDF revised (8/23) its timetable for the military

disengagement from Gaza, expecting to pull its last troops out of the Strip in 2–5 weeks. Meanwhile, PA Interior M Nasr Yusuf, in charge of security affairs, complained (8/21) that despite repeated requests, Israel was not providing the PA with the most basic information on its plans for the handover of the settlement areas. The ongoing tension between Israel's conflicting desires to declare the end of the occupation of Gaza and to maintain as much control over Gaza as possible (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 137), as well as its insistence on keeping the process unilateral, largely explain this reluctance to coordinate.

Indeed, it was not until 8/17 that Israeli officials opened talks with the PA specifically on which areas around the 4 evacuated West Bank settlements would be turned over to PA security control. Then, on 8/28, Israel unilaterally declared that the 4 sites would retain area C designation, under Israel's full security and civil control. Similarly, the IDF did not allow PA security officials to tour the Gaza settlements with their Israeli counterparts until 9/5. Two days later, on 9/7, the IDF announced that it would complete its military withdrawal from Gaza on 9/12; would keep the Rafah crossing closed for at least 6 months; and would open a temporary passage point (under Israeli monitoring) at Kerem Shalom on the Rafah-Egypt-Israel border for people as of 9/25, with a permanent transit point for goods to be completed there within 4 months (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 137). That same day, Israel threatened (9/7) that if the PA and Egypt opened the Rafah border bilaterally, it would cancel the customs union between Gaza and Israel, refuse to remove the rubble of the demolished settlements, and prevent implementation of a safe-passage link to the West Bank, essentially sealing off Gaza.

While Israel could largely ignore the PA, it did feel it necessary to coordinate with Egypt: distrusting the PA to secure the Rafah border, it required Egyptian forces to secure the Egyptian side before it would withdraw from the Philadelphi corridor, its buffer zone running along the demarcation line. Israel and Egypt had initialed a protocol on the deployment of 750 Egyptian border police along the Rafah border on 8/15 (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 137), but on 8/22, the Knesset denied ratification and demanded an appendix in which Egypt would pledge not to transfer arms or ammunition to the PA. After Israeli DM Shaul Mofaz assured (8/24) the MKs that the protocol "ultimately

gives comprehensive, and I emphasize comprehensive, responsibility to the Egyptians regarding the prevention of weapons smuggling," the Israeli cabinet (8/28) and Knesset (8/31) approved the protocol as is, suggesting that a statement on arms and ammunition could be included in side letters later. (Although Egypt had from the outset stressed that it would not accept responsibility for Israel's security or the security situation in Gaza despite its participation in the disengagement process, it did not comment on Mofaz's statement.) The protocol was formally signed in Cairo on 9/1, allowing the 750 Egyptian border police to begin deployment along the Rafah border on 9/10.

Meanwhile, Quartet envoy Wolfensohn pressed his position that the disengagement would be successful only to the extent that Gazans had reliable freedom of movement to the outside world and the West Bank (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 137). (He also pressed for the process to be linked to renewed road map implementation and, ideally, to immediate resumption of final status talks; PA Pres. Mahmud Abbas called for the same on 9/3.) Israel, however, showed little interest in discussing freedom of movement or safe-passage, and Wolfensohn was becoming increasingly frustrated. On 9/5, he held "tense" talks with PA and Israeli officials regarding border crossing mechanisms to improve investment and trade flows. The PA said it would agree to the presence of international inspectors at the Rafah border and would allow Israel to retain control over goods entering Gaza to "safeguard against smuggling" provided that Israel relinquished oversight over people entering and leaving Gaza through the Rafah crossing; Israel would not agree. The parties, according to Wolfensohn, were tantalizingly close to a workable agreement on a management system for transportation of goods, the proper use of new technology to monitor goods, and ways to assure the export of Palestinian agricultural goods, but Israel refused to hold a follow-up session after 9/5.

Instead, Israel moved along with its military evacuation of Gaza. In an unexpected turn on 9/8, Israeli DM Mofaz ordered a halt to the (previously agreed) demolition of 19 synagogues in Gaza settlements, saying that as a religious person, he found ordering the demolition "very difficult," even though they had effectively been deconsecrated and the government had won legal battles to have them removed. Nonetheless, and although the PA previously had expressly

refused to take responsibility for the synagogues, the IDF left them standing. By 9/9, except for the synagogues and the IDF division headquarters near Neve Dekalim, which was to be turned over to the PA, the IDF had completed removal of all IDF equipment and the demolition of all hardened IDF and settlement structures in Gaza.

On 9/11, the Israeli cabinet gave the necessary approval (14-2) to complete the IDF withdrawal and declare an end of military rule in Gaza. With the synagogues still in place, the PA declared the cabinet decision a "political trap" aimed at leaving the Palestinians in a no-win situation: Israelis would be outraged if the PA dismantled or failed to protect the buildings and Palestinians would be angry if the PA protected them, to say nothing of the uncertainty of the PA's ability to prevent vandalization of such potent symbols of Israeli occupation. Nonetheless, the evening of 9/11, the IDF held a flag-lowering ceremony at the division headquarters and began pulling out the 6 remaining battalions (5,000-6,000 troops), completing the withdrawal just past dawn on 9/12. PA and PLO officials were invited to the ceremony but boycotted on the grounds that attending would constitute endorsement of Israel's position that the occupation of Gaza was over with the withdrawal of troops; the PA viewed that occupation will persist as long as Israel has the ability to control Gaza, militarily and otherwise.

The official completion of the disengagement process came on 9/20, when the last IDF troops left their posts in the 4 West Bank settlements. Even though these areas would stay under full IDF control, the IDF would no longer have a permanent fixed base in the northern West Bank. On 9/21, Israel's Interior Min. approved an order declaring Gaza "foreign territory" and the 4 Israeli checkpoints into the Strip "international crossings," henceforth requiring Israeli and foreign nationals to use passports to cross.

During disengagement, Israel kept up a moderate pace of arrest raids and house searches in the West Bank, where restrictions on Palestinian movement remained high and construction of the separation wall continued (see Chronology for details). Acts of settler violence against Palestinians, a near daily occurrence (see below), increased slightly. As for Gaza, following the settler withdrawal, the IDF resumed raiding, searching, and sometimes occupying Palestinian homes there as well as firing on residential areas, bulldozing land, and occa-

sionally firing on Palestinians attempting to loot vacated settlements or straying near IDF checkpoints; 3 Palestinians were killed (9/6, 9/8, 9/9) and 6 were wounded before the IDF departed on 9/12. On the Palestinian side, a gunman fatally shot (8/29) an IDF soldier near Gaza's evacuated Morag settlement. By 9/20, the comprehensive death toll had reached 4,152 Palestinians and 981 Israelis.

Chaos in Gaza

Even before the IDF completed its Gaza pullout, the PA was having difficulties asserting security control of Gaza given Israel's lack of coordination, the unexpected speed of the disengagement, and the slow ongoing process of rebuilding and reforming the security services, devastated by the IDF during the 5 years of intifada (see Chronology). Palestinian factions, particularly Hamas and Fatah, jockeyed for credit for the Israeli withdrawal. Moreover, the factions reiterated their refusal to disarm after disengagement—Hamas on 8/17 and 8/20, and the Abu Rish Brigades (a Fatah offshoot), the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade (AMB), and the Fatah Hawks all on 9/5—stating that armed struggle against the occupation was legal under international law and would continue.

Israel gave the PA only 5 days advance warning of its final pullout and, as may have been anticipated in this environment, chaos quickly ensued upon its completion. Palestinians, waking up on 9/12 to find the IDF gone, quickly overran PA security forces to enter the evacuated settlements, scavenging some of the synagogues and greenhouses (the PA was able to safeguard others) and demolished structures for anything that could be sold or used (windows, wiring, metal fixtures, even decorative plantings), and setting 4 synagogues on fire. Palestinians also removed permanent roadblocks across the Strip and flocked to beaches to swim for the first time since the intifada began. Most important, 100s of joyous Palestinians overran the Rafah border crossing and entered Egypt, many of them to see relatives they had not seen in decades, others to buy cheaper Egyptian goods or simply to get out of Gaza, some for the first time in their lives; Palestinian residents of Egyptian Rafah also entered Gaza to see their homes and relatives abandoned in 1967. Panicked Egyptian border guards in one area opened fire while attempting to control a crowd, killing 1 Palestinian. The IDF also fired on Palestinians who got close to the n. Gaza border fence, wounding 1.

The looting and flood of Palestinians across the Rafah border lasted for 5 days. Admitting temporary defeat, Egypt declared (9/13) the Rafah border open for several days as a good-will gesture, allowing 1,000s of Palestinians to move back and forth across the border each day. On 9/14 and 9/15, Hamas members blew openings in the concrete border wall to allow greater access. While most cross-border traffic was purely civilian, there was at least one incident of weapons being seized (9/13), indicating that some arms almost certainly got into the Strip during this time. Meanwhile, the factions (especially Hamas and Islamic Jihad) started holding increasingly massive, armed victory rallies attended by 10,000s of Palestinians celebrating their new margin of freedom. The level of armed presence and size of the crowds were such that Abbas canceled plans to attend unity celebrations on 9/14 out of concerns about gunmen. On 9/16, the PA and Egypt began asserting control of the border, finally shutting the Rafah crossing and patching the border wall on 9/17 and declaring that it would be sealed for 6 months as Israel demanded (see above); all goods and people would henceforth pass through the Kerem Shalom crossing on the Israel-Egypt-Gaza border. The looting subsided by 9/17, and the large Hamas rallies continued, with cadres parading rocket propelled grenades (RPGs), rockets, and assault rifles in open defiance of repeated calls by Abbas (e.g., 9/13) to halt the “chaos of weapons.” On 9/21, Abbas met with Palestinian faction leaders in Gaza and secured their agreement to stop parading weapons at rallies as of 9/24.

Israel's Postdisengagement Agenda

Israel's actions in the immediate aftermath of the disengagement reinforced Palestinian fears that the unilateral action was meant mainly to secure Israeli control over the West Bank and Jerusalem and to park the peace process. Indeed, before disengagement was completed, Israeli PM Ariel Sharon stated (8/22) that “there will be building in the settlement blocs. . . . Each government since 1967—Right, Left, and national unity—has seen strategic importance in specific areas. I will build.” He specifically mentioned that Ma’ale Adumim would “continue to grow and be connected to Jerusalem” and that Ariel and surrounding settlements “will remain a part of Israel forever.” And indeed, a day after completing the withdrawal of settlers on 8/23, Israel confirmed (8/24) plans to seize some 1,588 d.

of West Bank Palestinian land to complete 10 miles of separation wall around the southern part of Ma’ale Adumim settlement and to add 3,500 housing units there (more than twice the number of units removed under disengagement). On 9/5, Israel approved construction of 117 new housing units in Ariel. Moreover, a significant portion of former Gaza settlers were expected to end up in West Bank and East Jerusalem settlements. For example, half of Morag’s settlers moved to Ofra in the West Bank, and at least 1,000 Neve Dekalim settlers were housed in hotels in Jerusalem. A day after completing the military disengagement from Gaza on 9/11, Sharon and Mofaz separately stated (9/12) that Israel intended “to make every effort to direct resources to the development of the settlement blocs” in the West Bank.

The U.S. clearly supported Israel’s contention that it had made a significant gesture in disengagement and should not be pressed to take previously agreed actions, such as halting ongoing violations of the road map provisions and fulfilling outstanding pledges made at the 2/05 Sharm al-Shaykh summit, or to take new actions, such as further settlement withdrawals, especially in the run-up to Israeli elections in 2006. U.S. Amb. to Israel Dan Kurtzer did, however, state (9/9) that the U.S. still expected Israel to remove the approximately 100 “unauthorized” settlement outposts in the West Bank, but gave no timeline. Even before disengagement was completed, U.S. Pres. George W. Bush stated (8/27, 8/28) that it was up to the Palestinians to respond to Israel’s “courageous” effort by showing that they could “fight terrorism and govern in a peaceful way” and by stepping up to “reject violence, reject terrorism, and build a democracy.” Immediately after disengagement, Bush met (9/14) with Sharon on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) conference in New York to praise him for his “courage.” Afterward, Sharon told the press that Bush realized that “there is no chance now” of resuming peace-making with the Palestinians and likely would not be one soon. Sharon added, “We are building [in West Bank settlements]. . . . Does that make the Americans happy? No. Are there steps against Israel? No.” Sharon further stated (9/16) that he would not freeze settlement expansion until the final status negotiations begin years from now, stressing that “the settlements will be the last phase,” and would be addressed when Israel discusses permanent borders.

The Quartet (European Union [EU], Russia, UN, U.S.) also held a FM-level meeting (9/20) with Sharon on the sidelines of the UNGA session, praising him for his "political courage" for implementing the disengagement and voicing "appreciation" to the PA for keeping the peace during withdrawal. The FMs also called on the PA to crack down on militant groups; called on Israel to facilitate Palestinian elections set for 1/06 and to halt settlement expansion; expressed concern over the separation wall construction; and urged both sides to resume talks immediately on road map implementation. The Quartet also called on Palestinians seeking to run in upcoming elections not to participate in "armed group or militia activities," but stopped short of endorsing Sharon's position that Hamas be excluded from legislative elections. Closed-door Quartet talks the same day focused on how to maintain momentum and build institutions in Gaza and addressed Wolfensohn's calls for a major quick aid infusion to jumpstart the Palestinian economy (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 137).

Israel took limited steps to deal with outstanding disengagement issues. On 9/19, Israeli and PA security officials held their first meeting since the IDF Gaza pullout to discuss security and border control; no agreements were reached. Israel and the PA signed (9/21) an agreement brokered by the EU to establish a joint transportation office that would "initiate, identify, evaluate, and promote . . . transportation infrastructure projects of mutual interest, among others for road and rail, including facilitation measures for the efficient transportation of people and goods." And the PA, EU, and the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) signed (9/22) an accord establishing the Palestinian Shippers Council to train Palestinians in transport, warehouse, port- and border-crossing management and to create a computerized customs clearance operation at the Gaza-Egypt border. On 9/23, the IDF began allowing the PA to open the Rafah crossing for brief periods every week or so to allow the passage of Palestinians with special needs, including pilgrims performing the hajj.

