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CHRONOLOGY

16 February–15 May 1999

This section is part sixty-two of a chronology begun in JPS 23, no. 3 (Spring 1984). Chronology dates reflect Eastern Standard Time. For more detail on events related to the peace process, see the Peace Monitor in this issue.

16 February

In Washington, the U.S.-Palestinian Bilateral Comm. opens its 2d mtg., focusing on economic issues. (al-Quds 2/16 in WNC 2/18; al-Ayyam 2/17 in WNC 2/19; PR 2/19; al-Hayat al-Jadida 2/21 in WNC 2/22; MEI 2/26) (see Peace Monitor)

Overnight, Abdallah Ocalan, head of the Turkish separatist group Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), who had been searching for a safe haven since he left Italian custody 1/16, is seized by Turkish commandos in Kenya after the Greek emb. in Nairobi denies him refuge. Kurdish demonstrators stage protests in Turkey and anti-Greek rallies across Europe in Scandinavia, Russia, Armenia, Australia, Canada. Israel, U.S. deny charges that they aided in the capture. (CSM, MM, WP, WT 2/16; CSM, MM, NYT, WP, WT 2/17; Le Soir 2/17 in WNC 2/18; MM 2/18; YA 2/18 in WNC 2/19; JP, MEI, PR 2/26)

17 February

Israel’s Labor party holds its primary in advance of the 5/17 elections. Party Chmn. Ehud Barak takes top position on the slate. (MM, NYT 2/17; CSM 2/18)

Netherlands FM Van Aartsen says Turkey’s handling of the Ocalan trial should be a test for Turkey’s membership in the European Union (EU). Kurds continue protests in Europe (home to 850,000 Kurdish refugees), Turkey over Ocalan’s 2/16 capture. In Berlin, Israeli security guards fire on 100s of protesters who storm the Israeli consulate, killing 3, wounding 16. (MM, NYT, WP, WT 2/18; De Volkskrant, al-Rayah 2/18 in WNC 2/19; Frankfurter Rundschau 2/19 in WNC 2/22; MM 2/22; WJW 2/25)

Syria agrees to pay $500,000 to the U.S. to repair the U.S. emb. in Damascus, damaged 12/19 during protests against the U.S.-led attack on Iraq. U.S. says it considers diplomatic tensions over, will begin resuming visa services (suspended 12/22) on 2/28. (NYT, WP, WT 2/18; MM 2/25)

UN says it will hand over $84 m. to Kuwait for reparations to victims of the 1990 Iraqi invasion. Funds will be taken fr. Iraqi oil exports, which have produced $2.7 b. in compensation to date. (NYT 2/18; MEI 2/26)

Israel Defense Force (IDF) blocks Jewish settlers fr. occupying a building in East Jerusalem, which they claim to have bought fr. a Palestinian family. The family denies it sold the building. (JP, PR 2/26)

18 February

In Rome, the UN Comm. for the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People opens 2-day conference in support of the Palestinian Authority’s (PA) Bethlehem 2000 tourism, development plan. (Reuters [Internet] 2/18)

Kurdish demonstrations against Ocalan’s capture abate in Europe, escalate in Turkey. In the past 3 days, Turkey has sent 10,000 troops into n. Iraq to attack Kurdish rebels, has arrested 750 Kurdish activists in Turkey. To contain the scandal over their involvement in Ocalan’s arrest, Greece replaces its FM, 2 cabinet mbrs.; Kenya reshuffles its cabinet. (MM 2/18; CSM, NYT, WP, WT 2/19; MM 2/23) (see 2/16)

IDF fences off the Lebanese village of Arnum to expand its self-declared security zone; says action is meant to protect residents fr. Hizballah attacks. Lebanon accuses Israeli of testing its limits under the 1996 April understandings, aiming to convince the Israeli-Lebanon Monitoring Group (ILMG) that occupation is legitimate if it prevents Hizballah fr. using civilian-populated areas as staging points for attacks, which is banned under the understandings. (VOL 2/18 in WNC 2/19; NYT, WP 2/19; SAPA [Johannesburg] 2/19 in WNC 2/22; WP 2/20; MM 2/25; MEI 2/26; MM 4/21)

Hamas spiritual leader Shaykh Ahmad Yasin enters a Gaza hospital with chest pains, high fever. (WT 2/19)
19 FEBRUARY

U.S. admits it worked for mos. to help Turkey arrest Ocalan, whom the U.S. considers a terrorist; says U.S. used diplomatic pressure, intelligence gathering to force nations to refuse him sanctuary, tracked him in Nairobi but did not have "direct involvement" in his capture. Turkish PM Bulent Ecevit says Turkey received the final tip from another country that he would not identify. Israel's Mossad issues public letter denying involvement. **Kurdish protests** continue in Europe, Canada, the Middle East. (MM 2/19; AFP, RL 2/19, al-Dustur 2/20, IRNA 2/21 in WNC 2/22; MIL 2/19 in WNC 2/24; NYT, WP, WT 2/20; NYT, WP 2/21; MM 2/22; MED TV 2/25 in WNC 2/26; PR 2/26)

With a private audience with Pope John Paul II on sidelines of UN conference in Rome (see 2/18), PA head Yasir Arafat begins international tour to confer with international leaders on the post-Oslo peace process, whether to unilaterally declare a state when the Oslo interim ends on 5/4. (WT 2/20; MENA 2/20 in WNC 2/22)

Israel's Jerusalem Post reports that 22 new parties have been formed since early elections were declared 12/21, bringing total number of parties to 56. (JP 2/19)

Lebanese Chamber of Deputies speaker Nabih Birri meets with Hizballah s. gen. Hassan Nasrallah to discuss coordination against Israel in light of Arnun occupation. (RL 2/19 in WNC 2/22) (see 2/18)

20 FEBRUARY

Arafat meets with Egyptian pres. Husni Mubarak in Cairo. (MENA 2/20 in WNC 2/22)

PA High Court orders the PA General Intelligence Service (GIS) to release Wael Farraj, jailed without charge since 4/25/96. GIS refuses to release him. (PR 2/26; PCHR 3/1; MEI 4/23)

In Amman, King Abdullah meets with Chmn. of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Henry Shelton on cementing security ties, boosting bilateral aid. (WP 2/21; MEI 2/26)

Jewish settlers seize 100 dunams of Palestinian land nr. Nablus for settlement expansion. (al-Hayat al-Jadida 2/21 in WNC 2/22)

Arab League condemns Turkey's latest incursion into n. Iraq, calls for immediate withdrawal. (RE 2/20 in WNC 2/22) (see 2/18)

21 FEBRUARY

Jordan's King Abdullah forces into retirement 4 key generals who are reportedly loyal to fmr. Crown Prince Hassan. (MM, WP 2/22)

Turkey ends incursion into n. Iraq begun 2/15. (WP 2/22)

22 FEBRUARY

U.S. Asst. Secy. of State Martin Indyk denies Israeli charges that the PA recently released terrorists, murderers fr. custody in violation of the Wye accord. (WT 2/24; WJW 2/25; NYT 2/26; JP 3/5; al-Istiqlal 3/5 in WNC 3/12; MEI 3/12)

Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu names Likud whip Meir Shitreet as finance minister, relinquishing the position which he has held since 12/16. (MM, WP 2/23)

The EU Council of Ministers approves (14-1) 2/11 recommendation to allow Israel to participate in the Fifth Framework research and development program. (WT 2/23; Le Soir 3/4 in WNC 3/5; JP 3/5) (see Peace Monitor)

23 FEBRUARY

In Morocco for a 3-day conference on the future of Jerusalem, Arafat backs away fr. vows to declare a Palestinian state on 5/4, saying that the PA is working on a "formula" for statehood. Orient House head Faisal Husseini says PA has accepted "in principle" U.S., EU calls to delay declaration. (AP [Internet] 2/23)

Turkey charges Ocalan with treason, rejects EU request to send observers to the trial. (AFP 2/23 in WNC 2/24; NYT, WP, WT 2/24)

Some 1,200 Palestinian doctors, nurses, health administrators in the West Bank strike to protest PA's failure to implement civil service law passed in 5/98, which would increase their salaries. (AP [Internet] 2/23)

Overnight, Hizballah mbrs. intercept elite IDF commando squad operating n. of Israel's self-declared security zone, killing 3, wounding 5. (MM 2/23; VOL 2/23 in WNC 2/24; MM, NYT, WT 2/24; AFP 2/25 in WNC 2/26; MEI, MM 2/26; MEI 3/12; WT 4/14)

24 FEBRUARY

Limiting constitutional rights of illegal immigrants, the U.S. Supreme Court rules (6-3) that the government can deport a group of 8 Palestinians, 1 Kenyan simply because of their controversial political views
in support of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. (WP, WT 2/25; MM 2/26; PR 3/5)

Israel Trade Min. announces that it has allocated new lands to build moderate-, small-scale factories in several West Bank, Gaza settlements, including Kedumim, Efraim, Erez. (PR 3/5)

U.S. planes fire on 2 Iraqi missile sites s. of Baghdad, killing, injuring a number of civilians according to the Iraqi government. There have been nearly daily attacks on Iraq since the U.S. adopted (see 1/25) its policy of sustaining low-level strikes against security targets in effort to contain Saddam Hussein. (NYT, WP, WT 2/25) (see 2/11)

25 FEBRUARY

The PA rejects Israel's offer to partially implement the expired Wye amgt. by opening the s. safe passage route, releasing more criminal prisoners; says that any proposal for partial implementation must include transfer of land. (NYT, WP 2/26)

In a 1-hr. trial, PA military court finds Palestinian Col. Ahmad Abu Mustafa guilty of kidnapping, raping a 6-y. old boy; sentences him to death for "inciting the public against the Palestinian Authority." 2,000 Palestinians stage demonstration in Gaza to demand Abu Mustafa's punishment. (NYT 2/26; NYT, WP, WT 2/27; PR 3/5; MEI 3/12)

Bashar al-Asad, son of Syrian pres. Hafiz al-Asad, goes to Amman to offer condolences to King Abdallah on the passing of King Hussein. (MM 2/26)

Israeli High Court rules (3-2) that American Samuel Sheinbein, charged with committing murder in the U.S. in 1997, is a citizen of Israel, cannot be extradited, will be tried in Israel. The decision reverses a lower court judgement that Sheinbein did not qualify for automatic citizenship through his father, who was born in Mandated Palestine. (MM, NYT, WP, WT 2/26; WJW 3/4; JP 3/5) (see 9/5/98)

