



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS
JOURNALS + DIGITAL PUBLISHING



Peace Monitor

Source: *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (Summer 2001), pp. 111-130

Published by: [University of California Press](#) on behalf of the [Institute for Palestine Studies](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/jps.2001.30.4.111>

Accessed: 30/03/2015 13:35

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16 FEBRUARY-15 MAY 2001

The Peace Monitor is a quarterly summary of bilateral, multilateral, regional, and international events affecting the peace process.

BILATERALS

PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI TRACK

As the quarter opened, Israeli-Palestinian clashes entered their fifth month. The level of violence had abated significantly in late 1/01 and early 2/01 but spiked immediately following the election of Likud's Ariel Sharon as Israel's PM on 2/6 (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 119). Around 364 Palestinians, 19 Israeli Arabs, 29 Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers and Israeli security personnel, 18 Jewish settlers, 11 Israeli civilians, and 1 German national had been killed. More than 11,000 Palestinians had been injured. Contacts between Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA), including security coordination, were minimal to nonexistent. The PA and Israel, under the administration of Ehud Barak, had suspended negotiations on final status just prior to the Israeli elections. PM-elect Sharon stated that he would not resume talks from Barak's endpoint or hold talks at all or ease the closure until all Palestinian violence ceased (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 119). At most, he would offer a long-term interim agreement under which a Palestinian state could be created on the 40 to 42% of the West Bank currently under full or partial PA control (areas A and B).

From 2/16 to 3/7, daily clashes continued at a moderate level, while Sharon concentrated on cobbling together a Likud-Labor coalition government (see Chronology for details). During this period, the new U.S. secy. of state, Gen. Colin Powell, made his first tour of the region to outline the Middle East policy of the new administration of Pres. George W. Bush, stopping in Egypt (2/24), Israel (2/24-25), Ramallah (2/25), Jordan (2/25), Kuwait (2/25-26), Saudi Arabia (2/26), and Syria (2/26). Rather than focus on the deterioration of Israeli-Palestinian relations, Powell lobbied for a revised sanctions regime for Iraq, underscoring the new administration's intention to take a less active role in the peace process. In talks with Sharon (2/25) and PA head Yasir Arafat (2/25), Powell urged Israel and the PA to halt

escalating violence, resume security cooperation, and improve Palestinian economic conditions, though he did not press Sharon to transfer money Israel owes the PA, saying Sharon's opposition was already clear. Powell also assured Sharon that the U.S. commitment to Israel's security would remain solid under Pres. Bush. Sharon declared that he would ease economic restrictions if Arafat (1) made a public statement in Arabic over Palestinian media outlets renouncing violence and calling for a halt to clashes, (2) took practical steps to halt violence and resume security coordination, and (3) took "tough actions" to halt incitement in the Palestinian media. Of note: on his drive to Ben-Gurion airport from the West Bank, Powell reportedly commented that he had never seen the Jewish settlements in East Jerusalem before and was taken aback at how "closely packed it all is," remarking how "difficult it will be to sort out the whole situation."

During this transition period, Egypt, Jordan, and the PA worked behind the scenes to formulate a plan for implementing a cease-fire and resuming talks. Arafat (e.g., 2/22, 2/23) and Pres. Husni Mubarak of Egypt (e.g., 2/18-20) discussed ideas with European Union (EU) leaders, and senior PA officials did the same with U.S. officials (e.g., 2/20, 2/22). Arafat, Mubarak, and King Abdallah of Jordan likely raised their ideas with Powell during his visit, but no such discussions were reported.

By 2/28, a consensus was reportedly building among Israeli military and civilian officials that the situation of ongoing clashes was untenable and that Israel would have to take decisive action soon, including possibly reoccupying PA areas. These opinions were reinforced by two Palestinian bombings inside Israel on 3/1 and 3/4 that killed four Israelis and wounded more than 70, raising the overall death toll to 410 Arabs and 62 Jews. After the 3/1 incident, Sharon's security adviser, Ehud Yatom, publicly warned that the PA areas "are not a red line" that could not be crossed.

Sharon Enters Office

After a month of wrangling, the Knesset approved (3/7) Sharon's seven-party coalition, dominated by Likud and Labor, including Labor's Shimon Peres as FM and Benjamin Ben-Eliezer as DM. At the same time, the Knesset passed a measure repealing the two-ballot voting system instituted in 1996 under which Israelis voted separately for PM and MKs. (The change reduces chances that small parties will introduce no-confidence motions capable of toppling the government and forcing new elections, since they would be the likely losers under the re-instated one-ballot system.)

Within hours of his inauguration, Sharon stepped up pressure on the Palestinians by sealing the West Bank and Gaza; digging trenches and erecting earthen barriers on the Birzeit–Ramallah road in the West Bank, completely encircling Ramallah (the blockade was eased on 3/15); and reinforcing the closures on nine other Palestinian towns, including Bethlehem, Nablus, and Tulkarm. On 3/8, the closures on five more towns were reinforced. According to well-placed sources, this was Sharon's first step in implementing a new strategy for confronting and halting the intifada, known as Operation Bronze or the 100-day plan. Under this plan, the IDF would set up new military blockades to divide the West Bank and Gaza into 64 units, each of which could be treated separately or completely isolated at Israel's choosing. Under this divide-and-rule approach, "troublesome" areas could be quarantined and "cooperative" ones "rewarded" by easing restrictions. Palestinians presumably would begin to blame activists and militants for their hardship and would pressure them to halt attacks on Israeli targets. Though Israel never officially confirmed the details of the plan, its bulldozing of Palestinian land, restrictions on movement, and expansion and linking of settlement areas intensified noticeably as of 3/7 (see Chronology for details), prompting the U.S. State Dept. to caution Israel (3/12) that blockades and closures "do not thwart terrorist attacks."

Sharon's first three weeks in office (3/7–27) were marked by several high-profile international events: Sharon's long-planned visit to Washington to meet with Pres. Bush, members of Congress, administration officials, and American Jewish leaders (3/19–21); the Mitchell Committee's visit to Israel and the occupied territories to investigate the causes of the al-Aqsa intifada (3/21–25; see

below); and the Arab League summit in Amman (3/27–28; see below). Striving to play down his "warrior image" while he and Israel were in the spotlight, Sharon ordered the IDF not to respond to several Palestinian attacks that normally would have earned harsh retaliation, including the first Palestinian mortar attack inside the Green Line (3/18), the theft of a kibbutz arsenal and murder of a guard near the Israel-Lebanon border (3/19), the shooting death of a settler infant in Hebron (3/26), and two bombings in East Jerusalem settlements that wounded 35 settlers (3/27).

Sharon also made openings to the PA. When Arafat sent a letter to Sharon (3/8) congratulating him on his swearing in and urging him to resume negotiations quickly, Sharon replied (3/8) that he might agree to meet Arafat face-to-face if the relative Palestinian calm of the preceding three days held. Although the calm did not hold and the two did not meet, Israeli and PA security officials met at Erez crossing on 3/16 to discuss ways of reducing violence. Sharon also reportedly authorized several envoys (possibly including his son Omri and Shin Bet head Avi Dichter) to meet with high-level PA officials (possibly including Arafat adviser Mahmud Abbas and PA intelligence chief Amin al-Hindi) on halting the clashes (ca. 3/7, 3/10, 3/17, 3/25).

During his visit to Washington, Sharon restated in meetings with Bush (3/20) and Powell (3/19) that he would not resume talks with the PA until Palestinian violence ceased completely, claiming that he had eased restrictions on Palestinians in previous days but had seen no positive response. Bush accepted Sharon's position that Israel could not negotiate under threat of violence, reiterated that the U.S. would not "force peace" on the Middle East, stated (despite State Dept. recommendations to the contrary) that Arafat would not be welcome at the White House until he "ends the violence," and said that the U.S. was very interested in furthering Israel's missile defense capability. Bush also canceled (3/21) the CIA's role as security mediator between Israel and the PA, saying the sides should cooperate directly. (The CIA had played a key role in exchanging intelligence and arbitrating disputes.)

Conditions Deteriorate

On 3/28, a Palestinian suicide bomber struck a bus stop inside Israel, killing two Israelis and wounding four. That evening, after the Arab League summit in Amman ended,

Sharon unleashed a massive air, land, and sea attack on Force 17 targets across Gaza and in Ramallah, killing three Palestinians, injuring 62, and damaging Arafat's residence. While the State Dept. acknowledged (3/28) Israel's "need to provide for its security" and weakly cautioned against seeking "a military solution to this conflict," Pres. Bush publicly ordered (3/29) Arafat to "stop the violence," angrily stating, "I hope that Chairman Arafat hears it loud and clear. He's going to hear it again on the telephone today." The strike—and, in the PA's view (4/2), the U.S. green light for Israel's actions—seemed to mark a turning point: On 3/30, Israel declared it was ending its "policy of restraint" in dealing with the Palestinians. The announcement coincided with Land Day, when Palestinians held massive demonstrations across the territories to mark the death of six Palestinians during 1976 protests against Israeli land confiscations. Clashes escalated, as did Palestinian casualties.

On 4/1, IDF forces for the first time entered PA-controlled area A to capture six Force 17 members. Israel then (4/2) eased open-fire restrictions on soldiers and stepped up its assassination policy (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 119), killing Islamic Jihad's Muhammad 'Abd al-Al (4/2) and Iyad Hardan (4/5) and Hamas's Muhammad Nassar (4/14) and targeting but missing Fatah *tanzim* leader Nassir Abu Hmeid (4/12). (Though Bush phoned Sharon hours after the 'Abd al-Al assassination, he said he did not raise the issue of "targeted killings.") From 4/1 to 4/10, Israeli-Palestinian violence leveled off at a new, high plateau. Palestinian mortar attacks on IDF posts and settlements in Gaza (4/2–4, 4/9–11) or on targets across the Gaza border inside Israel (4/5–8), which rarely caused damage or injuries, became a daily occurrence. The IDF routinely deployed helicopter gunships to shell PA security posts in response and stepped up its bulldozing of Palestinian homes, demolishing around 30 between 4/1 and 4/7. By 4/10, the death toll reached 448 Arabs and 73 Jews.

