

HUSSEIN LEADS ARAB LEAGUE DELEGATION TO BRITAIN

LONDON (WNS) -- The long delayed visit by a delegation from the Arab League to meet with British officials as part of the Arab effort to explain the Fez communique issued last October at the conclusion of the Arab League summit in Morocco, concluded here with the assertion by British Foreign Secretary Francis Pym that the Arabs have "got their act together" and adopted a negotiating position for peace in the Middle East. But at the conclusion of the one-day visit by the Arab delegation on March 18, led by King Hussein of Jordan, there was still no indication of Hussein's willingness to make the vital first step towards

negotiations.

But the visit here has reportedly succeeded in reviving the friendship between Britain and the Arab states. They received a red carpet treatment from the moment of arrival at the British Foreign Office and at 10 Downing Street to their final tea party with a beaming Queen Elizabeth at Buckingham Palace. Public interest in the visit had been enhanced by the fact that it had been postponed at three separate times since first mooted in the wake of the Fez meeting. The idea of Arab leaders was to acquaint the five permanent members of the UN Security Council with the Arabs' plan for a Palestinian state on the West Bank and

NEW YORK (WNS) -- A clear majority of Americans continue to view Israel as the United States' closest ally in the Middle East although many have indicated disenchantment with the manner in which the government of Premier Menachem Begin handled the findings of the Commission of Inquiry into the Beirut massacre at Sabra and Shatila, according to the latest Harris Poll. The poll was conducted by telephone between February 11 - 16 and surveyed 1,248 adults nationwide. Seventy two percent did not agree with the Israeli decision to retain Ariel Sharon in the Cabinet after the Commission's report suggested his ouster, even though he was relieved of his defense portfolio.

NEW YORK (WNS) -- Declaring it "unthinkable that in a place drenched with Jewish blood there should not be Jews to bear witness and recite Kaddish," the World Jewish Congress governing board had decided "in principle" that the WJC will participate in the solemn commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising to be held in Warsaw in April. The governing board, following the deliberation of some 100 delegates from 27 countries who met in early February in Washington, has also recommended that WJC member communities participate in the observance as well.

Gaza Strip with the capital in Jerusalem.

The ministerial visit to Washington, Paris, Moscow and Peking had all taken place with little media attention. But the squabble with Britain over whether a PLO official should meet with Premier Margaret Thatcher and the Queen caused an uncharacteristic rift between Britain and the Arabs and ensured the wide-

spread publicity once it was healed. This was made possible by the inclusion of Wlad Khalidi, who although a member of the Palestine National Council, is not an official of the PLO. It also provided an unexpected publicity coup for Hussein, who led the mission after Morocco's King Hassan, its original leader, lost patience and dropped out.

JERUSALEM (WNS) -- A public opinion poll conducted immediately after release of the report on the Commission of Inquiry into the Beirut massacre showed that Likud would continue to hold a substantial lead over the Labor Alignment if elections were held now. The poll, commissioned by the Jerusalem Post, said that Likud would win 58 Knesset seats, up one seat from a similar poll conducted in January and only three short of a parliamentary majority. The latest poll gave Labor 40 seats, up one from the earlier poll.

NEW YORK (WNS) -- Simon Shnirman, a 25-year-old Soviet Jew and former Prisoner of Conscience, was sentenced to three years in a labor camp on draft evasion, it was reported by the National Conference on Soviet Jewry. The sentence followed his arrest on January 12. Shnirman has already served two and a half years at hard labor under similar charges. He first applied to emigrate in 1977 and was denied permission on the pretext that "he did not work long enough to pay for money invested by the state in his studies."

JERUSALEM (WNS) -- A man convicted of disturbing the peace at the Peace Now demonstration during which a man was killed and nine persons were wounded, when a grenade was thrown at the demonstrators, was sentenced March 1 to a one-year suspended sentence, and a 25,000 shekel fine by a Jerusalem magistrate. Benayahu Aharoni, the convicted man, appeared pleased with the sentence and hugged waiting relatives after he and his attorney emerged from the judge's chambers.

TEL AVIV (WNS) -- The war in Lebanon has added another 1,100 members to the Association of Disabled War Veterans, according to its chairman, Yaacov Maoz, in an interview with the current issue of the army's Bamahane weekly magazine. The association now has some 37,000 members, 97.5 percent of whom are self-supporting, Maoz reported. The membership is probably the highest in the world on a percentage of population basis.

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