In addition, the IDF, with Israeli cabinet approval, began (9/18) leveling land some 200 m *inside* the n. Gaza border for construction of a security zone and electronic fence along the length of the northern border. Mofaz said that the zone might cut into Palestinian neighborhoods, stating that "if necessary, we will create ghost neighbor-

hoods, we will use artillery to prevent the rocket launchers from entering, even at the price of removing civilians from their homes." On 10/30, the IDF stressed that the zone "will be under the army's control" and that anyone who approaches it, "even by mistake," would be targeted.

Operation First Rain

In addition to its ongoing IDF operations (see above), Israel took military steps at significant stages of the disengagement process to reinforce that the withdrawals were exceptional, not the prelude to further "concessions" to Palestinian violence. Immediately after settlers were evacuated on 8/23, the IDF resumed assassinations. (The last known assassination had been on 8/1.) On 8/24, IDF undercover units raided Tulkarm refugee camp (r.c.) and assassinated 2 AMB and 1 Islamic Jihad member, also killing 2 bystanders and wounding 3. On 8/28, Islamic Jihad and the AMB retaliated by staging a suicide bombing in Beersheba (the first suicide bombing since 7/12), which killed the lone Islamic Jihad bomber and injured 2 Israeli security guards and 8 civilians. Egyptian security envoy Omar Sulayman immediately went (8/29) to Gaza to meet with AMB and Islamic Jihad leaders, persuading them to reaffirm their commitment to the 2/05 cease-fire and stressing the importance of maintaining the momentum of the disengagement; the groups claimed that the bombing was a one-time retaliation for the 8/24 assassinations. He held further talks on cementing the cease-fire and capitalizing on disengagement with Abbas (8/30) and the other Palestinian factions (8/31).

Completion of the military disengagement on 9/20 again was followed almost immediately by the IDF's assassination (9/23) of 3 Islamic Jihad members in a raid on Tulkarm. Islamic Jihad quickly responded with a barrage of rocket fire from Gaza on Sederot inside Israel, causing no damage or injuries. This first postdisengagement cross-border strike was followed later that day by a devastating explosion at a huge Hamas rally in Gaza's Jabaliya r.c. that killed at least 15 and as many as 21 Palestinians and wounded at least 100. Rather than admit that its militants had carelessly mishandled a Qassam rocket in a massive crowd (it later acknowledged this and offered compensation), Hamas accused Israel and launched rockets of its own. The Islamic Jihad and Hamas volleys continued overnight, with more than 30 rockets fired, lightly wounding 5 Israelis.

On 9/24, the IDF sent helicopters back into Gaza to fire on alleged weapons factories and warehouses, sealed the West Bank and Gaza crossings, fired missiles from naval vessels at Palestinian fishermen going out to sea, dropped leaflets on Gaza warning of harsh retaliation against further rocket fire, and reminded Abbas that the PA was now officially responsible for preventing attacks from Gaza. Later that day, the IDF assassinated 3 Hamas members in a helicopter strike on n. Gaza, and F-16s bombed open areas inside the n. Gaza border used as rocket launch sites, while tanks, artillery, and infantry gathered along the border in apparent preparation for a major operation.

Late that evening, Sharon convened his security cabinet to seek approval for a forceful response that would send the message that Israel would not tolerate Gazans retaliating against Israel whenever there is an incident in the West Bank. (Israel wanted to keep a hard differentiation between the West Bank and Gaza operationally, treating Gaza as an independent country and the West Bank as it has since 1967.) The security cabinet approved **Operation First Rain**, an "all-out continuous offensive" using artillery, air strikes, and assassinations in Gaza, and warned that if Palestinian violence continued after several days, the full cabinet would convene to consider sending infantry back into the Strip. Separately, a senior IDF officer threatened that Israel would "take Gaza back to the beginning" if there were further Israeli casualties.

On 9/25, the IDF continued to mass troops on the n. Gaza border, began to break the sound barrier over Gaza roughly every 2 hours (which continued at least through 9/30), and fired artillery shells from Nahal Oz into open areas of Bayt Hanun (marking Israel's first shelling of Gaza since 1967). Overnight on 9/24 and during the day on 9/25, the IDF conducted air strikes on Gaza, assassinating 2 senior Islamic Jihad members (wounding 4 bystanders), hitting the homes of 3 senior AMB members and a senior Palestinian Resistance Comm. (PRC) member in apparent assassination attempts (injuring 17 Palestinians), and striking a Hamas-run school (injuring 23 bystanders) and a cultural center run by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). Although Operation First Rain was only against Gaza, the IDF also launched (9/25) the largest arrest raids across the West Bank since 2/05, targeting Hamas and Islamic Jihad, detaining 207 Palestinians on 9/25 alone, including West Bank Hamas leader Hasan Yusuf and

senior member Muhammad Ghazzal. (Israeli military officials suggested on 9/30 that the raids were aimed at crippling Hamas before legislative elections in 1/06.) The U.S. response was to declare (9/25) that "we all know that the terrorists are trying to provoke Israel... at a very sensitive time" and that "we fully understand Israel's right to defend itself."

Although there had been no Palestinian violence emanating from Gaza since the morning of 9/24 and despite a Hamas pledge late 9/25 that it would not fire more rockets, the IDF vowed (9/26) that Operation First Rain would continue. Through 10/2, the IDF conducted predominantly overnight operations, launching helicopter and F-16 air strikes on AMB, Fatah, Hamas, and PFLP targets across Gaza and continuing artillery and air strikes on missile launching sites in n. Gaza. The IDF also targeted (9/26) the Rafah home of a PFLP member in what may have been an assassination attempt (injuring 2 bystanders). Arrest raids in the West Bank continued, with another 200 Palestinians or more detained, including 30 Hamas election officials and 17 Hamas candidates in the upcoming municipal and legislative elections, and resulting in the death (9/29) of 2 wanted AMB members in Balata r.c. in what may have been assassinations and of several other militants in exchanges of fire (see Chronology for details). The IDF also raided at least 8 Islamic charities, confiscating files and equipment. Meanwhile, all Palestinian factions reaffirmed their cease-fire on 9/27, though unidentified Palestinians launched several rockets and a mortar into Israel on 9/27, causing no damage or injuries.

Israel officially "suspended" Operation First Rain on 10/2 to "see if the Palestinian Authority is willing and capable of taking advantage of the new situation." IDF Central Command head Brig. Gen. Dan Harel said (10/27) that the operation successfully "achieved the objectives and created deterrence. . . . We made it clear to everyone that there's a new situation here, that we don't intend to engage in a specific clash with this or that terrorist cell." Rather, the IDF will set new "rules of the game" based on creation of a "balance of terror," as on the northern border with Lebanon. By 10/2, the comprehensive death toll had reached 4,181 Palestinians and 982 Israelis.

Israel Stalls Further Progress

Even as Operation First Rain continued, Abbas announced (9/28) that he had been invited to Washington to meet Bush on 10/20

to discuss ways of building on disengagement to move the peace process forward and that he also had tentative plans to meet with Sharon on 10/2. The quick wrap up of the IDF operation combined with the strange timing of Abbas's announcement at the height of fighting raised speculation that the U.S. had intervened to halt the escalation, offering Abbas the Bush meeting as a way to pressure Israel to rein in its forces. The U.S., which reportedly pressed Israel to consent to the Abbas-Sharon meeting, hoped that it would result in agreements on outstanding issues that could be given high profile during Abbas's Washington visit and would give Palestinians a sense that disengagement was progress. Abbas chief of staff Rafiq al-Husseini outlined (10/5) the PA's 5 priorities following disengagement: continuing democracy and reform efforts (including halting the security chaos in the territories and convincing Palestinians that negotiations are more successful than armed struggle in achieving national aims); improving the Gaza economy (including resolving border-crossing and safe-passage issues); securing Israel's fulfillment of its outstanding 2/05 Sharm al-Shaykh pledges (i.e., freezing separation wall and settlement construction, easing restrictions on Palestinian movement, turning over more West Bank towns to PA security control); returning to the road map and talks leading to a two-state solution; and starting discussion of final status issues immediately. Regarding halting security chaos in the territories, Husseini said that Abbas intended to "start with his own house" by bringing the AMB into the security forces, before trying to deal with Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

Meanwhile, Sharon strategy adviser Eyal Arad floated (9/27) what was seen as a trial balloon for Israeli opinion and a warning to Palestinians: In a speech to a local convention, he warned that if diplomacy with the Palestinians proved "to be futile," Israel would adopt "a strategy of unilaterally determining the permanent borders of the State of Israel," meaning "withdrawal to and annexation of territory that we would not evacuate" under any final status arrangement. Arad's approach was echoed the next day by outgoing IDF intelligence chief Maj. Gen. Aharon Ze'evi and former head of IDF strategic planning Eyal Giladi, who emphasized the need for continued Israeli unilateral actions in their addresses to a Tel Aviv University symposium. Sharon, however, said only that "there is no plan besides the road map."

The Abbas-Sharon meeting planned for 10/2 was delayed, with sharp differences in expectations. The PA wanted a meeting that would give Palestinians a sense of continued significant movement after disengagement, while the Sharon administration wanted a symbolic meeting only. The PA had demanded Israeli steps on turning over West Bank towns, the release of more prisoners, the return of Palestinians expelled from the territories since the start of the al-Aqsa intifada, and a halt to construction of the separation wall, but Israel reportedly agreed (10/7) only to reactivate dormant bilateral comms. on a prisoner release and security issues that were established after the 2/05 Sharm al-Shaykh conference. (There was no indication as to whether these committees actually convened.) On 10/10, the Abbas-Sharon meeting was postponed indefinitely.

Meanwhile, Wolfensohn returned to the region on 10/6 and oversaw 11 days of talks on the Rafah crossing, monitoring mechanisms, the customs envelope, and security. The sides noted some progress—though no agreement—particularly the parties' willingness formally to discuss the possibility of having EU monitors at the Rafah crossing as well as cameras that would allow Israel to observe real-time movement. The sides also discussed, but did not reach agreement on, a World Bank recommendation that 3 routes for bus, cargo, and passenger vehicle convoys be established linking Gaza with the northern, central, and southern West Bank "because of the restrictions Israel imposes on movement within the West Bank." Independently, Israel took grudging steps, such as allowing (10/8) Palestinian fishermen to resume fishing within 9 nautical miles of the Gaza coast (under the Oslo agreement, they were allowed out 20 nautical miles), reopening (10/9) the Qarni crossing (closed 9/24) for transportation of goods (allowing 40–50 trucks/day exporting goods from Gaza and 250 trucks/day importing goods from Israel and the West Bank); and reopening (10/10) the Sufa commercial crossing into Gaza (also closed on 9/24). Israel also complained (10/8) that Egypt was not doing enough to prevent smuggling.

By mid-10/05, Wolfensohn's patience had reached its limit. After sending (ca. 10/16) harsh private letters to both Israel and the PA strongly criticizing their glacier-like progress, Wolfensohn publicly released (10/17) a highly critical periodic report on the economic issues relating to disengagement. Stressing that he was "disappointed that none of the key movement issues has

been resolved," he warned that "without a dramatic improvement in Palestinian movement and access within appropriate security arrangements for Israel, the economic revival essential to a resolution of the conflict will not be possible" and that "the future will either be one of peace and development or one of conflict." He forwarded the report to the Quartet with a strong letter (dated 10/16), criticizing Israel for moving slowly on issues vital to the economic recovery of Gaza and warning that it could undermine PA efforts to improve security and attract investment. In the letter (which was not made public), Wolfensohn criticized Israel's failure to move forward on proposals for improving movement at crossings between Israel and Gaza, safe-passage, and allowing Palestinian workers into Israel (fewer than 100/day were presently entering). Specifically, he noted that "the Israelis have not agreed to accept the EU's generous offer to consider the role of 'a third party'" in supervising the Rafah crossing temporarily; that Israel had unnecessarily suspended discussions on the Gaza air and sea ports until agreements on Rafah were reached; that safe-passage could be finalized in "2-3 days of concentrated efforts" but that Israel had dragged its feet since agreeing to discuss the matter with the PA 6 weeks previously. He also noted that Israel had asked the U.S. to suspend a USAID-funded study into the best type of safe-passage link and that Israel had not taken any action to implement the agreements in principle reached in 6/05 to escort convoys of Palestinian cargo trucks and passenger vehicles between Gaza and the West Bank. Finally, he commented further that "the Government of Israel, with its important security concerns, is loath to relinquish control, almost acting as though there has been no withdrawal, delaying making difficult decisions and preferring to take difficult matters back into slow-moving subcommittees," while the PA "has undergone further erosion in its capability to cohere around key issues and in some cases must come forward with creative proposals of its own." In passing, Wolfensohn also noted that debris has not been removed from Gaza settlement sites because of delays by Egypt.

In this pessimistic mood, the Abbas-Bush meeting took place on 10/20 and resulted in no major statements or initiatives. Members of the PA team expressed disappointment (10/20) that Bush gave them nothing new to take back to the Palestinian people that could provide optimism or a sense of move-

ment. Instead, Bush urged Abbas to begin cracking down on Palestinian militant groups immediately and cautioned that a Palestinian state might not be established by the time he leaves office. Abbas agreed to do what he could to rein in militants but stated that he needed help to rebuild PA institutions and greater Israeli cooperation. He also urged the U.S. to press Israel to agree to the setting up of an Israeli-Palestinian back channel; if back-channel negotiations began soon, he believed that a state could be achieved by 2009.