Saudi businessman Salih Idris, whose pharmaceutical plant in Sudan was bombed by the U.S. in 8/98 for allegedly housing chemical weapons for Saudi dissident Osama Bin Laden, files suit against the U.S. Treasury Dept. for freezing his London assets without formally declaring him linked to a designated terrorist, as the law demands. The U.S. has never given proof of Idris's ties to Bin Laden. (WP 2/26; WT 2/27; see also WP, WT 2/4)

Turkish officials allow 2 lawyers for Ocalan to see the jailed PKK leader for the 1st time. The mtg. lasts 20 minutes; jailers confine the discussion to Ocalan's health, forbid discussion of his case. Afterward, 1 lawyer is arrested for maintaining ties to the PKK. The other, Ahmet Zeki Okcuoglu, quits, saying his life is in danger. (NYT, WT 2/27)

Rockets are fired fr. s. Lebanon into n. Israel, damaging a house but causing no injuries. Israel blames Hizballah, which denies responsibility. (AFP 2/28 in WNC 3/1; MM 3/1)

26 FEBRUARY

PM Netanyahu angers Jordan by giving a speech warning Israelis that Jordan could form an alliance with Iraq if Baghdad attacked Israel. (WT 2/28; JP, PR 3/5; MEI 3/12)

PA executes Preventive Security Forces (PSF) officer condemned to death 2/25. (NYT, WP, WT 2/27; JP, PR 3/5; MEI 3/12)

Iran holds 1st local elections since 1979. More than 280,000 candidates run for 200,000 seats nationwide. So many people turn out to vote that some polling stations run out of ballots, hrs. for voting are extended. (NYT, WP 2/26; NYT, WP 2/27; WP 2/28; CSM, MM 3/1; MM 3/2)

To protest Israel's "annexation" of Arnun on 2/18, 2,000 Lebanese students, residents of nearby villages break through an IDF military cordon, cut through barbed wire, cross suspected minefield, enter the village. IDF fires warning shots fr. outside Arnun, but does not try to expel protesters. Students leave at nightfall; IDF does not attempt to reenter the village. (NYT, WT 2/27; RMC 2/28 in WNC 3/1; MEI 3/12)

27 FEBRUARY

Israel seals its borders with the occupied territories, citing warnings of attacks by Hamas during the Jewish holiday of Purim. (WT 2/28; JP 3/5)

Netanyahu retracts 2/26 statement that Jordan might ally itself with Iraq if Baghdad attacked Israel. (WT 2/28)

Iran begins 9-day naval maneuvers in the Gulf, nr. the islands of Abu Musa, Greater and Lesser Tunbs, which are claimed by both Iran, the UAE. (WT 3/3; MM 3/4, 3/5)

28 FEBRUARY

PM Netanyahu, FM Ariel Sharon go to Amman to hold 1st mtg. with King Abdal-
lah. (WT 2/28; RJ 2/28 in WNC 3/1; MA 2/28, JT, MA 3/1 in WNC 3/2; NYT, WP 3/1; JP; PR 3/5; MEI 3/12) (see Peace Monitor)

Hizballah detonates 2 roadside bombs in s. Lebanon, killing 4 IDF soldiers, including a brig. gen., the highest-ranking Israeli soldier to be killed in Lebanon since the 1982 Israeli invasion. IDF retaliates by striking 4 Hizballah bases n. of the self-declared security zone, including Hizballah headquarters in the center of Baalbeck. Israeli DM Moshe Arens warns that Israel may disavow the 1996 April understanding to avoid civilian targets if Hizballah continues attacks. (AFP, IDF Radio, RL 2/28 in WNC 3/1; MM, NYT, WP, WT 3/1; Interfax, IRNA, JT, Kyodo, RE, SAPA [Johannesburg], SATN 3/1 in WNC 3/2; al-Quds al-Arabi 3/1, al-Akhbar 3/2 in WNC 3/4; WJW 3/4; JP, PR 3/5; MEI 3/12; WT 4/14; MM 4/21) (see 2/23)

100s of Lebanese students use government bulldozers to reopen road to Amun, remove IDF earthworks around the village. Lebanese government says it will pave the road to symbolically link Amun to areas n. of the Israeli-occupied zone. (WT 2/28; al-Ittihad, RMC 2/28 in WNC 3/1; Tehran Times 3/1 in WNC 3/8; MEI 3/12) (see 2/26)

U.S. attack on an Iraqi communications station nr. Mosul disrupts oil flow fr. Iraq to Turkey. UN warns that U.S. strikes could frustrate international efforts to supply food, medicine, other necessities to the Iraqi people under the UN Oil-for-Food program. (NYT, WT 3/3; AFP 3/4 in WNC 3/5; MIL 3/6 in WNC 3/16; MEI 3/12)

1 MARCH

Protest by Palestinian political prisoners against their detention in Israel's Megidoj jail turns into riot, injuring 3 Israeli policemen. Meanwhile, 44 Palestinians held in PA jails without charge end mo.-long hunger strike (see 2/12), claiming that they have reached an agmt. with the PA to resolve their case. (AFP [Internet] 3/1; PR 3/5)

A Palestinian is shot, wounded by IDF when he tries to avoid a roadblock nr. Ramallah. (PR 3/5)

Jordanian, Israeli water officials meet in Amman to prepare funding proposals to the EU for joint water projects in the Jordan Valley. (JT 3/2 in WNC 3/4; al-Ayyam 3/3 in WNC 3/5)

Jordanian FM Abdallah Khatib makes 1st high-level Jordanian visit to Kuwait since the 1990–91 Gulf conflict. Kuwaiat says that bilateral relations have returned to normal. (Petra-JNA, Radio Kuwait 3/2, JT 3/3 in WNC 3/4; MM, WP 3/3; Xinhua 3/3 in WNC 3/5)

Pentagon confirms that the U.S., Britain, Turkey have signed their 1st agmt. on technical rules of engagement for air operations in n. Iraq, broadening rules of engagement for pilots for 2d time since 1/25. (MM, NYT, WP, WT 3/2)

Israel's atty. gen. files formal request for a larger group of High Court justices to reconsider the 2/25 decision not to extradite Steinbein. (WP 3/2; WJW 3/4, 3/11)

Results of Iran's 2/26 local elections show that reform candidates allied with moderate Pres. Mohamed Khatami won a sweeping victory, taking all seats in Tehran, most seats nationwide. (WP, WT 3/2; NYT, WP, WT 3/3; MM, NYT, WP 3/8)

Lebanese brace for escalation in Israeli attacks following 2/28 incident. Israel's security cabinet threatens future strikes, but under strong international pressure, the IDF stages no attacks. (RL 3/1 in WNC 3/2; CSM, NYT, WP, WT 3/2; ITAR-TASS, MA 3/2 in WNC 3/4)

2 MARCH

Labor Chmn. Ehud Barak pledges to withdraw fr. Lebanon, resume negotiations with Syria within a yr. if he wins 5/17 elections. Center party candidate Yitzhak Mordechai vows to be out of Lebanon even sooner if he wins. (MM 3/3; WP 3/3; MM, WJW 3/4; MA 3/4 in WNC 3/5; MM 3/5; NYT 3/6; MM 3/8; JP 3/12)

Washington Post reports that during the U.S.'s 3 yrs. of intelligence work inside the UN Special Comm. (UNSCOM) weapons inspection team in Iraq (admitted 1/6), the U.S. rigged UNSCOM equipment to intercept Iraqi communications, sent burst transmissions fr. the UNSCOM headquarters to U.S. military without the knowledge of or sharing the information with the UN. UN Secy. Gen. Kofi Annan says U.S. actions could undermine other disarmament programs. (WP 3/2; WP 3/3; MM 3/5; MEI 3/12)

Turkey's Dep. Chief of Staff Hilmi Ozkok leaves Egypt after 3 days of talks on expanding bilateral military cooperation, heads to Jordan to discuss joint military exercises planned for 5/99. (ATL 3/4 in WNC 3/5)

Turkey allows 15-mbr. EU torture prevention group to visit PKK leader Ocalan to inspect the conditions under which he is being jailed. (NYT 3/3) (see 2/25)
3 MARCH

Israeli FM Sharon suggests that 5/17 elections be postponed to form a unity government dedicated to a pullout fr. s. Lebanon. PM Netanyahu rejects the idea. (MM 3/3; IDF Radio 3/3 in WNC 3/4; MM, NYT 3/4; MM 3/5; NYT 3/6) (see 3/2)

Israeli police question FM Sharon on suspicion that he bribed a fmr. gen. to give false testimony on his behalf in a libel case. (NYT, WP 3/4; JP 3/12)

Israel names 1st Arab judge to the High Court. 'Abd al-Rahman Zuabi will hold the bench for 9 mos. as temporary appointee. (WP 3/4; WJW 3/11; JP 3/12)

IDF lifts closure on the occupied territories imposed on 2/27. (PR 3/5)

Jordan reopens its emb. in Kuwait. Kuwait lifts its ban on Jordanian workers. (Xinhua 3/3 in WNC 3/5; MM, NYT 3/4; Stiilan 3/27 in WNC 3/29) (see 3/1)

4 MARCH

King Abdallah of Jordan replaces PM Tarawnah with fmr. dep. PM 'Abd al-Rauf al-Rawabda, Chief of the Royal Court Jawad Anani with fmr. PM 'Abd al-Karim Kabariti. Rawabda, who is strongly disliked by the opposition and Jordanian Palestinians, immediately announces new 25 mbrr. cabinet, which retains all but 7 mbrrs. of the outgoing cabinet. Abdallah urges new cabinet to consolidate ties with Israel, work for more open government, freer press. Analysts interpret changes as marking further sidelining of Prince Hassan, increased focus on internal affairs. (AFP; MENA, RJ 3/4 in WNC 3/5; MM, NYT, WP, WT 3/5; JT 3/7 in WNC 3/8; al-Dustur 3/7, al-Bayan 3/8 in WNC 3/9; MM 3/9, 3/10; al-Bilad 3/10 in WNC 3/11; JP, MEI 3/12; al-Watan al-Arabi 3/12 in WNC 3/22)

Lebanon's fmr. Energy M Shahih Barsoomian is arrested on suspicion of corruption involving hundreds of millions of dollars in fuel imports, the 1st major public figure to fall in the government's continuing antigraft crackdown. (NYT 3/5, 3/6) (see 1/7)

At the UAE's request, the Gulf Cooperation Council holds an emergency mtg. to discuss Iranian military maneuvers nr. 3 disputed islands (see 2/27); issues statement denouncing Iran's actions, urging mediation to resolve dispute. (MM 3/5)

After lull in attacks following disruption of oil exports 2/28, British jets strike surface-to-air missile sites in s. Iraq. (NYT 3/5, 3/7)

