

MIDEAST Mirror

Tuesday

THE MIDDLE EAST SPEAKS FOR ITSELF

22 Oct. 1991

MIDEAST & PALESTINE

15 Arab FMs to meet this week in Damascus (p.15)

Akhbar al-Khaleej: "Israel's secret sabotage plans" (p.18)

Palestinian leftists join Islamists in
opposing the talks at Madrid (p.12)

ISRAEL

Will Shamir lead the delegation to Madrid? (p.2)

Annexing 13% of West Bank keeps most settlers in Israel (p.8)

Shamir talks of Palestinian passports (p.9)

Israeli-Arab councils vote to strike against lack of funds (p.7)

JORDAN

"At Madrid: Time to end the games that kill" (p.9)

LEBANON

French press for parliamentary
elections in talks with Hrawi (p.22)

Freed US hostage flies to Germany for family reunion (p.23)

IRAQ

Harvard team warns that thousands will die
without imported food, medicine and parts (p.24)

TURKEY

Demirel ponders coalition options (p.27)

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Directors

F.C. Najia and M.S. Sabbagh

Editor-in-Chief

F.C. Najia

Co-Editor-in-Chief (USA)

Imad Shehadeh

Assistant Editors

Lydia Georgi, Najm Jarrah

Administration Manager

Micheline Hazou

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MediaGen (UK) Ltd.

1st & 2nd Floors, Unit C,
Old Chelsea Mews, 18 Danvers St.
London SW3 5AT
Telephone: 071-351-2399 (3 lines)
Telefax: 071-352-6297;
Telex: 915669 MEDIA

Mideast Media Services (USA)

P.O. Box 3516
Annapolis, Maryland (MD)
21403-0516 U.S.A.
Tel: (301) 261-2477/(301) 626-1328
Telefax: (301) 261-2066

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ISRAEL

*Chances of summit talks with
Mubarak and King Hussein*

Will Shamir lead the delegation to Madrid?

Eight days before the Middle East peace conference in Madrid, Israel has still to decide who will lead its delegation.

The decision is likely to be taken on Wednesday, with Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir still not ruling out the possibility of his own attendance.

There is also growing speculation that Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak will attend the conference, thus raising the chances of the two leaders holding their first summit meeting.

In an interview this week, Mubarak said he would meet Shamir if that would contribute to peace.

Tuesday's *Jerusalem Post* said Shamir's presence alongside Presidents George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev heightens the possibility that Jordan's King Hussein may also be asked to come to Madrid.

Syrian President Hafez Assad has so far spurned efforts by Secretary of State James Baker to bring him to the conference.

Israeli officials say the U.S. is working behind the scenes to ensure that each delegation is represented by its top leaders, so as to generate excitement about a turning point toward peace.

"The prime minister is considering whether to attend," Shamir aide Yossi Ahimeir said Monday night.

"One reason for going is that Bush and Gorbachev will be there. But the prime minister believes the major event is not the opening ceremony, but the negotiations. Shamir will consult with Foreign Minister Daviv Levy and Defense Minister Moshe Arens and then decide."

Levy had been looking forward to leading the delegation, as he has been one of the most passionate advocates of the talks inside the Likud-led coalition government.

However, an aide to Levy said Monday that "there's definitely some merit in Shamir's leading the delegation and Levy accompanying him." Levy's own thoughts are unknown.

Some believe Levy would like Shamir to attend the conference because Israel is likely to be represented with difficult choices.

U.S. officials have privately said, "It is important that Shamir attends so that he has a stake in the process succeeding."

Some Shamir watchers believe that for that very reason, he would want to distance himself from the talks should they fail. But others point that he could score public relations points if he goes to Madrid while Assad stays home.

Shamir, visiting Strasbourg to address members of the European Parliament later today, Tuesday, spoke of his hopes for peace when he met reporters briefly after a dinner on Monday attended by members of the European Jewish Congress.

He was asked whether Israel might freeze its settlement drive in the occupied territories after the conference opens, as Palestinian leaders say they expect. Shamir replied: "There are no occupied territories," reflecting his belief that Jewish people are in the West Bank and Gaza Strip by right.

Because he is not a head of state, Shamir cannot address a plenary session of the European Parliament, but will take part in a debate with members in a committee room barred to press and public before flying home this evening.

Shamir Monday told reporters at Ben-Gurion airport as he left for Strasbourg that Israel still had to ensure the Palestinian delegation met Israel's terms.

Washington was said to be issuing 20 invitations for Palestinians to join the talks -- 14 for the delegates and six for advisors.

"Nobody spoke to us of that. And we didn't agree to such a thing. That truly surprises us," Shamir said. "This is an issue we must analyze, examine and we will see if this list meets the rules we have accepted... We still have to check the names and we will act accordingly."

A leader comment in Tuesday's Post titled "Shamir's astonishment" said, "The exclusion of participation by the PLO has been a fundamental Israeli condition, and it has been accepted by the Bush administration. In fact, the Israeli negotiators, fearing a back-door PLO entry into the negotiations, received assurances from Secretary of State James Baker that there would be no 'alternative' Palestinian delegation which might replace the one meeting the Israeli criteria.

"But yesterday, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir was 'astonished' by reports that individual invitations had been sent not only to the 14 Palestinian members of the negotiating team, but to a six-member Palestinian 'consulting' delegation. In direct contravention of the

Joel Marcus in Haaretz:
Shamir should head the Israeli delegation to Madrid. Not only because of the world attention, but to underscore the importance the Israeli government attaches to the peace conference. Shamir's attendance will compel Egypt and Jordan to send Mubarak and Hussein, while Assad will be conspicuous by his absence

Zvi Gilat in Hadashot:
Shamir wants to attend the Madrid conference. Since it is clear beyond any doubt that Assad will not attend, Shamir's participation will underscore Syria's unwillingness for a real settlement. The possibility of Shamir attending arose when it was learned that Mubarak and Hussein may take part. But if a meeting with Mubarak cannot be clinched, Shamir is unlikely to go

Al Hamishmar:
The head of the Likud parliamentary faction, Haim Corfu, is proposing legislation so that no settlement can be evacuated against its residents' wishes, if it was set up by a decision of the government, the Jewish Agency or the World Zionist Federation. The proposal shows that the Likud has not changed its skin and that Likud politicians do not trust their representatives in the government, first and foremost the prime minister

criteria mentioned in the letter of assurance, this group includes Faisal Hussein, Hanan Ashrawi and four of their colleagues -- all self-proclaimed PLO proxies who are either Jerusalemites or residents abroad.

"That these people are purportedly members of just a consulting body is a technicality. They have openly proclaimed that their function is to act as liaison between the

negotiating team and PLO headquarters in Tunis. To all intents and purposes, it will be they who will be negotiating with Israel, and they will be doing so on behalf of the PLO. The nominal members of the delegation will be little more than puppets. Not surprisingly, Yasser Arafat proclaimed yesterday that the PLO will be an active partner in the negotiations.

"Thus, even before the confer-

MIDEAST Mirror

ence has begun, one of the American assurances has been vitiated, perhaps not absolutely literally, but certainly in spirit. It is one thing to concede that the PLO's reign of terror in the administered territories makes tacit PLO approval of the Palestinian delegates necessary if they are to stay alive. It is quite another to make a mockery of official U.S. assurances by letting the organization's lieutenants receive official American recognition and, in effect, lead the Palestinian delegation.

"Only the U.S. administration knows why it has decided to participate in active efforts to rehabilitate the PLO after the organization was discredited by its alliance with Saddam Hussein, its support of the Communist coup in the Soviet Union and its continued terrorist operations -- the most recent of which, a mission intended to massacre civilians in Nahariya, was mounted by Arafat's own Fateh. But if Shamir fails to protest against this official introduction of the PLO into the peace process and demand its rescission, his 'astonishment' will be but the first of many."

[] MODA'I: Israel has also sent the United States a list of questions about the various conference procedures, the media reported on Tuesday.

One man who believes it was a mistake for Israel not to have insisted on a "contractual peace" clause in the invitation sent out by the United States and the Soviet Union is Finance Minister Yitzhak Moda'i, a onetime "constrainer" along with Housing Minister Ariel Sharon and Foreign Minister Levy.

He himself abstained on Sunday when the cabinet voted 16-3 to accept the invitation to Madrid, because he wanted the clause inserted.

Moda'i talked to *Israel Radio* this Tuesday morning about a change that was occurring in the Middle East. But they must not pin

too many hopes on the outcome.

He himself believed Israel should attend the conference. It must stick to its guns, he said.

"I wholeheartedly trust the prime minister, because I know his opinions and positions. And also his ability to stand fast."

Moda'i offered his view that Levy, his old constraint colleague, has not abandoned his ideology. So far, all the struggles had been verbal.

"I am certain that in his heart and in his mind there is a resolute constrainer position, and he will stick to it," Moda'i said. But, overall, he was in favor of close cabinet scrutiny of all the forthcoming Israeli moves.

[] FIRST STOP: *Haaretz* columnist Joel Marcus assumes Tuesday that Yitzhak Shamir did not throw a party to celebrate the peace conference.

Younger, more outspoken colleagues were saying he was sure Syria would foil the conference by refusing to take part.

"(Hafez) Assad simply betrayed him -- he is not a man to be trusted."

The Syrian leader agreed to attend, but not before he almost burst U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's bladder at 12-hour meetings. He also appears to be trying to determine the nature and procedures of the conference.

In view of Assad's conduct, multilateral talks on regional problems will not be held.

Assad was against the invitation stating that the goal of the conference is a contractual peace. So it is not in, and it also lets Shamir off the hook of a discussion of the territorial issue.

"[Assad] did not want the conference to be at head-of-state level -- he evidently shuddered at the thought of sitting opposite Shamir -- and Baker gave in.

"The invitations were sent out to a conference 'at ministerial level'.

"Assad is trying to set the tone of the process, and that is quite clear."

But Israel is not necessarily bound, as America is. There is no reason for Shamir to play to Assad's tune.

"Yitzhak Shamir should head the Israeli delegation to the peace conference."

The invitation, Marcus notes, talks of "ministerial," not foreign ministerial level. In other words, it lets each country decide who it wants to send.

After George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev invited themselves, Israel's delegation should be headed by her highest authority. Not only because of the world attention, but to underscore the importance that the Israeli government attaches to the conference.

Shamir's attendance would compel Egypt and Jordan to send Hosni Mubarak and King Hussein, while Hafez Assad would be conspicuous by his absence.

Intellectuals and the most articulate spokesmen should be there, because they would be fighting for international opinion as well as peace.

"Shamir's English is not exactly the English of Abba Eban (the former foreign minister, sometimes called 'the voice of Israel'), his rhetoric is not exactly like that of Winston Churchill. But he will at least express at first hand the authentic voice of the present government."

In domestic terms, it is also important he should attend.

Shamir holds all the cards. It was he who got the resolution through the government on Sunday with an impressive majority, without rocking it.

Tehiya's departure still leaves Shamir a coalition government with a respectable Knesset majority.

"Tehiya will support his government from outside as long as Shamir is Shamir. The other two

nationalist factions that remained in the government give Shamir their confidence from within.

"But by staying on, hour after hour they demonstrate the limitations of his power.

"Ariel Sharon, who believes the actual meeting of the conference is an existential danger to the state, stays on with his only problem being his conscience -- how can he continue accepting collective responsibility for a decision that endangers the existence of the state?"

Shamir, Marcus writes, has a variety of options. He can lead some of the moves some of the time, without arriving at the necessity of giving up territories.

Palestinian autonomy is the only issue with any chance of making progress in the foreseeable future. If headway is made, he can rely on a firm majority in the Knesset, thanks to the "safety net" the Labor Party promised him, even if he has a minority government.

He will always have the option of resigning from the premiership at the most convenient moment, turning his government into a caretaker administration until general elections are held.

Shamir, within certain limits he has set himself, is directing the performance on behalf of Israel.

It is important, in the writer's opinion, that he take command on a path full of obstacles and mines, "from the first stop starting in Madrid."

□ **IMPORTANCE:** In *Hada-shot*, Zvi Gilat reckons Shamir wants to attend the Madrid conference.

He would decide when he returns from his visit to the European parliament in Strasbourg on Tuesday evening.