Israel's West Bank Road Plan

While Israel avoided any easing of restrictions on Palestinians or building on the disengagement, it moved forward on actions aimed at deepening and maximizing its control of the West Bank and reducing the Palestinians' margin of maneuver. On 10/16, as diplomatic efforts seemed to be gearing up, Israel ambushed and assassinated a wanted Islamic Jihad military commander in Jenin, seriously wounding a bystander. Within hours, the AMB killed 3 Jewish settlers and wounded 5 in two drive-by shootings near Gush Etzion settlement outside Bethlehem and Eli settlement outside Ramallah. Overnight on 10/16, the IDF launched arrest raids in villages around Hebron, Jenin, Ramallah, and Tulkarm. On 10/17, the IDF suspended all contacts with the PA, closed 2 stretches of the main north-south West Bank artery (Route 60) between Jerusalem and Ramallah in the north and Jerusalem and Hebron in the south to private Palestinian vehicles, and reimposed recently dismantled checkpoints around Bethlehem, Hebron, and Ramallah.

Two days later, on 10/19, Israel announced that it was considering a far-reaching plan that would bar all private Palestinian vehicles from all main roads in the West Bank "to protect Israeli motorists from roadside shootings." It would also drastically expand the system of settler-only bypass roads and bridges with the aim of completely separating the Palestinian and Israeli transportation networks within 2 years and barring all Palestinian workers' entry into Israel within 3 years. The unprecedented measures outlined in the plan made it a significant policy shift, but Israeli officials downplayed it, describing it as "a pre-existing plan that [is] being dusted off . . . following the disengagement" and stating that the IDF was only implementing "parts of the plan as an immediate response to terrorism" and would only implement the plan

in full if the PA collapsed. The PA denounced (10/19) the Israeli announcement as proof that disengagement was a ploy to permit “the official introduction of an apartheid system” in the West Bank that could pave the way for Israel’s unilateral annexation of large swaths of West Bank territory.

Meanwhile, despite the withdrawal from Gaza, the IDF continued to work on the n. Gaza “security” zone, dipping into Gaza territory (see above) and to bulldoze (10/4–5, 10/23) large areas in Abasan south of Kissufim crossing to erect (10/23) observation towers and a new military post. The IDF also fatally shot (10/9) three Palestinians near Dayr al-Balah who attempted to sneak into Israel from Gaza to find work. In the West Bank, Israeli violence continued at a moderate level, whereas Palestinian violence was low (see Chronology for details), with the IDF continuing widespread arrest raids and house searches and firing on stone-throwing youths. Jewish settler violence against Palestinians also continued. AMB gunmen fired (10/21, 10/22) on IDF patrols, injuring 2 soldiers; 1 AMB member was killed by return fire. Palestinians also threw a pipe bomb at an Israeli border patrol south of Jerusalem, lightly wounding 3 officers. As of 10/24, the comprehensive death toll had reached 4,190 Palestinians and 986 Israelis.

Operation Starting All Over Again

In the predawn hours of 10/24, the IDF raided and imposed a curfew on Nur al-Shams r.c. and Tulkarm, fatally shooting an Islamic Jihad military commander and his aide in an apparent assassination. Hours later, Islamic Jihad fired 5 rockets from Gaza into Israel, causing no damage or injuries. The IDF immediately responded with air strikes and artillery fire on open areas in n. Gaza used for rocket launches, shelled PA security force sites in n. Gaza from naval vessels (no damage or injuries reported), resumed sonic booms over Gaza, and closed the Erez and Qarni border crossings. On 10/25, the IDF declared areas of Bayt Hanun a closed military zone, warning Palestinians in the area not to leave their homes; carried out predawn air strikes on an AMB building in n. Gaza (severe damage, no injuries) and a cultural center in Rafah linked to Islamic Jihad (damaging the building and 2 nearby houses, injuring 5 bystanders); and continued heavy air and artillery strikes on open areas of n. Gaza. Palestinians and the IDF continued to exchange fire into the early afternoon of 10/26, causing no damage or injuries (see Chronology).

On the afternoon of 10/26, an Islamic Jihad suicide bomber retaliating for the 10/24 assassination detonated a device in an open-air market in Hadera, killing 5 Israelis, wounding 6 seriously and 14 moderately. Late that evening, the Israeli cabinet approved **Operation Starting All Over Again**—a “broad and nonstop” offensive (explicitly including assassinations) against “terrorism” in the West Bank and Gaza to continue until “terrorism” ends. The cabinet said that there were no plans for a ground offensive into Gaza at present but that restrictions on Palestinian movement across the West Bank would be tightened and diplomatic offensives raised to pressure Syria to stop hosting Islamic Jihad in Damascus. The IDF immediately began air strikes on suspected launch sites in n. Gaza. By the morning of 10/27, the IDF had sealed the West Bank and Gaza; recommended that Palestinians in n. Gaza not leave their homes; imposed a general curfew across the West Bank and closures on all Palestinian population centers in the n. West Bank; and put in place road closures cutting the n. West Bank off from the rest of the territory, barring all Palestinian private vehicles in the north.

Over the next 4 days, the IDF focused assaults on Gaza, deploying 3 new artillery units (2 outside s. Gaza and 1 outside n. Gaza) and massing troops on the border in case the Israeli cabinet called for a ground invasion. The attacks included mock raids and round-the-clock sonic booms over Gaza (UNRWA reported more than 350 windows and doors blown out in its facilities alone, while the PA Health Min. reported a 30–40% increase in spontaneous miscarriages) and frequent F-16 air strikes on suspected rocket launching sites; in the case of an air strike on Jabaliya r.c., Israel assassinated Islamic Jihad’s n. Gaza commander, killing 5 others (including at least 3 bystanders) and wounding 19. In the West Bank, the IDF began erecting a massive new checkpoint at Tapuach Junction south of Nablus that would permanently sever the Nablus and Jenin districts from the rest of the West Bank, creating a northern West Bank canton, and conducted arrest raids targeting Islamic Jihad, particularly in Bethlehem, Jenin, and Nablus. Meanwhile, Palestinians (predominantly Islamic Jihad; Hamas remained quiet during the operation) also fired several dozen rockets, mortars, and anti-tank shells into Israel, causing no damage or injuries.

On 10/28, the U.S. called on Israel to show restraint and resume talks with Abbas

and urged the PA to "act against terrorist groups." Sharon rejected the call, saying Israel's "message cannot be one of silence and restraint after such a terrible attack" as the Hadera bombing. On 10/30, Islamic Jihad announced that it would halt all rocket attacks from Gaza if Israel ceased targeting its members, but hours later, the IDF assassinated 2 more Islamic Jihad members, killing 1 bystander and wounded at least 6, in a raid on a house in Qabatya. Islamic Jihad resumed rocket strikes immediately, causing no damage or injuries.

Although the IDF did not publicly declare Operation Starting All Over Again either ended or suspended, the offensive tapered off after 10/30, most likely under pressure from the U.S. Fourteen Palestinians and 5 Israelis had been killed during the week, bringing the comprehensive toll to 4,204 Palestinians and 991 Israelis by 10/31.

The Rafah Arrangements

Israel and the PA resumed talks on the Rafah crossing and border-control issues on 10/30 under Wolfensohn's auspices. Progress at the talks, which continued almost daily until 11/13, was plodding and the sides frequently expressed deep frustration and traded accusations of failing to coordinate in good faith. Nonetheless, the Israeli cabinet approved in principle (11/1) the presence of EU monitors at the Rafah crossing. EU special envoy Marc Otte arrived (11/6) soon after to discuss details. Differences persisted, however, and by 11/10 the talks deadlocked over the mandate of the EU team (would they be advisers only, as the PA desired, or have veto power over who entered Gaza, as Israel wanted). With a continuing stalemate, Wolfensohn on 11/13, citing inexcusable delays caused by the PA, a lack of decision making and sense of urgency on the part of Israel, and Israeli security concerns that made it difficult to close a deal, publicly threatened to end his mission and return to private life if serious progress was not made in 72 hours.

Wolfensohn made his ultimatum the same day U.S. Secy. of State Condoleezza Rice arrived in Israel on a brief Middle East tour crafted around a relatively minor address she was to give at a democracy forum in Israel. On 11/14, Rice met separately with Abbas and Sharon, urging both sides to make concessions to move the peace process forward, particularly pressing Sharon to make a gesture to boost Abbas's standing. She also stated that the U.S. expected Israel to ful-

fill its pledges to halt settlement expansion and dismantle unauthorized settlement outposts. To Abbas's reported statement that he could not take steps against armed Palestinian groups until after the 1/06 elections, Rice responded that Washington would hold him to that timeline.

Meanwhile, Wolfensohn's talks on the Gaza crossings continued throughout the day, with Rice's participation. After a mid-day break, Rice reconvened the session and informed the Israeli and Palestinian teams that no one, including she, would sleep until a deal was reached. After all-night shuttle negotiations, Rice announced (11/15; in the presence of Wolfensohn and EU foreign policy adviser Javier Solana) that Israel and the PA had agreed on a schedule and process for Gaza border openings. The terms were outlined in two papers, the "Agreement on Movement and Access" and the "Agreed Principles for Rafah Crossing," together referred to as the Rafah arrangements (see Doc. A4). Under the deal, Israel would aim to allow the PA to open the Rafah terminal by 11/25, with EU monitors providing oversight and with guarantees that Israel could observe movement in real-time by remote camera. Israel also agreed to establish bus convoys between Gaza and the West Bank by 12/15 and truck convoys for goods by 1/15; to ease restrictions on Palestinian travel in the West Bank to a necessary minimum by 12/31; to allow 150 trucks/day through Qarni crossing by 12/31 and 450/day (its pre-intifada level) by the end of 2006; to allow the PA to begin work immediately on the Gaza sea port, with pledges to donors that Israel would not interfere with port operations; to guarantee that all Palestinian agricultural goods be allowed out of Gaza during the 2005 harvest and to "ensure the continued opportunity to export." For 1 year, only Palestinian ID holders would be allowed to cross through Rafah, with exceptions possible with advance permission by both Israel and the PA. Israel could protest the entry of any individual and order individuals held for up to 6 hours but would not have ultimate veto power on entry.

In parallel, Israel approved a request for Egypt to transfer ammunition to the PA security forces in Gaza. (The first shipment, funded by the U.S., arrived on 11/6.) But it also postponed (11/1), without explanation, the signing of an agreement with the UN Development Program (UNDP) on removing the rubble of Jewish settlements in Gaza.

During this period, Israeli-Palestinian violence continued (see Chronology for details). The IDF assassinated (11/1) 1 AMB member and 1 Hamas member in an air strike on Jabaliya r.c., wounding 10 bystanders; assassinated a senior Hamas member in Nablus on 11/15; fired across the border into Gaza twice (11/9, 11/12), killing 2 Palestinians and wounding 1, allegedly as they were planting roadside bombs; fired (11/12) on a Palestinian fishing boat that strayed out of Palestinian waters off Gaza, seriously wounding 1; and conducted major arrest raids targeting Islamic Jihad in Jenin, Nablus, and Qabatyia. An IDF soldier was wounded in an arrest raid in Jenin on 11/1 and died on 11/2. Palestinians fired several rockets and mortars, injuring 1 IDF soldier and 5 Israeli civilians in 2 separate strikes on 11/3. The IDF responded with artillery fire on Gaza, damaging (11/4) 5 Palestinian homes in Khan Yunis but causing no injuries. Settler violence also continued.

By the end of the quarter, Palestinian excitement over disengagement had dissipated: while they enjoyed freedom of movement within Gaza itself, Israeli control seemed undiminished, as it consolidated its new n. Gaza buffer zone, ordered closed military zones and recommended curfews inside Gaza, and bulldozed Gaza land to reinforce IDF border positions. Two full-scale military operations had been launched against Gaza since the withdrawal, and Israel's actions on the ground in the West Bank raised grave concerns.

Intifada Data and Trends

During the quarter, at least 83 Palestinians and 13 Israelis were killed (compared to 78 Palestinians and 14 Israelis last quarter), bringing the toll at 11/15 to at least 4,215 Palestinians (including 46 Israeli Arabs and 17 unidentified Arab cross-border infiltrators), 992 Israelis (including 307 IDF soldiers and security personnel, 200 settlers, 485 civilians), and 56 foreign nationals (including 2 British suicide bombers).

This quarter, Israel carried out 20 clear assassinations (up from 10 last quarter), killing 8 bystanders and wounding 43. The following individuals were assassinated this quarter: the AMB's Mahmud Hudaib (8/24), Majdi Hussein (8/24), and Hassan Madhun (11/1); Hamas's Nafiz Abu Hassanian (9/24), Rawad Farhat (9/24), Fawzi Abu Qara' (11/1), and Amjad Hinnawi (11/14); and Islamic Jihad's 'Adil al-Ghawi (8/24), Ra'id Ajaj (9/23), Said al-Ashqar (9/23), Jamil Ja'ara

(9/23), Muhammad Khalil (9/25), Nassir Barhum (9/25), Nahid Abu Ghanim (10/16), Luay Saadi (10/24), Majid Askar (10/24), Shadi Muhanna (10/29), Muhammad Qandil (10/29), Jihad Zarkana (10/30), and Arshad Abu Zayd (10/30). The IDF also attempted to assassinate a Hamas member on 8/24, and may have assassinated 2 AMB members on 9/29, wounding 1 bystander. Incidents on 9/24, 9/25, and 9/26 may have been failed assassination attempts targeting 2 AMB members, 2 Hamas members, 1 PRC member, and 1 member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP); 19 bystanders were injured (see Chronology for details).

During the quarter, there were 2 Palestinian suicide bombings (up from 1 last quarter) that killed 5 and injured 20 (compared to 5 killed and about 46 injured last quarter): the first, on 8/28, was carried out by an Islamic Jihad member but was claimed as a joint operation by Islamic Jihad and the AMB; the second, on 10/26, was claimed by Islamic Jihad alone.