5 MARCH

In East Jerusalem, an Israeli is stabbed, injured allegedly by a Palestinian. (MM 3/8)

6 MARCH

U.S. officials, military officers admit that the U.S. has fallen into a low-grade war with Iraq, is downplaying scope of the operation (with the Pentagon refusing to release basic data such as number of sorties flown) to avoid antagonizing friendly Arab countries and to minimize questions at home. Experts estimate that the U.S. has flown 3,224 sorties, dropped over 274 bombs in the last 10 wks. (WP 3/7; GIU 3/11; MM 3/12)


Israeli border police scuffle with 300 Palestinian women attempting to walk to East Jerusalem from the West Bank to protest Israeli restrictions on Palestinians entering Jerusalem. (WT 3/7)

In Jerusalem, an IDF soldier is stabbed, injured allegedly by a Palestinian. (MM 3/8) (see 3/5)

7 MARCH

U.S. Defense Secy. Cohen arrives in Saudi Arabia on 2d leg of regional tour; offers kingdom new weapons, military training to help shore up its defense against Iraq. (NYT 3/7; MM, NYT, WP, WT 3/8; MEI 3/12) (see 3/6)

Jewish settlers fr. West Bank settlement of Tene Oranim move 7 trailers to nearby hilltop to start new enclave. (AFP [Internet] 3/7)

In separate incidents in Jerusalem, a Palestinian woman tries to stab an Israeli security guard; a Palestinian taxi driver is stabbed, wounded allegedly by a Jew. (MM 3/8) (see 3/6)

8 MARCH


Fistfights break out b/wn. Palestinians and Jewish settlers fr. Efrat settlement in the West Bank who began digging trenches on Palestinian land to lay water pipes to their settlement. (AFP [Internet] 3/8)
Jerusalem, U.S. council female access men WP, Cairo.

Iraq force revolutionary 3/15)

3/11)

174
to the others.

Iraq, Iran. (MM, NYT 3/8; NYT, WT 3/9; MEI 3/12)

9 MARCH


Turkish parliamentary delegation arrives in Israel for 3 days of talks on strengthening bilateral ties. (ATL 3/9 in WNC 3/10; ATL 3/12 in WNC 3/17)

Iranian pres. Khatami arrives in Italy on 1st visit to Europe by head of state fr. post-revolutionary Iran. Italian FM Lamberto Dini says Italy should help break Iran's international isolation, Iran could be stabilizing force in Middle East region. (WT 3/9; NYT, WP, WT 3/10; NYT, WP 3/11; MM 3/12, 3/15)

IDF demolishes 6 Palestinian homes nr. Jerusalem, Ramallah. (LAW 3/12; PR 3/19)


10 MARCH

Arafat meets with King Abdullah in Amman. (VOA 3/18 in WNC 3/19; PR 3/19)

In Gaza, a Palestinian security court sentences to death a PA policeman for killing a fellow policeman, sparking demonstrations across Gaza by Palestinians who feel that the court decision was made under pressure fr. the murdered man's influential family, not based on evidence. PA police fatally shoot 2 demonstrators, wound several others. (PCHR 3/10; NYT, WP 3/11; PR 3/19; MEI 3/26) (see Peace Monitor)

U.S. Defense Secy. Cohen leaves Kuwait for Amman to discuss with King Abdullah the $200 m. military aid package now before Congress. (MM 3/10; RJ, Xinhua 3/10 in WNC 3/11; MM, NYT, WP 3/11; MEI 3/12)

Rana Raslan becomes 1st Israeli Arab to win Miss Israel beauty contest. PM Netanyahu claims her victory proves that Israeli Arabs are treated as equals to Jews, but 64% of Israeli Jews polled say they cannot accept Raslan as representing Israel. (NYT, WP 3/11; MM 3/12; WNW 3/18; JP 3/19)

11 MARCH

In London, Arafat meets with British PM Tony Blair. (SA 3/11 in WNC 3/12; VOA 3/18 in WNC 3/19; PR 3/19)

For 2d day in Gaza, PA police clash with 100s of Palestinians protesting PA police shooting of demonstrators 3/10. PA declares area a closed military zone, confiscates film fr. 6 photographers, detains 3 journalists. More than 50 Palestinians, including 17 policemen, are injured. (WT 3/12; RMC 3/12 in WNC 3/16; PA 3/19; MEI 3/26)


Saudi Arabia signs protocol with Afghanistan's Taliban under which only Taliban-certified Afghans may participate in the Hajj, lending credence to rumors that the Taliban broke with Saudi dissident Bin Laden a mo. or so ago, is no longer providing him safe haven. (GIU 3/16; see NYT 3/4)

In Amman, Turkey, Jordan hold talks in the context of their security cooperation agmt. on combating terrorism, drug smuggling, organized crime. (ATL 3/12 in WNC 3/16)

Turkish lawyer Ahmet Zeki Okcuoglu agrees to take up Ocalan's defense again but says that he still does not feel secure. (NYT 3/12) (see 2/25)

Hizballah attacks a South Lebanon Army (SLA) post in s. Lebanon, wounding 1 SLA mbr. (VOL 3/11 in WNC 3/12)

12 MARCH

Israel leaks to the media, condemns a 3/1 confidential note verbal fr. the EU testing Israeli FMin, orders for the EU to halt contacts with Palestinian officials in

In Dayr Abu Mushal, n. of Jerusalem, IDF soldiers clash with Palestinians throwing stones at passing Israeli cars, shooting a 7-yr.-old Palestinian boy, seriously injuring him. (AFP [Internet] 3/13)

3 Israeli right-wing parties (Mododet, Herut, Tekuma) that reject any land-for-peace deal with the Palestinians agree to run in the 5/17 elections as a bloc headed by fmr. Likud mbr. Benjamin Begin. (NYT, WP 3/13; JP 3/19)

13 MARCH

After mtg. with Palestinian notables in Rafah, Arafat stays the execution of PA police officer sentenced 3/10, orders a further investigation, releases all Palestinians detained during recent demonstrations. Arafat then leaves for a tour of the Gulf. Europe to continue consultations on Palestinian statehood with leaders of Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain, UAE, Finland, Norway, Spain. (MM 3/16; CSM 3/18; VOA 3/18 in WNC 3/19; PR 3/19; MEI 3/26)

Overnight, Israel deploys helicopters to hover over Beirut, areas in n., e. Lebanon, threatening attack. Helicopters return to bases around 4 a.m., but Lebanese forces remain on high alert. Hizballah attacks an SLA post in s. Lebanon, wounding 1 SLA mbr. (VOL 3/13 in WNC 3/16; WT 3/14)

14 MARCH


Israel tells Jordan that this yr., it will be unable to provide the quantity of water promised under the 1994 peace agrmt. due to an unusually dry winter, proposes a 60% cut-back. Jordan says Israel must provide full allotment. (NYT, WP, WT 3/15; JT, JTV 3/15; AFP, al-Dustur, JT 3/16 in WNC 3/17; MM, WP 3/16; MM, WT 3/17; MM 3/19; al-Quds 3/20 in WNC 3/22; WJW 3/25; MEI 3/26)

15 MARCH

PM Netanyahu rejects cabinet decision to adopt more flexible criteria for 500 Palestinian prisoners due to be released under Wye. DMin., Shin Bet have already drawn up new lists of prisoners to be freed. (YA 3/15 in WNC 3/17) (see Peace Monitor)


Arafat meets with Finnish pres. Martti Ahtisaari in Helsinki, then leaves for Oslo to meet with Norwegian PM Bondevik, FM Knut Vollebaek. (WT 3/15; SAPA 3/15 in WNC 3/17; PR 3/19)

Israel's state comptroller clears Labor candidate for PM Barak of allegations that as army chief he abandoned wounded soldiers in a 1992 training accident. (MM 3/15; MM, WP 3/16; WJW 3/18; see MM 3/10)

Israeli police say that some 600 Egyptian bedouin recently entered Israel fr. Sinai asking for humanitarian aid, saying they were driven by hunger to leave Egypt. Egypt rejects Israel's characterization of a mass exodus, admits some bedouin families have crossed the border. (WT 3/17)

Turkish cultural delegation arrives in Israel for 3 day tour. (ATL 3/15 in WNC 3/17)

Jordanian court sentences 2 Jordanians to death for killing an Iraqi diplomat, 11 other people on 1/17/98; 2 other defendants are given 20 yrs. in jail. (WP 3/16)

16 MARCH


On his 1st trip abroad as head of state, King Abdallah of Jordan goes to Cairo, where he, Egyptian pres. Mubarak discuss peace process and economics, inaugurate $229 m. electricity grid linking Jordan, Egypt. (MENA, RJ, VOA 3/16 in WNC 3/17; MM, WP 3/17)

17 MARCH

Refugee Working Group holds intersessional mtg. in Paris on family reunification. (Shaml Newsletter 2/99) (see Peace Monitor)
3 Israeli judges unanimously find Aryeh Deri, leader of the ultra-Orthodox Sephardic Shas party, guilty of fraud, bribe-taking. Shas supporters protest verdict as tantamount to discrimination against Sephardim. Deri's lawyers appeal the verdict to the Israeli High Court. (MM, WP 3/17; MM, NYT, WP, WT 3/18; JP 3/19; WJW 3/25; MEI 3/26; JP 4/2)

Israel announces plans to build 120 new housing units in Gilo settlement. (al-Ayyam 3/18 in WNC 3/23)

U.S. suspends nearly daily attacks on Iraq, directing its attention to the crisis in Yugoslavia. (WP 4/3) (see 3/6)

18 MARCH

3 Palestinian officials hold routine mtg. with 18 EU consular officials at Orient House in East Jerusalem. In protest, Israel imposes travel limits on the 3 officials. EU special envoy Miguel Morentinos also meets with PM Netanyahu to stress that the EU has not changed its position on Jerusalem. (AFP 3/18 in WNC 3/22; MM, NYT, WP 3/19; al-Quds 3/19 in WNC 3/22; WP 3/20; MM 3/22; MEI, PR 3/26; MM 3/29; YA 3/30 in WNC 3/31; YA 4/2 in WNC 4/5) (see 3/12)

PM Netanyahu tells the Knesset Defense and Foreign Affairs Comm. that he is preparing a plan for partial pull-out fr. s. Lebanon, but he still rules out an unconditional withdrawal. (MEI 3/26) (see 3/3)

At the White House, Leah Rabin presents Pres. Clinton with an award for peace-making on behalf of the Yitzhak Rabin Center for Israel Studies. PM candidate Mordechai attends, raising complaints among Netanyahu supporters that the U.S. wants to influence the outcome of upcoming Israeli elections. (WJW 3/25)