His aides were saying his presence as head of the delegation, or at least as an honored guest at the opening, would show the importance Israel attaches to the peace process.

Shmuel Schnitzer in Maariv:

A big, black, and menacing cloud hovers over the conference. We are embarking on a journey into the unknown, with Israel's security, the fate of its capital and the welfare of its population in the balance. There are mines along the road, and there is no knowing what lies behind the next bend

Akiva Eldar in Yediot Aharanot:

Attending the conference means recognizing the PLO and the Palestinian delegation. The proof can be seen in Shamir's bleak face and Arafat's bliss

Davar:

Shamir may not even have a majority during the negotiations for interim arrangements. The sole chance of proceeding with the peace process will depend on the security net Labor and the left-wing factions give the government. It is right for the opposition to support Shamir's peace moves. Labor is in opposition to the government, not to peace. But to carry out its national duty, the opposition must also present its policies and positions clearly, sharpen the difference between it and the Likud, and not cover it up for an imaginary national unity

It would allow better exposure and explanation of Israel's position. Since it was clear beyond any doubt that Assad will not attend, Shamir's participation would underscore Syria's unwillingness for a real settlement.

The possibility of Shamir attending arose when it was learned that President Mubarak and King Hussein may take part.

Contacts were likely in the coming days to check out the possibility of a meeting between Shamir and Mubarak in Madrid.

If it could not be clinched,

Shamir was unlikely to go. The composition of Israel's delegation would be influenced by his decision.

His participation may mean more people from his office, at the expense of the foreign ministry.

Political sources were saying Shamir wants to go to Madrid, so that his foreign minister will not get the international exposure.

On the other hand, they doubt Shamir would want to sit in the conference hall and listen to all the Arabs' claims and complaints against Israel.

MIDEAST Mirror

□ PRETEXT: The head of the Likud parliamentary faction, Haim Corfu, is proposing legislation so that no settlement can be evacuated against its residents' wishes, if it was set up by a decision of the government, the Jewish Agency or the World Zionist Federation.

The move prompts *Al Hamishmar*, the left-wing Mapam opposition daily, to state Tuesday that the Likud has not changed its skin.

The proposal shows that Likud politicians do not trust their representatives in the government, first and foremost the prime minister.

They fear they will be "dragged" into concessions and territorial compromise during the negotiations.

The leader writer assumes Shamir will accept the restriction willingly. He wants to be restricted more than they want to restrict him.

The Likud is running around in small circles, having suddenly discovered that the prime minister had not managed to dodge the peace conference. Statements were one thing, an attempt to stymie the negotiations' chances was another.

If the bill was submitted and endorsed by the Knesset it would be ten times more grave than setting up a few more settlements.

From the Arab point of view, it would put paid to the chances of getting some sort of compromise from Israel, and reduce their motivation to conduct talks with Israel to zero.

"There is almost no need to emphasize that any such legislation, during the move to create a political process of all times, will be considered by the United States and other friendly countries to be a flagrant Israeli act designed to thwart the talks."

The same thing applied to the PLO issue. Shamir had managed to get a "clean" Palestinian delegation. But only the mindless would believe the official Palestinian delegation to the talks with Israel would

be detached from the PLO and its leaders.

Only someone looking for a pretext to get out of the political process as quickly as possible would turn those advising and directing the Palestinian delegation into a problem with which he cannot live.

□ UNDER THE TABLE: Attending the conference means recognizing the PLO and the Palestinian delegation, writes veteran right-wing ideologist Yisrael Eldar, in *Yediot Aharanot*.

The proof lay in Shamir's bleak face and Yaser Arafat's bliss.

From the outset, Israel's main contention was against the PLO.

Eldar says he could not understand why so much importance was attached to the issue.

"Is it not obvious to everyone that they are all PLO, apart from those in Hamas?"

"At any rate, they all identify with the PLO's acts of terror."

And from where was the wisdom of the differentiation between those who "only" identify with and champion the PLO -- like Faisal Husseini -- and others who go out into the street with a knife to kill for the PLO.

Eldar calls it public and personal deception. Formally, they would not sit with the PLO at the table. Only on and under it.

"The PLO will conduct the negotiations, or what they call negotiations but that will obviously be nothing but a dictated ultimatum under the auspices of a resolute, rich mediator."

□ CLOUD: In *Maariv*, commentator Shmuel Schnitzer strikes a balance between pleasure and concern over the fulfillment of Israel's old dream for direct negotiations with the Arab countries and the Palestinians.

He is not sure which will have the upper hand. "We have here, without doubt, room for concern. A big, black, and menacing cloud

hovers over the conference."

The sponsors, he alleges, are not a neutral factor, standing aside and letting the sides thrash things out.

David Levy may believe they are full of goodwill and impartial.

Other people see things differently. A healthy instinct cautions them against a (Bush administration) patron who had never hidden his opinion that Jerusalem is an issue for negotiation, who held up the housing loan guarantees for immigrants, who backed Saddam Hussein when the beaten dictator protested against Israeli reconnaissance flights over Iraq, who advocates the slogan "territories for peace" and conducts talks with the PLO that are not totally covert.

They know Israel will not have an easy time of it with such a supervisor of the negotiating process.

Because of the length of time and the ups and downs during the preliminary talks, attention had been diverted from the difficult problems of the actual negotiations.

The absence of joy felt in Israel may be because there is time to consider what will happen when they start discussing the conflict.

"If it took two years to solve the procedural problems, how long will it take to settle the problem of the Golan Heights, not to mention Jerusalem?"

Everyone knows where the negotiations will begin. No one knows where and when they will end. And no one knows what will happen when it emerges, as it must emerge, that there is no basis of agreement on any of the arguments.

Would the Americans consider it enough to have brought the sides to the conference table? Or would they start putting pressure on the most vulnerable, who is determined, or so he claims, not to back down?

"We are embarking on a journey into the unknown, with Israel's security, the fate of its capital and the welfare of its population in the balance."

"There are mines along the road, and there is no knowing what lies behind the next bend."

Schnitzer talks of a "heavy mist" and the travel guide arousing suspicion. It was a long journey. It could last for years. How could they be happy without worrying?

[] **SOLE CHANCE:** Writing about the "opposition's duty," *Davar*, which usually talks for the Labor Party, forecasts a situation in which Shamir may not even have a majority during the negotiations for interim arrangements.

Ariel Sharon, backed by Likud extremists and the right, would continue trying to undermine the peace moves, especially if the prime minister did not call him to order or fire him.

"The sole chance of proceeding with the peace process will depend on the security net Labor and the left-wing factions give the government."

Davar assumes the government majority was not so much in favor of the peace process, but out of fear of Labor setting up an alternative administration.

It was right for the opposition to support Shamir's peace moves. "Labor is in opposition to the government, not to peace."

The support is given despite the knowledge that Israel would have been in a much better situation had Shamir not thwarted Labor's initiatives in 1987 and 1990.

This conditional support, however, did not oblige the opposition to keep quiet. "On the contrary, to carry out its national duty, it must present its policies and positions clearly, sharpen the difference between it and the Likud, and not cover it up for an imaginary national unity."

Only the presentation of a realistic, pragmatic alternative would foil any attempt on the part of coalition elements, or people close to the prime minister, to nip the conference in the bud.

Israeli-Arab councils vote to strike against lack of funds

A mass meeting of Israeli-Arab council heads in Shfaram Monday unanimously decided to stage strike action to protest against the financial plight of the councils, the *Jerusalem Post* reports Tuesday.

All municipal services in Arab towns and villages throughout the country are to be shut down for the day on Thursday.

This is to be followed by another one-day strike of municipal services, and the closure of all schools and kindergartens in the Arab sector on Sunday.

On the same day, elected officials and hundreds of municipals employees are to stage a mass demonstration outside the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem. Participants at Monday's meeting called on members of the public to join the planned protest.

Municipal workers in several villages have been on strike for as long as three weeks in some case to protest against the non-payment of their salaries. Some employees have not been paid for the past four months.

The strikers were joined Monday by municipal employees in the triangle town of Taibe, who have not been paid for the past three months.

Heads of more than 30 out of the 48 Arab councils attended the mass meeting. They decried what they described as the government's failure to honor its commitments to aid the financially-crippled local councils.

They are demanding a total of IS61 million this year, of which they claim IS33 million is a refund for sums deducted from regular budgets of the councils. They claimed an additional IS28 million was promised as an advance on an agreement approved by the government to raise budgets of Arab councils to those of Jewish councils over the next four years.

[] **FOOLS:** Mohammad Zeidan, spokesman for the national committee of Arab Council Heads, said that so far the Interior Ministry had transferred a total of IS600,000, which had to be divided among all the councils.

"The government is playing with us and treating us like fools," said Zeidan, who is chairman of Kafr Manda local council in the Galilee.

"Municipal employees in Beersheba went on strike for a few days because they didn't receive last month's salary and the problem was resolved. Many employees in the Arab sector have not been paid for periods of up to five months and the problem remains unresolved," he told the *Post*.

The meeting Monday agreed to grant the national committee powers to decide on further protest measures on Sunday unless their demands are met.

The additional steps being considered include an indefinite sit-down strike and tent demonstration by the council heads in Jerusalem, as well as sending reports of the plight of the councils and Arab citizens generally to the UN and foreign ambassadors.

Annexing 13% of West Bank keeps most settlers in Israel

By Jon Immanuel

At least 70 percent of Israelis living in Judea and Samaria could be brought within Israel's borders without moving them an inch, by annexing just 13 percent of the West Bank with an Arab population under 50,000, according to most recent population figures.

In the most concentrated area of settlement, almost one-third of the entire Jewish population of Judea/Samaria lives on four percent of the land, among fewer than 25,000 of the West Bank's 800,000 Palestinians.

These statistics are drawn from an examination of Jewish and Arab population figures, dating from June, obtained from the Council of Settlements and the Civil Administration in Judea and Samaria. They suggest that Israelis and Palestinians in Judea/Samaria are not inextricably meshed, making separation of the West Bank from Israel impossible, but that Israel does have a decisive demographic hold on specific areas.

The 13 percent land area includes six separate regions contiguous to the pre-1967 border, with more than 40 settlements. It encompasses all but two of the 10 largest settlements. Control over this area would, for topographical reasons, increase access to the main aquifers which are found beneath the coastal side of the territories.

The area around Rosh Ha'ayin, where settlement is most intensive, is especially convenient for drilling and provides relatively cheap water, a spokesman for Mekorot, the national water carrier, said.

Lack of access to this area would drive up water costs to Palestinians, adding to the toughness of negotiations over the area, but also providing a reason for mutual concessions.

□ **SIX AREAS:** Since most of the government's building activity is currently taking place within these six areas, the figures indicate that, despite its declared determination to eventually settle the Land of Israel, it is concentrating on consolidating certain parts.

Although well over half the area of Judea/Samaria has been bought or declared state land, more than 80 percent will remain unsettled or contain only small, isolated settlements as the government heads into the first stage of peace talks.

■ Area 1 includes Ariel and has 32,000 Jewish inhabitants on 220 sq. km.

■ Area 2, surrounds Area 1, and has about 3,000 Israelis on about 250 sq. km.

■ Area 3 includes Gush Etzion, with 5,000 on 100 sq. km.

■ Area 4, Maaleh Adumim, 15,000 on 70 sq. km.

■ Area 5, Givat Zeev, 6,000 on 50 sq. km.

■ Area 6 around Latrun has about 5,000 Israelis on 90 sq. km.

This totals 66,000 on 780 sq. km. In addition, several of the 14 new settlements on the Green Line about these areas and will eventually expand into them. The total area of the West Bank is almost 6,000 sq. km and the highest estimated number of Jewish residents is 85,000-100,000.

□ **OTHER AREAS:** Two other areas -- eight settlements south of Hebron (200 sq. km) and three west of Jenin (40 sq. km) -- can be linked easily to Israel without annexing virtually any Arab village. They add little to the Jewish population, but would require annexation of an additional four percent of the land.

The Jordan Valley with its 25 settlements over 1,000 sq. km

(some 17 percent of Judea/Samaria) of sparsely populated territory would add little Jewish population, but the northern section could be sliced off if the intention is to keep as many Israelis as possible where they are, while still leaving close to 80 percent of the land for a possible Palestinian state.

These nine areas include more than 76 of the approximately 130 settlements.

