

Murphy Is 'Convinced' That Israel, Egypt And Jordan Are Serious About Advancing The Peace Process

JERUSALEM (JTA) — U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy, winding up a two-week tour of the Middle East, said here that he was "convinced" that Israel, Egypt and Jordan are serious about advancing the peace process, though they remain at odds

over how to go about it. Murphy briefed Premier Yitzhak Shamir on his talks in Jordan and Egypt. His stopover in Jerusalem was his second since he came to the region two weeks ago on his first visit since September. He told reporters, "I am returning to

Washington convinced of the seriousness of purpose about advancing the peace process here, in Jordan and in Egypt." A spokesman for Shamir said Murphy informed the Premier that there was no change in the basic disagreement among the three countries over how to revive the peace process.

"There are good intentions, but there is disagreement over how to proceed," the spokesman quoted Murphy as saying.

Egypt and Jordan are pressing for an international peace conference on the Middle East with the par-

ticipation of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and all parties concerned, including the Palestinians. Both countries recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization as spokesman for the Palestinians.

Israel refused to negotiate with the PLO. It insists that any international forum must be a framework for direct negotiations, not a substitute for them and it is determined to prevent the re-entry of the Soviet Union into Middle Eastern affairs.

The U.S. appears to favor the Israeli posi-

tion. Murphy, who is Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, will meet Shamir again when the latter comes to Washington next month for meetings with President Reagan and top Administration officials. During his visits to Israel, Murphy met with Vice Premier Shimon Peres and Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

Israeli sources believe Murphy will return to the region after the Islamic Conference in Kuwait later this month. They believe much depends on whether the conference will give Egypt and Jordan a freer hand to act. President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt is due to visit Washington a week after Shamir's visit.

Israeli sources also maintain that a major purpose of Murphy's current Mideast tour was to allay Arab fears over the Reagan Administration's covert shipment of arms to Iran and to restore Washington's credibility in the Arab world.



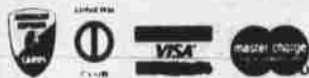
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