IDF demolishes 2 homes in Armun, Lebanon, as a warning to residents who aid Hizballah. (VOL 3/18, RL 3/19 in WNC 3/22) (see 2/28)

19 MARCH

Libya tells the UN that it will turn over by 4/6 the 2 suspects in the 1988 Pan Am 103 bombing over Lockerbie, Scotland. (MM 3/19; NYT, WP, WT 3/20; MM 3/22, 3/24; MEI 3/26) (see 10/26/98)

In Kurdish-controlled Turkey, a bomb explodes, rupturing the Iraq-Turkey pipeline, Iraq's main outlet for exporting oil under the UN Oil-for-Food program. (WP 3/22; AFP 3/22 in WNC 3/23; NYT 3/24)

20 MARCH

Refugee Working Group holds 2 mtgs. in Paris to follow up on family reunification talks. (al-Hayat 3/22; MM 4/6) (see Peace Monitor)


The PA releases 2 Palestinian political detainees. 1 of the prisoners, Harb al-Daqq, had been held without charge for 3 yrs. (PR 3/26)

Following cooperation talks with the Muslim Brotherhood's Islamic Action Front (IAF) party, Jordan's main opposition party, King Abdullah releases 15 Muslims who were detained over the past few yrs. for security reasons, orders general amnesty to co-incide with upcoming Id al-Adha holiday under which some 600 prisoners will be freed. (AFP 3/20 in WNC 3/22)

Lebanese military court sentences 6 persons to death for collaborating with Israel. (MENA 3/20 in WNC 3/22)

21 MARCH

In Vienna, Arafat meets Austrian chancellor Victor Klima. (Oesterreich Eins Radio Network 3/21 in WNC 3/22)

First Lady Hillary Clinton, daughter Chelsea arrive in Egypt for 5 day visit on 1st leg of N. African tour. (MENA 3/21 in WNC 3/22)


Israel's High Court rules that the more than 600 bedouin who entered Israel fr. Egypt and requested asylum face no danger fr. the Egyptian government, clearing the way for their deportation. (WP 3/22; GSM, NYT 3/23; PR 3/26) (see 3/15)

King Abdullah of Jordan issues royal decree naming his wife, Rania, queen. Queen Nur, wife of the late King Hussein, will be known as "queen mother." (NYT, WP 3/22)
Israeli judge quashes atty. gen.'s request to review the High Court's decision not to extradite Sheinbein to the U.S., allowing Sheinbein to be formally indicted on murder charges on 3/22. Even if convicted in Israel, Sheinbein would face prosecution if he returned to the U.S. (WP 3/22, 3/23; WJW 3/25; WP 3/28; JP 4/2)

Saudi Arabia acknowledges that it refuses to allow U.S. planes based in the kingdom to take part in raids on Iraq, that it objects to loosened rules of engagement. (NYT 3/22)

22 MARCH


Terry Anderson, the American journalist held hostage in Lebanon by Hizbollah for more than 6 yrs., sues Iran for $100 m., claiming Tehran played a role in his imprisonment. Hizbollah denies it kidnapped Anderson. (NYT, WP 3/23; WT 3/24; MM 4/9) (see 3/11/98, 8/27/98)

23 MARCH

Arafat meets with Pres. Clinton in Washington to discuss the post-Oslo period; asks the U.S. to endorse the Palestinians' right to self-determination. Clinton says U.S. will not change its policies but that final status talks, when they resume, should not be open-ended. (al-Akhbar 3/23 in WNC 3/24; MM, NYT, WP, WT 3/24; WJW 3/25; MEI, MM, PR, WJW 3/26; WJW 4/1)


At an emergency mtg. in Vienna, Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), non-OPEC mbrs., agree to cut output by 2 mbpd to push prices up to avoid massive revenue losses by oil producers. Steps are most drastic taken by OPEC in 13 yrs. (MM 4/1; MEI 4/9)

24 MARCH

Led by the U.S., NATO forces begin air strikes on military installations of Yugoslav pres. Slobodan Milosevic to prevent further Serbian attacks on the Kosovo province's ethnic Albanian guerillas, civilians. 13 of NATO's 19 mbr. states participate in this 1st NATO attack on a sovereign state. Russia suspends coordination with NATO in protest. (MM, NYT, WP, WT 3/25, 3/26; al-Quds 3/26, al-Ahram 3/27 in WNC 3/29; MEI 4/9) (see 3/17)

Arafat meets with Canadian PM Jean Chretien in Ottawa. (MM 3/25)

Israeli MK Azmi Bishara announces that he will run for PM even though as an Arab he cannot legally hold the job. (MM, NYT 3/25; YA 3/28 in WNC 3/29; NYT 4/1; JP 4/2; PR 4/6; MEI 5/7)

Fmr. PM Yitzhak Shamir quits the Likud, joins Begin's new right-wing coalition. (NYT, WP 3/25; WP 3/26) (see 3/12)

In Israel, 400,000 unionized government workers go on strike to demand a 14% wage increase. (MM 3/24; NYT 3/25)

25 MARCH

Iraq and Syria, which broke off ties in 1980 at the start of the Iran-Iraq war, agree to open interest sections in the Algerian emb. in each other's capitals as a step toward normalization. (NYT 3/25)

26 MARCH


PA releases Hamas spokesman Mahmud Zahhar, arrested 45 days ago for treating a Hamas fugitive who escaped after killing a PA policeman in 2/99. (NYT 3/27; MEI 4/23) (see 2/13)

Hizbollah detonates a roadside bomb in s. Lebanon, injuring 2 IDF soldiers. (RL 3/26 in WNC 3/29)

27 MARCH

PA releases 9 Palestinian political prisoners to mark the Id al-Adha holiday. (HA [Internet] 3/29; JP 4/9)
28 MARCH

*New Yorker* columnist Seymour Hersh reports that in 11/97, Russian PM Yevgeny Primakov allegedly accepted an $800,000 bribe fr. Iraqi pres. Saddam Hussein in return for Russian assistance with strategic weapons technology; cites British intelligence reports that a bank transfer was made btwn. Iraq's Dep. PM Tariq Aziz, an account "traceable to Primakov." Russia denies the report; National Security Adviser (NSA) Sandy Berger says that the U.S. has no evidence to support the report. (WP 3/29; NYT 4/1; *New Yorker* 4/5)

29 MARCH

PM Netanyahu orders closure of a Christian affairs office, a news agency, a prisoners' advocacy bureau, all in East Jerusalem, on the grounds that they are linked to the PA, are therefore operating illegally in the city. PA says that the organizations have been operating in the city since before the PA's creation. (MM, NYT, WP 3/30; MM, WT 3/31; AFP 3/31 in WNC 4/1; NYT 4/5; JP, PR 4/9)

Israeli government workers end strike after agreeing to a 4.8% pay increase. (NYT, WP 3/30) (see 3/24)

Fmr. CIA photo analyst Patrick Edington says that satellite imagery clearly shows that the al-Shifa pharmaceutical plant in Sudan bombed by the U.S. in 8/98 was not a chemical weapons factory. (WP 3/30) (see 2/25)

30 MARCH

Israel releases 14 Palestinian prisoners as a good-faith gesture to mark Id al-Adha. (MM 3/30; YA 3/30 in WNC 3/31; PR 4/9)

U.S. intelligence officials say that in 2/99, when the U.S. 1st threatened airstrikes against Serbian forces, a Yugoslavian military delegation went to Iraq to discuss sharing information, equipment to target U.S. warplanes. Currently, NATO attacks on Milosevic's forces continue as 10,000s of Kosovar ethnic Albanians flee to Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro to escape Serbian attacks, which have intensified since strikes began 3/24. NATO has moved into the 2d stage of its attack, targeting Serb troops in Kosovo, but member states are debating whether ground troops will be needed to control the situation. The U.S. says it will not deploy ground troops except to monitor a peace agmt. (GIU, WT 3/31; WP 4/2; JP 4/9) (see 3/24)

To date, Middle Eastern states are divided on whether to support NATO actions in Yugoslavia. Some, like Jordan and Saudi Arabia, support the NATO intervention as an effort to protect Kosovo's Muslims. Others, like Iran and Iraq, denounce it as a dangerous exercise in Western hegemony. Egypt, UAE are providing aid to refugees but saying little. Jordan has recalled its amb. to Belgrade. (WP 4/2)

Criticized for his government's muted response to the expulsion and killings of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, PM Netanyahu condemns mass murder by anyone in the Yugoslav conflict; says Israel will send $100,000 worth of tents, medicine, clothing to the refugees, but rejects any comparison btwn. Kosovo, Israel. Netanyahu aides say that Israel—motivated by a historic debt to Yugoslavia, whose partisans helped Jews escape the Nazis during World War II, and by an interest in smoothing relations with Russia—does not want to take sides in the conflict. (NYT 3/31; *Tishrin* 3/31, al-Hayat al-Jadida 4/1, ATA [Tirana], YA 4/2, al-Akhbar al-Yawm 4/3 in WNC 4/5; MM, WP 4/1; MM 4/2; WT 4/3; Xinhua 4/3, MA 4/4 in WNC 4/5; AFP 4/5, AFP, IDF Radio, Xinhua 4/6 in WNC 4/7; al-Hayat al-Jadida 4/5, al-Ayyam 4/6 in WNC 4/8; CSM 4/8; MEI 4/9)

Israeli helicopters fire on Lebanese troops in s. Lebanon, wounding an officer, 3 soldiers. IDF says the troops were on a route usually used by Hizbullah mbrs. (RL 3/30 in WNC 3/31; NYT 3/31)

31 MARCH

Israel claims that during his international tour, Arafat has been urging nations to support UN Res. 181 as the basis of a peace agreement; says that the 1947 res., calling for partitioning Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, was nullified by the Arab side and cannot be invoked now by Palestinians. (WT 4/1; MENA 4/2, 4/4 in WNC 4/5; al-Quds 4/2, al-Akhram 4/4, MENA 4/6 in WNC 4/7; JP, PR 4/9)

Israel celebrates Passover, leaving borders with occupied territories open rather than sealing them as it usually does on Jewish holidays. (WT 4/1)

PA releases 11 political detainees, all mbrs. of Hamas or Islamic Jihad, to mark Id al-Adha. (PR 4/9)

The IDF places a blockade on the West Bank village of Dayr Abu Mishal after a Jewish settler claims that Palestinians threw stones at him fr. the direction of the
village. Israeli soldiers arrest 21 teenagers. (LAW 4/5)

2 mbtrs. of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine are wounded in a clash with mbtrs. of Fatah Uprising in al-Baddawi refugee camp in s. Lebanon. (VOL 4/1 in WNC 4/2; SA 4/2 in WNC 4/5)