About 35 very small settlements -- some of them the most ideologically committed to an Integral Land of Israel, like Kiryat Arba (pop. 5,500), Jewish neighborhoods in Hebron, Elon Moreh near Nablus and Eli, Shilo and Ofra, north of Ramallah -- could not be incorporated within Israel's borders without annexing a much larger amount of the territories and a sizable Arab population.

The heartland of Jewish settlement in the West Bank is bordered by Ariel, Kedumim, Alfei Menashe and Oranit. It occupies four percent of the territory, includes at least 32 percent of the Jewish population in Judea and Samaria, and, in Barkan, has the largest industrial park in the country.

In this area alone, more than 5,500 housing units (of no more than 15,000 planned in the next 18 months) are in the process of being built or are in the ground-breaking stage. This will potentially increase the population from an estimated 32,000 to more than 55,000 within 18 months, bringing it up to 40 percent of the Jewish population in Judea/Samaria.

The area already boasts more Jews than Arabs and more Jewish settlements than Arab ones. Its total Palestinian population does not surpass 25,000. Kalkilya is the only substantial town which could not be excluded from Israel if both

Update

Shamir talks of Palestinian passports

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir raised the prospect of dual nationality passports for Palestinians during a visit to the European Parliament, an Israeli diplomat in Strasbourg said on Tuesday.

The diplomat said Shamir, speaking during a breakfast meeting with Euro-MPs, suggested that Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem might have their passports linked to the holding of Jordanian, Syrian or Lebanese nationality.

One parliamentary official said Shamir's comments about passports were vague, but that he appeared to be seeking an opening which would allow progress at the Middle East peace conference opening in Madrid on October 30.

French Socialist parliamentarian Claude Cheysson, a former foreign minister, said Shamir had shown himself "ready to consider a number of issues which until now had never been mentioned," particularly concerning the basis of talks about a partial withdrawal from the occupied territories.

"He says UN Resolution 242 does not mean that Israel should withdraw from all occupied territories, but he accepts that it means a withdrawal from certain occupied territories," Cheysson told *Reuters*.

He said Shamir did not say he accepted the principle of such a withdrawal, but added: "When he confirmed that the conference takes place on the basis of such resolutions, he also accepts the fact that that resolution means the withdrawal from certain territories."

However, Shamir contested the idea that Israel should freeze settlements in the Gaza Strip and West Bank soon after the October 30 peace conference opens as Palestinian leaders are urging.

"He says that is not the problem, because most of what you call the occupied territories is Israel and will be Israel. Therefore it is not a question of foreign settlements. It is a question of settlement by Jews in their own country," Cheysson said.

"With regard to other territories -- and by that he meant the Golan Heights -- the situation is different, but that this is open for negotiations. For me this is very, very important."

Cheysson said Shamir placed great emphasis on the role of mass migration of Soviet Jews to Israel in giving the Jewish state a new dimension in future "with more population, talent, scientific advance and a larger role at world level."

Areas 1 and 2 were annexed.

The 14 Palestinian villages in this area include Azzun and Bidya, with a combined population of

6,630. A handful of the others have almost 2,000 residents; most have fewer than 1,000.

The Jewish villages are

connected by a network of roads which ensures that no Israeli need ever pass through an Arab village. (*Jerusalem Post*)

JORDAN

The significance of what will happen at Madrid

"Time to end the games that kill"

By Rami G. Khouri, writing in Tuesday's Jordan Times

The Middle East peace conference that will be inaugurated in Madrid on October 30 is a hard pill to swallow for many Arabs who see it as a culmination of the process of Arab defeat and surrender at the hands of the Israeli-American combine. Many Arabs feel we

should not attend the conference, or that we will get nothing out of it. I think this is wrong, too pessimistic, and historically invalid.

If we approach the peace conference in such a

negative and vulnerable state of mind, we might as well not go. The truth -- at least as I see it -- is far more comforting, and, ironically, it coincides with some of the strident statements being made by the far right in Israel. These people say that peace talks with the Arabs will lead to an Israeli withdrawal from the Occupied Territories, a Palestinian state or something close to it, and perhaps even the end of Israel. Things are not quite so simple or so linear, but I am optimistic and enthusiastic about the peace conference for the following reasons:

1) The peace conference probably represents the first serious international effort since the turn of the century to define and contain Zionism. Ever since European Jewish settlers started coming to Palestine at the turn of the century, the geographic and demographic frontiers of Zionism and the state of Israel have never been formally defined -- either by Israel itself or by the rest of the world.

The peace conference may require further concessions from the Arabs in the short-term, and those concessions should be made with grace and confidence -- because the short-term goal of checking and then neutralizing the predatory nature of Zionism is worth the short-term price we are asked to pay. It is vitally important now to rescue as much of Palestine and Palestinian rights as is possible -- which means aiming for the best deal we can get, rather than continuing to demand naively for the total national rights we claim. This is not a poker game in which we go for all or nothing.

2) Such short-term compromise is necessary because it will pay dividends in the long term, and if we have learned anything in the Middle East it is that political drama is a long-term process. This is not the time to be naively impatient, or to panic from emotional stress. This is the moment to put emotions in our back pocket, and to address the issues before us with an extra dose of dispassionate rationality. Emotionalism and an exaggerated sense of honor have brought us chronic failure in the Arab World, along with some well entrenched police states, a few totalitarian oligarchies, and several states living perpetually on the brink of collapse (Sudan, Lebanon, Somalia, and, in the next half a decade, probably Egypt).

We deserve and need something better in the Arab World, which is why we have two priorities vis-à-vis the peace talks. The first is to stop the total colonization of Palestine by Jewish settlers from Brooklyn and Moscow, provide a focal point for the exercise of Palestinian national rights, and rid the region of the pressures and costs of the conflict with Zionism.

The second is to stop the political confusion within the Arab World itself, and allow the Arab people to get on with their quest for political systems that are more participatory, democratic, responsive and humane. An end to war in Palestine and movement on Arab democratization and integration will bring us into a whole new world in this region in the next decade -- a better world in which Arab dignity and productivity are restored, and the question of the status of the several million Jews amongst us is no longer a brake of the development of our region.

3) The mechanics of the peace conference will soon prove reasonable for the Arabs, because for the first time since the start of the Palestinian-Zionist struggle in 1896 we have the following situation: direct Arab-Israeli negotiations are taking place in a political context that is based on the internationally sanctioned demand for exchanging land for peace. The entire world accepts the Palestinian right of self-determination, and demands that Israel withdraw from our occupied lands. Yet, the world has made it clear that it will do nothing to bring these two objectives about unless we all sit on a negotiating table and work out the details.

The advent of such a negotiating table will see Israel badly isolated from the rest of the world. It will try its old tricks of diverting attention from the core issues, stalling, lying, obfuscating, and anything else it deems appropriate to avert the day of reckoning -- the day when it must withdraw from the lands it occupied in 1967, and coexist with a self-determinant Palestinian people living in freedom on Palestinian soil. Israel will find itself under intense international pressure to live within defined borders -- and it and the Palestinian national entity will enjoy all necessary international security guarantees.

4) The negotiations will shift the terms of reference of the Palestinian-Zionist or Arab-Israeli conflict from Israel's U.S.-backed military superiority to the arena of legal rights and moral dictates -- an arena in which we are far more powerful than the Israelis. In a structured negotiation based formally on the principles of Resolutions 242 and 338, we have the opportunity at last to translate the powerful international support for Palestinian rights into tangible facts. The conference provides the mechanism to shift the center of gravity of the Middle East conflict from Israel's military arguments, to our arguments about the need to implement UN resolutions.

There are dozens and dozens of UN resolutions condemning Israel's illegal actions in Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria. In a negotiating context, those resolutions provide us with moral and legal

firepower. Our challenge is to use them effectively, and to refuse to fall into the traps that Israel will keep trying to set for us -- traps such as Monday's Israeli criticism of Syria for the attacks against Israeli soldiers in South Lebanon. Here is a good case study of Israeli diversionary tactics in action.

Israel wants to brand the Arabs as terrorists and inveterate killers who wish only to drink the blood of Jewish children, and it wants to lay a moral claim for its own security as enjoying a greater priority than the rights or security of the Arabs. What is our appropriate response? First, pity for Israeli leaders so psychologically ravaged that they have brought three millennia of Jewish morality to the point where its sharpest focus is on warfare and guns. Second, composure and a steady diplomatic focus on the real issues at hand, which are the Israeli occupation of South Lebanon and the Golan Heights, in this case. Third, we do the James Baker Diplomatic Tango -- recalling what he himself said on a visit to Yemen last autumn, during the Gulf crisis, we simply repeat his words, to the effect that this conflict is all about the credibility of UN resolutions. If the Israelis do not want their soldiers killed in South Lebanon, those soldiers should not be in South Lebanon. Isn't that more or less what the world said about Iraqi soldiers in Kuwait, or does my memory play tricks on me? Or is there a special UN morality for Israel and another for the Arabs? We shall soon find out.

5) As the world focuses on the core conflict in Palestine and the issue of land and sovereignty, and seeks to resolve it by implementing UN resolutions calling on Israel to withdraw, end its settlements, and stop its illegal practices that deny the Palestinians their human rights the Israelis will panic. They have started to do so because they understand, perhaps better than most of us do, that this peace conference is the beginning of the end of the Israeli game that has lasted for nearly a century -- the game of claiming superior moral rights, national claims, security interests, and historical patrimony.

Israel is being asked to live by the same rules that other states and people live by. It has never been able to do so since 1947, and will have a hard time learning to do so. But in the end it will have to do so, or else risk perpetual conflict in this region. Such conflict will see it one day destroyed in a blaze of guns, as all other foreign colonial experiments in the Arab World have

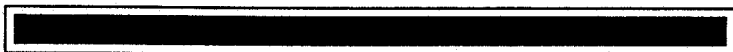
been destroyed with time. Why should the Israelis be the only people in the world who can use military force to forever subjugate the majority amongst whom they live? It is not possible, and it will not happen.

The Israelis can either come to terms with their greater Arab/Islamic environment now and accept peace terms that give them the security they demand -- or they can keep collecting nuclear bombs and get ready to die along with us in a great nuclear holocaust one day in the early years of the 21st century. There is no alternative. Perpetual Arab subjugation to Zionist frenzy is not possible. Either we all enjoy equal national rights, or none of us lives in peace and security. I suspect the majority of Israelis would choose peace with the Arabs, based on equal justice for Israelis and Arabs, rather than eternal warfare.

6) The Madrid peace conference is the most serious international effort this century to achieve the goal of equal justice for Arabs and Israelis. Should it succeed, Israel will have to come to terms with life as a normal state, rather than an imperial one. With time, in a peaceful and productive Middle East, Israelis will revert to their ancient role -- a small Jewish minority living in a large, powerful and ancient Arab/Islamic World, a world that has always considered them part of its heritage, and its future.

The Israelis will have a hard time making the adjustment from super state to boring, normal state. They will be unwilling to give up the self-declared moral privileges they claim according to their self-generated status as God's chosen people. They will be pained to learn that their game is over, and that we must all live as God's children, equally loved by him. This runs against everything that Jews and Israelis have been taught for the last several thousand years.

They have told themselves that they are special, distinct, chosen. The world will tell them at Madrid that they are none of these things, that they are one state among nearly 200 others in the world. They can fantasize all they want about special morality and higher calling in the realm of the heavens, but here on earth they must live according to the rules of man -- and the rules of man apply equally to all people. This is the significance of what will happen at Madrid. Let us hope it succeeds, for if it does all of us in the Semitic family shall be equal winners, and we can all stop playing games that kill.



MIDEAST & PALESTINE

**Palestinian leftists join Islamists
in opposing the talks at Madrid**

Al-Quds al-Arabi blames Arab governments for weak Palestinian negotiating position, saying it is up to the US to prove the rejectionists wrong

The PLO's two main leftwing groups have joined forces with the Islamist Hamas movement to denounce the current U.S.-sponsored peace process as an attempt to keep the Palestinians under permanent Israeli control.

In a joint statement issued in the Occupied Territories, the PFLP, DFLP and Hamas called for an escalation of the intifada during the buildup to the Madrid peace conference -- including a general strike on Wednesday -- to express popular rejection of the talks.