The Jordanian-Egyptian Initiative

By 3/29, Jordan and Egypt, in consultation with the PA, had finalized a draft version of what they termed the Jordanian-Egyptian nonpaper that aimed to delineate steps, based on the 10/17/00 Sharm al-Shaykh agreements, for implementing an Israeli-Palestinian cease-fire and resuming final status negotiations from the point at which they left off at Taba in 1/01 (see Peace Monitor in *JPS*

119). The EU states, Russia, the UN, and the U.S. had been briefed on the ideas and had been supportive. Sharon's government was given (ca. 3/29) a verbal outline of the nonpaper.

On 4/1, Israeli FM Peres arrived in Stockholm on a three-day European tour, during which he held "quiet contacts" with PA officials, led by Planning M Nabil Shaath. This was followed by a second Peres-Shaath meeting on the sidelines of a conference in Athens on 4/4, the first public, high-level political meeting between the sides since Sharon took office. In both sessions, Peres stressed Israel's position that the first step in any plan should be the total cessation of violence, only after which there could be an "alleviation" in the territories and a resumption of negotiations without prior conditions (either on the point from which talks would resume or on the goal, i.e., a nonbelligerency pact or final status agreement). Asked if he was rejecting the Jordanian-Egyptian initiative, Peres said (4/4) he could not reject it since it had not been formally presented in writing.

During visits to Washington, Egyptian pres. Mubarak (4/2) and Jordan's King Abdallah (4/10) briefed Bush on the details of the nonpaper and urged the U.S. to take a more active role in the peace process. Bush agreed that the nonpaper should be discussed and offered to "facilitate" talks between Israel and the PA, but stated that the U.S. "can't force peace" and that the regional powers should take a larger role "to create the atmosphere and the foundation . . . [for] a restoring of calm and rebuilding of confidence and security cooperation."

On 4/12, Sharon restated in an interview that he envisioned a long-term interim deal with the PA amounting to a nonbelligerency agreement, with the idea that time is on Israel's side and that in 10 to 15 years Israel would be stronger and the Arabs declining. He vowed never to evacuate a single settlement, not to compromise on Jerusalem, and not to withdraw from any part of the Golan Heights. At most, he repeated, he would accept a demilitarized Palestinian state on 42% of the West Bank (see Doc. C2).

Sharon Tests His Limits

As the half-hearted discussions on the nonpaper petered out, Israeli-Palestinian violence reached new levels. During the Athens talks on 4/4, Israel and the PA agreed to resume security cooperation. (Only one secret meeting on security—between Sharon's ad-

viser, Yossi Ginossaur, his son Omri, and Arafat on 4/1—had been held since the upswing in violence began on 3/28.) Later that evening, a senior delegation including Preventive Security Force (PSF) Gaza head Muhammad Dahlan, PA intelligence chief Hindi, and PA Public Security head 'Abd al-Razik al-Majayda met with senior IDF and Shin Bet officials at the home of U.S. Amb. Martin Indyk in Herziliya; a CIA official sat in as a "nonparticipating observer." Following the meeting, Americans escorted the convoy of PA vehicles to Erez. Midway through the crossing, IDF troops opened fire on the convoy, injuring two bodyguards and hitting all four vehicles with some 70 live bullets. The IDF claimed its soldiers were fired upon from the convoy and had "acted appropriately," while the PA accused Israel of an attempted assassination. Israel admitted its error (4/8) and apologized (4/9).

In the following days, Israel steadily escalated its military action. On 4/10, in response to a mortar attack in Gaza that caused no injuries, the IDF staged rare daylight air strikes on occupied PSF offices in Gaza, killing one PSF doctor and wounding 18 officers. In the predawn hours of 4/11, the IDF made its first sustained foray into PA-controlled territory, sending tanks and bulldozers into Gaza's Khan Yunis refugee camp to remove an earthen embankment and structures that Palestinian gunmen allegedly had used for cover when firing on adjacent settlements. Without alerting sleeping residents, soldiers opened fire with tanks and machine guns, cut power to the camp, and plowed under 28 homes, part of an apartment building, and an olive grove. The demolition cleared a 400-yard strip of land and left 360 Palestinians homeless. Most of the homes destroyed were one-story tin-roofed structures that did not have lines of sight to settlements or IDF posts and that were structurally unsuitable for use as mortar launching pads. On 4/14, IDF sent tanks and bulldozers into Rafah refugee camp and demolished the PA military intelligence headquarters, 17 Palestinian homes, and 40 stores, injuring 43 Palestinians, leaving more than 160 homeless, and damaging another 30 shops. Again, most buildings destroyed had no line of sight to Israeli targets and were unsuitable for launching mortars. The next day, the IDF bombed a Syrian military installation in northern Lebanon in response to a Hizballah attack on troops in the Shaba' Farms area of the Golan Heights (see below), raising con-

cerns that the conflict could spread beyond Israel and the Palestinian territories. On 4/16, Hamas fired mortars from Gaza into Israel, causing no damage. Israel responded with a four-hour land, sea, and air strike on PA security targets across Gaza, hitting Gaza City's main police station and at least seven Force 17 posts, killing one PSF officer and wounding 36 Palestinians. The IDF declared it was preparing for a "rolling episode and not a passing episode."

In the predawn hours of 4/17, without convening his cabinet or security cabinet for approval, Sharon ordered tanks, troops, and bulldozers into the Bayt Hanun area of the Gaza Strip to reoccupy a mile-wide section of land along the northern Gaza border with Israel from the Erez crossing to the northeastern corner of the Strip, marking the first reoccupation of territory ceded to Palestinian rule under the 1993 Oslo accords. Under the Oslo agreements, Israel already controlled a large border area stretching west from Erez to the sea, so by taking the Bayt Hanun area, Sharon created an IDF buffer zone between the PA areas and Israel. During the day, soldiers built ramparts, sandbagged positions around new tank outposts, and cleared large tracts of land. IDF Gaza commander Brig. Gen. Yair Naveh pledged that Israel would hold the area "as long as it takes—days, weeks, months"—to ensure Israel's security. Similar statements were made by IDF spokesman Ron Kitri. Fearing events could spin out of control, especially following the strike on Lebanon (4/15), and that Israel, in the words of a State Dept. official, was "trying to undo agreements that had already been signed," Powell publicly rebuked Israel for taking "excessive and disproportionate" action and called on the IDF to withdraw immediately. (The State Dept. repeatedly emphasized, however, that Powell did not use the word "condemn" in criticizing Israel.) Bush then phoned Sharon to urge restraint. Hours later, Israel announced that the IDF had completed its mission and was pulling out of the area, claiming it had never intended the operation to last more than a day. Explaining the announcement, Sharon adviser Dore Gold said, "We pay very close attention to what is said in Washington." A State Dept. official welcomed the Israeli decision but warned against future Israeli "over-reactions," saying, "It rests in their hands more than the Palestinians' to control the level of escalation." The IDF completed its pullout the morning of 4/18. That afternoon,

Palestinians fired seven mortars from the Bayt Hanun area toward the Erez crossing and a Jewish settlement, causing no damage. The IDF sent bulldozers back into Bayt Hanun briefly to destroy a PSF post. Bush phoned Sharon again to urge him to show restraint.

The Sides Take a Step Back

Israel got the message. Through the end of 4/01, Israel considerably toned down its actions (see Chronology for details). Though daily Israeli-Palestinian clashes persisted and the IDF continued to direct tank and heavy machine-gun fire at Palestinian residential areas, there were no helicopter attacks, incursions into PA-controlled areas were infrequent, home demolitions dropped dramatically, bulldozing of Palestinian lands was reduced slightly, and settler violence and settlement activity decreased noticeably. Though there were no obvious Israeli assassinations, three mysterious explosions on 4/25 and 4/30 that killed a senior Fatah activist and two Hamas activists were most likely Israeli hits.

Palestinian actions also diminished but not as much. Arafat, who had issued his first public call on Palestinians to halt mortar attacks across the Green Line on 4/11 (ignored on 4/16 and 4/19), made a second appeal on 4/19. Through the end of the month, mortar attacks fell off slightly, occurring every few days rather than daily, and were confined to Gaza. But Palestinian bombings continued at the same level, with suicide bombings and package bombs on 4/22 and 4/29 and a car bombing on 4/23, which left a total of one Israeli dead and 48 injured. Even in these cases, Israel did not authorize air strikes or take retaliatory actions. At the U.S.'s urging, Israel and the PA also resumed security talks on 4/21, meeting first at Erez and then, on 4/23, at the U.S. ambassador's residence, with CIA "tentative" participation. Follow-up meetings were held on 4/27 and 4/29, with no visible progress.

Diplomatic efforts were also revived. On 4/16, during the escalation but before the Bayt Hanun incursion, Jordanian FM 'Abd Allah Khatib met with Sharon and Peres in Tel Aviv to present them with the formal, written Jordanian-Egyptian initiative. The proposal outlined three stages: (1) a cease-fire, during which both sides would resume security coordination and Israel would withdraw to its 9/28/00 positions, end the siege on Palestinian areas, and transfer arrears; (2) a confidence-building period, during which all

outstanding Oslo provisions would be implemented (including all security commitments, safe passage, and the third further redeployment) and Israel would halt all settlement construction (including building in East Jerusalem); and (3) resumption of negotiations on all outstanding issues, based on UN Res. 242 and 338, from the point where they left off in 1/01, with a one-year deadline for completing an agreement. Implementation would be monitored by Egypt, the EU, Jordan, Russia, the UN, and the U.S. Sharon told Khatib outright that the proposal was a "non-starter," but Peres said it would be studied. Peres and various PA officials, particularly senior PA negotiator Ahmad Qurai' and Arafat adviser Muhammad Rashid (Khalid Salam), entered almost daily talks, no details of which were publicized. Israel also sent DMin. Dir. Gen. Amon Yaron to Amman (ca. 4/19) for talks with King Abdallah. On 4/27, Sharon and Peres drafted a formal response, saying the proposal was important and bore examination but that Israel had "serious reservations about almost every aspect" and "substantial changes" would have to be made before Israel could accept it. Sharon noted as particularly problematic clauses on halting settlement construction, resuming negotiations from the point at which they left off in 1/01, and on setting a deadline for reaching a final status agreement.