1 APRIL

In Sharm al-Shaykh, Arafat, Mubarak discuss EU’s 3/26 statement, declaration of state issue. (MENA 4/1 in WNC 4/2)

2 APRIL

In Cairo, Egyptian FM Amr Musa, PA Planning M Nabil Shaath hold talks on coordinating Egyptian, PA positions on the post-Oslo period. (MENA 4/2 in WNC 4/5)

U.S. resumes strikes on Iraq for 1st time since 3/16, hitting an oil refinery nr. Basra. (WP, WT 4/3; WP, WT 4/4) (see 3/17)

In s. Lebanon, Hizballah detonates a roadside bomb as an SLA patrol passes, injuring 1 SLA mbr. (VOL 4/2 in WNC 4/5)

3 APRIL

New Jordanian government issues 1st policy statement, which emphasizes internal over foreign affairs. The statement does, however, stress that Jordan supports peace with Israel, but “not peace at any price.” (JT 4/3, JT 4/4 in WNC 4/5; MM 4/6, 4/9)

The Red Crescent Society reports that the IDF has prevented 1 of its doctors fr. entering Dayr Abu Mishal. Since the IDF blockade began 3/31, more than 50 Palestinians have been denied entry to the village, 8 persons have been prevented fr. leaving to seek medical treatment. (LAW 4/5)

4 APRIL

In Amman, Arafat meets with King Abdullah. (RJ 4/4 in WNC 4/5; WT 4/5; al-Riyad 4/7 in WNC 4/15)

Jordan’s King Abdullah begins a 3 day visit to Saudi Arabia on 1st leg of regional tour aimed at restoring Arab solidarity, inter-Arab coordination; meets with King Fahd and Crown Prince Abdullah, who urge Jordan to limit ties with Iraq. (MM 4/6; JTV 4/6 in WNC 4/7; MM 4/7; ‘Ukaz 4/7, al-Ra’i 4/9 in WNC 4/14; al-Riyad 4/7 in WNC 4/15; MM 4/9; MEI 4/23)

Clashes erupt in Nazareth btw. Christians and Muslims, who oppose planned construction of a plaza for millennium Christian pilgrims nr. a mosque. More than 70 Israeli police arrive but make no effort to stop the rioting, which leaves 7 Palestinians injured. There have been nonviolent protests over the project for more than a yr. (WP, WT 4/5; MM 4/8; MEI 4/23)

Egypt recalls its diplomatic mission fr. Belgrade to protest attacks against Albanians in Kosovo. (MENA 4/4 in WNC 4/5)

IDF shelling in s. Lebanon injures 8 Lebanese civilians, including 5 children. (VOL 4/4 in WNC 4/5; WP 4/5; RL 4/5, 4/6 in WNC 4/7; WT 4/9; JP 4/16)

5 APRIL

After more than a decade, Libya hands over to the UN 2 suspects in the Pan Am 103 bombing for trial in the Netherlands under Scottish law. UN immediately suspends sanctions on Libya, which were imposed in 1992. (CSM, MM, NYT, WP, WT 4/6; WT 4/7; MEI, MM 4/9; CSM 4/15; MEI 4/23) (see 3/19)

In Ankara, Arafat meets with Turkish pres. Sulayman Demirel, then heads to Moscow for mg. with Russian FM Igor Ivanov. (NYT, WP, WT 4/6; Interfax 4/6 in WNC 4/7; PR 4/9; WJW 4/15)

Muslims in Nazareth observe general strike, call for mayor’s resignation over project to build Christian pilgrimage site. (NYT, WP 4/6; WT 4/7; MM 4/8; MEI 4/23) (see 4/4)

6 APRIL

In Moscow, Arafat meets with Russian pres. Boris Yeltsin, who calls for extension of the Oslo interim period. Arafat then leaves for the Ukraine for talks on the declaration of state issue. (ITAR-TASS 4/6 in WNC 4/7)

In Beirut, the Higher Palestinian-Lebanese Joint Comm. opens several days of talks on ways of improving conditions for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. (al-Hayat al-Jadida 4/8 in WNC 4/14); (see Peace Monitor)

PM Netanyahu speaks in support of NATO airstrikes on Yugoslavia, while Israeli FM Sharon separately warns that an independent Kosovo could become a base for Islamist terrorism. (MM 4/6; NYT 4/7; MM, NYT 4/8; WP 4/9; YA 4/9 in WNC 4/15; JP 4/16)

IDF expels 25 civilians, including women, children, elderly, fr. Shab’a in s. Lebanon. (RL 4/6 in WNC 4/7; RL 4/7 in WNC 4/8; RL 4/15 in WNC 4/19)

7 APRIL

Arafat meets with Japanese FM Masahiko Komura in Tokyo. (WT 4/8)
Muslim-Christian tensions in Nazareth continue, with 2 shops, 1 owned by a Christian, the other by a Muslim, firebombed overnight. (MM, NYT, WT 4/8; NYT 4/13; WP 4/15; JP 4/16; MEI 4/23) (see 4/5)

In London, Frank Ricciardone, U.S. special rep. for transition in Iraq, oversees mtg. of 11 Iraqi opposition groups comprising the Iraqi National Congress (INC) Executive Council, which has not met in 3 yrs. due to internal bickering. Participants in the 2 day mtg., aimed at forming a transitional government in n. and s. Iraq that would be backed by U.S. military aid, elect a 7 mbr. “interim collective leadership,” which plans to convene the INC General Assembly by 7/7 to elect a permanent leadership. A 5 mbr. contact group is also formed to lobby INC factions that boycotted this London mtg. to participate in the 7/7 session. The INC is 1 of 7 organizations eligible to receive U.S. military aid for the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. (NYT 4/8; MM 4/9)

8 APRIL

Arafat stops in Indonesia for consultations on possible unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state. (AFP, Republika [Jakarta] 4/9 in WNC 4/14)

9 APRIL

Arafat arrives in Vietnam for consultations on unilateral declaration of Palestinian state, then heads to Bangladesh for similar talks. (AFP 4/9 in WNC 4/14)

In Washington, U.S. Secy. of State Madeleine Albright meets with Israeli FM Sharon, condemns Israeli settlement expansion since Wye, criticizes Israeli overtures toward Russia, which vehemently opposes U.S. policy toward Yugoslavia. (MM 4/9; al-Quds 4/11 in WNC 4/14; MM 4/12; PR 4/16; MM 4/19; JP, MEI 4/23)

Israeli DM Arens announces that Israel is reducing its presence in s. Lebanon, noting that 80% of its posts are already controlled by its proxy, the SLA. (NYT 4/10)

A Turkish court sentences 114 intellectuals, human rights activists to a yr. in prison for signing a 1993 declaration calling for a peaceful solution to Turkey’s Kurdish conflict. (WP 4/10)

10 APRIL

King Abdullah of Jordan arrives in Oman for 2 day visit, meets with Sultan Qabus. (al-Ittihad 4/13 in WNC 4/14; RJ 4/11, 4/14 in WNC 4/15; MEI 4/23)

11 APRIL

Meeting with PM Netanyahu in Jerusalem, U.S. Asst. Secy. of State Indyk publicly criticizes Israeli settlement expansion as an obstacle to peace, Israel's rapprochement with Russia. Indyk is in Israel for a mtg. of the Israeli-U.S. strategic planning comm. that was established as part of the Wye agmt. (MM 4/12; WP 4/13; MA 4/13 in WNC 4/14; W JW 4/15; MM 4/19; PR 4/26)

Israeli FM Sharon arrives in Russia for 3 day visit, his 3d since 3/99; announces opening of Israeli consulate in St. Petersburg. (MM 4/13; Globes [Internet], Interfax, ITAR-TASS 4/13 in WNC 4/14; W JW 4/15; CSM 4/16)

Syrian pres. Assad indefinitely postpones trip to Russia, planned for 4/12-13, because of Israeli FM Sharon’s current visit to Moscow, Russia’s hesitation, under pressure fr. the U.S., to finalize an arms deal that was to have been signed during this visit. (MM 4/12, 4/13; W JW 4/15; WP 4/25) (see Peace Monitor)

12 APRIL

The Palestinian Council (PC) political comm. holds special session to draft a report on the end of the interim period, declaration of a Palestinian state. (PR 4/30)


Ignoring U.S. criticism (see 4/11), PM Netanyahu visita settlement construction site nr. Psagot; praises construction, saying, “We have done a lot, and we will do a lot more.” (WP 4/13; TJT 4/16 in WNC 4/20)

Hizballah detonates roadside bombing in s. Lebanon, killing 1 IDF soldier. (MM 4/13; al-Safir 4/14 in WNC 4/15; JP, MEI 4/23)

13 APRIL

PM Netanyahu, his fmr. DM, Mordechai, hold 1st televised debate of the Israeli election campaign. Drawing comparisons to Kennedy in his 1960 debate with Nixon, Mordechai trounces the PM, attacking his person and policy, often leaving the “grand master of television” at a loss for words. As a result, Labor party candidate Barak’s decision not to participate lends him the aura of being “above the fray.” (MM 4/13; MM, WP 4/14; MM, NYT 4/15; al-Quds 4/15 in WNC 4/19; MEI 4/23)

With government approval, Israeli settlers seize a new West Bank hilltop nr. Tene Oranim settlement, nr. Hebron. Peace Now
reports that Israeli building starts in West Bank settlements were up 105% in 1998, while housing starts inside the Green Line were down 20%. (MM, WP, WT 4/14)

14 APRIL

Arafat arrives in China for talks on the Palestinian statehood issue. (Xinhua 4/15 in WNC 4/19)

Jordan's King Abdullah holds talks with UAE leader Shaykh Zayid on bilateral ties. The pair then meets with Egypt's Pres. Mubarak for talks on peace process, regional issues. (MENA, Petra-JNA, RJ 4/14 in WNC 4/15; MEI 4/23)

Israeli Justice Min. announces that the UN comm. handling claims against Iraq for reparations fr. the 1991 Gulf War has authorized $31.5 m. in compensation to 68 Israeli companies, $260,851 to 13 individuals who suffered losses or injuries as a result of Iraqi scud attacks. The money will be drawn fr. Iraqi oil revenues. (NYT 4/15; WP 4/16; JP 4/23)

15 APRIL


Most of the 81 diplomatic missions in Israel, including the EU and U.S., decline an invitation fr. Israeli PM Sharon to participate in a 2 hr. "study tour" of the West Bank on 4/16 to gain a better understanding of Israeli security needs in advance of final status talks with the PA. (MM 4/15)