And they challenged the claim that a majority of Palestinians supported participation in the conference, saying the composition of the various bodies that had approved it -- presumably including the Palestine National Council (PNC), or Palestinian parliament-in-exile -- was not properly representative.

The statement portrayed the aim of the U.S.-led process as being to achieve diplomatically what decades of Israeli war and repression had failed to do -- namely, surrender Palestinian rights to repatriation, self-determination and independent statehood.

It said the U.S. was exploiting its increased strength following its victories in the Gulf and the Cold War to impose an unjust Arab-Israeli settlement on its own terms.

Why else would Washington, which had for years "encouraged and backed the Zionists and supported their entity materially and militarily," choose this moment to "start professing its seriousness about resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict" on its terms and conditions.

The statement said Washington's real aim was to restructure the Middle East by establishing a network of regional allies among whom Israel would be the "nucleus, military arm and controlling power."

The U.S. wanted the Madrid conference to enable its Arab allies to normalize relations with Israel, thus adding an economic dimension to its military role and giving it access to the "Gulf riches."

It said the way the Palestine Question was being approached at Madrid would "devoid it of its content as the cause of a people who have religious, national and

historic rights in Palestine, and turn it into a residents' problem that can be resolved in stages through administrative self-rule" under continuing Israeli control.

Even the "best outcome" possible from Madrid would merely be for "Israeli sovereignty to be replaced by token Jordanian sovereignty, which would act as cover for the perpetuation of the (Israeli) occupation through a continuing security and military presence in various parts of the (West) Bank and (Gaza) Strip."

The statement protested that in the buildup to the conference the Americans had been squeezing "free concessions" from the Palestinians that amounted to surrendering the rights for which they had "struggled and sacrificed for decades."

It said while the PFLP, DFLP and Hamas respected differences of view among Palestinians on this issue, the claim that the majority of Palestinians supported going to the conference under the terms on offer was false.

It spoke of attempts to "forge the will of our people by claiming that a majority of one body or other had agreed to the capitulation."

Such bodies had been set up "bureaucratically" and could not be considered fully representative until their composition "responds to the true will of the people."

"The PNC must become an authentic representative [body] of all sectors of our people in the homeland and diaspora, by instituting the principle of proportional representation in its membership."

It said the determined adherence by nearly six million Palestinians worldwide to their national identity was proof enough that they rejected attempts to "liquidate our cause."

The "whims of leaders who are deluded into submitting to America's will" would not detract from the determination of Palestinians to "continue the freedom struggle until the liberation of our land, the establishment of our state and the ingathering of our people in their country and its blessed capital Jerusalem."

It cited the experience of Lebanon -- where resistance fighters forced occupying Israeli forces to retreat from Beirut and most of the South into the present border "security zone" -- as an example the Palestinians should follow.

It urged people in the Occupied Territories to step up the revolt against Israeli rule in the days preceding the conference to express their rejection of the "comedy show" that was planned in Madrid.

"Let the people raise their fists and guns to thwart the capitulationist plans of imperialism," the statement urged.

□ LEFT: The PFLP and DFLP stressed Tuesday that they were not opposed to Arab-Israeli peace as such but were convinced that the terms of the Madrid gathering were unfair.

The two groups' leading spokesmen in the Occupied Territories -- Bir Zeit University professor Dr. Riyad Malki and the recently repatriated deportee Ali Abu-Hilal -- also strongly denounced threats of physical violence that had been made against the prospective Palestinian negotiators.

They condemned PLO dissident Ahmad Jibril, head of the Damascus-based PFLP-General Command, for saying in Tehran Monday that the Palestinian delegates had "sentenced themselves to death."

Malki and Abu-Hilal said whereas they were against the conferees going to Madrid and would organize demonstrations to press the point, such threats of violence could not be tolerated and had no place among Palestinians.

Malki read out a statement saying Palestinians wanted a just peace that would end the Israeli occupation, allow diaspora Palestinians to return and give the Palestinians the same rights to self-determination and statehood that other peoples enjoyed.

He said the terms thrashed out by Baker for the Madrid gathering fell far short of addressing these rights or meeting the standards set by international law.

"The conference cannot be the way to a just peace," he said.

He said the PLO leadership and its "offshoots" in the Occupied Territories had sanctioned Palestinian participation even though the PNC's minimum requirements had not been met.

The Israelis and Americans were trying to exclude diaspora Palestinians -- about two thirds of the entire Palestinian people -- from any part in a settlement. They were seeking to "isolate" East Jerusalem from the rest of the Occupied Territories and hand it to Israel, and would leave West Bankers and Gazans with nothing more than "administrative autonomy."

"We are gathered here not to express opposition to peace, but opposition to submission to these Israeli conditions which block real peace, and to urge the PLO

leadership... to respect the vast majority of our people and uphold national decisions which affirm the need to hold fast to our people's inalienable national rights," said Malki.

Malki went a step further, adding that the conferees being sent to Madrid "lack credibility and legitimacy and do not represent the Palestinian people."

Abu-Hilal agreed, saying the delegation would lack legitimacy unless the PLO announced that it was under its authority.

□ FATEH: The largest PLO constituent grouping, Fateh, appeared Tuesday to be challenging its leftist and Islamist opponents' attempt to mobilize against the Madrid conference.

In a leaflet distributed in the Occupied Territories it called on people to ignore the call by the PFLP, DFLP and Hamas for a general strike on Wednesday

It said the strike had not been called by the Unified National Command of the Uprising, so shops and businesses should therefore open normally on Wednesday.

□ POINT: The Palestinian daily *al-Quds al-Arabi* -- which supports Fateh -- said the rejectionists had a point about the unfavorable terms of the conference but this did not warrant non-participation at Madrid.

Rather, the paper urged the U.S. to disprove in practice what Palestinian opponents of the peace conference were accusing it of planning.

It said deep-rooted Palestinian opposition to the terms on offer for the talks was not unexpected. It had been aired forcefully at the PNC and the Palestine Central Council before the decision to go to Madrid was taken.

Even the chief Palestinian negotiator, Dr. Haidar Abdeshafi, had lamented that the talks were being held under rules drawn up by the U.S. and Israel.

But the paper said the rejectionists were wrong to blame the PLO for this state of affairs. It was the Arab regimes who had pushed the Palestinians into the corner they find themselves in.

The PLO had urged the Arab states to make an Israeli settlement freeze a condition for their attendance at the conference, but they refused.

They had also ignored Palestinian proposals for Arab participation to be made conditional on discussion of the status of Jerusalem at Madrid.

The PLO had in addition tried to persuade the Arab participants to meet beforehand to coordinate their positions at the conference, but again this had not happened. Most of the Arab regimes continued to "boycott the PLO in response to American pressure."

"It will not be unexpected for this pressure to be turned up at the negotiating table, to force the

Palestinian negotiating team to make more concessions," *al-Quds al-Arabi* warned.

The paper said opposition of some Palestinian groups to the conference showed how dangerous it was for Washington to continue "imposing Israeli conditions on the Arab side, and demanding that it alone offer concessions."

The Palestinians had shown all the flexibility they could to make the conference possible, in the knowledge that post-Cold War America was in a commanding international position and in order to "save our people from fresh massacres."

But "America's lack of appreciation of this stand risks stopping the march of Palestinian moderation and realism dead in its tracks, and reinforcing the convictions of the Palestinians who reject the peace conference."

It warned of disaster if Washington continued to show bias toward Israel and a "lack of seriousness" in pursuing a comprehensive settlement based on international law and UN resolutions, i.e. a full Israeli withdrawal from the Occupied Territories, East Jerusalem included.

"The Madrid conference will be the real test of American intentions. If the Bush administration fails, instability in the Arab world will spread for years, and all hopes for real peace will explode."

[] AMMAN: In Jordan, also facing powerful domestic opposition to the Madrid conference, the daily *al-Ra'i* had less time for the rejectionist case.

The paper turned its editorial guns on Iran, which is currently hosting a conference on Palestine at which it is rallying opposition to the Madrid talks among groups from various Arab and Islamic countries.

Al-Ra'i said the same groups that were exhorting the Palestinians to arms now were those who during the Gulf war had urged Iraq to fight to the bitter end with such disastrous consequences.

"Those who wanted to fight imperialism, Zionism and reaction to the last Iraqi child are now affirming their willingness to continue their struggle to the last Palestinian child," it said.

They had pledged during the Gulf crisis that "their fingers are on the trigger and that they will shake the earth beneath the feet of the aggressors if they fire a single shot at an Iraqi." Yet Iraq was turned to rubble and these "strugglers stayed behind their bullet-proof glass."

It was ironic that Iran was leading the chorus of concern for the fate of the Palestinians, the paper said.

Had it been sincere it would have shown similar, if not more, concern for the welfare of its Iraqi neighbors, fellow Shiites who were being starved by sanctions without Iran lifting a finger to help.

The paper warned the "Palestinians and other Arabs"

who were adopting the same line that their record was no less ignoble than that of Iran, and they were in no position to "threaten to detonate the ground beneath the feet of those who go to Madrid."

All they offered the people of the Occupied Territories was "embarrassed applause every now and then, and demands that they continue their steadfastness, resistance and martyrdom till the last Palestinian child."

"This is an opportunity for peace, whose Arab enemies are trying to undermine to affirm how wrong we are and how right they are," the paper said.

These groups were using nothing but words to fight the peace conference and pursue the liberation struggle.

But those same words had been tested before, when during the attack on Iraq it transpired "that there are no fingers on the trigger. The first people to abandon the Iraqis were those who pledged most loudly that they would fight in their trench to defeat imperialism, Zionism and reaction."

[] IRAN: The Tehran conference Monday heard Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati predict that Israeli intransigence would scuttle the Madrid talks.

"The naive people who have been drowned by the current of appeasement will not be given a single handspan of the land of Palestine," he told the delegates.

He said the Madrid conference "ignored totally" most of Palestine and held out little prospect, if any, that the remainder would be returned to its rightful owners.

"It does not uphold ending the occupation, but merely seeks to establish relations between the Zionist entity and the neighboring states," he said.

With the intifada continuing any such deal was "doomed," he said.

Velayati said however that the Gulf crisis had brought a solution to the Palestine Question closer, if only by demonstrating the "hypocrisy with which the arrogant world powers treat the issue of the usurpation of land by others."

When Israel was the guilty party "the slogans of denunciation" against illegal conquest suddenly dissipated, he said.

"In this context, the farcical show that goes under the name of a Mideast peace conference aims at nothing more than consolidating the Zionist entity in this region," he said.

Velayati condemned the PNC decision accepting the conference concept, saying instead of supporting the intifada the Palestinian parliament was leading its people along a course that would only demoralize them and undermine the credibility of their leaders.

[] ROW: The Lebanese pan-Arab daily *al-Hayat* said a fierce row erupted at the Tehran meeting on Monday between Palestinian opponents and supporters of the decision to go to Madrid.

Palestinian delegates in Tehran include representatives of the PLO mainstream and opposition groups as well as the Syrian-backed Palestinian dissident groups and various Islamist factions.

Correspondent Ali Noun said tempers flared when one of the Lebanese delegates, Sheikh Said Shaaban of the Tripoli-based Tawheed Movement, denounced PLO Chairman Yaser Arafat for insisting on maintaining the organization's secular character.

He charged that Arafat did this to curry favor with the West, and asked: "Are the infidels smiling on him now?"

Shaaban was interrupted by Fatah Central Committee member and PNC Deputy Speaker Selim Zaanoun, who told the Lebanese cleric his words were "irresponsible and inappropriate."

The PLO's Tehran representative also interjected to remind Shaaban that he had received PLO support in the past and was in no position to start denouncing it now.

This led to bitter exchanges in which Damascus-based delegates -- including Abu Moussa, head of the Fatah splinter movement that broke away in 1983 -- turned on the PLO representatives, saying they had no business being at the Tehran conference in the first place.

Noun said PLO delegates boycotted a dinner for conference delegates hosted by Iranian Parliament Speaker Mehdi Karrubi, but decided against leaving Tehran altogether in protest at their hosts' attitude.

The chief Palestinian delegate in Tehran, PNC Speaker Abdelhamid Sayeh, defended his decision to attend the Iranian meeting despite the overwhelmingly anti-Madrid sentiments of the participants.