Palestinian use of mortars, rockets, and roadside bombs declined by about 50% this quarter. All rocket and mortar launches were from Gaza. There were relatively few prior to Israel's assassination of 3 Islamic Jihad members on 9/23: only 4 rockets and 2 mortars, all fired before Gaza disengagement was completed on 9/12. Within hours of the 9/23 assassinations, however, Islamic Jihad resumed the attacks, which were escalated by Hamas later that day (after the disastrous mishandling of a Qassam rocket by Hamas members at a rally in Khan Yunis caused an explosion that killed as many as 21 Palestinians, and Hamas falsely blamed Israel). Attacks ceased on 9/29, then resumed again after the Israeli assassination of another Islamic Jihad member on 10/16, and continued at a moderate level to the end of the quarter, generally following the pattern of IDF violence (see Chronology for details). None of the Palestinian rocket attacks caused any fatalities; 3 Israeli border police were wounded on 10/18, and 1 IDF soldier and 5 Israeli civilians were injured in 2 separate attacks on 11/3.

House demolitions nearly ceased this quarter, as the IDF continued to suspend "punitive" home demolitions (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 136), citing the lull in Palestinian violence that followed the 2/05 Sharm al-Shaykh summit. One house in Gaza's al-Mawasi region (8/17) and 2 in East Jerusalem (9/13, 11/7), however, were demolished for being built without permits.

Aside from bulldozing for construction of the separation wall, which was ongoing, IDF bulldozing of Palestinian lands in the West Bank involved only a handful of reported incidents involving clearing areas for construction of new IDF posts (11/10), checkpoints (9/6), or settler-only bypass roads (9/19). In Gaza, IDF bulldozing centered on clearing the n. Gaza buffer zone and expanding border crossings (see Chronology).

Jewish settler violence against Palestinians remained a near-daily occurrence this quarter. Incidents, which occurred mainly in the West Bank, included settlers rampaging en masse through Palestinian areas (8/17, 8/20, 8 incidents on 8/22, 8/25, 10/29), occupying Palestinian homes (8/18, 8/19, 3 on 10/26), fencing off land for expansion of settlements or creation of new outposts (9/2, 10/10, 11/11, 11/15), beating or otherwise attacking Palestinians (8/18, 2 on 8/22, 8/23, 8/28, 9/4, 9/5, 9/26, 9/30, 10/12, 10/17, 10/22, 10/25, 10/27, 2 on 10/28, 10/30, 11/9), vandalizing property (8/16, 2 on 8/17, 8/18, 8/19, 8/22, 9/4, 9/14, 9/18, 9/29, 10/15, 10/19, 10/28, 10/29, 11/6, 11/13), setting fire to property (8/16, 8/17, 8/19), firing on Palestinian homes (8/17), destroying crops and uprooting trees (particularly after the olive harvest began; 8/22, 8/28, 8/30, 9/17, 10/3, 10/16, 10/18, 10/20, 10/21, 11/7, 11/12, 11/14), and killing livestock (9/4, 9/17). In addition, settlers shot and killed 5 Palestinians (8/17) and wounded 1 Palestinian (8/21) and injured at least 3 Palestinians (2 on 9/11, 10/1) in deliberate hit and run incidents. Of 69 reported incidents (down from 73 last quarter), nearly half (28) occurred in Hebron, with the remainder occurring around Homesh and Sanur (12), in Gaza (6), and near Nablus (11), Qalqilya (9), Bethlehem (3), and Ramallah (1). Most incidents in Gaza (e.g., 2 on 8/17, 8/18) and a handful in the West Bank (e.g., 8/16, 8/18, 8/19, 8/20, 8 incidents on 8/22) were essentially protests against disengagement. Of the 69 cases, IDF troops were escorting the settlers and did not stop the attacks (3 cases); were in the area and observed, but did not intervene (at least 4 cases); and stepped in to halt the violence (5 cases). Of note: after the drive-by shootings of 3 settlers on 10/16, IDF soldiers in Hebron stopped (10/20) escorting Palestinian children to school past Jewish settlements, fearing that they themselves could be attacked by angry settlers seeking revenge against Palestinians. Escorts began in fall 2004 after repeated attacks on

children by settlers from Ma'on. The attacks resumed on 10/21.

At least 4 Palestinians who had spent more than 2 years under Israeli administrative detention reported (10/5) that they recently had received official offers from the Israeli military prosecutors through their lawyers to be "voluntarily deported" for 2 years rather than face continued detention. None of them took the offer.

The World Health Organization reported (9/23) that more than 60 Palestinian women had given birth at Israeli checkpoints since 2000 (31 in 2000/2001, 16 in 2002, 8 in 2003, and 6 in 2004) and that 36 of their babies died.

On 10/6, the Israeli High Court barred as illegal under international law the IDF's use of Palestinians as human shields. DM Mofaz vowed (10/7) to appeal to the court personally to reverse the ruling, arguing that the practice saves Israeli lives and that banning it would also inflict more casualties on the Palestinians because the army would be forced to use broader military actions, such as bombarding entire buildings where wanted persons were located. Meanwhile, IDF Chief of Staff Maj. Gen. Dan Halutz ordered (10/7) officers to comply with the ruling until a "creative solution" can be found. By early 11/05, the IDF Operations Directorate had reportedly issued a new policy known as the "outstretched arm," allowing IDF soldiers to "ask Palestinians to assist in mediating" between soldiers and wanted men. The policy reportedly was used at least twice before the end of the quarter.

In a poll conducted (ca. 10/5) by Israel's Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, 46% of Israeli Jews favored transferring Palestinians out of the occupied territories, 31% favored transferring Israeli Arabs out of the country, 60% favored encouraging Israeli Arabs to leave the country, 61% believe Israeli Arabs pose a threat to the state, and 80% opposed Israeli Arabs being involved in important decisions, such as delineating Israel's borders.

Separation Wall

Construction on Israel's separation wall in the West Bank continued, with monitors reporting that most construction this quarter continued to be concentrated around Jerusalem to the north and south, with new segments begun northwest of Jerusalem (9/15), southwest of Hebron (11/6), and near Azariyya in East Jerusalem (11/10). A segment of the wall near Qalandia crossing south of Ramallah was completed on

8/20. The IDF also issued (ca. 10/13) military orders confiscating 60 d. northwest of Nablus for the creation of a buffer zone around Shavei Shomron settlement that will cut off Palestinian access to another 100 d. of land.

The Israeli High Court issued (9/15) a unanimous decision calling on the government to consider modifications to an 8-mi segment of the separation wall near Alfe Menashe settlement to facilitate movement for 1,200 Palestinians in 5 nearby villages who would otherwise be trapped between the wall and the Green Line. The decision also reaffirmed the court's position that the wall is legal.

Independent Initiatives

State Dept. reps. met (ca. 10/11) with promoters of the Geneva Accord, marking the first official U.S. engagement with the plan since the U.S.'s lukewarm reception of the initiative soon after it was released in 10/03 (see Special Doc. in *JPS* 130; Quarterly Updates in *JPS* 130, 131), suggesting that the U.S. might be interested in encouraging thinking along the lines of the plan. A group of Israelis and Palestinians, led by 2 former Oslo negotiators, drafted the unofficial peace plan, which they hoped would complement the road map and provide the general outline of final status. The accord, which was denounced by Israel, endorsed by Yasir Arafat, and received wide Israeli and Palestinian public praise, controversially calls for Israel's retention of the largest West Bank settlement blocs, renunciation of the refugee right of return, and Palestinian control of the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif.

In New York, Maj. Gen. (res.) Uzi Dayan, head of Tafnit—"a new political movement (not a party) . . . to help bring about a significant change in Israel's national priorities" that was formed in summer 2005, held (9/20) a press conference to outline a plan for separation of Israel and the Palestinians that envisions completion of the separation wall, Israel's evacuation of 32 West Bank settlements (21,000 settlers) within 3 years, and the redeployment of the IDF along a temporary border that would place the Etzion Bloc, Ariel, Route 443 (Modi'in-Jerusalem), settlements around Jerusalem (including Ma'ale Adumim), Kiryat Arba and the corridor leading to it, the Judean Desert, and the Jordan Valley under Israeli control. If final status were not achieved in a reasonable amount of time, Israel would declare the temporary borders permanent, giving Israel con-

trol of a third of the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem), with 3% of the Palestinian population.

Sweden hosted (9/27-28) a meeting in Stockholm between Fatah members, led by PA Dep. PM Nabil Shaath, and the Israeli Labor party, led by MK Haim Ramon, to discuss the future of Gaza after disengagement. The delegations represent only their parties, not their governments. Sweden previously hosted meetings between Fatah and Labor in 1/04.

INTRA-PALESTINIAN DYNAMICS

Elections

By the opening of the quarter, the PA had held three rounds of municipal elections (12/23/04, 1/27/05, 5/5/05) and planned at least two more before the end of the year, one of which had been set for 9/29. On 8/20, Abbas set the date for legislative elections at 1/25/06.

The fourth round of municipal elections was held as planned on 9/29 in 104 locales in the West Bank. (The first round of elections covered 26 West Bank municipalities, the second 10 Gaza municipalities, and the third 76 West Bank and 18 Gaza locales; see Quarterly Updates in *JPS* 135, 136.) Originally this round was to include another 27 Gaza municipalities and 1 West Bank municipality near settlements evacuated under disengagement, but the PA postponed (8/15) elections in these areas until at least 11/05, arguing that disengagement might still be going on as of 9/29 (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 137). The PA's official results showed (10/1) that Fatah won 51 of 104 municipalities and Hamas won 13, with 40 councils won by coalitions and with overall voter turnout at 84%. Other sources (e.g., *Ha'Aretz* 10/2, *Middle East International* 10/12) argued that when the political leanings of candidates who ran as independents was taken into consideration, Fatah could be said to have won 55 municipalities and Hamas 25-35. Of the 32 largest municipalities, Hamas candidates and clear affiliates won 15 and Fatah 9. It is worth noting that Hamas ran candidates in only 48-56 municipalities, and Fatah ran unopposed in 22; upper bound, this would mean that Hamas won 73% of the races it entered, whereas 43% of Fatah's wins were uncontested.

On 10/12, the PA cabinet decided to hold the fifth round of municipal elections in 44 West Bank constituencies (including al-Bireh, Hebron, Jenin, Nablus, and Ramallah)

and 3 Gaza locales (Fakhari, al-Qarara, and Umm Nasir) on 12/15. No date was set for voting in the 65 West Bank municipalities and several Gaza municipalities remaining, raising questions as to whether voting there would occur before the 1/06 legislative elections, as was previously intended. On 11/13, the PA postponed municipal elections for Hebron, citing Israel's refusal to provide assurances that it would facilitate elections there. But the Israeli FMin. said that the PA never asked Israel to do so, and many Palestinians suspected that the PA truly feared an overwhelming Hamas victory. (Indeed, the decision to postpone was denounced by all factions except Fatah.)

As noted above, senior Israeli officers acknowledged on 9/30 that massive arrest raids in the West Bank paralleling Operation First Rain were in part meant to cripple Hamas in advance of municipal and legislative elections, and analysts believed (see *New York Times*, *Washington Post* 10/1) that the raids did, in fact, negatively affect Hamas's showing in the 9/29 voting. Arrests and raids targeting municipal and legislative candidates continued through the end of the quarter (e.g., 9/20, 10/7). On 9/16 and 9/19, Sharon said that Israel would "make every effort not to help" the PA hold legislative elections (e.g., by easing restrictions on Palestinian movement in the West Bank) unless the PA banned Hamas from participating or forced it first to disarm and amend its charter, adding, "I don't think they can have elections without our help." The U.S. officially said (9/16) that it opposed any attempt to interfere in Palestinian elections but shared Israel's concerns. Independently, U.S. National Security Adviser Frederick Jones said (9/9, 9/16) that U.S. officials would never talk to elected officials who belonged to "terrorist groups," adding, "We do not believe that a democratic state can be built when parties or candidates seek power not through the ballot box but through terrorist activity as well." When Bush in his 10/20 meeting with Abbas did not publicly support Israel's position that Hamas should be barred, Israel shifted (10/23) its tone, arguing that it would be "impractical" to try to hinder the legislative elections if Hamas ran, though it would continue to press the PA to disarm the movement.

On 10/17, 12 Palestinian parties and factions signed a code of conduct regarding campaigning for and adhering to the results of the 1/06 legislative elections, including vowing not to carry arms or use them during public events and electoral activities

(see Doc. B2). Among the signers were the Arab Liberation Front, Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), Fatah, Fida, Palestinian Arab Front, the Palestinian National Initiative (al-Mubadara), the PFLP, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC), the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF), Palestinian Peoples Party (PPP), the Palestinian Popular Struggle Front (PPSF), and al-Sa'iqa. Hamas did not sign. West Bank Hamas leader Shaykh Hasan Yusuf, who represented Hamas in the negotiations, had approved the text but was arrested on 9/25 in the IDF sweeps during Operation First Rain; the Gaza branch of Hamas consequently refused to sign the document in protest of clauses prohibiting campaigning in mosques.

The State Dept. said (10/18) that the U.S. was pushing the PA to take the code of conduct further to require candidates in the 1/06 elections to renounce violence and "unlawful or nondemocratic" methods and to otherwise "tighten up the rules" on what constitutes a party, making it clear that candidates cannot "associate" with violence. U.S. officials argued that action by the PA would make it easier to secure Israel's cooperation to ease restrictions on movement for elections and to secure foreign aid from Congress and the EU. Abbas reportedly said (10/20) that he wanted to enact legislation in line with U.S. wishes after the new PC is elected; though he was receptive to strengthening the rules before elections, Abbas could not be seen to be acting at the demand of the U.S.

Reform Efforts and Governance

Palestinian Council (PC) members held (10/3) a special session on the escalating lawlessness in the territories and endorsed a call on Abbas to form a new cabinet within 2 weeks or face a no-confidence vote against PM Ahmad Qurai's government. The PC also called for the ouster of all heads of the various PA security branches and their deputies because of their failure to halt violence. While they did not explicitly call for Interior M Yusuf's removal, they said that he and Qurai' were equally to blame for the security chaos. Qurai' rejected (10/12) the PC's demands, saying there was not enough time to form a new government before 11/24, when candidate registrations for the 1/06 elections opened. PC members said (10/12) that they would examine Qurai's position and decide whether to move forward with a no-confidence motion to force a government collapse. On 11/9, PC members voted

(22–9, with most of the 85 members absent) against calling a motion.

