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HOME AND FOREIGN NEWS

Water scheme worries Peres

By BENNY MORRIS and JOEL GREENBERG

Foreign Minister Peres is "concerned" about a major Israeli water-drilling scheme in the West Bank, and has set in train an inquiry into its purpose and likely consequences, informed sources said yesterday.

The plan to pump water near Bethlehem, mostly to Jerusalem and Jewish settlements, has brought strong Palestinian protests and expressions of concern from senior officials as well as Egypt and Jordan, which plans to raise the issue at the UN. Sources close to the project have said it could deplete wells serving Arab communities in the Bethlehem region.

Peres has repeatedly posited the "improvement of the quality of life" of the Arab population of the territories as one of the aims of the government, and "is concerned by signs that the drilling is designed to obtain water for the inhabitants of Israel proper rather than for those of the territories," the sources said.

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The coordinator of activities in the territories, Slimuel Goren, said this week that the project would only get final approval if adequate water supplies to Arab communities were guaranteed in a legally binding contract.

Goren defended the project as the only way to ensure the future water supply of Jerusalem and communities in the central mountain ridge which runs through the West Bank. The project is to employ new deep-drilling technology and pump some 18 million cubic metres of water a year from a prime West Bank aquifer near Herodion. It has already been approved in principle by Defence Minister Rabin.

Plan okayed for power co. switch

By JOEL GREENBERG Jerusalem Post Reporter

The inner cabinet yesterday approved a plan for the Israeli supply of power to Jewish communities across the Green Line currently served by the East Jerusalem Electricity Company. The energy and defence ministers are to submit a bill to the Knesset confirming the move.

The plan, submitted by Energy Minister Moshe Shahal, calls for the transfer to the Israel Electric Corporation of power supply to new Jerusalem neighbourhoods, and the Jewish quarter and Western Wall area in the Old City, the Atarot airport, and Jewish settlements and army installations in the West Bank now serviced by the JDEC.

The JDEC's concession to supply power, which runs out at the end of

of 10 to 15 years,

Equipment turned over to the IEC by the East Jerusalem company would be assessed, and its worth deducted from the NIS 34 million debt owed by the JDEC to the Israeli company, from which it buys almost 95 per cent of its power.

Industry and Trade Minister Ariel Sharon objected to the plan and said the Arab company should be dismantled.

An Energy Ministry spokesman told *The Jerusalem Post* that the plan would enable the JDEC to function more effectively and move towards economic recovery by serving fewer customers.

Ministry officials have charged that the company is poorly run and overstaffed, but company spokesmen have blamed its financial losses

Storm over Shamir's vote on clemency

By ASHER WALLFISH Post Knesset Correspondent

The Mapam and Progressive List for Peace Knesset factions yesterday tabled motions of no confidence in the government, in the wake of Prime Minister Shamir's vote for the bill to grant clemency to the members of the Jewish terrorist underground who are still in prison. The bill was not passed.

The Mapam statement accused Shamir of "seeking to confer legistimacy upon terrorists for the sole reason that they are Jews." It said that after the terrorists had been sentenced by due process of law, it



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