Peres left for Cairo (4/29), Amman (4/29), the UN (4/30), and Washington (5/1-3) to brief leaders on Israel's position. (Of note: Peres briefed American Jewish leaders, 5/1, before meeting with administration officials, 5/2-3.) He stressed that the sides had agreed on the need for a cease-fire and the principles on which a cease-fire would be based but not on the steps to achieve it. In talks with Bush and Powell, he focused on the cease-fire aspect of the initiative, which Israel still maintained must come before a resumption of peace talks. Echoing that position, Powell stated (5/2) that the U.S. supported the Arab proposal as a "beginning of a dialogue. But, of course, that dialogue cannot get underway until violence is brought down." Egypt and Jordan noted (4/29) Israel's reservations and proposed changes but said they were not willing to start a new process of "talks about talks." Jordanian PM Ali Abu Raghieb stated (5/1) that in drafting the proposal, "We concentrated on ensuring the implementation of agreements already signed. The initiative had nothing to do with implementing agreements

not yet signed and was careful not to introduce any new binding provisions. That is why it is out of the question to introduce any amendments to the plan."

Loosening the Reins on the IDF

Meanwhile, the death toll in the Israeli-Palestinian clashes had reached 484 Arabs and 77 Jews. Around 5/1, a number of events coincided to cause a new deterioration. On 4/28, a previously unknown group called the Four Martyrs, claiming retaliation for the death of four Fatah members on 4/25, fired mortars at three settlements in Gaza. Although five settlers were injured in the mortar strikes Israel, unusually, did not respond. Arafat, however, reportedly concerned by the Fatah linkage, ordered (4/29) the popular resistance committees, the loosely knit groups that had carried out many if not most of the militant acts since 10/00 (see below), to disband and "return to their original security positions." The call was strongly opposed and ignored (see below), highlighting Arafat's limited ability to control Palestinian violence.

On 5/1, although the quality of the clashes had not changed appreciably for nearly two weeks, the IDF stepped up attacks on PA targets, shelling the offices of the PA Central Bureau of Statistics, the Local Government Min., and the Wafa news agency. Afterward, Sharon announced (5/1) that he had given the IDF "freedom beyond imagining" to act against Palestinians. The next morning, before dawn, IDF tanks and bulldozers entered Brazil refugee camp in PA-controlled Gaza. Without warning, soldiers opened fire with tanks and machine guns and demolished 20 homes, killing one Palestinian, wounding 14, and leaving 150 homeless. The IDF claimed the four-hour assault was to halt sniper fire from the area. Meanwhile in Washington, Powell, in discussing the need to reduce violence before a PA-Israeli dialogue could begin (see above), omitted mentioning the IDF's raid on Brazil camp that morning, leaving the unspoken emphasis on the Palestinians' need to quell disturbances. On 5/3, at an American Jewish Committee meeting in Washington, Bush, with Peres at his side, declared that the U.S. and Israel "see eye to eye on how to handle the peace process" and that the U.S. would be "steadfast in supporting Israel against terrorism."

Thereafter, and through the end of the quarter, Israel steadily escalated its military activity. According to Sharon spokesman

Raanan Gissin (5/11), "Our basic strategy is to keep [the Palestinians] guessing and having them spend more time defending themselves under constant attack by the Israeli army." The IDF routinely sent troops into PA-controlled areas, often with bulldozers to level agricultural land, Palestinian homes, and PA security posts (see Chronology). While only six such incursions were reported in 4/01, and none before, around 25 such incidents were reported in the first week of 5/01 alone. On 5/6, Israeli DM Ben-Eliezer said he had given IDF field commanders greater freedom to launch ground attacks into areas under PA control. On 5/13, the IDF launched a major air and sea strike on PSF posts across Gaza. Israel also openly resumed its assassination policy, killing Islamic Jihad's Ahmad As'ad (5/5) and Hamas's 'Abd al-Hakim al-Manama (5/15), and making a failed attempt on Fatah *tanzim* leader 'Abd al-Karim Owais. Simultaneously, settler violence against Palestinians escalated (see Chronology). Israel's Public Security Min. announced (5/8) that it had drawn up a list of 11 offices operated by the PA in East Jerusalem, including Orient House, that it planned to close in the near future so as "to thwart any activity by the PA infringing on our sovereignty in Jerusalem." By the end of the quarter, Palestinian demonstrations were also becoming much larger. For instance, 10,000s of Palestinians attended the memorial service in Ramallah for five PSF officers killed by the IDF in an admittedly unprovoked attack on 5/14. Massive rallies were also staged across the West Bank and Gaza to commemorate the anniversary of the Nakba on 5/15.

"A Bridge Back to Negotiations"

On 5/4, amidst the deteriorating conditions, the five-member Mitchell Committee of inquiry into the causes of the al-Aqsa intifada (set up by the U.S., in consultation with Israel, the PA, and the UN, per agreements reached at the 10/17/00 Sharm al-Shaykh summit) released its preliminary report, which the U.S. and the international community quickly embraced as a possible "bridge back to negotiations," in the words of UN Secy.-Gen. Kofi Annan (5/14). The committee's conclusions were based on written submissions by Israel and the PA (some presented last quarter [see Peace Monitor and Docs. B1 and C1 in *JPS* 119] and some ca. 4/1), assessments by technical experts who visited Israel and the territories, and the committee's meetings with Israeli and Palestinian officials, experts, and community rep-

representatives during its visit to the region (3/21–25).

The committee had originally planned to come to the region in mid-2/01, but Israel suspended cooperation with the committee pending renewal of its mandate by the Bush administration (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 119). On 2/21, the outgoing PM Barak, in coordination with incoming PM Sharon, asked the U.S. to freeze the committee, arguing its existence was not compatible with the realities of ongoing Palestinian violence. By 3/6, the U.S. advised Israel to work with the committee, warning that if it did not, the PA might press for a UN resolution condemning Israel's nonparticipation, which it would be difficult for the U.S., as instigator and organizer of the committee, to veto. Israel relented. Though Sharon agreed to meet with the committee (3/25), he criticized (3/25) the inquiry as unjustified, saying Israel had made "a historic mistake" in consenting to the investigation "because no one has the right—no one—to put Israel on trial before the world."

The preliminary report, which the committee itself described as "deliberately even-handed" (5/4), accepted that Sharon's 9/28/00 visit to the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif was only one factor that sparked unrest, concluding that the main cause was the "lack of full compliance with agreements since the opening of the peace process," which had eroded trust on both sides. The report highlighted three goals—halting violence, rebuilding confidence, and resuming negotiations—though it emphasized that the "timing and sequence" of steps must be decided by the parties. The committee specifically called on the PA to make a 100% effort to halt violence and on Israel to halt all settlement construction (including natural growth), to pull forces back to where they were on 9/28, and to use nonlethal weapons against unarmed Palestinian demonstrators. Both Israel and the PA, in their initial (5/4) and formal (5/15) statements, deemed the report generally positive and constructive (see Docs. B4 and C3). The PA regretted that the committee did not recommend an international protection force for Palestinians in the territories. Israel took exception to the report's criticism that it had used excessive force and rejected the call for a settlement freeze. Indeed, Sharon vowed (5/8) to continue expanding settlements, arguing that construction was not illegal because the set-

tlements are built "not on occupied territory, but disputed territory."

With Israel and the PA's relatively warm reception to the report, the U.S. heralded (5/10) it as the possible basis of a peace initiative, noting that the Mitchell Committee conclusions and goals closely mirrored those of the Jordanian-Egyptian initiative, which the U.S. said it still supported as well. In response, Sharon reiterated (5/11) Israel's rejection of a settlement freeze as part of a cease-fire agreement. (A Gallup poll released that day, however, indicated that 55% of Israelis would support a settlement freeze in exchange for a cease-fire versus 39% who would oppose.) The PA, in turn, sent senior negotiator Mahmud Abbas to Washington (5/15) to impress upon Powell the PA's view that a settlement freeze must be an integral part of any plan for halting violence and resuming negotiations. At the close of the quarter, pending the release of the Mitchell Committee's final report in late 5/01 (see Doc. A2), the U.S. was exploring options on settlements (including various definitions of "settlement expansion"—e.g., physical area versus number of residents, outward versus upward growth) that would make a settlement freeze—viewed as necessary in both the committee report and the Jordan-Egyptian initiative—acceptable to both parties, so that work on a cease-fire and resumption of negotiations could move forward.

Overview of the Clashes

At the close of the quarter, approximately 511 Palestinians (including Israeli Arabs), 36 IDF soldiers and Israeli security personnel, 28 Jewish settlers, 18 Israeli Jewish civilians, two Rumanians, and a German had been killed. According to the Health Development Information and Policy Institute (5/2), upward of 14,000 Palestinians had been injured, of whom 1,500 had been permanently disabled. (Jerusalem Media and Communication Center placed the injured as high as 20,000.) Nearly 75% of fatalities and 37 to 38% of injuries were caused by live ammunition. According to B'Tselem (5/3), 855 Israelis had been injured; 66 had moderate or severe injuries, and the rest had light injuries.

On 3/14, the Red Crescent reported that since 9/28, 15 Palestinians had died as a result of being unable to cross IDF checkpoints to reach medical treatment. In 109 cases, the IDF denied Palestinians access to ambulances at checkpoints. At least another seven Palestinians died from denial of medical treatment by the end of the quarter.

Israel assassinated at least six Palestinians this quarter: Mahmud Madani (2/19), Muhammad 'Abd al-Al (4/2), Iyad Hardan (4/5), Muhammad Nassar (4/14), Ahmad As'ad (5/5), and 'Abd al-Hakim al-Manama (5/15). Failed attempts were made on Nasir Abu Hmeid (4/12) and 'Abd al-Karim Owais (5/12).

According to Gush Shalom, as of 2/28, some 450 Palestinian homes had been demolished since the intifada began. IDF house demolitions rose steadily after Sharon's inauguration on 3/7 through the end of 4/01 and then tapered a bit in 5/01. The Palestine Media Center reported (4/28) that to date, the IDF and settlers had bulldozed 3,669,000 m² (906 acres) of Palestinian land.