On 8/20, when Israel's disengagement from Gaza was underway, Abbas signed (8/20) a presidential decree, setting guidelines for use of Gaza land to be evacuated. PA Planning M Ghassan Khatib stated (8/17) that the IDF and settlement lands after disengagement would be turned over to the Palestinian Investment Fund (PIF), which would manage them for 6 months. During that period, fast-track courts would be set up to assess claims to the 3% of the land that Israel confiscated from individual Palestinian owners (ideally this would be completed within 3 months). The PIF would also take bids from private sector companies to manage the agricultural assets on the other 97% of lands. The Planning Min. would finish its land use plans for development of the remaining, nonagricultural areas within the 97%. Greenhouses in Gaza were to be turned over to PalTrade, a quasi-governmental organization established under the auspices of the Palestinian Finance Min. to promote direct trade and joint ventures with Palestinians. PalTrade will operate the greenhouses for one year, then decide whether to "privatize" them. As of 8/24, PalTrade had already signed a deal with the Israeli firm Agrexco, which handles most of Israel's agricultural exports, for the export and marketing of the greenhouse goods to Israel and abroad. (Of note: settlers dismantled 25% of greenhouses before disengagement and Palestinians looted 25% of those remaining after disengagement.) On 10/7, the PA broke ground on the first major development project in Gaza since disengagement—a \$100 m. housing complex for 25,000 Palestinians on the site of Morag settlement, funded by the UAE, that is expected to be completed in 2 years.

Around 9/14, PA FM Nasser al-Kidwa announced his decision to appoint, transfer, or retire Palestinian diplomats abroad in keeping with the new diplomatic corps law passed in 6/05 (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 137). The PLO Political Dept., under Fatah head Faruq al-Qaddumi, was not consulted on the changes. Given that the PA technically is a branch of the PLO, representing only Palestinians inside the occupied territories, Qaddumi has argued that appointments should be under his purview; the Kidwa initiative was viewed by some as a deliberate move by Abbas to sideline Qaddumi.

Abbas nominated (9/18) former secretary of the Palestinian Bar Association, Ahmad al-Maghani, as PA attorney general, replacing Hussein Abu Assi. Abu Assi was slated for

replacement with Abbas's election as president in 1/05, but the dismissal could not be made until a suitable candidate was found.

Palestinian chief justice Zuhayr al-Surani quit (10/13) in protest over PA legislation ratified by Abbas on 10/11 that gives ministers the power to appoint judges, which he argues constitutes political interference in the judiciary, undermining the independence of the judiciary. Previously, judges were appointed by presidential decree after nomination by a panel of 9 senior judges.

Qurai' announced (10/23) plans to establish 5 new camps for training and housing new PA security forces, aimed at bringing the AMB under the PA's authority. The first camps would be set up near Nablus and Ramallah. Fully implemented, the plan would still incorporate only a fraction of AMB members into the security forces.

National Unity and Power Struggles

Nearly a year after Arafat's death in 11/04, power struggles within Fatah continued. At the highest level, rivalry between Abbas (as PLO chairman, PA president, and a senior Fatah member) and Faruq al-Qaddumi (as Fatah head and head of the PLO political dept.) further blurred the lines between the PLO, PA, and Fatah (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 137). In addition to PA FM Kidwa's rotation of the PLO diplomatic corps without consulting Qaddumi (see above), the Fatah Central Comm. (FCC), in a move seen as an attempt to restrict Qaddumi's powers, convened (8/16) an extraordinary meeting in Gaza to declare that there is no official position of Fatah "head" or "chairman" in Fatah's bylaws, but only a position of FCC "commander in chief," whose role is to chair FCC meetings in coordination with the Fatah secretary and 2 deputies.

At a broader level, Fatah reformers continued, with growing frustration, to jockey for power against the established Fatah leadership. On 10/18, 244 Fatah members in Gaza (mostly from Rafah) issued a letter announcing their resignation ahead of 1/06 elections, stating, "We have spent the last ten years trying to improve the conditions in Fatah. During the past five years of the intifada we also made precious sacrifices to reform the party and lead it to a better path. Today we are submitting our resignations in protest against the lack of democracy and accountability in the party" as well as the lack of jobs.

Relations between Fatah and the PA on the one hand and the Fatah breakaway AMB on the other remained ambiguous. For

example, AMB members continued to denounce PA corruption and inadequacy (see below) while at the same time seeking reintegration. With regard to Fatah, on 10/11 the AMB demanded that it be allotted a portion of the 66 spots on the Fatah party list in the Fatah primaries, postponed from last quarter (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 137) and now scheduled for late 11/05. (Under the new election law passed 6/18/05, half of the 132 PC seats will be elected from party lists and half on a constituency basis.) Fatah did not immediately respond, but Abbas issued (10/30) a presidential decree barring members of the PA security services from running or voting in the Fatah primaries unless they resigned their security posts first. Several dozen PA security officials had been planning to run, and the decision would also likely affect AMB members incorporated into the security services as part of the PA reform efforts. Abbas reportedly wanted to create a clear separation between Fatah membership and positions in the security service or PA ministries. It was unclear why the restrictions were not extended to other factions. Also of note, as disengagement drew to a close and the PA began taking responsibility for evacuated sites, the PA recruited (9/7) AMB militias in Gaza to reinforce its security forces around settlements to prevent looting. (Abbas had earlier called on the AMB to provide security reinforcement on 7/19/05 [see Chronology in *JPS* 137], though on a much smaller scale.)

Hamas, too, faced increased tensions with Fatah and the PA this quarter, particularly as the PA tried to assert security control in Gaza after disengagement. PA police clashed (10/2) with Hamas members in Gaza City when they allegedly tried to arrest Muhammad Rantisi, Hamas activist and son of assassinated Hamas leader 'Abd al-'Aziz Rantisi. The violence, which lasted several hours, spread to Shati' r.c. and left 1 PA police officer and 2 Palestinian bystanders dead, and at least 50 Palestinian wounded. During the clashes, Hamas members fired RPGs at 2 police stations and police ran out of ammunition. On 10/5, unidentified Palestinian gunmen allegedly wearing PA police uniforms kidnapped 2 Hamas members in Shati' r.c. In response, Hamas members detained and seriously beat (10/5) a PA general intelligence officer. On 10/6, suspected Hamas members kidnapped, shot, then dumped seriously wounded senior Fatah official Samir al-Juz in Bayt Lahiya. Hours later, a previously unknown group calling itself the Omar Bin al-Khattab Brigades (OBKB; suspected to be

composed of disaffected PA general intelligence officers angry over the 10/2 clashes) kidnapped 3 senior Hamas members in Bethlehem, Hebron, and Tulkarm, stating that "this is a response to Hamas's violations and disregard for law and order and their attacks on security institutions and Palestinian leaders. . . . This is our first response"; the OBKB released (10/7) one captive with an apology. The other Hamas captives presumably were released quickly, but no reports appeared in the press.

In a bid to "show the role of the resistance in liberating Gaza" and boost its legitimacy before the 1/06 elections, Hamas released (9/4) on its Web site the names, photographs, and biographies of its seven top military commanders. Of note: Hamas's Nablus leader Muhammad Ghazzal said (9/21) that Hamas would amend its charter calling for the destruction of Israel and recognize the Jewish state if Israel recognized Palestinians as victims, withdrew to the 1967 lines, and allowed an independent Palestinian state and the right of return.

The National and Islamic Higher Comm. for Coordination of the Intifada (NIHC) reprimanded (10/5) Hamas for its "armed aggression" during clashes in Gaza City on 10/2. Hamas boycotted the session and reportedly considered leaving the NIHC in protest, which would have been a serious blow to the umbrella organization, which has had significant success in mediating relations among the factions. On 10/30, the NIHC met again (Hamas attending) to discuss how to restore calm after the 10/26 Islamic Jihad's bombing, but the factions failed to agree on reinforcing their unilateral cease-fire, with Hamas saying (11/2) that it did not plan to renew the truce when it runs out at the end of the year.

Egypt invited (10/4, 10/26) the PA and Palestinian factions to return to Cairo for national unity talks and talks on extending the cease-fire through the 1/06 elections (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 136). The factions accepted but did not set a date. After the 10/26 suicide bombing, Israel for the first time criticized (10/29) Egypt for hosting the meetings, claiming that it accorded the "terrorist groups" the same status as the PA.

Overall, intra-Palestinian violence seemed to be down slightly this quarter. The one major incident occurred on 9/7, when as many as 100 PRC gunmen stormed the Gaza City home of senior Fatah Revolutionary Council (FRC) member and former Gaza public security chief Musa Arafat, dragged him to the street, fatally shot him, wounded 4

bodyguards, and kidnapped his son Manhal and 3 bodyguards, releasing them soon after. Palestinian security forces were deployed near enough to be able to clearly observe, but they did not intervene. The PRCs initially denied (9/8) responsibility, then stated (9/9) that some PRC members acted independently. The gunmen reportedly were led by Gen. Rashid Abu Shibak, an ally of controversial Civil Affairs M Muhammad Dahlan (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 135). Abbas had retired Musa Arafat, a powerful Gaza figure long considered corrupt, from his post in 4/05 as part of security reform, keeping him on as a security adviser with the symbolic title of minister. In a possibly connected incident, suspected Fatah militants shot and wounded (10/6) PA military intelligence official Bassam Azzam (who was close to assassinated military intelligence chief Musa Arafat) in Bayt Lahiya.

Two incidents targeted Hamas leaders: Unidentified gunman fired (8/19) on the car of West Bank Hamas political leader Shaykh Hasan Yusuf, who was not inside, causing no injuries. Unidentified gunmen fired (10/2) on the Gaza City home of Hamas political leader Mahmud Zahhar, causing damage but no injuries.

Demonstrations against the PA also seemed down slightly. Most protests (some of them armed) involved demands for jobs, higher salaries, and generally more PA support. The majority of these (8/21, 8/30, 9/10, 10/11) were by AMB members seeking jobs and protesting PA corruption. Two (9/4, 10/3) were by PA policemen seeking higher wages and better equipment. And one (lasting 9/4-5) in Khan Yunis was by dozens of unemployed Palestinians demanding jobs and better living conditions.

Kidnappings by Palestinians began for the first time last quarter, with the capture and release of 8 foreigners (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 137), and continued at the same pace this quarter with the capture of 7: Unidentified Palestinian gunmen kidnapped (9/10) an Italian journalist in Dayr al-Balah, releasing him unharmed several hours later without explanation. PA security forces and Hamas members intervened to free 1 American and 1 Palestinian journalist kidnapped by unknown militants on 9/18. On 10/6, 1 Italian and 1 French journalist were kidnapped in Gaza and quickly released by unidentified gunmen who wanted to pressure the PA to address unemployment. AMB members briefly kidnapped (10/12) an American journalist and a British photographer in Khan Yunis, giving no explanation; Fatah secured

their quick release unharmed. In addition to the intra-Palestinian kidnappings mentioned above, a previously unknown group calling itself Knights of the Storm (thought to be a Fatah offshoot) kidnapped (10/18) 2 alleged Palestinian collaborators in Gaza City, saying they took action when the PA security forces failed to do so. The group released the men on 10/25, shooting each in the leg.

Also of note: Gunmen of a previously unknown group called the Islamic Army raided and ordered closed (11/14) a Central Election Commission (CEC) office in Rafah, calling the upcoming elections un-Islamic and a plot by the U.S. and Israel. CEC officials refused to leave, and the gunmen left when PA security forces arrived.

PALESTINIAN OPINION

The following data are excerpted from a poll conducted by Birzeit University's Development Studies Program (DSP) on 11 October 2005. Results are based on a survey of 1,200 men and women from the West Bank and Gaza. The poll, the 22nd in a series, was taken from the DSP's Web site at home.birzeit.edu/dsp.

1. After the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, do you feel secure about yourself, your family, and property?

	West Bank	Gaza	Total
a. Yes	15.6%	46.4%	27.3%
b. To some extent	14.2%	20.0%	16.4%
c. No	68.6%	33.5%	55.2%
d. No opinion	1.6%	0.1%	1.0%

2. Do you believe that the withdrawal from Gaza will deepen Israeli control over the West Bank?

	West Bank	Gaza	Total
a. Yes	75.4%	78.9%	76.7%
b. To some extent	12.2%	11.3%	11.9%
c. No	12.4%	9.9%	11.5%

3. Do you support or oppose a truce agreement that prevents attacks against Israeli targets?

	West Bank	Gaza	Total
a. Support	69.0%	82.9%	74.3%
b. Oppose	26.6%	16.2%	22.6%
c. No opinion	4.4%	1.0%	3.1%

4. Do you support or oppose [the call for the PA to disarm the various militant groups]?

	West Bank	Gaza	Total
a. Support	28.9%	45.4%	35.2%
b. Oppose	66.2%	50.0%	60.0%
c. No opinion	4.9%	4.5%	4.8%

5. If the following blocs run for the legislative elections, which one would you vote for?

	West Bank	Gaza	Total
a. Fatah bloc	48.9%	44.0%	46.8%
b. Hamas bloc	23.5%	26.3%	24.7%
c. PPP, PFLP, DFLP, Fida, Nidal, and Mubadara	8.8%	3.9%	6.7%
d. I will participate, but I will not vote for any of the above	15.6%	20.1%	17.5%
e. I will participate, but I have not decided yet	3.1%	5.7%	4.2%

FRONTLINE STATES

JORDAN

This quarter witnessed little high-level Jordanian-Israeli activity, and what appeared to be Israeli and U.S. attempts to draw the kingdom into deeper participation in Israeli-Palestinian affairs did not meet with much success. Several Israeli announcements (e.g., 9/1, 9/5, 11/14) that King Abdallah would be visiting Israel shortly were met by denials that a trip had been scheduled. Sharon and King Abdallah did meet (9/16) informally on the sidelines of the UNGA session in New York, but discussions were not substantive. Similarly, during talks on bilateral U.S.-Jordanian relations in Washington, Bush urged Abdallah to visit Sharon and Abbas to help advance the peace process, saying "it will be very helpful to have your voice of reason there to talk to both leaders." Abdallah thanked Bush for supporting the peace process but made no plans for a trip. Instead, he spoke with Abbas and Sharon by phone on 10/4 to urge them to meet with each other soon and to press forward with peace talks.