Tehran had billed the gathering as being in support of the intifada and Jerusalem, and it would be good if delegates discussed these matters "rather than trading personal insults," he was quoted as saying by *al-Quds al-Arabi*.

Sayeh said the Palestinians were going to Madrid to claim their legitimate rights.

If the peace talks sought to end the Arab-Israeli conflict by upholding UN resolutions the Palestinians would "most certainly" go along with the process. If they were hijacked by Israel to serve its ends, they always had the option of walking out, he said.

Sayeh said Palestinian rejectionists were "falling into a trap set by Israel and the U.S." By portraying Arafat's pro-peace approach as being at variance with Palestinian opinion they were effectively supporting the Israeli bid to undermine the PLO's representative status.

15 Arab FMs to meet this week in Damascus

Fifteen Arab foreign ministers will reportedly meet in Damascus this week to coordinate their stands at the Middle East peace conference opening in Madrid October 30.

While many reports continued to forecast a meeting of the foreign ministers of the five Arab "ring" states -- Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and Palestine -- in Damascus Wednesday, some regional papers Tuesday spoke of a much larger gathering that would also include the foreign ministers of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and four Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) states.

The leading Saudi daily *Asharq al-Awsat* quoted Palestinian officials in the delegation that accompanied PLO Chairman Yaser Arafat to Cairo Monday that the gathering will take place in Damascus "within the next four days." They said it would be attended by the foreign ministers of Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Palestine and Lebanon, the six GCC partners (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and the UAE), in addition to Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania.

The four latter countries, together with Libya, make

up the AMU, but unlike the GCC, they will not be attending the peace conference as a bloc because of Tripoli's opposition to the parley, the Palestinian daily al-Quds al-Arabi notes Tuesday.

Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria and Mauritania have accepted the invitation to attend the peace talks with Israel as observers. Al-Quds al-Arabi noted that the Algerian foreign ministry statement announcing Algiers' agreement to go to Madrid stressed that this followed the PLO's decision to authorize Palestinian participation in the conference. It quoted the statement as saying the PLO had urged Algeria to be represented "to support the Palestinian people and their leadership."

In Cairo, the opposition weekly *ash-Shaab* also reported that the proposed Arab meeting would bring together the foreign ministers of the "ring" or frontline states, the GCC and the four Maghreb partners. It said this is the most Arafat, who has been pressing for a summit of the Arab "ring" leaders, could achieve during his talks in Cairo and earlier in Damascus.

While Syria has apparently been willing to host a

"ring" summit, Egypt has consistently been reported cool to the idea. There has also been confusion about Cairo's role at the parley following President Hosni Mubarak's statement that it will go to Madrid as an "observer."

In its Tuesday edition, the Egyptian semi-official *al-Gomhuriya* quotes Mubarak as saying Egypt would take part in the conference as "a participant" but its role in the bilateral negotiations that are to follow between Israel and the main Arab participants (Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and the Palestinian representatives) would be limited to that of an "observer."

The U.S. and Soviet sponsors of the conference state in their invitation that Egypt is being asked to attend as a participant.

Mubarak also told the paper that Foreign Minister Amr Moussa would deliver Egypt's address at the parley but Cairo's input would not end there. "The Egyptian role will continue to be effective throughout the lengthy and tough negotiations that will follow the conference opening in order to narrow the gap in viewpoints and overcome the disagreements that may arise," he said.

The Egyptian leader added that it was necessary to coordinate Arab positions before going to Madrid, hence his meeting with Arafat, his telephone conversation with Syrian President Hafez Assad and his other contacts with all the other Arab and international parties concerned.

Moussa, for his part, told a joint news conference with Arafat Monday that Egypt would take part in the conference as a full participant but would only take part in the bilateral negotiations with Israel if the parties to the talks requested. In response, Arafat urged Cairo to maintain its participation "alongside the Palestinian delegation."

Ash-Shaab, which speaks for the Islamist Socialist Labor Party (SLP), claimed that the United States was trying to "marginalize" Egypt's role in the peace talks. The weekly paper, which was attempting to explain the confusion surrounding the Egyptian position, said that was why Arafat had come to Cairo - "to salvage what can be salvaged and try to adjust the American-Israeli peace terms."

Ash-Shaab also quoted PLO sources as saying Arafat put before Mubarak PLO ideas on how to establish a link between the negotiations Israel is to have with the Arab states and those it will hold with the Palestinians so as to block the American-Israeli attempt to decouple the proposed Arab-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli settlements. According to the same paper, Cairo is now involved in contacts with Washington to ensure that Israel will not pull out of the conference if the link between the Palestinian delegation and the PLO becomes too visible, as is expected.

□ PLO: The PLO has been denied a seat at the

conference table because of Israel's refusal to deal with it, but at his Cairo press conference, Arafat dismissed a suggestion that his organization had been undermined by the fact that the invitation to the conference had been delivered to East Jerusalem nationalist leader Faisal Hussein.

"Don't forget I appointed Hussein head of the Palestinian team and Dr. Haidar Abdelshafi head of the negotiating team," Cairo's *al-Ahram* quotes Arafat as retorting.

The pan-Arab *al-Hayat*, reporting Arafat's answer, said he stopped short of saying he appointed Abdelshafi and noted only that he had named Hussein leader of the team that negotiated with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and his aides over the past eight months.

However, the paper quotes him as adding: "Don't worry, we have good coordination between (PLO headquarters in) Tunis and Madrid."

Hussein announced the names of the 14-strong Palestinian negotiating team, which will attend the Madrid conference within a joint delegation with Jordan, at an East Jerusalem press conference this Tuesday afternoon. (*The names he put forward were published in yesterday's Mirror with one change only -- Samir Abdallah, an economics lecturer at Bir Zeit University, replacing Dr. Ahmad al-Yazji*). Hussein will act as chief coordinator of the Palestinian delegation but will not attend the talks because of Israel's veto on East Jerusalemites. Other East Jerusalemites and diaspora Palestinians will join him in an advisory committee.

The U.S. has proposed that Jerusalem natives join the Jordanian component of the joint delegation as a compromise to circumvent Israel's veto and partially satisfy Palestinian demands. An unnamed Palestinian official quoted by *AFP* says the two Jerusalem natives who will be on the Jordanian delegation are Harvard Professor Walid Khalidy, 66, who holds American citizenship in addition to his Jordanian passport, and Rohi al-Khatib, who was mayor of East Jerusalem until Israel deported him in 1967 and now lives in Amman. A Jordanian official told *Mideast Mirror* in Amman the Jordanian delegation would also include diaspora Palestinians.

One of those nominated to the Palestinian negotiating team, Ghassan Khatib, told reporters in Amman Monday the Palestinian delegation would arrive in the Jordanian capital for coordination talks later this week and fly on to Madrid. He said Jordan would lead the team at the opening session and the chairmanship would then alternate between the two sides depending on the issues discussed. The coordination mechanism has been agreed during Arafat's talks with King Hussein Sunday and a PLO delegation will be in Amman next week to finalize details.

[] *SPECIAL: Tuesday's Washington Post mean-*

while reports that the Bush administration is expected to appoint a special envoy and an accompanying team to monitor the peace talks.

It quoted administration officials as saying the bilateral negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbors, and between Israel and the Palestinians, could take months or years, and naming a high-level envoy would be intended to demonstrate the United States' commitment to the process during a long period when there may be little or no progress in the negotiations.

Among those being considered for the post, the officials said, is Richard Armitage, who most recently served as U.S. special negotiator on the American military bases in the Philippines and has also served as a high-ranking Pentagon official. They said it was also possible President Bush would nominate someone outside the government or perhaps a senior State Department official.

[] SAUDI: In other pre-conference coordination moves, Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk ash-Sharaa flew to Jeddah late Monday and delivered a message to King Fahd from Assad, the official Syrian news agency SANA said.

It said the talks dealt with the need to formulate "a unified Arab position at the peace conference" which would enable the Arabs to regain their occupied lands and the Palestinians to achieve their "national rights."

The Saudi cabinet, in a statement quoted in Tuesday's press, reaffirmed the kingdom's support for the Madrid peace conference and expressed the hope that a lasting peace would be achieved, allowing the Palestinians to realize their "legitimate rights."

[] WEIGHED: Sari Nusseibeh, a prominent Jerusalemite on the Palestinian advisory committee told *al-Hayat* the upcoming peace talks were weighed in favor of Israel and would not give the Palestinians their freedom and independence.

But he said the Madrid conference was "part of a historic trend" and he predicted that future elections in Israel would bring the Labor Party back to power and more productive talks would be launched.

[] PANKIN: Arafat is expected to seek Moscow's support for the Palestinian position at the peace conference when he meets Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin in Paris later today.

French President François Mitterrand Tuesday said he will not be receiving Arafat this time not to disrupt the Madrid conference.

"I will surely see him soon," he told a radio interviewer. "I have no reason to refuse him a meeting. But I do not want there to be any confusion or any intervention before the opening of the peace conference which would create doubt or suspicion... but I will see Mr. Arafat later... at the earliest opportunity."

But Foreign Minister Roland Dumas said he will probably be seeing the Palestinian leader.

Pankin has made clear the cessation of Israel's settlement drive in the Occupied Territories, a major Palestinian demand, is high on Moscow's own agenda.

He told reporters in Amman Monday before flying to Cairo that the Soviet Union would "do its best to help solve this issue" at the peace conference.

Mideast Mirror's Amman correspondent quotes an informed source as saying Pankin had assured the Jordanians that Moscow would lobby for a settlement freeze "once the peace conference gets under way."

In answer to a question on the massive Soviet Jewish emigration to Israel, Pankin said Moscow's relaxation of emigration policies applied to all Soviet citizens but it was Moscow's "understanding" that Israel would not settle the immigrants in the occupied Arab lands.

[] REGIONAL: According to a report in *al-Hayat*, Jordan wants the multilateral Arab-Israeli talks on regional issues to be held because it is afraid it will be saddled with another influx of Palestinian refugees from the Arab states.

The refugee issue is on the agenda of the multilateral talks, which Syria and the PLO say must not be held until there is progress toward a comprehensive peace settlement.

King Hussein has said Jordan would take part in the peace talks, but his foreign minister later said it had not been decided at which stage.

Quoting official Jordanian sources, *al-Hayat* said Amman wanted the talks to produce a commitment by the Arab states to naturalize Palestinian refugees on their territories because in view of the fact that the West Bank and Gaza Strip are not economically capable of absorbing the Palestinian diaspora, the only other alternative would be the transfer of the diaspora to Jordan, which would "realize the Israeli extremists' dream of turning Jordan into a Palestinian state."



Akhbar al-Khaleej: "Israel's secret sabotage plans"

□ *British experts are quoted as saying the Israelis are plotting terrorist operations to blame on the Arabs*

□ *The pan-Arab al-Hayat backs Syrian objections to the multilateral talks*

□ *The Saudi Asharq al-Awsat sees "a paved road to the heart of the Arab region" in America's future*

□ *Ex-chief of the Arab League says Bush's only problem now is the Israeli lobby in the US*

British Mideast experts quoted by a Bahraini daily Tuesday say Israel has "secret plans" to destabilize the Middle East if the peace talks do not go its way.

The paper, *Akhbar al-Khaleej*, names two of the experts as George Joffe and Don Kerr. Kerr is associated with London's Control Risks Information Services.

The London-dated report quotes these and other unnamed experts as saying that Israel's acceptance of the invitation to the Madrid peace conference does not mean the Israeli leaders have decided to give peace priority over their "expansionist agenda, their rejection of the Palestinians' legitimate rights and their dreams of gaining control of the Middle East by force of arms."

Rather, the Israeli leaders are "planning, after the initial meetings of the conference, to implement a secret program aimed at derailing the conference if it becomes clear that the Arab side will not accept what Israel wants."

□ **SECRET PLAN:** The "secret program," the British experts told the paper, includes:

□ Staging fake attacks on Israel from Jordan and South Lebanon to "allow Israel to claim that the Arabs are trying to undermine its security while it is participating in the peace conference."

□ Mounting terrorist operations in various parts of the world and blaming them on Syria and Palestinian and Lebanese groups.

□ Widening the gap between pro- and anti-peace Jordanians, sowing Palestinian-Jordanian discord on the issue and "exploiting the difficult economic conditions" of the Hashemite kingdom.

