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Jordan finalises delegatio

Diplomats and experts expected to dominate Jordan's negotiation team

By Nermeen Murad
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The government was completing work last night on the names of the Jordanian side to the joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation, and a final list is expected to be announced today. Career diplomats and technical experts are expected to dominate the Jordanian team, which will meet today with their Palestinian counterparts to get to know each other and coordinate strategy on the historic Middle East conference that opens in Madrid on Wednesday.

Informed sources confirmed the names of 12 of the Jordanian delegates but said that the list was not yet finalised by Friday evening. The sources also confirmed that Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber will head the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation and that Dr. Abdul Salam Al Majali, a former minister and advisor to His Majesty the King, will head the Jordanian team to bilateral talks with the Israelis.

The 12 confirmed delegates

are: Ambassador Awaad Khalidi (France), Ambassador Mohameed Udwan (the Soviet Union), Ambassador Talal Sataan Al Hassan (Belgium and the European Community), Ambassador-designate Fuad Ayyoub (the United Kingdom), Armed Forces General Abdul Hafez Mar'ee, Vice-President of the University of Jordan Adnan Al Bakhit, Foreign Ministry official and advisor to His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Aoun Khassawneh, Secretary General of the Ministry of Municipalities and former Jordan Valley Authority Director-General Mohammad Bani Hani, former Governor of Jerusalem Anwar Al Khatib and Harvard University professor Walid Al Khalidi, who is also an international expert on Palestinian affairs.

The inclusion of Mr. Khatib and Prof. Khalidi is seen as an effort to fulfill the criteria set by the Palestine National Council (PNC) last month in which the Palestinian parliament-in-exile demanded that Palestinians from Jerusalem and in the diaspora be

represented in the delegation.

The delegation, described by officials as a "team of government officials and experts," will maintain contact with Prime Minister Taher Masri as a reference point with the cabinet, which is constitutionally required to approve the agreements resulting from negotiations.

The cabinet had met Thursday to approve an initial list of delegates but the final decision was postponed until today when the cabinet is expected to meet again and approve the final list of names.

The cabinet, a coalition of several distinct groups espousing different ideologies and political leanings and technocrats, has endorsed Jordanian participation in the conference, but individual ministers are emphasising that they remain the "reference body for the delegation on points of development in negotiations." This was one of the key issues discussed during a cabinet session Thursday, sources told the Jordan Times.

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Jordan finalises its delegates

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The highest authority on the negotiations by the joint Jordanian-Palestinian committee will be the consultative body under the joint command of King Hussein and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat.

Technical committees, comprising senior government officials who have had decades of experience with problems and issues spawning from the Arab-Israeli conflict, are working on finalising the details of presenting the Jordanian case in Madrid and enabling the actual negotiating team to get down to business in bilateral talks with Israel.

Dr. Majali, who has served as minister of health and education as well as a special advisor to the King in the past, will assume charge of the bilateral negotiations after the opening session of the conference.

"Dr. Abu Jaber will head the team to the ceremonies at Madrid but Dr. Majali will remain with the negotiating team when talks break into bilateral negotiations," a source told the Jordan Times.

The naming of a "technical team" to the peace conference came after speculations that a "national team" comprising political heavy weights of Jordan was being planned, but sources explained that the need for a national team was not eliminated under the present arrangements.

"The team of negotiators does not have the jurisdiction to make national decisions but has to come back to the consultative body and the cabinet on every step they make," said one of the sources.

"Therefore there is no need for a national team at the negotiating table because the final decision

will be made here in Amman," the senior government source said.

"They have to be specialists in their field to conduct specialised negotiations on the issues which will be proposed during the course of talks," the source added.

Sources also rejected speculations that Jordan would upgrade the level of its representatives to the peace conference to balance it with the high-profile Israeli delegation, which will be led by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

The two teams within the delegation are expected to conduct several coordination meetings during the next two days before leaving to Madrid Monday.

The joint delegation is also expected to meet with King Hussein for final consultations before the conference.