Jordan was more affected this quarter by fallout from the U.S. war on terror and Iraq. On 8/19, a group tied to al-Qa'ida fired 2 Katyusha rockets from Jordan at 2 U.S. naval

vessels in Aqaba port, missing the vessels, hitting a building on land, killing a Jordanian soldier walking nearby, and wounding a bystander; a third rocket, fired into Elat, Israel, did not explode. On 11/9, 3 Iraqi suicide bombers connected to al-Qa'ida detonated devices at 3 major American-owned hotels in Amman, killing 60 persons and wounding as many as 100. Many of the dead were attending a Palestinian wedding at the Radisson hotel. Four senior Palestinian officials were among those killed: PA Interior Minister gen. Col. 'Abid Alun, Palestinian commercial attaché to Egypt Jihad Fattuh, PA economist Musab Khurma, and West Bank military intelligence head Lt. Gen. Bashir Nafi. Al-Qa'ida alleged (11/10) that one of the targets was a secret Israeli-Jordanian security meeting being held at one of the hotels. Before the al-Qa'ida claim, the Israeli daily *Ha'Aretz* reported (11/10) that Jordanian security services had been alerted in advance to the synchronized bombings and had evacuated Israeli tourists from the Radisson and escorted them back to Israel shortly before the explosions occurred. The report was not picked up elsewhere.

The IDF deported 2 Palestinians with Jordanian citizenship who had been held in Israeli prison since 2003. Israel did not inform Jordan until 6/05 that the men were being held (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 137). Their deportation was delayed in a dispute over whether Israel or Jordan would pay their transportation fees to the border.

LEBANON

Lebanon continued to feel reverberations of the 2/14/05 assassination of former Lebanese PM Rafiq Hariri. The UN commission investigating the assassination, headed by German prosecutor Detlev Mehlis, issued its 54-page interim report on 10/20. Its main conclusion was that senior Syrian and Lebanese officials were probably involved in plotting, funding, and executing the assassination over several months, and that the decision to carry out the murder "could not have been taken without the approval of top-ranked Syrian security officials and could not have been further organized without the collusion of their counterparts in the Lebanese security forces." The report also faulted Syria for not fully cooperating with the investigation and for attempting deliberately to mislead it. The report was welcomed as a "vindication" by large segments of the Lebanese population, but the lack of hard evidence implicating Syria

fueled the scores of rumors questioning the reliability of Mehlis's witnesses that circulated throughout the quarter; among the most prominent were reports that certain witnesses had been planted by Rifat al-Asad, President Hafiz al-Asad's estranged brother and bitter rival who had been living in France since being exiled for rising against the regime. On the other side were allegations of threats, bribes, and intimidation by Syrian authorities and their allies within the Lebanese government and security forces, and questions raised by such incidents as the death of one key witness in a car crash and the recanting by another witness of his testimony to the commission. Syria continued vigorously to deny responsibility. With questions mounting, the UN extended (10/20) the investigation until 12/15 at Mehlis's request.

The quarter was also marked by the ongoing string of bombings ever since Hariri's assassination (see Quarterly Updates in *JPS* 136, 137). While some of these clearly targeted critics of Syria, others had no apparent reason besides keeping tensions high. Most of the bombings this quarter took place in Christian neighborhoods, raising fears and anxieties within that community. On 8/22, a large bomb exploded in a shopping center in a Christian quarter of northern Beirut, injuring 3 Lebanese and causing extensive damage. During the night of 9/26, a powerful package bomb exploded in another Christian Beirut neighborhood, shearing the facade off an apartment building, heavily damaging several other buildings, killing 1 Lebanese, and wounding 23. On 9/19, 1 Lebanese security guard was killed and 2 people were wounded when a grenade was thrown at the Kuwaiti information office in Beirut. On 9/25, a bomb placed in the car of prominent Lebanese TV journalist May Chidiac severed her arm and leg. No group claimed responsibility in any of the incidents.

In late 9/05, Lebanon launched what was interpreted as a new campaign, influenced by UN Res. 1559's call for the disarming of militias in Lebanon, to bar Palestinians from carrying weapons outside the refugee camps and to prevent the smuggling of arms into the camps. On 9/29, the Lebanese army erected checkpoints and reinforced troops around PFLP-GC bases south of Beirut and in the Bika' Valley, and on 10/7 raided the bases of several "Syrian-headquartered Palestinian armed groups" (presumed to be PFLP-GC) in the Bika' Valley, seizing weapons. The follow-

ing day, Lebanese PM Fuad Siniora opened talks, the first of their kind, separately with PLO officials and reps. of Palestinian factions in Lebanon to assure them that the government would not confront the factions so long as Palestinian arms were kept within the camps. Siniora stated that the issue of what to do about arms inside camps would be broached later. The factions agreed (10/8) and pledged to form a follow-up comm.

On 10/18, Siniora met with PA Pres. Abbas in Paris; at their press conference afterward, they both condemned the movement of arms and militants into the refugee camps, expressed concern about Syria's role, and agreed to take steps to ensure Lebanon's sovereignty and independence. Abbas and Siniora also held a separate meeting with Terje Larsen, the UN special envoy for UN Res. 1559 implementation, to discuss the disbanding of all militias in Lebanon. Afterward, Abbas stated (10/18) that "Palestinians should remember that they are guests in Lebanon and are not above the law."

Nonetheless, tensions over the camps continued this quarter. On 10/23, Palestinians affiliated with the Islamist Jund al-Sham exchanged gunfire outside 'Ayn al-Hilwa r.c. with mbrs. of the Lebanese Nasserite Popular Organization (NPO), leaving 1 NPO member dead and 2 NPO members and 1 Jund al-Sham member injured. The clashes reportedly stemmed from a personal dispute on 10/22 involving the stabbing and wounding of an NPO member. After a civilian army contractor was fatally shot (10/26) by Palestinian gunmen in the Bika' Valley, Lebanese army commandos supported by tanks encircled (10/26) 5 nearby Fatah-Uprising and 2 PFLP-GC bases to hunt for suspects, but the government pledged to resolve differences with the militant groups through dialog, not force. At the close of the quarter, there were no reports that the encirclement had been lifted or that arrests had been made, and speculation at the end of the quarter was (10/29) that the contractor may have been killed by shots fired from inside Syria.

PA Refugee Affairs M Abbas Zaki visited Lebanon for a week in mid-8/05 to brief Lebanese officials on the disengagement and to discuss ways to improve the status of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. In 6/05 and 7/05, Lebanon had pledged to increase the number of professions in which refugees could work, to grant amnesty to wanted Palestinians in the Lebanese camps, and to ease restrictions on construction in the camps, but none of the pledges had been

fulfilled by the opening of the quarter (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 137). On 11/10, Zaki held follow-up talks in Beirut with Siniora on these issues as well as on the matter of the arms in the camps. Though no decisions were reached, Zaki expressed confidence that all issues would soon be resolved and said that a unified Palestinian delegation, including reps. of the PA, PLO, and the alliance of Palestinian factions, was being formed to complete the talks. Zaki also toured the refugee camps and met with leaders of the Palestinian factions. PM Qurai' also visited Lebanon on 8/22 to meet with the Palestinian factions; no details were released.

Israel and Hizballah reportedly (11/8) resumed talks this quarter, brokered by Germany, on completing the second stage of a prisoner release deal agreed in 1/04. The first stage of the deal had been completed in 1/04 with Israel's release of 400 Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners and the bodies of 59 Lebanese killed over the years on the Israel-Lebanon border, in exchange for Hizballah's release of alleged Israeli spy Elhanan Tennenbaum and the bodies of 3 IDF soldiers. In the second stage, which was to have been completed in 4/04, Israel was to release Lebanese prisoner Samir Kantar (considered by Israel to have "blood on his hands" for his participation in a 1979 Palestinian Liberation Front raid into Israel) in exchange for information on missing Israeli pilot Ron Arad (downed over Lebanon in 1986). Talks on implementing the second stage had fallen off sometime after 8/04 (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 134).

Also of note: Lebanese authorities arrested (9/14) three leading member of the Guardians of the Cedars, an extreme right-wing Lebanese nationalist group, on charges of inciting terrorism, murder, and violence for issuing a communiqué, which, among other things, called on "each Lebanese [to] kill one Palestinian" and reiterated an official party slogan "Not one Palestinian will remain on the soil of Lebanon."

SYRIA

Syria's withdrawal in 4/05 of its military and intelligence forces from Lebanon (certified by the UN on 5/23; see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 137) did not result in an easing of pressures on the country. International attention remained focused on Syria's possible involvement in the Hariri assassination with the continuing investigation by the Mehlis commission (see above) as well as on im-

plementation of UN res. 1559, which called on Syria not only to withdraw its forces from Lebanon but also to halt support of all "Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias" (i.e., Hizballah and the Palestinian factions) or face sanctions. In 9/05, Syrian pres. Bashar al-Asad reportedly met in Cairo with Egyptian pres. Hosni Mubarak, who told him to expect no support if the UN linked Syrian officials to the Hariri assassination.

Immediately after Mehlis's interim report implicating Damascus was released (10/20), Bush, Rice, and U.S. Amb. to the UN John Bolton pressed (10/21, 10/24) the UN Security Council (UNSC) to take quick action to sanction Syria. On 10/25, the U.S., Britain, and France introduced a UN res. demanding that Syria cooperate with the Mehlis investigation and make available to UN investigators Syrian officials and others identified as suspects in the report, also calling for a travel ban and assets freeze on those identified as suspects. (Syria imposed the travel bans on 11/9.) The res. passed the UNSC unanimously on 10/31 after the wording was changed to call for unspecified "further action," instead of sanctions, if Syria did not comply. However, it should be noted that the res. was passed under chapter 7 of the UN charter, which allows consideration of the use of military force to contain threats to peace. (Chapter 6 authorizes only diplomatic solutions.) "Western envoys" involved in the drafting process said (10/19) that the text was the first of 2 planned resolutions that would mark "the toughest international action ever taken against Syria and would be designed to isolate President Bashar al-Asad" (quoted in *Washington Post* 10/20).

The second res. was expected to respond to UN special envoy Larsen's progress report on the implementation of UN res. 1559, which was issued on 10/26. The report recertified that all Syrian forces had been withdrawn from Lebanon but concluded that arms and fighters were still entering Lebanon from Syria and going to armed Palestinian groups, undermining Lebanese stability, and that Syria may be sponsoring those activities. It also expressed concern over the increasing number of attacks on anti-Syrian Lebanese politicians and journalists by unidentified assailants. Nonetheless, as of the end of the quarter, no UN res. in response to the report had been submitted.

Meanwhile, the U.S. kept up criticism of Syria's alleged lack of cooperation with the U.S. war in Iraq (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 137). Bush criticized (9/22) Syria for

inadequate control of its border with Iraq and warned (9/13) that Syria would face further isolation if it did not take steps to bar “killers” from entering Iraq. U.S. Amb. to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad did not rule out (9/13) military action against Syria, which he accused (9/12) of “continuing” to allow “terrorists” to operate training camps in Syria and to send 100s of insurgents from Syria into Iraq. On 10/28, Syria stepped up policing of its border with Iraq.

The possibility of launching military strikes inside Syria against camps used by insurgents operating in Iraq was reportedly debated by senior U.S. officials at a closed meeting in Washington on 10/1, but Rice reportedly blocked the proposal. (When asked to confirm on 10/11, Rice refused to comment “on internal deliberations in the administration.”) Fueling speculation on U.S. plans with regard to Syria, U.S. Asst. Secy. of State C. David Welch said (10/9) that the U.S. was concerned that Damascus continued to meddle and cause instability in Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, and the occupied territories and expected the international community to “send the very strongest of signals to the Syrians about their misbehavior,” which could include U.S. strikes on Syrian border areas near Iraq. The *Financial Times* reported (10/11) sources close to the Bush administration as saying that the U.S. is “actively seeking an alternative” to Asad. Other sources said that the U.S. “would probably accept a military figure but it would be very hard to identify someone to step in and work with the U.S.,” hence the policy was aimed more at “behavior change” than “regime change.” Other U.S. policymakers speaking on condition of anonymity said that the Bush administration was, in the *Washington Post*'s words (10/23), “brokering a series of steps designed to unravel the regime in Syria but not oust the government,” at least in the short term. The long-term hope reportedly was that Asad's power would be so eroded that he would allow “transformation” to take place naturally. Citing the same unnamed officials, the *Post* reported that “after an intense hunt for alternatives,” including among exile groups, “the Bush administration has concluded that there is no political party strong enough and sufficiently friendly to endorse as a replacement for Asad.” Also of note: On 10/16, Syrian opposition groups issued a “Damascus declaration” calling for democratic change in Syria; the declaration purposefully was issued just before the release of the Mehlis report to maximize

potential international support for the opposition as an alternative to the Asad regime.

Also of note: After the 10/26 Islamic Jihad suicide bombing inside Israel, the Quartet issued (10/28) an atypical statement, read by a UN spokesman, calling on Syria “to take immediate action to close the office of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and to prevent the use of its territory by armed groups engaged in terrorist acts.” The fact that UN Secy-Gen. Kofi Annan issued a separate UN statement on the bombing the same day warning against further escalation of violence suggested that there was some difference of opinion within the Quartet as to the tone of the Quartet statement, which echoed U.S. condemnations.