The paper quotes Joffe as saying there are signs the Israelis are planning "terrorist operations in Israel and

the occupied Arab territories in the name of some of the rejectionist Arab groups."

Joffe says his information indicates that Israel is trying to "influence the course of events in Jordan in its favor," but he adds that his own view is that the Jewish state will find it difficult to infiltrate the Arab rejectionist groups and prompt them to undertake the terrorist actions it wants.

Even if these sabotage efforts fail, he is quoted as saying, Israel is likely to try to derail the conference by dissolving the Knesset and holding elections "on the pretext of consulting Israeli public opinion on the negotiations with the Arabs," which would freeze the peace process for a year.

But none of these attempts are likely to obstruct the peace talks "for many reasons, most important of which is America's insistence on holding them."

Akhbar al-Khaleej quotes Kerr as agreeing that American pressure will "prevent Israel from implementing its plans to destroy the conference, either by staging acts of violence in the Arab world and Israel or by taking military action against Syria, Jordan, Lebanon or Iraq."

But Kerr adds: "This pressure cannot guarantee that Israel will not instigate security incidents in Jordan."

□ **SYRIA:** The state-run Syrian press agrees wholeheartedly that the Israelis are out to destroy the peace conference one way or another.

Tishreen says in a Tuesday editorial that the dispute over the conference within the Israeli government is "between extremists and extremists": Housing Minister Ariel Sharon and his followers want "an immediate confrontation with the United States and the international community," while Prime Minister

Yitzhak Shamir and his group "want to undermine the conference from within, drowning it in problems that have nothing to do with the reasons for which it is being convened."

The Shamirites' view, the paper says, is that the confrontation Shamir wants "is a gamble that carries many risks and may reflect negatively on the influence of the Zionist lobby in the United States and Europe."

But otherwise, there is no real difference between Sharon and Shamir, *Tishreen* says. Both have made it abundantly clear, by word and deed, that far from having any intention of relinquishing any part of the Arabs' lands, they have plans for further expansion in the Arab world.

"In fact, Shamir may be more dangerous to peace than Sharon and [Minister-Without-Portfolio Rehavam] Zeevi, because he resorts to deception, trickery and subterfuge, awaiting the opportunity to pull out of the conference and destroy all the international efforts that have been exerted over a period of months to convene it and make a success of it."

The paper says that "Western politicians" are aware of the Israeli leaders' intentions and "pin no hopes worth mentioning on the possibility that they will become more flexible," which is why the West is talking about "long, exhausting negotiations in the framework of the Madrid conference that may go on for months, indeed for years." The Western leaders "feel that if the Zionist intransigence is to be ended, there is no alternative to effective pressure [on Israel] by the international community and the two superpowers, lest the conference be drawn into the labyrinths of delay and procrastination and diverted from its real goal of implementing Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which call for Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and securing the Palestinian people's right to be free and to build an independent life safe from the savage oppression to which they have been subjected for over 40 years."

But despite this international attitude, *Tishreen* says, the Arabs have to keep their guard up. "Vigilance is a necessity and a duty. The Arabs must not succumb to delusions and [false] expectations. They face a fierce enemy determined to devour their lands. The more cohesive the Arab position is and the more the [Arab] nation clings to its rights and refuses to cede its land, the closer it will draw to the realization of its goal of Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and the Palestinians' rights. These are the two cornerstones of peace without which peace cannot possibly exist."

The English-language *Syria Times* also predicts Israeli attempts to destroy the peace process and calls for "all-out efforts and full-fledged pressure" to counter them.

"Moreover," it says, "the Arabs who responded positively to the peace efforts and contributed to

ensuring the success of the serious American peace drive should collectively work to strengthen solidarity and to adopt united stands against aggressive and expansionist Zionist ambitions and against Israel's own attempts which aim, among other things, to enforce separate deals and thereby to strip the conference of its content and significance."

Syria is expected to host Arab coordination meetings before the peace talks start. It is anxious to avert any Arab concessions to Israel before its own talks with the Jewish state make progress towards an agreement for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the Golan Heights, on which it has promised Jordan and the Palestinians it will make no deal unless a similar agreement is reached on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Damascus' major concern now appears to be the multilateral Arab-Israeli talks that are supposed to start two weeks after the Madrid conference convenes. It has said it will not attend these negotiations, which would deal with regional issues like arms control, water rights, refugees and economic cooperation, until progress is made towards a peace settlement, and it fears that Arab participants in the collective talks may establish relations with Israel that reduce the pressure on it to arrive at an accommodation with Damascus.

Syria's views on the multilateral talks are shared by Lebanon, its protege, and the PLO, which also fears that Arab-Israeli "normalization" would leave the Palestinians defenseless against Israel.

Jordan, however, is reported ready to attend the talks, and so are Egypt and the six-state Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Four of the five Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) states have said they will attend the Madrid conference as observers but have not publicly committed themselves to participation in the multilateral talks. Beyond Foreign Minister Farouk Sharaa's public appeal to Arab states last week to stay away from the collective talks, Syria has studiously avoided a public clash with Egypt and the GCC on this issue, apparently in the hope of winning them over in the continuing consultations, but its media are full of innuendo about the need for "unified Arab positions" and efforts to prevent the peace talks from veering away from its major destination: a land-for-peace settlement.

"Like other peoples of the world," *al-Baath* says in its Tuesday editorial, "we believe it is of the utmost importance that the conference be convened for the purpose of achieving a just, comprehensive settlement based on the international resolutions, not for other things that have nothing to do with the peace process."

The importance of focusing on that primary objective is underscored by Israel's continuing public declarations rejecting any withdrawal from the occupied territories, the paper says, which means that "Israel" wants to keep the land, wants the Arabs to agree to this, and also wants water, diplomatic relations, etc."

This Israeli attitude places the conference in a deadlock "before it starts, if it doesn't lead to its failure before it convenes," the paper says, adding: "We do not want to anticipate things, but it would be very useful for everyone to be vigilant and on guard against what 'Israel' is preparing for the conference and the region alike.

"And here we would like to stress a matter of extreme importance, namely, that it is the Arabs that must be the most vigilant, because it is their future as a nation that is threatened."

□ DEFENSE: The Lebanese pan-Arab daily *al-Hayat*, which is close to Saudi Arabia, rises to the defense of Syria's position Tuesday in an editorial by George Semaan.

Semaan says Damascus, Beirut and the PLO are afraid that any regional gains Israel may make in the multilateral talks -- like "recognition, normalization, an end to [the Arab] boycott [of Israel], a share of [the region's] resources" -- before it returns the Arabs' land to them would eliminate any incentive it may have to return the land.

If Israel rakes in such gains before it settles its conflict with the Arabs, the peace conference, which is based on the land-for-peace principle, will be rendered meaningless, Semaan says. "It is not acceptable for Israel to enjoy normalization with the Arab states while it maintains its conflict with the Syrians, the Lebanese and the Palestinians, and it is impossible for the other Arab states attending the conference as participants or observers to accept such an outcome.

"If there must be multilateral talks, therefore, there should be coordination not only among the Arab Ring states [Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and the PLO] but among all the Arab states invited to the conference, the object being to build a unified position that would give Israel nothing at the multilateral talks unless it makes a substantive concession or concessions at the bilateral talks relating to the conflict. Any trend in any other direction would lead to an uncomprehensive, unjust and temporary peace settlement, which is not the purpose of the invitation sent out by [U.S. President George] Bush and [Soviet President Mikhail] Gorbachev."

□ MAHMOUD RIYAD: Writing in the same paper, former Arab League Secretary General Mahmoud Riyad also supports the Syrian position: Israel, he says, is trying to establish linkage between the bilateral and multilateral talks, so that it can disrupt the negotiations over the occupied territories if the Arabs reject its economic demands. This is nothing new, he points out. Israel established the same linkage in its Camp David peace talks with Israel, agreeing to give back Sinai only guaranteeing normalization with Egypt and a steady

supply of fuel from the Egyptian oil fields, along with an American undertaking to provide the oil if Egypt fails to.

Syria was right from the beginning to demand a unified Arab delegation to the talks with Israel, Riyad says, but since that idea has been rejected by Israel and the U.S., Damascus is trying to do the next best thing: coordinate with all the Arab parties in order to maximize world support for the Arab position and deal intelligently with all the maneuvers Israel can safely be expected to resort to.

Riyad supports the Syrian call for coordination, not only to deal with the multilateral-bilateral linkage but also to make sure that the Arabs go to the peace talks with identical interpretations of Security Council Resolution 242. Some Arab leaders, he says without naming them, have made statements indicating that their understanding of that resolution is less than satisfactory, and these and other public pronouncements, in his view, are partly responsible for the intransigence the Israeli leaders are demonstrating.

Riyad devotes part of his lengthy op-ed piece to praise for President Bush, whom he describes as the American president most qualified to bring peace to the Middle East because he knows the region well, is backed by a skillful secretary of state, and "does not have a Jewish National Security Adviser who puts American policy to work for the achievement of Israeli goals as Henry Kissinger did."

Another advantage Bush has, Riyad says, is that he enjoys the backing of the Soviet Union and the European Community, both of which support the Arabs' rights, not to mention the backing of the U.N., whose General Assembly has left no doubt where its sympathies lie.

"The only problem facing Bush as he tries to implement his peace initiative in a sound way that satisfies the conscience of the world is the strength of the Israeli organizations in the United States, most powerful among which is AIPAC, which has influence on many members of Congress," Riyad says.

He adds that Bush's success in delaying the debate on Israel's request for \$10 billion in loan guarantees over the objections of the Israeli lobby does not in his view mean that the lobby is weakening. After all, Bush did not reject the Israeli request; he merely deferred it.

"We will see many Israeli demands and maneuvers in cooperation with the Jewish organizations to embarrass President Bush and his aides and start rumors and charges against them, which is what they [the Israelis and the lobby] are masters at," he says.

□ SAUDI: Another view of American-Israeli relations is presented in the Saudi *Asharq al-Awsat* by Walid Abi-Mershed, who says that everyone is

talking about two major trends in the Middle East -- the Arab effort to implement Resolutions 242 and 338 and the Israeli effort to achieve its version of peace -- but a third trend has gone unnoticed: the America's tendency towards the Arab world.

The question that few are asking out loud but is nevertheless worrying many in Tel Aviv, he says, is: What can Israel give Washington in the new world order more than the Arabs can give it?

The question, he says, reveals a "new reality" that followed the Gulf crisis, in which Israel has been transformed from an strategic asset into a strategic/economic burden for the U.S.

"While it may be too early to speak about a paved American road to the heart of the Arab region before Washington translates its new policy into a balanced settlement that is binding on Israel, the signs indicate that Washington is undertaking a root reevaluation of its Middle East policy," Abi-Mershed says.

"Washington appears to be drawing close to the elimination of a major impediment to its relations with the Arab region, the impediment of the pro-Israel bias that has characterized American diplomacy over four centuries [sic].

"To the extent that the elimination of this obstacle paves the Arabs' road to Madrid, it also paves

Washington's road to the Arabs."

[] E. JERUSALEM: In East Jerusalem, *ash-Shaab* says in an editorial that while PLO Chairman Yaser Arafat strives to establish Arab coordination and meets with Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin to "face Moscow with its responsibility" to a just peace, "we look forward to seeing the international community united and working with the same seriousness and firmness that it demonstrated against Iraq to establish a peace in the region based on Resolutions 242 and 338, which call for an exchange of land for peace. Without this seriousness and firmness, we will continue to regard America's peace talk as nothing but blatant deception and dust in the Arabs' eyes."

Another East Jerusalem daily, *an-Nahar*, broaches the subjects of the Palestinian refugees in the diaspora, declaring that no peace settlement can be reached unless their problem is solved.

The solution of their problem, it says, must be based on the UN resolutions that deal with it, and these call for their repatriation or compensation. *An-Nahar* says the Palestinian refugees must be given the right to return to the liberated Palestinian territories plus compensation to allow them to rebuild their lives there. Billions of dollars will be needed for this, it says.



LEBANON

French press for parliamentary elections in talks with Hrawi

Military aid also high on president's Paris agenda

French President François Mitterrand was reported on Tuesday to have prodded President Elias Hrawi to organize free parliamentary elections in Lebanon.