In response to death of IDF soldier 4/12, IDF reoccupies Armun, outside its self-declared security zone, this time setting up SLA camp inside the village. Lebanese PM Salim al-Huss asks France, the UN, the U.S. to intervene with Israel. U.S. suggests that Lebanese army be deployed in Armun, but Huss refuses, saying army will not be used as a "screen to defend" the IDF. (RL 4/15, AFP, IRNA 4/16 in WNC 4/19; MM, NYT 4/16; NYT, WP 4/17; RL, Xinhua 4/20 in WNC 4/21; MM 4/21; MEI 4/23, 5/7) (see 2/28)

Shas head Deri is sentenced to 4 yrs. in prison. Analysts believe the ruling could improve PM Netanyahu's chances for reelection by rallying Shas supporters to his cause; one of Netanyahu's campaign promises has been to aid Israelis who feel marginalized by what he describes as the "elites," including judges. Deri will remain free pending appeal, may remain party leader even if jailed. (MM 4/15; MM, NYT, WP, WT 4/16; JP, MEI 4/23) (see 3/17)

3 UN comms. on Iraq (disarmament, sanctions, missing-in-action issues) present their first reports to an informal mtg. of the UN Security Council (UNSC). UNSC mbrs. are still divided on how best to proceed with monitoring (e.g., whether to lift sanctions, dissolve UNSCOM). (MEI 4/23)

IDF begins clearing 300 dunams of Palestinian land, olive groves held by Bayt Dujin, al-Sawiyya villages for construction of new bypass road to Ariel settlement. In other incidents, settlers place 8 trailers on hilltop nr. Karmei Shomron settlement, begin expansion of Elkana settlement onto some 200 dunams of Palestinian land held by Mashah village. (al-Ayyam 4/16 in WNC 4/23)

16 APRIL

Arafat is in Kazakhstan for consultations on unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state. (Interfax 4/16 in WNC 4/19)


17 APRIL

Jordan's King Abdullah arrives in Libya for talks with Qaddafi on bilateral relations, expanding economic ties in light of sanctions suspension. He also meets with Arafat, in the country to discuss declaration of state issue. (Great Jamahiriya Radio, Libyan Television Network, al-Ra'i, RJ 4/17, JTV, Libyan Television Network, RJ 4/18 in WNC 4/19; JT [Internet] 4/19; al-Bayan 4/19 in WNC 4/20; MEI 4/23)

18 APRIL


PA releases 8 Hamas prisoners in Gaza, 5 of whom have been held without trial for 3 yrs. (MEI 4/23)

Israeli cabinet adopts a compromise proposal to resolve Christian-Muslim dispute in Nazareth, which it will present to Nazareth residents shortly. The plan would allow a small mosque to be built next to a scaled-
down plaza for millennium pilgrims. (MM 4/19; NYT 4/20) (see 4/7)

Turkey holds elections to replace its caretaker government. Far-right Nationalist Action party makes gains, Islamic Virtue party suffers setback, Kurdish People's Democratic party has strong showing in south. Democratic Left head Ecevit will stay on as PM, but will be forced to form a coalition with at least one other party, a process that could take several wks. (Sabah 4/18 in WNC 4/20; MIL 4/18 in WNC 4/22; MM, WP, WT 4/19; MMM, NYT, WT 4/20; MM, NYT 4/21; WP 4/22; MEI 4/23)

In s. Lebanon, a civilian is wounded by IDF shelling. (RL 4/18 in WNC 4/19)

19 APRIL


IDF places closure on West Bank, Gaza, preventing Palestinians fr. entering Israel during its memorial, independence day holidays. (al-Jazira 4/20 in WNC 4/27; NYT 4/23)

IDF demolishes 2 Palestinian homes in Isawiyya, East Jerusalem, for being built without a permit. (LAW 4/19; PR 4/23; TJJ 4/23 in WNC 4/27)

Lebanon asks the UN to force Israel out of Armun village. (al-Safir 4/19 in WNC 4/21; WT 4/21)

20 APRIL

PC holds special session to discuss Palestinian statehood issue; recommends ending the interim period on 5/4, working toward creation of a Palestinian state. PC speaker Ahmad Qurani says that after 5/4, the PC, existing PA institutions will continue to function until new elections are held, alternative institutions are formed. (al-Quds 4/21 in WNC 4/22; al-Quds 4/22 in WNC 4/27; PR 4/23) (see Docs. B1 and B2)

Christian leaders in Nazareth accept Israeli government compromise on mosque, plaza construction. Muslim leaders reject it, preferring the case to be settled in court. The Vatican terms plans to build a mosque next to the Church of the Annunciation a "provocation." (WP, WT 4/21; MM 4/27) (see 4/18)

In al-Am'ari refugee camp in the West Bank, PA Military Intelligence Service (MIS) mbrs. shoot, wound a Palestinian during an arrest. In protest, Palestinians block the main road, seize a weapon fr. an MIS mbr. MIS breaks up demonstration, arrests several Palestinians. (al-Ayyam, al-Hayat al-Jadida 4/21 in WNC 4/23)

EU suspends sanctions on Libya in line with similar move by UN on 4/5. (WT 4/21)

Syria announces that 25 government officials, directors of public sector corporations have been placed under investigation as part of a government crackdown on corruption directed by Pres. Asa'd's son, Bashar al-Asad. (al-Bayan 4/20 in WNC 4/22)

ILMG discusses IDF occupation of Armun, issues statement saying that ILMG mbrs. differ on whether Israel was justified under the April understandings in taking Armun, urges both sides to take "concrete steps" to return the situation in the village to status-quo-ante 4/15. (MM 4/21; AFP 4/29 in WNC 4/30)

21 APRIL


Jordanian officials report that Israel has dropped plans to cut water supplies to the kingdom this yr. due to drought. (AFP, JT 4/21 in WNC 4/22; HA [international edition] 4/23; at-Ra'i 4/28 in WNC 4/30; MEI 5/7) (see 3/14; Peace Monitor)

Faisal Husseini, in his capacity as a PLO official, holds political briefing at Orient House in East Jerusalem for 30 foreign diplomats, incl. EU officials, several Arab ambs. Husseini is also the PA's minister for Jerusalem affairs. (MM, WP, WT 4/23; JP, MM, PR 4/30) (see 3/18)

IDF lifts closure on the West Bank, Gaza that was imposed on 4/19. (NYT 4/23)

22 APRIL

Israel announces it will close PLO offices at Orient House, calling 4/21 briefing for diplomats a PA "provocation." PA accuses PM Netanyahu of trying to ignite an incident in Jerusalem before the 5/17 Israeli elections; claims that mtg. was a PLO event, not a violation of the ban on PA diplomatic


Russian FM Ivanov arrives in Israel on 1st leg of regional tour aimed at reviving the peace process. Israeli candidates, vying for votes fr. Israel’s Russian immigrants, who make up 14% of the electorate, queue to meet him. (MM 4/22; ITAR-TASS 4/22 in WNC 4/23; WT 4/23; AFP 4/23 in WNC 4/26; JP 4/30; MEI 5/7; WP 5/8)

IDF closes Palestinian school nr. Ariel settlement in the West Bank following stone-throwing incidents nearby. (IDF Radio 4/22 in WNC 4/23)

23 APRIL

In Geneva, the UN Human Rights Commission passes (31-1, with 21 abstentions) resolution condemning Israel’s “continued violations” in the occupied territories. The U.S. votes against. (Reuters [Internet] 4/23)

In Casablanca, Arab human rights groups open major 3 day conference on human rights conditions in the Arab world. It is the 1st international conference of the Arab Human Rights Movement. (INFOPAL 5/21)

Russian FM Ivanov meets with Arafat in Ramallah, then leaves for Egypt. (AFP, ITAR-TASS 4/23 in WNC 4/26; MENA 4/23 in WNC 4/27; MEI 5/7)

Jewish settlers set up new enclaves on hilltop nr. Ma’ale Levona, nr. Ramallah. (AP [Internet] 4/24)

Hizballah detonates a roadside bomb in s. Lebanon, killing 1 SLA mbr., wounding a 2d. In an unrelated incident, the IDF shells a Lebanese army checkpoint nr. of the self-declared security zone, injuring 3 civilians. (RL, VOL 4/23 in WNC 4/26; NYT, WP 4/24)

24 APRIL

After talks with Pres. Mubarak in Cairo, Russian FM Ivanov heads to Damascus, where he says relations with Syria are warm despite delay in finalizing arms deal. (MENA 4/24, ITAR-TASS 4/25 in WNC 4/27; WP 4/25) (see 4/11)

25 APRIL


In Amman, Israeli PM candidate and fmr. DM Mordechai meets unofficially with King Abdullah. (JT 4/26 in WNC 4/27)

Israeli pres. Ezer Weizman, trade delegation arrive in China for 1 wk. visit. (Xinhua 4/25, 4/26 in WNC 4/27)

Iran, Qatar hold talks on expanding bilateral relations. (IRNA 4/25 in WNC 4/27)

Israeli police shut Palestinian Prisoners Club office in East Jerusalem that Israel alleges was being used by the PA in violation of Oslo. (al-Quds 4/26 in WNC 4/29) (see 4/22)

Israel officially charges Shin Bet undercover agent Avishai Raviv with failure to prevent assassination of PM Yitzhak Rabin, conspiracy, support for a terrorist organization. (NYT, WP, WT 4/26; JP 4/30) (see 11/18/95)

U.S., Britain complain that for several mos., Syrian trucks have been smuggling Iraqi oil out of Iraq in violation of UN sanctions, perhaps in a barter arrangement in exchange for Syrian goods. U.S., Britain have asked the Syrian government to block shipments, but volume appears to be increasing, with 100s of tankers/wk. now entering Syria. The degree of direct Syrian government involvement in the smuggling cannot be confirmed. (NYT 4/26; MM 4/30)

26 APRIL

PC adopts (41-1, with 2 abstentions) a nonbinding resolution leaving the door open for continued negotiations with Israel at the end of the Oslo interim period, not mentioning possible declaration of state. (AP [Internet] 4/26)

Pres. Clinton sends letter to Arafat, expressing support for Palestinians right to self-determination; appealing to Israel, the PA to renew peace talks swiftly after Israeli elections 5/17, conclude negotiations in 1 yr. (MM 4/26; MM, NYT, WP, WT 4/27; JT 4/27 in WNC 4/28; YA 4/28 in WNC 4/29; MM, WJW 4/29; PR 4/30; MM 5/5; WT 5/6; MEI 5/7) (see Peace Monitor; Docs. C4 and C5)