Regarding freedom of movement, Israel, responding (2/24) to queries from the U.S. embassy in Tel Aviv as to why 17 Palestinian economic officials and business leaders were barred from leaving the occupied territories to attend a conference sponsored by the U.S. and the World Trade Organization, stated that its current policy was to reject virtually all travel applications from Palestinians, even when there is no indication that the applicants pose a security risk, unless high-level Israeli officials specifically endorse the request.

The IDF reported (3/12) that since the start of the intifada, it had recorded 115 bombing incidents in the West Bank, 2,257 shooting incidents in the West Bank, and 4,000 shooting incidents in Gaza. Palestinian mortar use, which began in late 1/01, remained restricted to Gaza. The first mortar fired from Gaza into Israel was on 3/18. Mortar incidents were infrequent until 4/2, when two weeks of daily attacks began. After Arafat's second call (4/19) on Palestinians to halt strikes on Israel proper, incidents decreased to roughly one every three to four days. At least one mortar attack inside the Green Line occurred (5/4) after Arafat's second plea.

In addition to the theft of weapons from Manara kibbutz (3/19) mentioned above, the Israeli navy captured (5/7) a boat near the Israel-Lebanon border carrying 4 shoulder-fired antiaircraft missiles, 48 Katyusha rockets, 20 rocket-propelled grenades, 120 anti-tank grenades, 70 antitank mines, 10s of assault rifles, and ammunition. Israel claimed that Hizballah and Iran had supplied the weapons and that members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) were delivering them

to the PA. The PFLP-GC admitted sending the boat, but the PA denied any connection with the shipment. The IDF arrested (4/1) a soldier who had gone AWOL after allegedly stealing 35,000 rounds of ammunition and possibly handguns, rifles, and grenades, which he had then allegedly sold to "hostile elements in the PA." The IDF also reported (5/13) that 42 mortars, rocket-propelled grenades, and ammunition were stolen (ca. 5/7) from an IDF base in Mishor Adumim and were possibly transported to Palestinians in the Bethlehem area.

The Tami Steinmetz Center's Peace Index poll conducted 3/28–29, just as violence escalated sharply, showed that 72% of Israeli Jewish respondents thought that more military force should be used against Palestinians and that 79% agreed with Sharon's position that peace talks should not resume until the Palestinians halt all violence.

The Jewish settlers continued to be the focus and instigators of much of the violence this quarter. In late 2/01, reports increased of Jewish settlers occupying new settlement sites (e.g., 2/20, 2/25) and of moving boundary fences, adding trailers, and bulldozing Palestinian land around settlements to increase their size (e.g., 2/25). On 3/3, the IDF confirmed that it was "working to widen the margins of the settlement blocks in the Gaza Strip in order to bolster settlers' security and send a message to the Palestinians." Starting the day of Sharon's inauguration, Jewish settlers dramatically escalated their confiscations of Palestinian property, creating new settlement sites (e.g., 3/7, 3/8, 3/13, 3/29) and expanding settlement boundaries (e.g., 3/18, 3/25, 4/2), as well as attacking Palestinians and their property (see Chronology for details). After the fatal shooting of a settler infant in Hebron on 3/26, local settlers laid siege to the Palestinian neighborhood of Abu Sunayna, where the gunfire originated, urging the IDF to help them occupy the area. The IDF warned Palestinians to evacuate or risk heavy attack, but residents refused and no attack came. Over the next week, settlers attacked and destroyed Palestinian property in Hebron and threatened to storm Abu Sunayna, but the IDF held them back. Settler violence continued at a high level until mid-4/01, declined following the Bayt Hanun incident 4/17, and escalated again in 5/01 in keeping with the overall trend of the clashes.

On 3/20, the Jerusalem Municipal Council approved a plan to expand Har Homa/Jabal Abu Ghunaym settlement by 2,832 units,

blocking Bethlehem's northern expansion, despite the fact that of the 2,300 units already under construction, only 638 had been sold. Israel also completed plans (3/23) for a new 6,000-unit settlement south of Jerusalem, to be called Givaot. On 4/5, Sharon announced plans to build another 708 units in Ma'ale Adumim (where 1,610 units are currently vacant) and Alfe Menashe (where some 800 units are empty); the U.S. criticized (4/5) the move as "provocative." The Israeli daily *Ha'Aretz* reported (5/1) that a total of 9,844 settlement units were either empty or under construction. Settlement housing starts for the year 2000 were 2,511, indicating that long-term vacancies are high. Israeli MK Yossi Raz reported (ca. 3/14) that sales of units in settlements had dropped by 50% since the intifada began. DM Ben-Eliezer approved (ca. 3/28) plans to reinforce and upgrade Dugit, Gush Katif, Pe'at Sadeh, and Rafiach Yam in Gaza. At the close of the quarter, Sharon was exploring plans to increase state support for settlements by as much as \$350 m. over five years.

In late 4/01, the Israeli government's Company for the Restoration and Development of the Jewish Quarter announced a \$36 m. plan to build 100s of housing units for Jews in the Jewish Quarter and the Mount Zion area near the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif so as to alter the demographic balance of Jews and Arabs in the Old City. The plan also includes annexing areas of the Muslim Quarter near Herod's Gate, which the company terms the "previous Jewish Quarter," to the existing Jewish Quarter and developing the City of David area in Silwan. The plan must be approved by the Housing Min., which had not done so by the end of the quarter.

Palestinian Authority

The PA remained virtually unable to function this quarter, with ministries operating on a crisis management basis and doing little other than monitoring the decline of their sectors. Israel eased travel restrictions on Palestinian Council (PC) members once during this quarter, on 3/10 (immediately after Sharon's inauguration), to allow the PC to convene its first and only full session since the intifada began. In his address to the PC, Arafat appealed to the new Israeli government to resume peace negotiations quickly. Though acknowledging Israel's "need for security and safety," he did not call for a halt to the clashes, as Israeli officials had hoped, which may account for Israel's refusal to lift

travel restrictions again. Only after Powell's visit to Ramallah on 2/25 did Israel permit Arafat to travel to the West Bank regularly.

The PA Health Min. warned (3/12) that the West Bank and Gaza faced a serious health crisis. Officials noted that not only had IDF blockades prevented injured and ailing Palestinians from getting treatment (including chemotherapy and dialysis) and medical workers from reaching clinics, but doctors had also been unable to vaccinate children, water systems were without chlorine treatments, and garbage could not be taken to dumps outside populated areas. Problems were expected to rise with warmer weather.

The PA Supply Min. warned (3/13) that food reserves in the West Bank and Gaza were dwindling, along with Palestinians' purchasing power, meaning hunger would spread. On 2/27, the UN World Food Program (WFP) began distributing flour to 250,000 needy Palestinians, marking the first time that the WFP, which operates in war zones and areas on the brink of famine, has conducted a large-scale distribution program in the occupied territories.

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics estimated that as of 2/17 more than 1 million Palestinians were living in poverty and that unemployment had reached 40%. On 4/5, the Finance Min. estimated total economic losses due to closures since the start of the al-Aqsa intifada at \$3.868 b. Meanwhile, the Israeli Manufacturers' Association (IMA), complaining that there had been an average decline of 50% in Israeli sales to the PA since the intifada began, warned (3/5) that if the PA continued to "boycott" Israeli products, its members would stage a counterboycott of the Palestinian sector.

In response to EU demands (3/12-13, 4/11) that the PA institute financial reform policies (see Donor section below), Arafat began (ca. 4/1) to crack down on major corruption cases. At the PA's request, Abu Dhabi extradited (4/22) Jawid Ghusayn, former head of the PLO's Palestine National Fund, to Gaza to face charges of failing to repay a \$6.5 m. loan from the PA. The PA issued (ca. 4/22) a warrant for the arrest of Palestinian-Lebanese businessman Ali Safadi, who received \$12 m. to carry out projects for the PA, for giving \$2 m. in bribes to PA officials and pocketing the rest of the money. The PA also canceled (ca. 4/22) a \$40 m. computer contract after discovering that the PA official in charge of the deal had appointed his brother as project manager. On the other

hand, when Justice M Frayh Abu Midayn accused several high-ranking Finance Min. officials of corruption, those officials complained directly to Arafat who then criticized Abu Madayn. Abu Madayn has since reportedly left the territories (ca. 5/4) for an extended vacation after Arafat rejected the resignation he submitted in protest.

The PA postponed (3/12) the Palestinian Bar Association elections, set for 3/16, and extended the terms of the PA-appointed members until the al-Aqsa intifada is over, marking a step backward for PA judicial reform (see Peace Monitors in *JPS* 116, 117).

A Palestinian prisoner died (2/27) at a Nablus hospital after being transferred from PA Military Intelligence custody, where doctors said he had been severely beaten and tortured.

INTRA-PALESTINIAN COORDINATION

Intra-Palestinian coordination remained loose and fluid this quarter, with no clear organizational structure emerging that could claim to direct the intifada. The National and Islamic Higher Committee for the Follow-Up of the Intifada (NIHC), the Fatah *tanzim*, and the popular resistance committees (PRCs) all continued to operate but deliberately emphasized their independence from each other. The NIHC and the PRCs, which emerged at the outset of the intifada, both comprise members of all national and Islamist factions, but whereas NIHC members operate as representatives of their factions, PRC members act independently both of their factions and of the NIHC, hoping to show that the militant stream is leading the intifada. Fatah's *tanzim*, the mass-based groups that predate the intifada, dominate the NIHC and the PRCs but are separate from both and from the PA's PSF, despite considerable overlap in Gaza (but far less in the West Bank). Because of the high *tanzim*-PSF correlation in Gaza, which makes the *tanzim* more directly accountable to Arafat, most attacks there are staged by the PRCs. The *tanzim* are more active in the West Bank, where their PA ties are looser.