Hrawi emerged from a 45-minute tête-à-tête with Mitterrand followed by a working lunch attended by aides Monday to declare the meeting was "better than any I've had so far" and that the French leader had accepted an invitation to visit Lebanon.

Hrawi's official visit to Paris seals a rapprochement between the Lebanese and French governments following a long period of strained relations over France's insistence on granting political asylum to Christian Gen. Michel Aoun, who took shelter at the French embassy in Beirut for 10 months after his ouster in a Syrian-led assault on his Baabda Palace headquarters in October of last year.

Aoun, who does not recognize the Syrian-backed Hrawi administration, was finally allowed to leave for France last August under a conditional "amnesty" requiring him to remain abroad for five years and refrain from engaging in any political activity.

□ ELECTIONS: Mitterrand shares Aoun's view that free parliamentary elections are long overdue in Lebanon, where the last general elections were held in 1972, three years before civil war erupted. The house has since been extending its own mandate and the government

last June appointed 40 MPs in an unprecedented move stipulated by the Arab-sponsored Taef accord.

The Lebanese pan-Arab daily *al-Hayat* Tuesday quoted a diplomatic source in Paris as saying the Mitterrand-Hrawi talks covered the issue of organizing free elections in Lebanon. A French presidential spokesman also said discussions during the working lunch dealt with "the details of organizing elections, including preparing electoral lists."

The same paper quoted an unidentified French diplomat as describing last June's designation of deputies as akin to a "barbaric" action by "a democratic state." He said France, which had strongly criticized the move, supported the holding of free parliamentary elections in Lebanon.

The diplomat also said France's demand that all foreign forces, including Syria's, withdraw from Lebanon was "logical and reasonable." He said Lebanon and Syria could coexist as "two sovereign and independent states," but the Syrians were trying to "exploit the situation to impose constraints on the Lebanese."

□ DUMAS: Speaking to reporters after a meeting with Hrawi later Monday, French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas said the talks dealt with the reconstruction of Lebanon, which Paris intended to assist, as well as the Middle East peace conference opening in Madrid on October 30 in which Lebanon will take part.

Dumas, announcing he would visit Beirut next month, said the talks also focused on relations between Syria and Lebanon. He said France had consistently supported the Taef accord and had noticed "an improvement in the situation in Lebanon... and we believe that the exercise of total sovereignty requires the exercise of the right to vote. We believe that the Taef accord must be implemented in full, i.e. lead to the withdrawal of foreign forces (from Lebanon) and the implementation of (Security Council) Resolution 425 (requiring Israel to evacuate the South).

In an interview with the French daily Le Figaro published Monday, Hrawi said Syrian President Hafez Assad had told him Syrian forces would pull out of Beirut to the eastern Bekaa Valley next year as required by the Taef accord. He said he would like to hold elections in Lebanon "tomorrow" if he could, but population records were destroyed during the war and 240 employees were now working to bring them up-to-date. Once everything was ready, municipal and parliamentary elections would be held, Hrawi said.

Dumas, queried by reporters about the statements Aoun has been making to the press from his French exile, said Paris would "remind" the general of the laws under which he has been granted political asylum should he violate them.

In his latest statement, Aoun

told the French television channel *La Cinq* Sunday he could not think of any place in the world other than Lebanon where charges were brought against citizens because "they stood up to the occupation whereas collaborators are in power and get international assistance."

Al-Hayat reports Tuesday that pro-Aoun T-shirts and posters have recently surfaced in Christian East Beirut, while anti-Aoun posters have appeared in the city of Jbail (Byblos) north of the capital.

□ **MILITARY:** Hrawi and Defense Minister Michel Murr also discussed French military aid to Lebanon with French Defense Minister Pierre Joxe.

Murr said the Lebanese side had expressed its readiness to honor some FF400 million (\$69.5 million) in debts owed to France for military equipment purchased under a 1984 deal but needed a "grace period" in view of its current financial straits. He said much of the equipment bought under the FF1 billion (\$174 million) deal had been damaged during the war, particularly during the early 1990 clashes between Aoun's troops and Christian Lebanese Forces (LF) militiamen, and the French were queried about their readiness to help repair it. Murr said the French had been "responsive" to the Lebanese requests, but no decisions could be reached in one session of talks.

The official part of Hrawi's visit to Paris ends Tuesday night, but he will be staying on for a couple of days before going to Rome and the Vatican.

□ **CLANS:** Several people were killed or wounded in clashes between two Shiite Moslem clans in the eastern town of Baalbeck Monday in which the pro-Iranian Hizbollah took part, according to press reports.

Reuters quoted security sources as saying at least eight people were killed and 17 wounded in the

Freed US hostage flies to Germany for family reunion

Freed American hostage Jesse Turner, his 1,731-day ordeal in Lebanon over, flew to a U.S. airbase in Germany on Tuesday for a reunion with his wife and to hug the four-year-old daughter he has never seen.

Turner, 44, was released by his fundamentalist kidnappers in Lebanon on Monday night and handed over to the U.S. ambassador in Damascus at the Syrian foreign ministry in the morning.

"I am very happy to be freed and I am looking forward to see my family and friends," he told reporters in a brief ceremony.

U.S. doctors examined him and passed him fit for the flight to the Air Force base at Wiesbaden, near Frankfurt, the U.S. embassy said.

Turner, who taught mathematics and computer science at Beirut University Collage (BUC) until he was abducted on January 24, 1987, looked well and relaxed at the ceremony. He answered no questions and whispered to U.S. Ambassador Christopher Ross at his side before shrugging off a question on whether he had seen other hostages.

His Lebanese wife Badr and his only daughter, Joanna, are expected at Wiesbaden to meet him. Joanna was born months after his abduction.

Turner and three of his colleagues were kidnapped on the BUC campu by gunmen posing as policemen giving a lesson on how to avoid abduction. His kidnappers, Islamic Jihad for the Liberation of Palestine, had already released two of the academics but one, American Alann Steen, is still with them.

The release of Turner is the latest phase in a complicated UN-mediated exchange of Middle East captives. The kidnap groups are swapping the Western hostages for Lebanese prisoners held by Israel. Israel is releasing the prisoners in exchange for missing Israeli servicemen or their remains or hard information that they are dead.

Since the latest round of releases began in August, kidnap groups have set free two Americans, Edward Tracy and Turner, and two Britons, John McCarthy and Jack Mann. Israel has released a total of 66 prisoners, mostly Lebanese Shiites, and obtained the remains of one dead serviceman and confirmation that two others are dead.

fighting between members of the Ja'far and Midlej clans in which mortars, machineguns, anti-tank rockets and artillery were used.

The sources said Ja'far gunners shelled the Sheikh Abdallah barracks, a major base for the pro-Iranian Hizbollah where Western hostages are believed to have been held.

They said Hizbollah militants then clashed with members of the Ja'far clan and captured some of

them. Two of the dead and four wounded were Hizbollah members while the other six killed were Ja'fars, according to the sources, who said the battles were sparked by the killing of a Midlej family member by a Ja'far a week ago.

Al-Hayat, reporting five dead and eight injured in the clashes, said Syrian troops who control the area intervened and arranged a cease-fire between the warring sides.

IRAQ

Harvard team warns that thousands will die without imported food, medicine and parts

Thousands of Iraqi children will die if the country does not quickly obtain food, medicine and spare parts from abroad, according to a report released on Tuesday by the International Commission on the Gulf Crisis recently returned from Baghdad.

The 87-member team, organized by graduates of Harvard University's schools of law and public health and funded by UNICEF, Oxfam-UK, the MacArthur Foundation and the John Merck Fund, warned that conditions faced by the Iraqi people as a result of the long-term effects of the Gulf crisis were worsening dramatically and creating a public health and social disaster.

It based its findings on visits to 30 Iraqi cities and rural areas in all parts of the country from August 23 to September 5, which it noted were conducted without the interference or supervision of the government.

And while it stopped short of making recommendations, it stressed the urgent need for Iraq to import not only food and medical supplies but equipment and parts to repair its power generation, water purification and sewage treatment facilities, many of which are on the verge of collapse.

The report emphasized the way runaway inflation since the crisis has exacerbated health and economic problems, estimating that the incidence of poverty in the once-prosperous country was now greater than in India.

The following is a summary of the main findings of the team, which conducted separate surveys in eight key areas:

Child mortality and nutrition survey

It is estimated that the mortality rate of children under five years of age is 380 percent greater today than before the onset of the Gulf crisis.

Before the crisis, the mortality rate for children under five years of age was 27.8 deaths per thousand live births. Since then it has increased to 104.4 deaths per thousand live births.

Furthermore, it is estimated that the mortality rate of children under one year of age (the infant mortality rate) is 350 percent greater than before the onset of the Gulf crisis. During January to August 1990, infant mortality was 22.7 deaths per thousand live births but

has since climbed to 80.0 deaths per thousand live births.

The rise in infant and child mortality is likely due to a complex interaction of factors. There are acute shortages of food and essential medicines throughout Iraq. In addition, lack of clean drinking water and poor sanitation have greatly increased water-borne diseases, such as cholera, typhoid, dysentery, and gastroenteritis.

A random sample of 2,902 children showed that nearly 29 percent were malnourished, leading to the estimate that over 900,000 Iraqi children are malnourished nationwide, including 118,000 children who face an increased risk of dying.

The incidence of severe malnutrition was greatest among children between one and two years of age, over one-third of whom are malnourished.

Health facility survey

The study team included five health professionals who visited 29 hospitals and 17 community health centers located in nearly all governorates of Iraq.

Mortality for patients under five years of age varied dramatically throughout the country. For example, at Babel Pediatric Hospital, it has increased 3.9 times for the first seven months of 1991 while at Diwaniya, an increase of 1.2 fold was documented. The incidence of diseases was similarly uneven. With the improvement of Baghdad's water supply the risk of communicable diseases in Baghdad has substantially diminished in recent months, while in southern Iraq the morbidity pattern is substantially more acute and remains at epidemic or near-epidemic levels.

Within hospitals, infant and child malnutrition is clearly the most significant problem documented. Among in-patients at Erbil Pediatric Hospital, the prevalence of malnutrition, as an admitting diagnosis, was 71 percent; at Suleimaniya, 66 percent; at Mosul, 66 percent; and at Ramadi Pediatric Hospital, 61 percent. Food shortages and frequent gastroenteritis appear to have contributed to a very high level of malnutrition. This is reflected in the large increase in low birth weight babies. As an example, in Kut, low birth weight babies represent 30-50 percent of all live births compared to 12-14 percent in 1990. The cost of infant formula on the open market has increased 2,000-

3,000 percent since August 1990.

In addition, water-borne diseases, including typhoid, gastroenteritis, and cholera are epidemic. Hepatitis has increased throughout Iraq and by as much as one hundredfold in some areas. Meningitis is now widespread in southern Iraq. With the damage to child vaccination programs, such preventable diseases as measles and polio are also resurgent.

Strained health facilities operate at only a fraction of pre-crisis levels. Most lack even basic medical supplies such as vaccines, antibiotics, anesthetics and syringes.

Medicines are in extremely short supply. As a result, infectious diseases go untreated. There is little or no chloramphenicol for typhoid, fluids for rehydration of those suffering from cholera or gastroenteritis, or antibiotics for meningitis. Lack of vaccines and poor sanitary conditions have resulted in outbreaks of previously uncommon and preventable childhood disease, such as polio, measles, and tetanus.

Drugs for chronic diseases are also unavailable. The rate of coronary attacks has increased substantially because patients with heart disease are dying because they cannot obtain insulin. Children with treatable leukemia are dying because anti-cancer drugs are largely non-existent. Laboratories, X-ray units, neonatal units, and operating theaters either do not function or provide only limited services.

Due to lack of water and detergent, sanitation was poor and water supplies sporadic in nearly every hospital visited. 30 percent of hospital water sources in the south were grossly polluted with coliform indicating fecal contamination. In Kurdish areas, tested water supplies of hospitals found heavy coliform pollution. Moreover, the water that is supplied is often contaminated with fecal matter. Lavatories are clogged. At several hospitals, raw sewage had backed up into the wards.

Electrical facility survey

The project surveyed the conditions of most major electrical facilities in Iraq.

