

WAR TENSION RELAXED IN ISRAEL

TEL AVIV (WNS) -- A period of relaxation appeared in the Middle East after the worst scare since the 1973 Yom Kippur War. The Israeli Cabinet said in an official statement that there was a relaxation of tension but that there is "a continued need for alertness and vigilance to watch Syrian intentions." The Cabinet's announcement came on the heels of reports that war had been imminent in the Middle East. Israeli Premier Yitzhak Rabin said that only "a very limited number" of Israeli reserve troops had been mobilized. The sudden escalation over the weekend developed out of the convergence of several developments pointing to a new outbreak of hostilities. One factor was the mounting belligerence of statements emanating from Arab capitals in support of the rigid, maximalist stand taken by Yasir Arafat in his address to the U.N. General Assembly. Another was the staging of large-scale military exercises by the Syrian Army on the northern front, reminding Israelis that it was

just such exercises that immediately preceded the Yom Kippur War. Meanwhile, there were reports from Israeli intelligence that at least 20 Soviet merchant ships were unloading large cargoes of war equipment at the Syrian port of Latakia. The Syrians themselves hinted that they might oppose renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observation Force which expires November 30. Premier Yitzhak Rabin made it

clear in a statement on Friday that Israel regards the UN force as part and parcel of the disengagement agreements.

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