

but Jordan wants to limit this to three years.

Jordan-Israeli condominium dominium

In order to clarify other aspects of this deal, we will quote what was published by another Israeli newspaper *Yediot Aharonot*: «The first thing this plan called for is to abrogate the military government in the occupied territories. Civil affairs would then be supervised by a joint Jordanian-Palestinian council, the structure and powers of which will be negotiated between the two parties... The settlers would be considered explicitly as Israeli citizens; their security would be the responsibility of the Israeli army... It is natural that Israeli military presence in the West Bank will be decreased. A joint Jordanian-Israeli police force would be established within the framework of the joint council. Palestinian mayors would replace Israeli military governors. Jordanian military forces will be prohibited entrance to the West Bank. The borders will be opened and joint industrial projects will gradually be established. The detailed plan emphasized that this partial solution constitutes a stage towards an overall solution...»

From 'autonomy' to joint rule

After the signing of the Camp David accords and the execution of the first section, the US administration, 'Israel' and the Egyptian regime were confronted with Palestinian rejection. This hindered execution of the second section of the accords regarding 'autonomy' in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. However, the US and 'Israel' have now deemed it suitable to reassert 'autonomy' in a new form, encouraged by the two following factors: (1) the formation of the Israeli government of national unity; and (2) the crisis of the PLO, and the rightist leadership's readiness to deal with the US proposals, especially after the signing of the Amman accord.

This renewed attempt is moreover nurtured by the Jordanian regime's willingness to participate. This provided Peres with the opportunity to promote the 'Jordanian option', modifying the 'autonomy' plan so that the Jordanian regime would have more influence in its execution.

The right's dilemma

While 'Israel' rules out the PLO altogether, the US insists that it can only

be a negotiating partner if it makes all concessions in advance: recognizing 'Israel', resolutions 242 and 338, and totally abandoning armed struggle everywhere. In this light, it is possible to perceive the dilemma which exists between the Jordanian regime and Arafat's leadership. The regime insists on Arafat's positive response to the US-Israeli conditions. The PLO leadership, however, insists on obtaining US guarantees for Palestinian self-determination before conceding to these proposals. The continuation of this hesitation threatens the settlement process, which has induced King Hussein to seek alternatives to the PLO. Thus, we notice changes in Jordan's stand on the Amman accord. Hussein in his UN speech expressed readiness to enter into direct negotiations with 'Israel' without preconditions.

On the other hand, it is difficult for Hussein to go all the way without a suitable Palestinian-Arab cover. Now, with the Arafat leadership providing him with a PLO cover, King Hussein is simultaneously trying to create an alternative Palestinian leadership which will be primarily loyal to himself rather than to Arafat.

Reliable sources in Amman have reported that Hussein asked Arafat to continue with the Amman accord on condition that Jordan alone acts; if the situation arises again requiring a joint delegation, then moderate Palestinians such as Freij and Siniora should represent the Palestinian side.

Lion's share to 'Israel'

Looking closely at the terms of the secret Peres-Hussein agreement, we

see that it is an attempt to combine the second section of Camp David with the 'Jordanian option' which in essence corresponds to the Labour party's program. The source of this combination goes back to the fact that the Israeli national unity government will not commit itself to the 'autonomy' plan as it was specified in Camp David. The Labour party rejects 'autonomy', seeing a danger that it will grow into a Palestinian state. Likud, for its part, rejects the 'Jordanian option' because it would entail partial withdrawal from Palestinian land occupied in 1967. Peres' plan for joint administration thus hits two birds with one stone. It represents a compromise between Likud and Labor. At the same time, it extricates 'Israel' from the political stalemate by throwing the ball into Jordan's court.

What makes this dangerous is that Jordan is taking concrete steps towards unilateral negotiations with 'Israel' on this basis, in the meantime keeping other doors open (renewed relations with Syria), in case things don't turn out as planned.

What is most noticeable is that this plan gives the lion's share to 'Israel' which must neither relinquish control over territory or resources, nor its idea of a united Jerusalem. The only Israeli concession is agreement in principle to an international conference, if its relations with the Soviet Union are restored. This was made in full knowledge that it is unattainable, for the Soviet Union has declared that the reasons for its breaking relations with 'Israel' still exist. Peres is also hedging his bets, for the agreement is only tentative. If Jordan backs out, 'Israel' could implement its own interpretation of 'autonomy' unilaterally. ●