The Palestinians were in closer contact with Damascus this quarter. PA PM Qurai' went to Damascus on 8/21 to brief Syrian officials on the disengagement. Fatah head Faruq Qaddumi met (9/4) with Syrian FM Faruq al-Shara' in Damascus; no details were reported. Soon after, Pres. Asad met (9/10) with Palestinian rejectionist group leaders. According to UN envoy Larsen, Asad told them that there were “no red lines limiting their destabilizing activities.” PFLP-GC head Ahmad Jibril put the emphasis somewhat differently, however, stating (9/10) that Asad had said that Syria felt “it was no use to put pressure on the Palestinian factions” because the U.S. had not responded to Syria's compliance with its demands in other areas.

REGIONAL AFFAIRS

Israeli and U.S. efforts to press Arab and Muslim states to drop their boycotts and expand ties with the Jewish state in recognition of Israel's disengagement from Gaza met with some success. At the opening of the UNGA session in New York in mid-9/05, Israeli FM Silvan Shalom held at least 10 side meetings with Arab and Muslim FMs, including publicly announced meetings with Indonesia, Qatar, and Tunisia and informal meeting with Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Turkey.

Also at the UNGA session, Qatari FM Shaykh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr al-Thani urged (9/14) Arab nations to open up to Israel and stated (9/25) that Qatar was willing to consider establishing full diplomatic relations with Israel before the creation of an independent Palestinian state. In mid-11/05, a high-level Israeli delegation was rumored (*Yedi'ot Abaronot* 11/12) to be in Qatar to discuss ways of strengthening

bilateral economic and trade relations and to coordinate policy positions on (unspecified) international issues. Qatar also donated (10/11) \$6 m. to help build a soccer stadium in the Israeli Palestinian town of Sakhnin, marking the 1st Arab aid to any town inside Israel.

Bahrain announced (9/23) that it had repealed its economic boycott of Israel in order to comply with its 2004 free-trade agreement with the U.S. Bahrain had promised to lift the boycott in 1999 to gain entry to the World Trade Organization (WTO; which requires members not to "discriminate" against their trading partners and to accord each other most-favored nation trading status), but the U.S. did not think it had taken sufficient action until now to fulfill its pledge, therefore requiring the formal repeal.

Similarly, Israeli and U.S. officials reported (11/15) that Saudi Arabia had "presented sufficient warrantees" that it would drop its boycott of Israel, thereby satisfying requirements of a free-trade agreement it had signed with the U.S. in 9/05. (Saudi Arabia did not comment.) The announcement was expected to help Saudi Arabia in its current bid to join the WTO. The U.S., which has influence in approving WTO memberships, has argued that WTO anti-discrimination rules require Arab states to drop the boycott in order to join.

FM Shalom refused to confirm or deny reports in *Yedi'ot Abaronot* (9/2) that several weeks previously, after a year of talks, Israel opened a low-level diplomatic mission in Dubai, which is part of the UAE; Israel and the UAE have not had formal diplomatic relations. The Israeli diplomats, dual citizens holding foreign passports, are reportedly officially living in the UAE (with their families) as "businessmen."

Of note: the *New York Times* reported (10/5) that Kuwaiti businessmen and academics had been debating in the pages of Kuwaiti newspapers the idea that "reducing hostilities to Israel" by opening trade relations and normalizing diplomatic relations could help the Palestinians (e.g., by giving the Arab states' leverage with Israel), noting that Morocco, Qatar, Pakistan, and Tunisia had recently opened up to Israel and suggesting that Kuwait should not be left behind.

Egypt and Israel approved (8/24) a \$1 b. private joint venture for the construction of a power station in El-Arish, Egypt, that will supply electricity to Israel and the Palestinian territories. The project will provide 10%

of the Israel Electric Corporation's current production capacity, which is insufficient to meet local demand.

Israel announced (9/5) that Egyptian pres. Husni Mubarak would visit Israel in 11/05 to attend a ceremony marking the 10th anniversary of PM Yitzhak Rabin's assassination as a gesture marking appreciation for Israeli's disengagement from Gaza. As had been the case when Israel made similar announcements concerning impending visits by King Abdallah of Jordan (see above), Egypt denied that any plans had been made, and in fact the visit did not take place.

INTERNATIONAL

UNITED STATES

After the Gaza disengagement was completed, the U.S. was concerned that enough progress be made toward normalizing Palestinian daily life so that Palestinians would continue to see the benefits of the disengagement and reduce violence, opening the way to progress on implementing the road map and resuming final-status talks. Improvement in Palestinian lives was also seen as a way to support Abbas in advance of the 1/06 PA legislative elections. As in previous quarters, the Bush administration's priority on the Israeli-Palestinian front was to maintain enough calm to allow the U.S. to attend to its more important regional issues, such as the situation in Iraq and containing Iran (see below) and Syria (see above).

In line with U.S. concerns about improving Palestinian living conditions, the U.S. signed over (8/24) \$50 m. in direct aid to the PA that was promised by Bush in 5/05 (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 137). The money will be used for infrastructure projects in Gaza. The U.S. also approved (8/21) a new \$60 m. grant to the PA for a water pipeline project and allocated (9/15) \$2.3 m. toward the purchase of nonmilitary equipment for the PA security forces and \$700,000 for community policing. On 9/21, Asst. Secy. of State Welch said that the administration had requested \$150 m. for the Palestinians for FY2006, down from \$225 m. for FY2005. Of note: USAID announced (9/29) that it had awarded the U.S. firm Louis Berger Group a \$1 m. contract to study the optimal safe-passage link between the West Bank and Gaza.

The Bush administration also took initiatives to convince the Palestinians of its genuine desire to see the peace process

advance. Most significant was Rice's intensive mediation of the Rafah arrangements (see above), which involved serious pressure on Israel to act. In addition, prior to his 10/20 meeting with Abbas, Bush held (10/5) an impromptu 30-min. meeting in the Oval Office with Abbas Chief of Staff Rafiq al-Husseini and several PA officials in which he reiterated his commitment to the formation of an independent, viable Palestinian state. The meeting with the PA team, which was visiting the State Dept. to prepare for Abbas's trip, was held at the urging of Undersecy. of State Karen Hughes, tasked with improving the U.S. image in the Arab world. The talks, cordial and largely informal, touched on issues of democracy, halting violence, protecting human rights, and West Bank settlement construction. When the Palestinians warned of the dangers of Israel's continued settlement expansion, Bush reportedly replied, "Don't worry. I have some political sway with Israel and will use it if need be."

In what was clearly a gesture to the Bush administration, the PA awarded (8/26) a rare broadcasting license to the U.S. government-operated and funded Radio Sawa, set up after the 2003 invasion of Iraq as a subtle propaganda tool to improve the U.S. image in the Arabic-speaking world. The frequency allotted to Radio Sawa, one of the few that the PA obtained under the Oslo Accord, had been used by the independent Ramallah radio station Voice of Love and Peace, whose broadcast license expired on 8/15; to make way for the broadcast of Radio Sawa, the PA Information Min. declined to renew the license on 8/26, and the American station began airing immediately.

Meanwhile, the U.S. took measures to assure Israel of its continued support after disengagement. On 9/3, a senior administration official speaking anonymously to the *New York Times* (reported 9/4) stated that the Bush administration was urging allies to "refrain from pressing Israel to make new concessions to Palestinians" following disengagement, including pressure to implement outstanding pledges from the 2/05 Sharm al-Shaykh summit, so as to strengthen Sharon in the run-up to Israeli elections in 2006. In keeping with this policy, the U.S. had reportedly definitively rescinded (by 8/21) its own demand that Israel and the U.S. jointly map the West Bank settlements to assure effective monitoring of settlement construction and to identify and remove "unauthorized" outposts. The U.S. had made

its support for disengagement contingent upon Sharon's acceptance of the demand, and Israel had agreed in exchange for Bush's endorsement of Israel keeping major West Bank settlement blocs in final status (see Special Docs. in *JPS* 132). However, neither side ever took serious steps to coordinate the mapping: Israel did not want its settlement construction to be constrained, and the U.S., in addition to not wanting to pressure Sharon, did not want to legitimize existing settlements.

Almost immediately after the settler disengagement was completed, Israel sought U.S. help in underwriting its costs. On 8/24, Israeli Fin.M Ehud Olmert met with Secy. of State Rice in Washington to discuss Israel's \$2.2 b. aid request for development of the Galilee and Negev to help house the Jewish settlers evacuated under disengagement (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 137). Talks were expected to last several months, since the U.S. FY2006 budget was already finalized and the aid request would have to be a supplemental, to be submitted in 2/06 at the earliest. On 9/9, Israel suspended the aid request at the request of the U.S. in light of the enormous damage (initially estimated at \$700 m.) caused by Hurricane Katrina in late 8/05 but quietly relaunched discussions by 11/15 (despite revised estimates placing the cost of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, which hit in 9/05, at \$200 b.).

In the strictly bilateral security realm, the U.S. and Israel signed (8/16) a memorandum of understanding (MOU) outlining a strategic alliance based on "common understandings of the global security environment," under which they agreed to share information and consult on defense matters. The purpose of the agreement is to give the U.S. a formal say in Israeli sales of military equipment to third parties, particularly of equipment using technology jointly developed with the U.S. The MOU was demanded by the U.S. as a direct result of Israel's covert sale of proprietary U.S. radar technology to China, the latest in a series of such transfers to hostile states over the years. Following the discovery of the China transfer in 12/04 (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 135), the U.S. froze (4/05) most regular defense and strategic coordination meetings with Israel, and the Pentagon suspended (6/05) weapons technology transfers to Israel until a formal MOU was signed (see Quarterly Updates in *JPS* 135-37).

Under the new arrangement, Israel effectively agrees to abide by the Wassenaar

Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies, which promotes transparent export controls in order to prevent transfers of items that could threaten international and regional peace and security. The importance for Israel was that it effectively restored strategic cooperation with the U.S. Almost immediately, the U.S. army awarded (8/24) Israel Military Industries a \$300 m. contract to supply it with light ammunition "principally for American forces operating in Iraq." Meanwhile, Israeli DMin. Dir. Gen. Amos Yaron, with whom the Pentagon had reportedly refused to deal since the Chinese sale (in which he was deeply involved) was uncovered, stepped down in mid-9/05. In the first test of the new understandings, the Israeli DMin. said (10/21) that Israel had frozen a \$100 m. contract to upgrade Venezuela's F-16 fleet; the U.S., which is opposed to Venezuelan pres. Hugo Chavez's government, had requested the cancellation. On 11/4, the U.S. pledged to resume defense and strategic coordination meetings as well as Israel's participation in the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program (suspended because of the China deal); the F-35 is slated to replace the F-16, the primary combat airplane of both countries. (Of note: A 9/28 study by the *New York Times* ranked Israel as the U.S.'s third largest arms and military technology supplier, after Canada and Britain and ahead of France and Germany.)

Pentagon analyst Larry Franklin pleaded guilty (10/5) to passing classified information (including regarding Iran's activities in Iraq and weapons tests) to AIPAC policy dir. Steve Rosen and senior analyst Keith Weissman, as well as to the political officer at the Israeli embassy in Washington Naor Gilon (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 137). Franklin said that he leaked the information because he was "frustrated" with the direction of U.S. policy and wanted to influence it by having his contacts relay the data through "back channels" to officials on the National Security Council (NSC). In return for his guilty plea, he was expected to testify against Rosen and Weissman, who pleaded (8/16) not guilty to charges of conspiring to gather and disclose classified national security information to journalists and an unnamed foreign power (i.e., Israel). On 8/17, former dep. asst. secy. of state David Satterfield, currently the second highest ranking U.S. diplomat in Baghdad, was revealed as one of the two anonymous U.S. government officials (USGO-2) cited in the

8/4 indictment against Franklin as having discussed classified information with Rosen and Weissman. On 8/29, Kenneth Pollack, a staffer on Clinton's NSC, announced his belief that he was USGO-1; an unnamed source connected with the investigation confirmed it the same day. Rosen and Weissman are slated to go on trial on 1/3/06. Franklin will be sentenced on 1/20/06.

The U.S. announced (11/1) plans to open a new Qualified Industrial Zone (QIZ) in Egypt's central Nile Delta region and to expand 2 of the 7 existing QIZs. The U.S. says that Egypt and Israel's desire to expand the QIZ program, which allows goods produced in the zones duty-free entry to U.S. markets provided they contain at least 11.7% input from each country, "underscores the success of this program in fostering closer ties between the people, businesses, and governments of these two key Middle East countries."

Of note: Rice announced (11/15) that Maj.-Gen. Keith W. Dayton would assume General Ward's role as U.S. special envoy overseeing PA security reform and outstanding security issues related to disengagement. (Ward is being promoted to head the U.S. European Command.) Dayton is the former military head of the Iraq Survey Group (ISG), tasked with searching for WMDs in Iraq and connections between Saddam Hussein's regime and al-Qa'ida; ISG ultimately found no evidence that Iraq possessed any WMDs in 2003, concluding that if it did, they were not in "militarily significant" amounts (see the 9/30/04 Duelfer Report). Dayton is currently serving as director of strategy, plans, and policy in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, U.S. Army.

RUSSIA

Russian FM Sergei Lavrov and PA FM Kidwa held (8/25) talks in Moscow on Russian assistance to the PA, including possibly helping to train the security forces. As of 10/24, Israel and the PA reported that Russian military experts had arrived in Gaza but would not say how many there were or how long they would stay. At the close of the quarter, U.S. sources stated that there had been only one Russian adviser, who had already departed. Lavrov also visited (10/26-27) Israel for talks with Sharon and FM Shalom on Iran's nuclear weapons program and bilateral coordination on "terrorism."

EUROPEAN UNION

This quarter, the EU stepped up involvement in Israeli-Palestinian affairs by agreeing to participate in security-related missions in Gaza. As mentioned above, serious discussions began in early 10/05 regarding the possibility of the EU providing monitors to oversee PA control of the Rafah crossing. The EU mechanism was included in the Rafah arrangements negotiated by Rice and agreed to by Israel and the PA on 11/15, though no formal agreement among Egypt, the EU, Israel, and the PA on the details had been concluded by the end of the quarter.