The various groups do not always cooperate. In Tulkarm on 3/25, for example, PSF officers intervened to free an Israeli civilian who had been kidnapped by the *tanzim*. In Nablus on 2/26, a gunfight erupted between members of the PSF and the *tanzim* when the PSF attempted to arrest a *tanzim* member driving a stolen vehicle; no injuries were reported. The most prominent split occurred

on 4/29, when Arafat demanded the PRCs to disband, effectively ordering Fatah and PSF members participating in the PRCs to pull out. At the same time, Arafat ordered senior PSF officer Yasir Zanun (a Fatah member and PRC leader) hauled in for questioning and had the PSF arrest Hamas spokesman 'Abd al-'Aziz Rantisi for making statements "harmful to national unity" for a speech he made accusing Arafat of treason for resuming security talks with Israel. The move to disband the PRCs was denounced immediately by Fatah *tanzim* leader Marwan Barghouti, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the PFLP. Masked PRC members led marches in Rafah condemning Arafat and calling for allegiance to the resistance, and the PRCs released leaflets saying that if the PA was "embarrassed" that Palestinian fighters were members of the PSF, "we are ready to tender our resignations from these institutions," i.e., the PSF.

In early 3/00, a grass-roots nonviolent movement began to take shape, organized largely by members of Palestinian NGOs, intellectuals, and artists, with some Israeli-Arab MKs and PC members. These demonstrations (e.g., 3/12, 3/19, 3/24) were rarely reported by the press unless they turned violent; the IDF tended to attack the crowds the moment even a few individuals threw stones, sparking riots. On 3/21, Fatah *tanzim* leader Barghouti (who attended the 3/12 rally) called on Palestinians to adopt more nonviolent protests, at the same time announcing that NIHC would change its name to the Popular Committee of the Intifada to reflect the broader role of the general public in the intifada. The change, arguably an attempt to co-opt the mass-based movement, had little practical impact since the NIHC is commonly known simply as the Nationalist and Islamic Forces, the signature used on its leaflets.

Palestine National Council (PNC) speaker Salim Zanun threatened (2/22) to resign his position and form a new political party if Arafat continued to ignore his reform-minded independence commission plan, which he submitted last quarter (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 119). On 3/17, Zanun declared the establishment of the Palestinian Independence Party (though not his resignation) and claimed that the Fatah Central Committee had set up a commission consisting of himself, Arafat adviser Abbas, and Sakhr Habash to study the party's documents. He also claimed that the PNC had authorized its members in Jordan to form a special committee, headed by himself, to

give recommendations for political and economic reforms in the PA. Given the overlapping and conflicting loyalties of the PA, Fatah, and the PNC during the ongoing intifada, it was unclear under what, if any, authority Zanun was operating.

PALESTINIAN OPINION

The following data are excerpted from a poll conducted by the Media and Communications Center (JMCC) between 5 and 12 April 2001. Results are based on a survey of 1,200 men and women from the West Bank and Gaza. The poll, fortietth in a series, was made available by JMCC's office in Jerusalem.

1. How satisfied are you with Arab solidarity with the intifada?

	West Bank & Gaza	West Bank	Gaza
a. Satisfied	39.8%	37.5%	43.6%
b. Dissatisfied	58.4%	60.0%	55.7%
c. Don't know	1.3%	1.8%	0.2%
d. No answer	0.5%	0.7%	0.5%

2. Do you support or oppose the continuation of the current Palestinian intifada?

	West Bank & Gaza	West Bank	Gaza
a. Support	80.2%	76.3%	86.8%
b. Oppose	13.3%	15.8%	9.1%
c. Don't know	5.0%	5.8%	3.6%
d. No answer	1.5%	2.1%	0.5%

3. What is your feeling about suicide bombing operations against Israeli civilians in Israel?

	West Bank & Gaza	West Bank	Gaza
a. Strongly support	54.4%	49.6%	62.7%
b. Somewhat support	19.3%	17.9%	21.8%
c. Somewhat oppose	10.1%	10.0%	10.2%
d. Strongly oppose	5.8%	7.8%	2.3%
e. Don't know	7.1%	10.3%	1.6%
f. No answer	3.3%	4.4%	1.4%

4. The United States acts as the sponsor of the peace process and a mediator in the negotiations. Do you believe that it is conducting its mediation in a biased manner toward the Palestinians, in a neutral manner, or in a biased manner toward the Israelis?

	West Bank & Gaza	West Bank	Gaza
a. Biased toward Palestinians	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%
b. Neutral	2.5%	2.4%	2.7%
c. Biased toward Israelis	95.3%	94.9%	96.1%
d. Don't know	1.2%	1.8%	0.0%
e. No answer	0.6%	0.5%	0.7%

JORDANIAN-ISRAELI TRACK

Aside from promoting the Jordanian-Egyptian initiative mentioned above, Jordan removed itself from the Israeli-Palestinian issue as much as possible this quarter. During his visit to Washington (4/10), King Abdallah privately urged Bush to support the initiative but did not mention it in his public statements, focusing instead on urging the U.S. administration to press Congress to ratify the 10/24/00 Jordan-U.S. free trade agreement. Apart from diplomatic contacts to promote the peace initiative, Jordan limited its interactions with Israel to trade. On 4/23, Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics announced that during the first quarter of FY 2001, exports to Jordan had risen 240% and imports from Jordan had doubled. (During the same period, Israeli exports to Egypt had fallen 45% and imports had fallen 14%.) Israel announced (2/21) that it would invest \$1.5 m. in three Jordanian firms in the Irbid qualified industrial zone (QIZ). The kingdom's new Aqaba Special Economic Zone, which also includes a QIZ to promote joint projects with Israel, began operation on 2/16 (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 119).

Domestically, Jordan acted out of fear that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would spill over into the kingdom. Concerned after 1,000 Jordanians attended a rally (2/24) organized by the Jordan professional associations to protest U.S. Secy. of State Powell's visit to the kingdom on 2/25, the government cracked down on dissenters just before the Arab summit in Amman (3/27-28): intelligence units raided the home of student leader Saijj Daraghmeh and detained him for planning a protest rally in support of the in-

tifada and of lifting sanctions on Iraq that was to be held during the summit; and authorities arrested Amman shopowner Samih Ali for drawing a U.S. flag on the floor of his store and hanging signs calling on summit attendees to support the intifada. As Israeli-Palestinian clashes escalated, the government banned (4/4) all public demonstrations. Small groups of Jordanians (200–300) successfully staged rallies in Amman on 4/7 and 4/12 without police intervention. But Jordanian security forces violently dispersed (5/12) 100s of Jordanians taking part in two Palestinian solidarity rallies in Amman sponsored by the Muslim Brotherhood. Security forces ordered journalists to leave the scene, confiscated film and cameras, and arrested at least three reporters, one photographer, and one cameraman for harming the image of the kingdom. Several Amman-based TV stations said (5/12) that they had been warned by the government in advance not to take any footage of the demonstrations. After the uproar generated by the 5/12 events (on 5/13, 45 MPs ordered an inquiry into the government's actions), 1,000s of Jordanians were allowed to demonstrate in Amman on 5/15 to mark the 53d anniversary of the Nakba. Meanwhile, throughout the quarter, editorials in the quiescent semi-independent press generally urged the Palestinians to halt the intifada.

The government's trial against 21 members of the 23-member antinormalization committee of the Jordan professional associations opened on 2/27 (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 119). All 21, who were freed on bail pending the conclusion of the case, were charged with membership in an illegal group; two senior members were also charged with possession of explosive devices. Two journalists were charged separately (ca. early 2/01) with slander and libel for publishing the antinormalization committee's blacklists.

Jordan sent home (3/26) six Israeli journalists who had come to Amman to cover the 3/27–28 Arab summit (see below), saying the government had received death threats against them and could not guarantee their safety.

SYRIAN-ISRAELI TRACK

Syria had no direct contact with Israel this quarter. During Secy. of State Powell's tour, which followed a Hizballah attack on IDF troops in the occupied Golan Heights (see below), Sharon asked (2/25) him to warn

Syrian pres. Bashar al-Asad that he was "playing with fire" by "failing to halt" Hizballah attacks and that Israel might not be able to "restrain" itself much longer if attacks continued. Powell reportedly did not pass the message on to Asad when they met on 2/26; their discussion was focused on bringing Iraqi oil shipments through Syria under the UN oil-for-food program, which Syria agreed to do.

Following a Hizballah attack (4/14) on IDF troops in the Shaba' Farms area of the occupied Golan Heights that left one soldier dead, the IDF carried out (4/15) air strikes on a Syrian radar station deep inside Lebanon, killing three Syrian soldiers and wounding four. The strike, the first on a Syrian target since 1996 and the most severe since 1982, was approved (9-2) by the Israeli inner cabinet. The State Dept. urged (4/15) all sides to exercise maximum restraint but refused to condemn the Israeli action, pointedly stating that "the primary event in this situation is the fact that Hizballah escalated the situation in what we think was a clear provocation." Following the IDF reoccupation of Bayt Hanun, Bush phoned (4/19) Asad to discuss the dangerous situation in the Middle East and to urge restraint in the wake of Israel's 4/15 attack. Asad agreed on the need to avoid further escalation but reserved the right to respond to Israeli aggression and demanded a formal apology from Israel.

Israel particularly condemned Pres. Asad's public statements this quarter. In his speech to the Arab League (3/27), Asad called Sharon "a killer" and Israel a "racially discriminatory society." In Spain on 5/3, he stated that Sharon was the product of a society that is "more racist than the Nazis." During the pope's visit (5/5–8; see below), he denounced those "who try to kill the principles of all religions with the same mentality with which they betrayed Jesus Christ." The English-language press frequently mistranslated "Zionists" as "Jews," misrepresenting Asad's statements as religious rather than political attacks.

Domestically, Asad continued to fine-tune his reform policies. In mid-2/01, the government began requiring new groups to obtain prior official permission to meet. Though the reformists, led by independent MP Ra'id Saif, accused (2/18) the government of halting its reform efforts altogether, some analysts considered the move a signal that the government desires reform but will alone decide

the pace. On 2/26, Syria's first privately owned newspaper, *al-Dumari*, began publication; the first 75,000-copy edition sold out within hours. On 4/19, 15 Syrian intellectuals, under the name the Constituent Commission of the Civil Society Committees, issued a document entitled "A National Social Contract in Syria," including what it considered the national principles on which reform should be based. The government did not react.