During the Gulf crisis, enormous damage was inflicted upon the electrical generation infrastructure. Since the cease-fire, electrical generation has been restored to about 68 percent of the 1990 peak load but to only 37 percent of the installed capacity. The study estimates 75 percent of electrical transmission lines are operable. All repairs have been done using salvaged parts and improvised methods.

Most of this repair, especially in the switchyards and first-span connections to transmission, does not meet normal standards of construction, imposes increased safety risks, and is likely to break down. Without spare parts, replacement and further repair will not be possible. The store of salvageable parts is depleted. Iraq does not have the capability to manufacture the necessary items. Many are specific to the foreign

companies from Europe, Japan, and North America that built or supplied all the power stations.

Finally, the study team documented the profoundly negative impact that the damaged and ill-repaired power generation system has had on, and will continue to have on, water purification and wastewater treatment and public health infrastructure generally.

Water and wastewater systems survey

Much of Iraq's water and water purification facilities function at only a fraction of pre-Gulf crisis levels or not at all. Only one of 18 water treatment plants inspected operated at 100 percent capacity. Water distribution and purification suffer from minimal flow and lack of chlorine which is being rationed at all plants. The primary factors impairing water treatment and purification do not result from damage caused by the war and civil uprisings, but from a lack of spare parts and chlorine. Wastewater treatment, water delivery and purification are also substantially limited by the lack of electrical power.

Reduced water flows and insufficient levels of chlorine in the distribution system promote the incidence of water-borne diseases. The lack of electrical power has eliminated wastewater treatment in Baghdad and southern Iraq and raw sewage is being discharged into waterways. Sewage treatment is also dramatically reduced because of a lack of chlorine, spare parts and reliable electrical power. The study team estimates that if current trends continue, the entire water treatment and delivery system will deteriorate to the point of collapse. Within a matter of months, those critical public services are expected to be operating at only 5-10 percent capacity.

Environment and agricultural survey

Most of Iraq's population of 18 million is directly exposed to water-borne disease in their potable water supply.

Out of 158 drinking water samples from all 18 governorates, 106 tested positive for gross coliform contamination and roughly half showed positive evidence of gross fecal contamination. Only in Baghdad did over half the samples test negative. Team members documented unsanitary water source and waste disposal conditions in all cities surveyed.

Common conditions observed included:

1. Solid waste accumulating in the streets due to the lack of collection and landfilling equipment.
2. Raw sewage overflows in the streets and around homes.
3. Raw sewage being dumped directly into the rivers due to impaired or inoperable wastewater treatment plants.
4. Children bathing and playing in these rivers.
5. People with little to no tap water supply be-

cause impaired or inoperable water treatment and distribution plants cannot generate adequate line pressure.

6. People drawing drinking water directly from the rivers, and

7. People drawing drinking water from holes dug in watermains, which are often contaminated by cross-connections from adjacent sewage pipes.

Over 60 percent of the population in five of the seven governorates surveyed no longer have tap water available in their homes because of low water supply system pressure. The low pressure is caused by lack of spare parts to maintain pumps, power outages, and breaks in the water mains.

Income and economic survey

More than a year of war and internal conflicts have had a disastrous impact on the economy. The destruction of the economic infrastructure and an acute shortage of imported inputs have caused a considerable decline of output and wage employment (especially in the private sector). The reduction of formal employment opportunities, and the general impoverishment of the population, have led to a large-scale expansion of "informal" self-employment (e.g. street-vending).

Overall money earnings have remained more or less unchanged for the majority of the population since August 1990. Over the same period, consumer prices have sharply increased, due to trade restriction, exchange-rate depreciation and reductions in subsidies. The food price index has risen by 1,500 to 2,000 percent.

Correspondingly, real earnings have fallen to less than seven percent of their pre-crisis level, in terms of purchasing power over food. In terms of private incomes, the incidence of poverty is now greater in Iraq than in, say, India. The collapse of private incomes has been further aggravated by the deterioration of many basic public services.

These adverse developments have been partly compensated by the expansion of public food distribution. Iraq's public distribution system, which covers all residents (except in areas not currently administered by the government, particularly the north), is equitable and efficient. However, food distribution

covers at best one half of the nutritional needs of the population. Many households have to sell their assets to complement food rations with market purchases.

The paralysis of economic activity and basic public services, inadequately compensated by food rationing, has been one of the major causes of nutritional deprivation and enhanced mortality.

Child psychology survey

On the basis of in-depth interviews of 214 Iraqi children of primary school age, two professional child psychologists report levels of anxiety, stress, and pathological behavior unprecedented in their 15-year experience in this field. For example, nearly two-thirds of children interviewed believe that they will not survive to become adults. Nearly 80 percent are afraid of losing her/his family through death or separation. Eighty percent experienced shelling at close distance. The researchers conclude that "the high proportion of affected children clearly calls for a substantial national and international response to provide the necessary technical, professional, and educational means... to help these affected children."

Women survey

A report on the state of women was compiled by three researchers who conducted in-depth interviews with 80 Iraqi women. The collapsed Iraqi economy has driven many families to poverty. Due to the sanctions and the damaged water and electricity infrastructure, as well as fuel and food shortages, 80 percent of women interviewed described a situation where the burden of their domestic responsibilities had increased significantly. Fifty-seven percent of the women reported suffering from health problems. The Iraqi people, especially the women, are overwhelmed by their daily struggle to provide for their children even the most basic needs of food and water. Many women are forced to sell their jewelry, and other household assets to raise money to buy food for their children. The crisis is worst in the case of vulnerable groups, such as widows, who do not have any personal assets to sell for food and other basic necessities.



TURKEY

Demirel ponders coalition options

Who will Suleyman Demirel choose to partner his True Path Party (DYP) in a governing coalition?

Following the publication on Tuesday of final - though still unofficial -- results for Sunday's general elections, it became clear that in purely numerical terms the 67-year-old veteran politician has three options.

With the DYP allocated 178 parliamentary seats (slightly less than earlier projections), it can muster a simple majority in the 450-member parliament in partnership with either the Motherland Party (ANAP)'s 115 MPs, the Social Democratic Populist Party (SHP)'s 88, or even the fundamentalist Welfare Party (RP)'s 62.

The only other party in parliament is Bulent Ecevit's Democratic Left Party (DSP), which has ended up with seven mandates.

The general consensus Tuesday was that the Islamist group was beyond the pale as far as the DYP's liberal wing is concerned, and therefore ruled out.

However, Demirel was keeping all his options open.

He told a post-election news conference Monday that a coalition was unavoidable and he would be discussing the matter with the various political parties in the coming few days after the DYP leadership had formulated a general line of approach.

"We do not reject anything. We can't," he said when asked what kind of coalition he would like to build.

He also hinted that fresh elections might have to be called in the near future, while stressing this was not an issue for the time being.

Reminded by one reporter that he had said during the election campaign that an unstable coalition government would make Turks look back with nostalgia at the eight years of ANAP rule, he replied that he had urged voters to avoid putting a coalition into power but they had decided otherwise.

"Are we supposed to leave Turkey without a government? I said that to explain that a coalition is not a good idea. But it has a chance of being successful."

Asked if he would talk about the subject to President Turgut Ozal -- who Demirel does not recognize and has pledged to unseat -- the DYP leader retorted: "I said I was going to the political parties. Is Cankaya (the presidential palace in Ankara) a political party?"

Demirel said the "Cankaya issue" was closely linked to the question of forming a government, an apparent hint that he favored coalition partners who shared his goal of toppling the president.

For the newly-elected parliament to oust the president -- who has five of his seven years in office left to run -- it needs to muster the two-third majority of 300 MPs required to change the constitution.

[] YILMAZ: Outgoing Premier Mesut Yilmaz for his part said Monday he doubted the quest to oust Ozal would succeed.

"I don't give much chance to opposition parties doing what they said earlier about Ozal," he said after submitting his government's resignation to the president.

Ozal assigned Yilmaz' administration to continue in a caretaker capacity until Demirel forms a cabinet, something he has 45 days to do.

Yilmaz indicated that he preferred ANAP to lead the opposition rather than team up in government with a party committed to the ouster of Ozal, who founded ANAP and led it to two election wins before using its parliamentary majority to have himself elected president in 1989.

"The DYP has made promises which nobody can keep. Now we are leaving the stage to them. Let them come and keep their promises," Yilmaz said.

He said the nation had voted to turn ANAP into the main opposition party, and he saw his duty as discharging that task in a responsible manner.

He added that ANAP's relationship with Ozal would be no different to that between the president and any other opposition party.

[] INONU: At his post-election news conference SHP leader Erdal Inonu -- whose party performed well below expectations -- hinted he was ready to team up with Demirel.

"The thing to do now is to see how the DYP will act. Then our position will be clearer," he said.

"This does not mean that we want to form a coalition, and we are not in a position at present to say whether we are likely to be in or outside government," he said.

The SHP shares the DYP's goal of removing Ozal but the two parties are far apart on a host of other issues, notably the Kurdish problem in the southeast.

[] DILEMMA: *Cumhuriyet's* Hasan Cemal remarked Tuesday that all the main parties faced a real dilemma because of the inconclusive election result.

Apart from the Welfare Party, which did considerably better than anticipated, nobody could be said to be happy with the outcome of the ballot.

"There is a certain air of wariness, and with good reason," he said.

"We cannot say that 'stability' is the force that emerged from the polling booths. We don't know how the game will be played on the political stage. We can't even say that the lead players have decided what roles to assume."

Assessing Demirel's coalition options as he returns to the premiership after 11 years, Cemal said Yilmaz probably genuinely preferred to stay out of government.

If the DYP leader opted for a link with the RP he would do himself incalculable harm.

This left him with the SHP option. But although Inonu seemed willing to go along with the idea, the Social Democrats had emerged as the biggest losers in the election.

Demirel seemed to think that time and public support would be needed for a DYP-SHP coalition to take shape, particularly in light of the Socialists' alliance with the HEP, the pro-Kurdish People's Labor Party.

□ KURDS: The HEP appeared to be emerging as a headache for Inonu Tuesday, threatening to slash his party's parliamentary presence by one quarter.

The HEP was formed by Kurdish nationalists who broke away from the SHP in 1989, but shared its slate at the elections after it was barred on a technicality from running independently.

The SHP's success in the predominantly Kurdish southeast was mostly due to the HEP, whose candidates accounted for 22 of the 88 parliamentary seats it won nationwide.

HEP assistant secretary-general Ahmet Karatas hinted Monday that the Kurdish deputies would now quit the SHP and form their own parliamentary bloc.

He said no definite decision had been taken, but warned: "Our remaining in the SHP will only be possible if the SHP begins to think like the HEP," especially regarding Kurdish human rights.

The HEP's incompatibility with a DYP-SHP alliance was further underlined Monday when Demirel

pledged to crush Kurdish rebels seeking an independent state in the southeast.

The HEP disavows links with the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) which has been fighting an eight-year guerilla war with the army, but its supporters regularly chant pro-PKK slogans and the guerillas are reported to have urged their supporters to vote for the SHP-HEP.

□ OZAL: *Milliyet's* Altan Oymen -- who dismissed talk of a DYP-RP coalition as inconceivable -- pointed to another factor mitigating against a governing alliance between Demirel and Inonu.

He said the two parties differed sharply on a host of foreign and domestic policies, meaning that the only goals they could share concerned changing the constitution and ousting Ozal.

Yet the DYP and SHP combined would only control 266 seats -- enough to govern, but not enough to remove the president.

Why then, should Demirel seek a partnership with the Social Democrats who opposed him ideologically?

If, however, Demirel "drops the Ozal factor," he can form an alliance with ANAP, which shares many of his policy aims.

Such a partnership would probably be the "most positive" step for Demirel to take, but would require some sort of agreement with Yilmaz -- if he agreed -- to clip Ozal's wings.

Turkey's next prime minister, remarked Oymen, has to cope with the fact that Ozal "apart from being the president, effectively runs the country."

□ VENDETTA: *Sabah* chief columnist Guneri Civaoglu thought that Demirel would not back down from his pledge to remove Ozal.

Thus the focus in his coalition deliberations will not be so much on forming a cabinet as unseating the president.

Yet Demirel had to avoid giving the impression that he was pursuing a single-minded and aggressive vendetta against the president, Covaoglu warned.

Demirel would surely be hurt if the perception grew that he was giving his feud with Ozal priority over the governance of the country.