Israel orders 3 PLO offices operating out of Orient House in East Jerusalem to close within 24 hrs. or file a court appeal.
Jordan, Syria announce formation of 2 comm. to discuss border crossing procedures, ownership of land along their common border. (RJ 4/26 in WNC 4/27; Petra-JNA 4/28 in WNC 4/29)

Israeli FM Sharon meets with Pope John Paul II at the Vatican. (WP, WT 4/27)

27 APRIL

In Gaza, the PLO Central Council (PCC) opens debate on statehood declaration, with 96 of 124 mbrs. attending. Arafat opens the mtg. by affirming Palestinians’ right to independence, but recommended against declaring a state on 5/4. Hamas sends a 4 mbr. observer group led by Shaykh Ahmad Yasin, marking 1st time it has participated in a PLO mtg.; the move is criticized by Hamas political leaders in Jordan. Islamic Jihad, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine boycott. (MM 4/27; AFP, IDF Radio, JT 4/27 in WNC 4/28; MM, NYT, WP, WT 4/28; IDF Radio, MBC 4/28 in WNC 4/29; al-Ayyam 4/28, 4/29 in WNC 5/3; PR 4/30; MEI 5/7; al-Istiqla 5/7 in WNC 5/17; CSM 5/17) (see Peace Monitor)

In Nablus, 1,000 Fatah mbrs. march in support of a statehood declaration on 5/4. (WT 4/28)

A Palestinian arrested by Israeli police on burglary charges on 4/27 is admitted to a Tel Aviv hospital having been beaten so severely that one of his kidneys stopped functioning. (Reueters [Internet] 5/6)

Without explanation, the GIS orders the Hamas weekly newspaper al-Risala closed “until further notice.” Under pressure fr. unnamed PA officials, the paper is allowed to reopen several hrs. later. (APF 4/27 in WNC 4/28; al-Hayat al-Jadida 4/29 in WNC 5/3; PR 4/30)

In Geneva, the UN Human Rights Commission passes (52-1) a resolution reaffirming the Palestinians’ right to self-determination, right to return. The U.S. votes against. (ADC press release 4/28; Xinhua 4/28 in WNC 4/29; Prime Minister’s Report 4/30) (see 4/23)

Israel claims that the PA has released 3 Hamas prisoners involved in attacks in which Israelis were killed. PA, Hamas deny the story. (IDF Radio 4/27 in WNC 4/28; NYT, WP 4/28; al-Ayyam 4/28 in WNC 4/29; PR 4/30; JP 5/7)


Lebanese security personnel arrest an Israeli woman, Mary Vizeman, on suspicion of spying after she is found in Tyre without a passport. Vizeman, who speaks Arabic well, claims that she came fr. Nazareth to visit a friend in Beirut. (VOL 4/28 in WNC 4/29; JP 5/7)

Hizballah attempts to capture 2 IDF/SLA posts in s. Lebanon, wounding 8 IDF soldiers, 3 SLA mbrs. IDF shells Hizballah targets in response, wounding 2 civilians. (VOL 4/27 in WNC 4/28; MM 4/28)

28 APRIL


After being briefed by the State Dept. on the U.S.’s 4/26 letter to Arafat, Israel accepts in principle Pres. Clinton’s call for an extension of the interim period. (Prime Minister’s Report 4/30)

U.S. State Dept. spokesman James Rubin says that the U.S. is “deeply concerned” that Israel has repeatedly broken promises not to expand settlements onto land not immediately adjacent to existing settlements. (MM 4/29)

Jordanian-Syrian border crossing comm. opens 3 days of talks in Damascus. Jordan proposes adopting identity cards, rather than passports, for travel b/wn. the 2 countries. (JT 5/1 in WNC 5/3) (see 4/26)

Under pressure fr. farmers’ groups, large corporations, the U.S. eases sanctions to allow sale of food, medical supplies to Iran, Libya, Sudan, other nations accused of supporting “terrorism”; adopts a general exemption for food, medicine whenever the U.S. imposes trade sanctions. (NYT, WP, WT 4/29; MM 4/30; MEI 5/7)

PA police confront an IDF patrol that accidentally strayed into Silleh village in West Bank area A, nr. Jinin. When the patrol refuses to halt, police open fire, wounding an IDF soldier. IDF declares the area around Jinin a closed military zone. (NYT, WP 4/29; NYT 5/1; JP 5/7)

To improve their chances in the upcoming 7/99 municipal elections, 13 Jordanian opposition parties agree to form a unified list, but decide to exclude the Islamist oppo-
sition party, the **IAF** (al-Dustur 4/30 in WNC 5/3; SA 5/2 in WNC 5/5)

**29 APRIL**

PCC votes to defer decision on unilateral declaration of a state until 6/99, after the Israeli elections. Before reconvening in 6/99, the PCC says that it will concentrate on building state institutions, drafting a "constitution." PM **Netanyahu** claims that PCC decision is a victory of his hard-line stance on the peace process. (CSM 4/29; AFP, Interfax, IRNA, MENA 4/29 in WNC 4/30; MM, NYT, WP 4/30; al-Akhbar, ITAR-TASS, MENA, RJ 4/30, MENA 5/1 in WNC 5/3; al-Jazira 5/1 in WNC 5/5; al-Diyar 5/1 in WNC 5/11; JP, MEI 5/7) (see Peace Monitor; Doc. B3)

**Jewish settlers** begin expansion of Ofarim settlement onto 1,000 dunams of Palestinian land. 8,000 new units are planned. (al-Hayat al-jadida 4/30 in WNC 5/3)

**Jewish settlers** in Hebron severely beat a 4-yr-old **Palestinian girl**, leaving her with a fractured skull. (LAW 5/4)

Hizballah detonates roadside bomb in s. Lebanon, injuring 1 **mbr.** (RL 4/30 in WNC 5/3)

**30 APRIL**

Israel says it will go ahead next wk. with construction plans for **Har Homa/Jabal Abu Ghunaym** settlement in East Jerusalem, soliciting bids for construction of "the first" 1,400 housing units. (WP 5/1)

**IDF** soldier is sentenced to 14 days in jail for driving into a PA-controlled area on 4/28. (NYT 5/1)

U.S. State Dept. releases annual terrorism report, which softens language on Iran, removing description of Iran as "most active state sponsor of terrorism," noting reduction in planning and execution of attacks. (NYT; WP 5/1)

**1 MAY**

As a follow-up to Arafat's international consultations on declaration of a Palestinian state, the **PA** says that it is encouraging a number of **EU** and other states to show their support by upgrading the Palestinian representation in their countries to embassy level, increasing their donor pledges to help PA institution, infrastructure building. (al-Hayat al-jadida 5/2 in WNC 5/6)

**Netanyahu aide David Bar-Ilan** admits that at Wye, PM **Netanyahu** promised Pres. **Clinton** that he would halt settlement expansion "except for a few exceptions... where there is a danger that the land allotted to the settlements would be taken over by illegal building by Palestinians." (WP 5/2) (see 4/28)

**Jordan, Turkey** begin 1 mo. of joint military exercises. (SA 5/2 in WNC 5/3; al-Dustur 5/5 in WNC 5/6) (see 3/2)

**Jordan** ends 3 wks. of joint military maneuvers with **Pakistan**. (The News [Islamabad] 5/2 in WNC 5/3)

In Hebron, an **IDF** soldier fires rubber bullets at 2 **Palestinian children** (aged 15 and 6) who refuse his orders to come to him, severely injuring both. (LAW 5/1) (see 4/29)

**2 MAY**

**Jordan, Syria** begin 3 days of water talks in Damascus, focusing on water sharing given expected drought this summer, implementation of al-Wahda dam project. Syria agrees to provide Jordan with an additional 8 mcm of water to offset 10% projected shortage. (SANA 5/2, JT 5/3 in WNC 5/4; MM 5/4; JT 5/4 in WNC 5/5; MEI 5/7; SA 5/9, al-Ra'i 5/12 in WNC 5/13; al-Ra'i 5/17 in WNC 5/18)

The **PA** calls on Syria to convene a summit aimed at renewing bilateral relations. (AFP 5/2 in WNC 5/3; al-Quds 5/2 in WNC 5/4; AFP, RMC 5/5 in WNC 5/6)

In Tehran, **Iran, Saudi Arabia** open 4 days of talks on military cooperation, improving defense ties, but are vague on what form such coordination would take. Iran proposes forming an Arab-Islamic axis, comprising Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria, to counter the **U.S.-Israel-Turkey** alliance. (NYT, WT 5/3; GIU 5/4; MM 5/6; al-Musawwar 5/14 in WNC 5/17)

**3 MAY**

In Washington, the U.S.-Israel Joint Political Military Group (JPMG) convenes to discuss exchanges aimed at improving Israel's defensive capabilities. (USIS Washington File 5/5)

Fmr. PLO guerrilla and current Palestine National Council mbr. **Muhammad Oudeh** admits to planning hostage-taking of Israelis at the 1972 Munich Olympics, says **Arafat** was briefed on plans, but that intention was never to kill the athletes. (WP, WT 5/4)

**IDF** demolishes 2 **Palestinian homes** in Jerusalem. (LAW 5/5; MM 5/6)

Choosing not to contest his lawsuit, the U.S. unfreezes $24 m. in assets of **Saudi bus-
inessman Idris, who owns al-Shifa pharmaceutical plant in Sudan, bombed by the U.S. in 8/98. Administration says it still has "concerns" about Idris based on sensitive intelligence sources. (NYT, WP 5/4; MM 5/14) (see 2/25)

Hizballah stages 3 attacks against IDF, SLA targets in s. Lebanon, killing 1 IDF soldier, injuring 5 IDF soldiers and SLA mbrs. (RL, VOL 5/3 in WNC 5/4; MM 5/4; WT 5/5; MEI 5/7)

4 MAY

Across the occupied territories, only scattered Palestinian protests, clashes with IDF soldiers mark the official end of the 5 yr. Oslo interim period. The PA holds no ceremonies; Arafat is in Ireland. 17 Palestinians are injured in a clash with the IDF in Hebron. (WT 5/4; IRNA 5/4 in WNC 5/5; CSM, MM, NYT, WP 5/5; al-Quds 5/6 in WNC 5/10; JTJ 5/7 in WNC 5/12)

Contradicting his own aide (see 5/1), PM Netanyahu denies U.S. charges that he has broken a promise to build only on land adjacent to existing settlements, says that he made it clear to the U.S. that he would build settlements in "undeveloped areas." (WP 5/5)

After 3 yrs. of refusing official contact, Morocco's King Hassan receives a delegation of 50 Israeli legislators, religious leaders, businessmen. (NYT 5/5)