LEBANESE-ISRAELI TRACK

Israeli-Lebanese relations continued to be marked by tensions over Shaba' Farms (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 119). On 2/16, Hizballah fired mortars at an IDF convoy in the area, killing one soldier and wounding two. In response, the IDF bombarded southern Lebanon using tanks and helicopter gunships. Following a similar attack on 4/14, the IDF struck a Syrian radar station in northern Lebanon (see above). During the rest of the quarter, the IDF occasionally overflowed Lebanon as far north as Beirut (e.g., 4/16, 4/18, 4/23), conducting mock raids and breaking the sound barrier. On 5/4, IDF troops from Shaba' Farms crossed into Lebanese territory and erected a post carrying cameras and monitoring devices. On 5/14, Hizballah again fired rockets at troops in Shaba' Farms, and the IDF responded by firing mortars at Hizballah targets in south Lebanon; neither side reported damage. The next day, as a show of force, the IDF reinforced troops in the area, overflowed southern Lebanon, and fired machine guns across the border.

Lebanon confirmed (3/14) that it had begun construction of a water pumping station on the Hasbani River, upstream from Lake Tiberias, to serve the growing needs of two small southern Lebanese villages. Israel warned (3/14) that if Lebanon continued with this "unilateral action," it risked "a forceful confrontation." Sharon, Israel's Infrastructure M Avigdor Lieberman, and Mekorot water authority head Uri Saguy separately warned (3/14) that "wars break out because of water." The UN said (3/14) that it had informed the IDF of the project over a month earlier at Lebanon's request and had received no objections.

On 5/2, UN Secy.-Gen. Annan submitted a proposal to the UN Security Council (UNSC) to reduce the size of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) from 4,600 troops to 3,500 by 7/01 and to 2,000 by 2/02. Lebanon protested (5/3), arguing that the troops

are necessary as long as tensions in the region remain high. The UNSC must respond to Annan's proposal before the UNIFIL mandate comes up for renewal at the end of 7/01.

This quarter, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee withheld disbursement of \$20 m. of Lebanon's foreign assistance for FY 2001, and the U.S. informed Lebanon (4/24) that it would not receive any supplemental aid from the U.S. beyond the \$32 m. for Lebanese NGOs and educational institutions that the State Dept. has requested for FY 2002. Both moves were punishment for Lebanon's refusal to deploy its army to the border with Israel and take responsibility for security in the south following Israel's withdrawal in 5/00. Lebanon refuses to do so until the issue of Shaba' Farms is resolved and a peace treaty is signed delineating the formal border between the states.

Other loose ends from the Israeli withdrawal: Hizballah turned over (2/22) to the Lebanese army the remaining IDF tanks and equipment it confiscated during the 5/00 pullout. EU and U.S. diplomats, speaking anonymously, and the Palestinian Human Rights Campaign independently confirmed (3/21) reports that some former South Lebanon Army members who fled to Israel in 5/00 were manning IDF checkpoints in the West Bank and Gaza. Lebanon convicted (5/3) 25 people of collaborating with Israel, bringing to 2,600 the number of convictions in Lebanese court since the IDF withdrawal. In addition, the Lebanese army announced (3/8) that it had detained at least 12 persons, including one Palestinian, on charges of spying on Hizballah for Israel.

Lebanon continued to face internal strains over the Syrian military presence in the country in light of the Israeli withdrawal (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 119). On 3/14, the government deployed a large number of troops and internal security forces, as a "precautionary measure," to control demonstrations by predominantly Christian university students to mark the 12th anniversary of exiled Christian militia leader Michel Aoun's "liberation war" against Syria and to protest the Syrian presence in the country. The rallies were peaceful, and 30 students arrested during the day were released by evening. On 3/27, Maronite patriarch Nasrallah Sfeir returned to Lebanon after a six-week tour of Canada and the U.S., which was described as a "campaign to end Syria's stranglehold" on Lebanon. An estimated 150,000 Lebanese

Christians turned out to greet him, carrying banners calling on the Syrians to go home, on Aoun to return, and on the government to release jailed militia leader Samir Ja'ja' and booing Pres. Emile Lahoud (a Maronite who supports the Syrian presence). In a counter-demonstration on 3/30, 150,000 Shi'a attended the Friday sermon by Hizballah spiritual leader Shaykh Hassan Nasrallah supporting the Syrian presence as necessary to deter the escalation of sectarian tensions. On 4/4, 300,000 Shi'a attended Nasrallah's Ashura speech in which he asserted that with Sharon in power in Israel, Lebanon needs Syria's support.

On 4/7, Lebanon banned street protests and announced security measures to prevent unauthorized demonstrations after unsigned leaflets were distributed in Beirut urging violence during pro- and anti-Syrian rallies planned for 4/11, two days before the 26th anniversary of the outbreak of the civil war. On 4/12, three associates of MP Akram Shihayib, who is close to Druze leader Walid Junblatt (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 119) and had also recently questioned Syria's continued military presence, were injured by a letter bomb. Pres. Lahoud cautioned (4/10) against allowing the debate over Syrian troops to degenerate into interfaith hatred that could jeopardize civil peace.

On 4/30, after a month of talks, some 30 prominent Lebanese Christian politicians and political groups issued a document, endorsed by the Maronite church, calling for an intra-Lebanese dialogue. While calling for a timetable for the redeployment of Syrian troops as a prelude to their withdrawal, it also laid the foundation for a "historic settlement" with Syria, asserted that Israel poses the main threat to Lebanon, and expressed support for the Palestinian intifada. The paper is known as the Kornet Shawan document, after the town where the leaders met while drafting it.

MULTILATERAL TALKS

No multilateral talks were held this quarter due to the breakdown of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and the eruption of violence.

REGIONAL AFFAIRS

RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL

Relations between Israel and the Arab states remained at a low point this quarter as the al-Aqsa intifada continued. Aside from

Egypt and Jordan, Qatar was the only Arab country to have direct diplomatic contact with Israel this quarter. The Qatari FM met with Peres in Washington on 5/2 and offered to host an Israeli-PA summit to broker a cease-fire arrangement. The invitation was apparently declined. The Israeli Press Office in Washington confirmed (5/21) reports in the Iranian press (5/9) that the Israeli trade mission in Doha was open and that trade representatives had never left or ceased doing business after Qatar supposedly shut the mission on 11/9/00. At last report on 11/28/00, Qatar had refused U.S. requests to reopen the office (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 119).

Though Egypt maintained high-level diplomatic channels with Israel, relations between the two frayed further this quarter (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 119). Mubarak, who thought (4/17) Sharon had "gone too far" with the 4/15 attack on Syrian targets in Lebanon, declared (4/21) following the Bayt Hanun incursion (4/18) that he had been prepared to give Sharon time to prove himself, but he now believed that "he is only interested in violence." Moreover, an extraordinary snafu occurred on 4/29, following the Mubarak-Peres meeting on the Jordanian-Egyptian initiative, when separate press conferences, rather than a joint one, were held. Mubarak, at his press conference, announced that Israel and the PA had agreed to a cease-fire and would resume negotiations in four weeks if calm prevailed. Soon after, Peres told the press there had been no breakthrough, the sides had agreed on the need for a cease-fire but could not agree on how to achieve it. Peres blamed (4/30) an interpreter's error, but Mubarak appeared (4/30) on Egyptian TV, visibly angry, and related his version of the meeting, saying the Israeli delegation had deliberately misled him about the success of its talks with the PA and emphasizing that "they begged me to make a statement saying they reached an agreement."

INTER-ARAB HIGHLIGHTS

This quarter the Arab states pursued two tracks in aiding the Palestinians given the ongoing intifada: providing financial and moral support and/or seeking a formula to halt the clashes and resume negotiations. Egypt and Jordan, as already mentioned above, focused on the latter, holding numerous coordination meetings (e.g., 2/27, 4/15), including many with the PA (2/24, 2/27-28,

3/11, 3/17, 4/7–8, 4/12, 4/16–17, 5/5–6, 5/15) and also Syria (3/14).

The Arab League opened its first full summit in 12 years in Amman on 3/27. The summit focused on the peace process, aid to the Palestinians, sanctions on Iraq, Arab solidarity, and building inter-Arab economic links. Expectations were high for the Arab leaders to issue a tough final statement that reflected a strong, united stand in support of the Palestinians and Iraq and for them to take decisions that would provide practical assistance to the Palestinians. (On 3/25, 1,000s of Egyptian university students staged demonstrations calling on the Arab states to do more to support the Palestinians.) In the end, the summit offered little more than moral support. Participants failed to issue a unified position on halting sanctions on Iraq, instead promising to work toward lifting the sanctions. The statement condemned Israel for its treatment of the Palestinians, supported continued negotiations based on land for peace, demanded Israel sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, and expressed “extreme indignation” toward the U.S. for vetoing (3/27) the UN resolution on protection for the Palestinians (see below).

Arab leaders approved a \$240 m. emergency aid package for the PA for the next six months (\$40 m./month for six months from the Arab League’s al-Aqsa intifada and Jerusalem funds, plus an interest-free loan of \$15 m./month for four months) to cover recurrent expenses. The new pledges effectively scaled back earlier, unfulfilled promises of \$1 b. in emergency aid with a more modest monthly stipend, even though the \$1 b. pledge was not officially rescinded. Saudi Arabian FM Saud al-Faisal finessed the money issue, arguing that the original \$1 b. pledge was not meant for emergency aid but to fund long-term economic projects that would make the Palestinian economy independent of the Israeli economy. Indeed, the Islamic Development Bank, which manages the al-Aqsa intifada and Jerusalem accounts, agreed (3/19) to transfer \$92 m. to the PA for health, education, infrastructure, and agricultural projects, though there was no indication that the money was sent by the end of the quarter. The PA received the first \$40 m. monthly aid transfer from the Arab states on 4/10.

On the sidelines of the Arab summit, Syrian pres. Asad met (3/27) with Arafat, whom his father had ostracized for decades, marking the first senior-level Palestinian-Syrian

meeting since the 1993 Oslo Accord was signed. The delegations argued over how they should formally characterize the relationship between the Palestinian and Syrian tracks of the peace process, with the PA rejecting Syria’s demand that they term the tracks *talazum* (inseparable)—the same word used to describe the relation between the Lebanese and Syrian tracks. After a reportedly heated debate, the leaders settled on the word *tarabut* (correlated) and agreed to resume joint coordination on all levels, particularly at the leadership level and with regard to the new Sharon regime. As of 4/5, Damascus reportedly had begun recognizing the PA passport.

