Murphy's visits have always yielded a new round of dreaming about US efforts to establish 'peace' in the region, all the while the US is fueling the fires of conflict. 'Irangate', and the deployment of US warships in the Mediterranean and Gulf, are but recent examples of the US's 'peaceful' efforts. The US's definition of credibility is its own interests, and these are much more important to it than the concerns of its Arab followers.

HUSSEIN'S PILGRIMAGE

Arab reaction's pilgrimage to western Europe opened this year with King Hussein's January 12th-18th trip to France, Italy and the Vatican. Most observers of Hussein's visits pointed out that his main goal was to convince the EEC governments to support the Jordanian five-year plan for the West Bank and Gaza Strip, ridiculously called the 'development' plan. However, the political aspect of the King's trip, of which the 'development' plan is an important part, was apparent. In a speech at the dinner party held for the Italian President Cosiga, the King stressed that the plan «would have good results not only on the economic level, but also in terms of stability in the region.» This statement was in itself incriminating, for the Jordanian regime still claims that the plan has no political goals, but only aims at 'improving the quality of life' in the occupied territories.

Thus far, the only EEC country to support the Jordanian 'development' plan is Britain which contributed £2.5 million. However, Hussein's trip to Italy may have produced some results. During the dinner party, Cosiga stated, «We look positively to the five-year development plan...» Italy's prime minister, Bettino Craxi, said, «...Italy has always supported such plans aiming at improving living conditions.»

Hussein's 'French' trip may, however, not have steered his way. The French government reportedly told him that France prefers sending its financial aid directly to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, not to the Jordanian government.

Yet the Jordanian regime's efforts to gain support for the plan did not halt despite the not so promising results of the king's trip. On January 19th, Crown Prince Hassan visited London in a continuation of the regime's efforts to gain unanimous EEC support for the plan. Accomodating these efforts are the US's attempts to bring the EEC governments to a concensus on the Jordanian plan.

PERES' SHUTTLE

'Israel' is also showing its support for the so-called development plan. Peres visited Italy just before Hussein, and left a message there for the king. Spadolini, Italy's defense minister, said that this «message supports the Jordanian development plan and expresses hope that western countries will show support as well.» In Brussels, headquarters of the EEC, Peres appealed for aid to 'moderate' Arab states in order to draw them into direct negotiations with the Zionist state. Only in this perspective can one understand the call for an international conference, which Peres issued on his return from Britain. The international conference which Peres is promoting, and which Thatcher's Britain endorsed, is so full of conditions as to be a replica of the consistent US-Israeli stand, not a 'breakthrough' as projected by some. According to Peres, an international conference should not be a substitute for direct negotiations; it should not include parties who have no diplomatic relations with 'Israel' - aimed at keeping the Soviet Union out. Obviously, Peres' international conference is only a decoy designed to draw Arab reaction, especially Jordan, into direct negotiations with 'Israel'. Mainly this aims at negating the PLO's role as representative of the Palestinian people who are the party most concerned in any discussions about the future of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, not to mention the Arab-Zionist conflict as such. The seemingly contradictory statements of Shamir are but a part of the internal power play in the Zionist state, reflecting tactical differences as to how Israeli interests can best be promoted.

This castrated version of an international conference is also in line with US thinking, as was clear in the statement of Pickering, US ambassador to 'Israel', in mid-February, that the US might be for an international conference if it were a way to draw King Hussein to the negotiations table, echoing an earlier statement by US Secretary of State Schultz. Nor is Hussein opposed. In his interview with *Expresso,* Hussein stated that «in case of organizing an international conference, the issue of Palestinian representation would not be an obstacle.» This shows Hussein's basic agreement with Zionism and imperialism on the necessity of putting aside the PLO, and finding substitutes in order to push forward the imperialist 'peace' efforts.

EUROPE JOINS THE SHUTTLE

Some European states are becoming more obvious in their role as go-between for the sake of promoting imperialist stability in the Middle East. Thus, it was noticeable that French envoys were dispatched to 'Israel' to brief Peres on Mitterrand's talks with Hussein. Similarly, Italian Defense Minister Spadolini visited 'Israel' after Hussein's stay in his country.

Spadolini shuttled between Jordan, 'Israel' and Egypt in mid-January, following Murphy's path. According to Spadolini, his was a «thought-gathering mission» concerning the 'peaceful' settlement. It seemed strange that Spadolini came to the region to gather thoughts when he had already met with Jordan's king and the foreign minister of 'Israel'.

The Tunisian daily, *Assabah,* published a statement on January 19th, made by Spadolini, saying that «Israel is the source of the difficulties obstructing the idea of an international conference... These difficulties stem from Tel Aviv's condition that the USSR restore relations with it and solve the Soviet Jews' immigration problem... There is also a difficulty in the issue of Palestinian representation... Therefore, there should be a solution to the Palestinian representation in the conference.»

This statement seems unbelievable coming from Spadolini, the most distinguished friend of 'Israel' in Italy. Yet when read carefully, it becomes clearer. What is actually being demanded in order to have an interna-