

peace process. Moreover, King Husayn chose to emphasize his commitment to peace negotiations with Israel under the auspices of an international conference and with the participation of elements that recognize UN Resolutions 242 and 338.

**Syria Begins Construction on Al-Yarmuk Dam**  
*TA170601 Jerusalem Domestic Service in English*  
0500 GMT 17 Dec 87

[Text] Syria has begun building a large dam on the Al-Yarmuk River that leads into the Jordan River. The dam would prevent Israel's usage of some 25 million cubic meters of water. The Voice of Israel's political reporter says Syria and Jordan recently signed an agreement over the exploitation of the Al-Yarmuk water. The accord did not mention Israel. Recent studies revealed that Israel would suffer severe economic difficulties as a result of the new dam.

**Shamir Remarks on Issue**

*TA171122 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew*  
1100 GMT 17 Dec 87

[Text] Prime Minister Shamir says that Israel is intensively dealing with the Al-Yarmuk water issue. He said that contacts on this issue are under way, but refused to give any details. The prime minister made these remarks in an interview to the Voice of Israel in Arabic. He noted that the water issue is important to Syria, Jordan, and Israel, and that Israel will see to its vital interests. Mr Shamir made these remarks in reaction to a report on the Voice of Israel this morning.

**U.S. Support Assured**

*JN170812 Jerusalem in Arabic to the Arab World*  
0530 GMT 17 Dec 87

[Text] Our political correspondent reports that the Inner Cabinet recently discussed the dimensions of the Syrian plan to build the Al-Kabir Dam on the Al-Yarmuk River on which work began recently. The correspondent says that upon the completion of this dam, Israel would be deprived of 25 million cubic meters of water annually.

Our correspondent adds that the United States has been informed of the effects of the Yarmuk dam on Israel and that Washington has expressed its support for the Israeli position on this subject.

**Soviet Motives on Consular Group Analyzed**

*TA161453 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew*  
16 Dec 87 p A10

[Commentary by Yosef Harif: "A Soviet Foothold in Israel"—passages in boldface as published]

[Text] A few days ago a Soviet spokesman reiterated that if Israel asks Moscow to send a "consular delegation" similar to the Soviet delegation which has been in Israel

since 14 July, the request would be turned down because "there are no Israeli permanent residents or Israeli property in the Soviet Union."

Was Moscow thus trying to foretell Jerusalem's reaction to a Soviet request to once again extend the visas of the "consular delegation" members, without making this extension conditional on a reciprocal visit to the Soviet capital by an Israeli delegation?

Initially, the Soviets said that they would wind up their affairs by the end of their 3-month stay. However, 3 days before the visas expired, Yevgeniy Antipov—who is still considered the head of the delegation in Israel despite the fact that he is in Moscow—asked the Foreign Ministry to extend the visas. His explanation was that they need more time to finish "the affairs we have been dealing with" and that "there is a lot of work."

To the best of Israel's knowledge, the Soviet "consular delegation" is not overworked. But out of a desire to demonstrate goodwill to the Soviets, Shim'on Peres did not dwell on the fine points and acceded to the request. The visas were extended by another 3 months. Interestingly enough, in his approach to the Foreign Ministry Antipov added that he hoped a positive reply to his request would be given shortly or at least "before the meetings of the foreign ministers (Shultz-Shevardnadze)."

Antipov's approach clarified what had been known even earlier: that it is not the "workload" involved in the handling of Soviet property and passports that dictates the needs of the delegation, but rather the wish to maintain a bizarre consular foothold in Israel. This foothold can then be described to the United States and the West as a kind of framework for the relations developing with Israel, and can be presented to the Arab world as a mere technical framework.

Indeed, in his talks with U.S. Administration officials during Gorbachev's visit to the United States, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze pointed to the presence in Israel of this "consular delegation" each time the question was raised of Moscow's resumption of relations with Israel. Some time earlier Shevardnadze had told Latin American statesmen that the Soviet delegation in Israel served what he termed "a political function."

The position emerging from a debate held a few days ago in Jerusalem was that the visas of the consular delegation members, which are due to expire in mid-January, should not be renewed unless the Soviet Union agrees to allow an Israeli delegation to visit Moscow. The purpose of this visit would be to handle Israeli affairs (such as, for example, checking the Israeli Embassy building which has been locked and empty for the past 20 years, ever since the Soviet Union broke relations with Israel in 1967).