So few Arab states showed up to a meeting of the Arab Boycott Bureau in Damascus (ca. 5/1) to discuss reimposing the boycott on Israel that the session was canceled. No details were reported on which states were willing to attend.

Arab states continued their quest to enhance their strength and independence as a regional unit by building inter-Arab economic ties. Saudi Arabia and Syria signed (2/20) a free trade agreement (FTA), while Jordan and Syria held talks (5/2) on an FTA and agreed (2/27) to expand agricultural cooperation. The U.S., however, reportedly pressured Jordan (ca. 2/21) to forego an FTA with Iraq for the time being; a draft FTA had been submitted for discussion on 2/6 (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 119). Egypt signed an agreement with Iraq (2/20) to boost land, sea, and air transportation links, and held talks with Jordan (5/6–7) on facilitating crossborder transportation and reducing transit fees. Jordan, Syria, and Egypt inaugurated (3/14) a power grid linking their countries. Syria and Iraq signed (3/1) bilateral cooperation agreements on railroads, communications, information services, and transportation.

Lebanon passed (3/22) a law aimed at Palestinian refugees that forbids “anyone who does not have citizenship in a recognized state” from owning property. The PA shut down the Ramallah bureau of the Qatar-based Jazeera satellite TV station, noting PA displeasure with a trailer for a documentary on the Lebanese civil war broadcast by the channel. Arafat ordered the station reopened on 3/25.

Jordan asked (4/18) Syria to increase the water flow from the Yarmuk Dam to the kingdom, which is facing its seventh consecutive year of drought. Syria had not re-

sponded by the end of the quarter, but in talks on 4/26, they agreed on measures to reduce water use on both sides of the border. Syria also released (ca. 4/15) three more Jordanian political detainees (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 119).

INTERNATIONAL

UNITED STATES

The new Bush administration attempted to stick to its two primary aims of its Middle East policy as indicated last quarter (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 119): to reduce U.S. involvement in the peace process, preferring to have the parties deal directly with each other; and to increase focus and pressure on Iraq and other "states of concern." In its first decisive act in the region, the U.S., with Britain, carried out a major strike on five Iraqi sites on 2/16, killing three Iraqi civilians, injuring 25, and marking the first attack outside the no-fly zones since 12/98 and the first use of guided missiles in combat in two years. France, Turkey, and the Arab states condemned the strike, which sparked major anti-American riots in Lebanon (2/21), Amman (2/24), and Gaza (2/25) just as Secy. of State Powell was heading to the region. As mentioned above, the focus of Powell's trip was to gain support for a U.S. proposal for a new "smart sanctions" regime for Iraq; violence in the occupied territories was a secondary issue.

By the end of the quarter, the Bush administration was forced to reassess its level of involvement in the peace process. On the narrowest level, Bush elected to cancel CIA participation in security talks on 3/21, urging the parties to coordinate directly, only to have the CIA sit in as a "nonparticipant observer" during security talks on 4/4, and finally to bring the CIA in as "tentative" participant on 4/23 as the situation worsened. On a broader level, the U.S. was concerned that increasing international criticism of its lack of participation as the situation deteriorated would undermine its efforts to secure a new sanctions regime for Iraq, which it intended to bring before the UNSC in 6/01. Hence the U.S. initiated efforts (see above) to meld the Jordanian-Egyptian proposal and the Mitchell Committee report into a new peace initiative. By 4/27, the administration was also considering reviving the post of Middle East special envoy to take pressure off Powell.

Secy. of Defense Donald Rumsfeld informed Sharon (3/19) and Mubarak (4/3) that the Pentagon, as part of its drive to reduce troop commitments abroad, wanted to withdraw the U.S. contingent serving with the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) mission on the Sinai. The MFO, set up in 1982 under the 1979 Camp David Accord, comprises 1,844 peacekeeping troops, including 865 Americans. Australia, Canada, Colombia, Fiji, France, Hungary, New Zealand, Norway, and Uruguay also contribute troops, with Colombia and Fiji having the largest contingents after the U.S. and with the costs of the operation distributed proportionally among the participating nations. Under the MFO agreement, a withdrawal of troops cannot be made without the consent of both Egypt and Israel. Unofficially, Sharon argued against the withdrawal but said Israel would go along with a troop reduction so long as a symbolic American presence remained, but Mubarak was strongly opposed. Official responses were pending at the end of the quarter. Of note: The MFO issue was not on the agenda for the Sharon meeting on 3/19. Rumsfeld sprang it without briefing State Dept. officials in charge of Middle East policy, though he had discussed it loosely with Powell.

Although Bush (3/20) and Powell (2/25) vowed that the administration would continue to give priority to Israel's security, the U.S. refused Peres's request (5//2) to release the first \$450 m. installment of an \$800 m. supplemental aid package that Clinton initially promised Israel to cover the costs of redeployment from Lebanon (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 118) and which Peres said Israel urgently needed in order to cover the costs of the intifada. The U.S. said it looks favorably on the package in principle but was not prepared to release it. Israel and the U.S. held (2/19–23) joint air defense exercises in the Negev as part of joint military maneuvers that began in 1/01 (see Peace Monitor in *JPS* 119).

The State Dept.'s annual human rights report on Israel and the PA areas (2/26) faulted Israel for using "excessive force" in dealing with Palestinian violence and for "numerous serious human rights abuses" against Palestinians. PA forces were faulted for participating in, or at least failing to prevent, violence, though the PA was not accused of ordering attacks. The State Dept.'s semi-annual PLO compliance report covering 6/15/00 through 12/15/00 (released 4/2) generally praised PA

security cooperation and stated that even Israeli security forces were uncertain of the degree to which PLO or PA officials were actively involved in encouraging violence during the period. The annual State Dept. counterterrorism report (5/1) mentioned but could not confirm Israeli accusations that PA security forces and Fatah members had facilitated or taken part in attacks. The mention, however, was considered a warning that the groups risked inclusion on the State Dept.'s next list of "terrorist" organizations to be released 10/01.

Bush received (4/5) two letters signed by 87 senators and 208 representatives calling on him to close the PLO office in Washington, cut economic assistance to Palestinian institutions, refrain from inviting Arafat to Washington, and reassess whether the PLO should be reclassified as a terrorist organization and travel restrictions placed on PLO officials in light of the intifada. The letters were the product of a lobbying effort by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). Senate Appropriations Subcommittee members pressed Powell (5/15) to justify continued aid to Egypt, Lebanon, and the Palestinians given the deterioration of the peace process. Powell argued that the aid serves the national interest "at a very delicate time in the region."

Addressing Congress on 3/8, Powell stated that while there were no immediate plans to relocate the U.S. embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv, Pres. Bush remained committed to moving it "to the capital of Israel, which is Jerusalem." The State Dept. claimed (3/8) that Powell misspoke. Powell did not comment until 3/14, when he stated only, "It is up to the parties to ultimately make judgments on this issue, even though one party or another may make claims with respect to their belief."

In light of Israel's assassination policy, the U.S. said (2/21) that it would review Israel's use of U.S.-provided weapons to determine whether Israel has violated the Arms Export Control Act.

The U.S. group Partners for Peace reported (2/28) that three naturalized U.S. citizens of Palestinian origin who recently traveled to visit family in Israel/the occupied territories on their U.S. passports have been denied exit visas by Israel, which demands they obtain Palestinian passports and reapply for exit visas. As of 2/28, the U.S. consulate had refused to intercede. On 3/3, Israel deported Palestinian American Muhammad

Husayn for allegedly attempting to smuggle night vision equipment into Ramallah from the U.S.

On 4/4, New York State assemblyman Dov Hikind announced that he had raised \$150,000 to purchase bulletproof vests, helmets, and "other personal protective equipment" for Jewish settlers. Among the donors were Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-NY) and New York governor George Pataki.

Israel and American Jewish groups coordinated efforts this quarter to better promote Israel's image and opinions among Americans. Israeli FMin. officials and American Jewish groups held a four-day brainstorming session in Washington (2/25-28) on forming a nationwide network to promote Israel's version of events regarding the ongoing intifada. Participating groups included AIPAC, the American Jewish Congress, the Anti-Defamation League, the Council of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations (CPMAJO), and the Jewish Council for Public Affairs. CPMAJO Pres. Malcolm Hoenlein said that the groups had already done extensive polling to pinpoint what issues resonate with target groups (especially Christians and African Americans) and had contracted two PR firms to help build the network. In addition, seven major American Jewish philanthropists, including Michel Steinhardt and Edgar Bronfman, held talks (ca. 3/8) on creating a privately funded think tank, to be called Emet, to enhance Israel's image. Reports speculated that the donors would put up \$8 m., and the Israeli government \$1 m.

Israel's Transportation M Ephraim Sneh criticized (5/3) American Jews for canceling trips to Israel, calling their actions "embarrassing" and "the antithesis of solidarity," and blamed the U.S. Jewish leadership and the State Dept. for allowing a U.S. travel advisory on Israel. Since the intifada began, 45% of El Al reservations have been canceled.

In Washington, two American women filed (2/20) a \$250 m. suit against the PLO, Arafat, and PSF Gaza head Dahlan for allegedly orchestrating the 11/20 Kefar Darom bus bombing in which one of the women was injured and the husband of the other was killed. Under a 1996 law, U.S. citizens harmed by overseas terrorist acts may sue for damages in U.S. courts. On 5/11, the *Jerusalem Post* reported that the Flatow family, the first to file a claim and win judgment against Iran for the death of their daughter in a 4/95 suicide bombing in Israel, received \$22.5 m. in reparations from the U.S. Treas-

sury. The Treasury Dept. confirmed (5/21) that the Flatows received the funds on 2/4 and that other families who had won similar judgments had also been paid, but said that all details, including whether the funds had been taken from Iran's frozen assets, were classified.

RUSSIA

Russia maintained contacts with all parties to the peace process this quarter, repeatedly denounced Israel's excessive use of force, and supported the Jordanian-Egyptian initiative, but otherwise was inactive.