On 11/15, the EU approved a 3-year project, to begin on 1/1/06, to train PA police. The EU Police Mission for the Palestinian Territories (EUPOL COPPS), to be headed by Jonathan McIvor (police adviser to EU special envoy Marc Otte), will oversee 50 EU security experts. It will start by focusing on improving security in Gaza City and Ramallah, then move to Nablus and other cities. It will build on existing EU mechanisms established in 4/05 to coordinate support for the PA civil police, with the aim of "establishing sustainable and effective policing arrangements" that can ensure long-term security reform.

After the settlers left Gaza, the EU issued (8/25) a statement praising Sharon and Israel for their courage in implementing the disengagement plan and recognizing the PA's commitment to a peaceful withdrawal, urging both sides to make progress toward implementing the road map. Israel hailed the EU declaration as "the most positive statement in years." However, during a visit to the region 8/28-31, EU foreign policy adviser Javier Solana's repeated references to Israel's "first phase of disengagement" irritated Israeli officials and raised concerns. EU FMs expressed (10/3) "grave concern" over Israel's continued settlement expansion, stating that "these activities form an obstacle to peace and threaten to make any solution based on the coexistence of two states physically impossible." They also reiterated that the separation wall is a violation of international law.

Also of note: Around early 9/05, Palestinian residents of 59 homes demolished by the IDF in Rafah on 1/10/02 filed a complaint in British court accusing IDF Maj. Gen. (res.) Doron Almog (the former head of the IDF Southern Command) and the current and former IDF chiefs of staff, Maj. Gen. Dan Halutz and Maj. Gen. (res.) Moshe Ya'alon, of war crimes. Almog arrived at Heathrow air-

port on 9/11, the day after a London court issued a warrant for his arrest; learning of the warrant from the Israeli embassy, he refused to disembark. British police declined to board the plane to arrest him, allowing him to return to Israel. Soon after, a British court annulled the arrest warrant, arguing that he was no longer in the country. On 9/16, a group of East Jerusalem Palestinians whose homes were demolished for lack of permits filed their own complaint in British court charging the IDF's Almog, Halutz, and Ya'alon with war crimes.

UNITED NATIONS

As the quarter opened, Israeli amb. to the UN Dan Gillerman signaled Israel's post-disengagement expectations of the UN by stating (8/16) Israel's hope to see a "more positive" UN stance, in recognition that something "dramatic" and "historic" had taken place in Gaza, when the UNGA convened for its opening session in 9/05. He specified (8/16, 10/10) that Israel's primary objectives would be to increase the number of Israelis elected to UN forums and comms.; to put an end to the annual renewal of nearly 25 resolutions condemning Israeli settlement and occupation practices; and to convince the UN to disband as part of its reform process 3 special comms. that are "forums for Israel-bashing" that "have outlived any usefulness and continue to drain the budget": the Secretariat's Division for Palestinian Rights, the Comm. on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and the Special Comm. to Investigate Israeli Practices.

Israel took significant steps to meet its first objective during the quarter: On 9/27, Gillerman submitted Israel's first formal request for temporary membership in the UNSC, which U.S. Amb. to the UN Bolton had already said (9/12) the U.S. would support. Even if the request were granted, Israel would have to wait 13 years until it could hold a rotating seat; all seats are reserved until 2018. The UNGA adopted (11/1) by consensus a res. presented by Israel (with 108 cosponsors) that established 1/27 as Holocaust remembrance day and called on the UN to establish a "program of remembrance and education" within 6 months. It was the first ever res. presented by Israel to be approved. Egypt, Jordan, and Venezuela had urged that the date commemorate genocides worldwide, but Israel rejected this, arguing the uniqueness of the Nazi genocide. After 2 years of lobbying by Israeli

FM Shalom, UNESCO elected (10/10) Israeli rep. Michel Turner as one of several new delegates to its prestigious World Heritage Comm. Israel also reported (11/8) that it was holding talks with the UN Truce Supervision Organization regarding allowing IDF troops to join UN peacekeeping forces.

Switzerland announced (9/13) that it would convene the 192 signatories of the Geneva Conventions by the end of 2005 to discuss adoption of a third symbol for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)—a red diamond—to allow Israel to participate fully in the organization. Israel in the past had rejected the diamond proposal as an unacceptable compromise, insisting that a red star of David be adopted alongside the red cross and the red crescent (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 129). There are indications, however, that its position may have softened.

Sharon attended the 9/05 UNGA session for the first time since the outbreak of the al-Aqsa intifada. In his speech to the assembly on 9/15, Sharon called on Palestinians to “eliminate terror, violence, and the culture of hatred from our relations” and to demonstrate their commitment to peace following Israel’s disengagement. He also said Israel had not forgotten the “dozens of harsh and unjust decisions made by the United Nations over the years” and reiterated Israel’s commitment to the road map and the 2/05 Sharm al-Shaykh understandings. PA FM Nasser al-Kidwa attended the speech but did not applaud.

Israeli FM Shalom held (11/6) his first meeting with recently appointed UNRWA head Karen Koning Abu Zayd in which he suggested that UNRWA transfer its mandate to the PA and dissolve itself now that Israel has disengaged from Gaza.

The UNGA passed (11/14) 4 draft resolutions and 1 draft decision dealing with the UNRWA and 5 draft resolutions on Israeli practices in the occupied territories. On the UNRWA: a res. expressing appreciation for UNRWA’s works passed 152-6 (Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, U.S.), with 2 abstentions; a res. urging assistance to Palestinian refugees passed 151-1 (Israel), with 8 abstentions; a res. on Palestinian refugee property passed 153-6 (Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, U.S.), with 2 abstentions; a res. on persons displaced by the 1967 war passed 154-6 (Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, U.S.), with 1 abstention; and a draft decision expanding the UNRWA’s

Advisory Commission to include Australia, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland was approved without a vote. On Israeli practices: a res. expressing appreciation for the work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories passed 80-9 (Australia, Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Tuvalu, U.S.), with 68 abstentions; on Israeli practices affecting human rights of Palestinians passed 144-7 (Australia, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, U.S.), with 11 abstentions; a res. on Israeli settlements passed 149-7 (Australia, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, U.S.), with 7 abstentions; a res. on the occupied Syrian Golan passed 153-1 (Israel), with 9 abstentions; and a res. on the applicability of the Geneva Conventions passed 153-5 (Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, U.S.), with 6 abstentions.

Meanwhile, UN special rep. on human rights Hina Jilani issued (10/11) a statement at the end of her visit to Israel and the occupied territories, saying that Israel’s policies and practices “result in conditions and an environment which place human rights defenders operating in these areas at grave risk and presents [sic] serious obstructions in every aspect of their functioning” (see Doc. A2). The statement noted especially that the rights of minorities in Israel are “seriously constrained” and that “human rights defenders in the occupied Palestinian territories operate under conditions that are absolutely incompatible with international norms” and that place human rights workers physically “at grave risk.”

TURKEY

Reps. of the Ankara Forum—a Turkish initiative established in 4/05 to build economic cooperation among Israeli, Palestinian, and Turkish businessmen—held a meeting in Antalya on 9/1 to discuss Rafah crossing issues and joint tourism projects in preparation for their third major meeting on 9/21 in Istanbul. The 9/21 talks focused on transforming the Erez industrial zone into a Palestinian free industry zone, providing financing for small- and medium-scale enterprises (especially in construction).

Turkey gave (10/9) the PA a copy of its Ottoman archive containing all documents on land ownership in Palestine through 1916.

IRAN

Continuing speculation that the U.S. and Israel are planning some sort of military action against Iran's nuclear sites by mid-2006 were fueled when a Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Comm. delegation visiting Washington presented (9/29) the Bush administration with recent photos of Iran's nuclear facilities. According to *Yedi'ot Abaronot* (10/2), the action made "it clear that [Israel] would only be able to wait until a certain date next year and would strike at Iran if no [diplomatic] progress is made by that time," stressing that sanctions and isolation alone will not work.

Meanwhile, at an annual conference on Zionism in Tehran, Iranian pres. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad created a stir by declaring (10/26) that Israel "must be wiped off the map." Israel immediately called (10/26) for Iran's expulsion from the UN, while the U.S. said (10/26) it took Iran's threats seriously. The president reiterated the comments on 10/28 before a crowd of 10,000s marking Jerusalem Day in Tehran, adding that Israel and the U.S. "become upset when they hear any voice of truth-seeking. They think they are the absolute rulers of the world." Although the Iranian FMin. backed (10/29) away from Ahmadinejad's statements, saying that "Iran is committed to its obligations stated in the United Nations charter and it has never tried to use force or threat against a second country," Annan canceled (11/4) plans to visit Iran as part of a Middle East tour in protest. Even the PA called (10/26) Ahmadinejad's statements "unacceptable," suggesting that he should focus on "putting Palestine on the map" beside Israel and supporting the peace process for a 2-state solution.

PAKISTAN

Pakistani FM Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri met (9/1) with Israeli FM Shalom in Istanbul for talks on improving relations, marking the 1st high-level diplomatic meeting between Pakistan and Israel. (Senior Pakistani and Israeli intelligence officers have maintained an unofficial back channel since the early 1990s.) The Pakistani FMin. stressed that the meeting did not connote official recognition of Israel, which would come only after Israel reaches a comprehensive peace agreement with the Palestinians. It also said that it had informed the PA and Saudi Arabia in advance of the government's decision to deepen contacts with Israel and that Abbas was

"very supportive of this idea." Pakistani pres. Pervez Musharraf also accepted an invitation to address American Jewish leaders at the Council for World Jewry, which took place on the sidelines of the UNGA session in New York on 9/19.

DONORS

Donor efforts this quarter continued to be focused on supporting Wolfensohn's mission of revitalizing the Palestinian economy quickly after disengagement; bringing the PA's Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) in line with the 3-year, \$9 b. international aid package in support of disengagement proposed by the G-8 in 7/05; and outlining donor steps to ensure Gaza's long-term economic recovery and reconstruction.

Donors stepped up to meet Wolfensohn's request for funding for projects that would have a quick, noticeable impact on the territories in the first 6 months after disengagement, so as to encourage Palestinians to maintain calm. As of 10/11, the World Bank reported that donors had already transferred some \$750 m. in aid to be disbursed by the end of the year, mostly for projects in Gaza, though some funds would go to the West Bank. Wolfensohn estimated (10/17) that the total amount disbursed would reach \$1 b.-\$1.3 b. by the end of 2005, with the 25-35% increase in aid compared to 2004 reflecting donor efforts to develop quick-impact economic programs in support of disengagement. Funds raised for planned and ongoing quick-impact projects included \$30 m. for roads, \$130 m. for housing, \$110 m. for water, \$30 m. for education, \$15 m. for health, \$50 m. for energy, \$55 m. for private sector project financing (including the \$14 m. to purchase greenhouses; see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 137), \$30 m. for job creation, and \$50 m. for improving PA governance. The World Bank's West Bank and Gaza dir. Nigel Roberts said (10/11) that disengagement had "rekindled donor enthusiasm because they see an opportunity here for real change" but noted that if the PA did not take quick, visible steps to halt corruption and waste and to reform the legal system, "then that donor enthusiasm is going to fade."

On 10/15, the EU agreed to increase its aid to the Palestinians by as much as \$350 m./year in the medium term if significant progress were made on implementing the road map and if other donors also doubled their commitments. Where

possible, the EU would seek to fund tri-lateral (EU-Israeli-PA) projects. By 10/5, the EU had already given the PA \$70 m. in post-disengagement aid, above the \$250 m.-\$350 m./yr. that it has given in recent years. The European Investment Bank also announced (11/10) a new \$400 m. loan guarantee program for Palestinian small businesses in Gaza that aims to create 100,000 new jobs.

In his periodic report issued on 10/17, Wolfensohn criticized the PA for raising public employee salaries in violation of the Wage Bill Containment Plan agreed with the donors, which in turn had increased the PA's budget deficit for 2005 to \$250 m., threatening the MTDP goals of balancing the PA budget. The next MTDP for 2006-8 was still being drafted (see Quarterly Update in *JPS* 137) and was slated for completion in 12/05.

Several official donor meetings were held this quarter. The Local Aid Coordination Comm. (LACC), which handles day-to-day aid coordination in the field, held an informal meeting on 9/8 to discuss the progress of the disengagement and reforms in donor-PA coordination mechanisms. Donors want to streamline the donor structures to empower the PA and focus more on meeting the goals of the MTDP. To this end, they considered eliminating as outdated two bodies—the Task Force for Palestinian Reform (TFPR) and the Humanitarian Emergency Policy Group (HEPG). (The TFPR was initially a Quartet body with significant U.S. control established in 7/02 to monitor donor activity and PA reform progress in line with U.S. policy; see Quarterly Updates in *JPS* 125,

126. The HEPG was created in 12/02 to address the emergency needs arising from the intifada and link their fulfillment to wider donor efforts.) In their place, four strategy groups (economic, governance, humanitarian and social development, infrastructure) would be created, each of which would be jointly chaired by a main donor and the appropriate PA ministry, and the LACC would be transformed into a joint PA-donor secretariat.

The donors' Task Force for Project Implementation (TFPI) met with Israeli officials in mid-10/05 to discuss Israeli/IDF restrictions on Palestinian employees of UN and other international organizations entering the "seam zone" between the separation wall and the Green Line, which have hampered donor and humanitarian aid work there. The TFPI also sought establishment of a mechanism to review the security files of Palestinian staff being prevented from obtaining magnetic cards or permits. No details on the discussions were released.

Wolfensohn announced (10/17) that a meeting of the donors' Ad Hoc Liaison Comm. (AHLC), the donor's principal policy-level coordinating body, was planned for 12/05 in London to assess the outlook for the Palestinian economy in 2006 and prepare for a major pledging conference tentatively scheduled to be held after the 1/06 legislative elections (no date has been set), where donors would hopefully pledge much larger sums over a longer time frame in line with the G8 proposal. The AHLC is also expected to finalize and approve changes to the donor mechanisms (outlined above) recommended by the LACC.