Labor candidate for PM Barak makes private visit to Amman to meet with King Abdullah on the peace process, regional issues, ways to revive the Israeli-Syrian negotiations. (WT 5/5; JT 5/5 in WNC 5/6; JP 5/14) (see 4/25)

Kuwaiti leader Shaykh Jabar Ahmad al-Sabah dissolves parliament after lawmakers threaten to oust his Islamic affairs minister for mistakes printed in 120,000 copies of the Qur'an, calls for early elections to be held 7/3. (MM, WP, WT 5/5; MM 5/6)

Hizballah detonates a roadside bomb in s. Lebanon, killing 2 SLA mbrs., injuring 3 IDF soldiers. (VOL 5/4 in WNC 5/5; WT 5/5; VOL 5/5 in WNC 5/6; Tishrin 5/5 in WNC 5/10; MEI 5/7)

5 MAY

Donor's Joint Liaison Comm., Local Aid Coordination Comm. meet in Gaza. (al-Ayyam 5/6 in WNC 5/10)

PLO submits appeal, challenging Israel's move to close its offices in Jerusalem's Orient House. (MM, WP 5/6) (see 4/26)

PA reiterates its desire for closer ties with Syria. (AFP 5/5 in WNC 5/6; al-Quds 5/5 in WNC 5/7; al-Hayat al-Jadida 5/11 in WNC 5/14) (see 5/2)

Jordan's King Abdullah invites Iran's Pres. Khatami to visit the kingdom. Meanwhile in Tehran, Iranian, Jordanian delegations discuss expanding economic ties. (IRIB Television, IRNA 5/5 in WNC 5/6)

6 MAY

Arab League says it will form a comm. of legal experts to assist the Palestinians in drafting a constitution. (MENA 5/6 in WNC 5/7; al-Ayyam 5/6 in WNC 5/10)

U.S. Amb. Edward Walker meets with Israeli Public Security M Avigdor Kahalani to urge Israel to show restraint over the Orient House issue. (MM 5/6; CSM, WT 5/7) (see 5/5)

Jordan's King Abdullah calls on Western governments to cancel half of the kingdom's $7 b. foreign debt to ensure political, economic stability. (NYT 5/7; MM 5/14; MEI 5/21)

7 MAY

Orient House, Israeli Internal Security Min. officials try to reach compromise on closure of offices. (SA 5/9 in WNC 5/10) (see 5/6)

Jordan's water minister says that Israel will provide the kingdom with its full share of water under the regular schedule agreed to under the 10/94 peace treaty. (JT 5/8 in WNC 5/10) (see Peace Monitor)

Arab League antiterrorism agmt. comes into force 1 mo. after being ratified by 8 of the League's 22 mbrs. (Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, the PA, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, the UAE). (NYT 5/8)

PSF arrests 4 al-Najah University students on charges of being mbrs. of Islamic Jihad; raid al-Manar press offices, confiscating files, computer disks. (LAW 5/12)

8 MAY

The New York Times reports that 2 New York-based groups financed by wealthy Americans—Chai L'Yisrael, supporting Netanyahu, and Kesher, supporting Barak—are arranging cut-rate charter flights for some 15,000 dual Israeli-U.S. citizens to fly to Israel to vote in the 5/17 elections. Israeli-U.S. dual citizens are allowed to vote in both countries, but Israel does not allow them to vote by absentee ballot. (NYT 5/8; WP 5/9; NYT, WT 5/15)
9 MAY

Over objections of his finance minister, PM Netanyahu persuades his cabinet to approve a 5 yr. program that would give $5,000 cash grants to Jews buying housing units in East Jerusalem; a 5 yr., $100 m. project for infrastructure improvements in East Jerusalem. (NYT 5/11)

Under pressure fr. the U.S., Israel's Public Security M Kahalani postpones closure of PLO offices in Orient House, meets with Orient House head Faisal Hussein to seek a compromise. (RMC, SA 5/9 in WNC 5/10; CSM, NYT, WP 5/10; IDF Radio 5/10 in WNC 5/11) (see 5/7)

IDF begins bulldozing 1,050 dunams of Palestinian land nr. the West Bank village of al-Shuyukh reportedly for development of a new industrial zone. (al-Quds 5/12 in WNC 5/17; LAW 5/15)

10 MAY


Delegation of senior Turkish military officials arrives in Israel for 3 days of talks on defense cooperation. (WT 5/12)

11 MAY

Through a new series of campaign advertisements, PM Netanyahu admits that he has recently made “mistakes” that have caused Barak to take the lead in election polls by 6-8% in the past couple of wks.; pleads with voters to “come back home.” (WP 5/12; WT 5/13)

Israeli High Court approves appeal submitted today by Ir Shalem peace group to delay the closure of Orient House offices until after the Israeli elections. (MM, NYT 5/11; CSM, NYT, WP, WT 5/12; WJW 5/13) (see 5/10)

King Abdallah of Jordan arrives in London on his 1st official visit to Britain as head of state, discusses debt issue with PM Blair. (JTV, LPA, Petra-JNA 5/11 in WNC 5/12; MEI 5/21) (see 5/6)

In Damascus, Iran, Syria discuss joint industry projects; cooperation in banking, energy, justice, sports health. (IRNA 5/11 in WNC 5/12)

Ayman al-Amsi, a Palestinian detainee held by the PA police in Gaza since 3/14, is admitted to intensive care while still unconscious, showing signs of torture. (LAW 5/14)

In s. Lebanon, Hizbollah detonates a roadside bomb as an SLA convoy passes, killing 1 SLA mbr., wounding 4. 4 Lebanese homes are damaged by IDF shelling. (RL 5/11 in WNC 5/12)

12 MAY

At the weekly PC session in Ramallah, PA Justice M Frayh Abu-Madayn criticizes lack of separation bwn. judiciary, executive branches of the PA. (al-Quds 5/13 in WNC 5/14; al-Ayyam 5/3 in WNC 5/17) (see Peace Monitor)

Pres. Clinton notifies Congress that he will decide after Israeli elections whether to waive the transfer of the U.S. emb. in Israel to Jerusalem. The 10/23/95 Jerusalem Embassy Act orders the U.S. to move the emb. by 5/31/99 or suffer major funding cuts, though it gives the pres. the ability to delay the transfer for national security reasons. (WJW, WP, WT 5/13; JP, MM 5/14) (see Doc. D2 in JPS 98)

Deri, Shas party spiritual leaders endorse PM Netanyahu for 5/17 election. (CSM, WP, WT 5/13) (see 4/15)

Jewish settlers try to seize Palestinian land in Asira al-Qibliyya, sparking clash with local Palestinians. IDF intervenes when settlers fire in the air to intimidate the Palestinians. (al-Quds 5/13 in WNC 5/17)

13 MAY

Iranian pres. Khatami begins 3 day visit to Syria on 1st leg of 10 day tour that will also take him to Saudi Arabia, Qatar; holds talks with Pres. Asad on bilateral relations and regional security; forming an Arab-Islamic axis (Iran, Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia) to counter the U.S.-Israel-Turkey alliance. (MM 5/13; Iran News, IRNA, VIRI 5/13 in WNC 5/14; MM, NYT, WT 5/14)

IDF shells areas in s. Lebanon, killing 2 Amal mbrs. In a separate incident in Jazzin, a roadside bomb explodes as a car passes, killing 4 civilians, 1 suspected SLA mbr. (VOL 5/13 in WNC 5/14; WP, WT 5/14)

14 MAY

U.S. emb. in Israel confirms that Amb. Walker has set up an apartment in Jerusalem in an effort to stave off congressional pressure to move the entire emb. fr. Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. State Dept. denies that the apartment serves as the amb’s “secondary residence.” (WP, WT 5/15) (see 5/12)

Khatami also meets with Damascus-based Palestinian opposition leaders, a Hamas delegation fr. Jordan. (MM 5/14; IRIB Television, RMC 5/14; NYT, WP 5/15)

King Abdullah arrives in Washington on his 1st trip to the U.S. as head of state. (State Dept. press briefing 5/14)

Syria begins pumping water to Jordan to help ease drought. (al-Dustur 5/14 in WNC 5/17; NYT 5/15; JT 5/15 in WNC 5/17; JT 5/17 in WNC 5/18; MEI 5/21) (see 5/2)

15 MAY

Israeli Arab MK Bishara withdraws fr. race for PM, fearing his candidacy undermines attempts to unseat Netanyahu. However he does not endorse Barak. (NYT, WP, WT 5/16; al-Ahram 5/18 in WNC 5/19)


Khatami then leaves for 5 day visit to Saudi Arabia to discuss rapprochement, economic cooperation, regional stability; inaugurates new Iranian consulate in Jiddah. (Iran News, IRIB Television, IRNA, SATN 5/15, IRNA 5/16 in WNC 5/17; NYT, WP, WT 5/16; GIU 5/20; MEI 5/21)

Hizballah clashes with the IDF, SLA in s. Lebanon, killing 1 IDF soldier, 1 SLA mbr., wounding 7 SLA mbrs. (VOL 5/15 in WNC 5/17; MEI 5/21)

**Chronology Source Abbreviations**

AFP (Agence France-Presse, Paris)

ATL (Anatolia, Ankara)

CSM (Christian Science Monitor, Boston)

GIU (Global Intelligence Update, Austin)

HA (Haaretz, Tel Aviv)

IRNA (Islamic Republic News Agency, Tehran)


JT (Jordan Times, Amman)

JTV (Jordan Television Network, Amman)

LAW (Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment, Jerusalem)

LPA (London Press Association, London)

MA (Ma'ariv, Tel Aviv)

MBC (Middle East Broadcasting Centre, London)

MEI (Middle East International, London)

MENA (Middle East News Agency, Cairo)

MIL (Militiyet, Ankara)

MM (Mideast Mirror, London)

NYT (New York Times, New York)

PCHR (Palestinian Center for Human Rights, Gaza)

PR (Palestine Report, Jerusalem)

RE (Republic of Egypt Radio, Cairo)

RJ (Radio Jordan, Amman)

RL (Radio Lebanon, Beirut)

RMC (Radio Monte Carlo, Paris)

SA (al-Sharq al-Awsat, London)

SANA (Syrian Arab News Agency, Damascus)

SATN (Syrian Arab Television Network, Damascus)

TJT (The Jerusalem Times, East Jerusalem)

VIRI (Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Tehran)

VOA (Voice of the Arabs, Cairo)

VL (Voice of Lebanon, Beirut)

WJV (Washington Jewish Week, Rockville, MD)

WNC (World News Connection [Internet], Washington, DC)

WP (Washington Post, Washington, DC)

WT (Washington Times, Washington, DC)

YA (Yedi'ot Aharonot, Tel Aviv)

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