EUROPEAN UNION

The EU this quarter focused on providing emergency assistance to the Palestinians and led efforts to convene an informal donor meeting in Stockholm on 4/11 (see below). The current EU pres., Swedish FM Anna Lindh, and EU Commissioner for External Affairs Christopher Patten visited Israel and the PA areas (3/12–13) to observe conditions, discuss how the sides could halt violence and ease Palestinian financial and economic suffering. They warned Arafat that the EU could not continue to provide the PA with emergency aid unless Arafat did more to combat corruption and urged Sharon to transfer money owed the PA. Peres told the EU (5/9) that if it wanted to play a role in the peace process, EU states must not receive Arafat until he agrees to halt Palestinian violence.

The EU sparred with Israel over certificates of origin for goods imported from Israel. Under the EU-Israeli association agreement, goods made in the occupied territories are not given preferential trade status. The EU has long suspected that Israel is falsely labeling goods manufactured in the settlements as "made in Israel" and exporting them. The EU plans to take up the issue at its next FMs meeting in Brussels on 5/21. If Israel does not adequately prove its goods are not produced in the West Bank or Gaza, the EU may impose sanctions on imports from Israel. Israel warned (4/30) that sanctions would "backfire on Europe."

On 2/19, the British Parliament passed an antiterrorism act similar to the U.S. antiterrorism act, which places economic and travel sanctions on groups deemed to be terrorist. As of 5/1, an amendment to the act listing 21 groups as terrorist organizations was to be submitted to parliament for approval. Of the 21 groups on the list, 14 are Arab or Muslim

(including the Abu Nidal Organization, Fatah Revolutionary Council, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the Izzeddine al-Qassam Brigades), raising charges that Britain is targeting Muslims, especially since no Jewish extremist groups, such as Kach or Kahane Chai, were included.

UNITED NATIONS

The largest debate in the UN this quarter was over calls to provide international protection for the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. The Arab states were eager to have a motion passed in the UNSC before the Arab League session on 3/27–28, so the summit could endorse and add weight to the resolution. Sharon, however, warned Secy.-Gen. Annan (3/21) that sending an observer force to the territories could escalate violence. Marathon negotiations on two main proposals (by the EU and the Non-Aligned Movement) were held in the UNSC in the days leading up to the Arab summit. On 3/27, the members were close to a compromise agreement on a draft that did not mention an observer force, instead calling for establishment of a "protection mechanism" for Palestinian civilians. Only two or three points remained to be discussed when the U.S. declared it was not ready to approve the compromise. (The U.S. reportedly insisted that an acceptable resolution could make no mention of settlements, the Geneva Convention/international law, or land for peace and that it could not use the word "siege.") At that point, the Palestinian delegation resurrected the call for an observer mission and forced a vote. The resolution was carried (9-1, with 4 abstentions), but the U.S. vetoed. In 12/00, a similar measure failed to get the nine votes needed to pass (see *Peace Monitor* in *JPS* 119).

At the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR), the U.S. and Guatemala voted (4/6) against a resolution reaffirming the "inalienable, permanent, and unqualified right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including their right to establish their sovereign and independent Palestinian state." Canada abstained. The U.S. and Israeli ambassadors condemned the resolution, which passed 48-2, as preempting the outcome of negotiations and undermining peace efforts. On 4/18, the UNCHR adopted three resolutions condemning Israeli actions in the occupied territories, including the Golan Heights. The U.S. was the only country to vote against measures censuring Israel for continued settlement expansion, house demolitions, and

land confiscations. The EU abstained from resolutions strongly deploring Israel's assassination policy and occupation of the Golan. This was the first session in which Israel participated as an observer in the Geneva forum (see *Peace Monitor* in *JPS* 117).

On 5/3, The U.S. lost its seat on the UNCHR for the first time since the committee was established in 1947. The UNCHR has no permanent members. In each round of elections, the 54 members of the UN Economic and Social Council vote to fill 14 of the UNCHR's seats, three of which are reserved for Western nations. Although the U.S. had secured written pledges of support from 41 countries before the anonymous balloting, the top three vote-getting Western candidates were France (52), Austria (41), Sweden (32); Armenia, Bahrain, Chile, Croatia, Korea, Mexico, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Togo, and Uganda also won seats. Diplomats say the vote was a sign of international irritation over the Bush administration's stands against international environmental and health pacts, its support for abolishing the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty, its delays in paying \$582 m. in arrears despite a 12/00 agreement to lower U.S. dues, and its failure to appoint a permanent ambassador to the UN. House International Relations Committee chair Henry Hyde (R-IL) declared (5/3) the vote threatened to turn the UNCHR into "just another irrelevant international organization." Senate Foreign Relations Committee chair Jesse Helms (R-NC) said (5/12) that holding back the \$244 m. in arrears for FY 2002 was the "minimum" the U.S. should do to retaliate for its rejection. An amendment to the foreign operations bill withholding the \$244 m. passed the House (252-165) on 5/10.

Prompted by worsening conditions in the territories, UNRWA appealed (2/22) to donor countries for \$37.2 in emergency aid to provide food subsidies, wages, and short-term jobs for Palestinians. At the time, UNRWA already faced a \$65 m. deficit for FY 2001. On 5/9, it appealed to donors for \$80 m. to continue operations without interruption from 6/1 to 12/31.

VATICAN

Pope John Paul II visited Syria (5/5-8) on a personal pilgrimage, but given the timing and itinerary of his tour, the trip had political overtones. On 5/6, John Paul visited the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, the site of a shrine to St. John the Baptist, where he called for reconciliation between Christians

and Muslims and an end to religious violence; this was the first visit to a mosque by a pope. On 5/7, he visited the Church of St. George in Qunaytra, a village on the border of the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights that Israel occupied in 1967 and deliberately destroyed when it withdrew in 1974. There, the pope prayed for peace in the Middle East.

IRAN

As the intifada intensified, Iranian FM Kamal Kharrazi declared (3/21) that Tehran sought to build a broad alliance of Arab and Islamic countries to drive Israel out of occupied Arab lands, expanding the alliance between Iran, Lebanon, and Syria that had backed Hizballah and forced Israel out of Lebanon. To this end, Tehran sponsored a conference (4/24-25) in support of the intifada attended by delegations from 35 countries, plus senior members of Hamas, Hizballah, and Islamic Jihad. Attendees opened with calls on states to take concrete actions to support of the Palestinians (such as providing aid and boycotting Israel) instead of making empty declarations (an allusion to the Arab summit statement on 3/28). At the close, however, participants issued a simple statement expressing solidarity with the Palestinians, condemning Israel and the U.S., and calling for creation of an international court to try Israel for war crimes. Iran hosted (4/23) an NGO conference on Palestinian human rights. The U.S. was put off by the meetings, noting (4/24) Iran's support for "terrorism," and also expressed concern over Russia's decision (3/12) to sell arms and provide nuclear help to Iran for the first time in five years.

Iran's other efforts were aimed at building relations with Arab states. Tehran signed a security cooperation agreement with Saudi Arabia (4/17); signed memorandums of understanding on economic cooperation to aid Lebanon's reconstruction efforts (2/24) and on water management with Syria (5/9); and held talks with Jordan on customs and water cooperation (2/18-21) and with Syria on health sector cooperation (2/26). After 19 years, the Tehran-Damascus railway resumed operation (3/10) with 1 train/week; the route extends to Istanbul. In addition, Iran and Turkey signed (5/10) a memorandum of understanding on security and border cooperation, and held talks (5/8) on expanding cooperation in the political, economic, and parliamentary fields.

TURKEY

Israel and Turkey kept in close contact on the ongoing clashes and potential peace initiatives. Sharon dispatched Peres (4/10) and his special representative, Meir Rosenne, to Ankara (2/26) to meet with FM Ismail Cem on the Israeli-Palestinian situation and Turkey's deepening economic crisis, which could affect payment on Israel's contracts to refurbish Turkish military hardware. Though Turkey informed (ca. 2/28) Iraq and Syria that, after the worst drought in 20 years, it might have to reduce the flow of water to them from the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, Ankara held (4/10, 4/30) high-level talks on selling Israel Manavgat water.

Turkey and Syria signed a protocol on improving economic, social, and cultural relations (2/16); discussed (2/26) improving media cooperation (2/26) and transportation (5/8); and signed (3/29) an agreement on agricultural cooperation. Turkey and Jordan signed (3/17) an agreement eliminating double taxation and held talks on drafting an FTA.

DONORS

This quarter, donors clearly were torn between their stated dislike for providing the PA with funds to cover shortfalls and recurrent expenses, which they see as a stop-gap measure that does nothing to promote long-term fiscal responsibility or planning, and the obvious need for emergency assistance. Donor structures remained intact and functioning, though at a reduced capacity. The sector working groups on education, health, industry, and the environment reportedly were able to meet to discuss the deterioration in their areas.

The Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC), which last met in 6/00, did not think it could hold a formal, constructive session given the politics of the ongoing intifada. Instead, it held an informal meeting in Stockholm on 4/11, without Israel or the PA but with additional donors as observers. The meeting was hosted by the EU and Norway, and attended by representatives from Canada, Egypt, Japan, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the U.S., as well as from the IMF, Islamic Development Bank, UN Special Coordinator's Office, and World Bank. Participants assessed the financial situation of the PA and discussed coordinating donor efforts for the next six months, by which time they hope the future of the peace process will be clearer. The donors estimated that the PA could function on a monthly emergency budget of \$85 m., with \$55 m. for salaries. Knowing that the Arab states had already approved \$40 m./month for six months at the Arab League meeting (see above), the EU agreed to give the PA \$9 m./month for six months from the Special Cash Facility, provided that the PA draw up an austerity budget for minimum social and emergency expenses and adopt policy measures aimed at enhancing financial management. (As of 5/11, the EU and PA reportedly had agreed on budget and reform issues, and the EU was preparing to transfer the first \$9 m. installment.) Participants also urged Israel to release \$120 m. in taxes owed the PA; the last time Israel transferred funds was on 12/20/00. The AHLC hopes to hold a formal session by the end of 6/01 but will consider meeting again informally if the political situation has not improved.

Compiled by Michele L. Kjørlien