

Israelis, Palestinians stamp out agreement

The Associated Press

TABA, Egypt— After hurdling major issues like border crossings, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators were optimistic Wednesday that they only needed about a week to wind up small issues, such as postage stamps.

"That's the agony of my life," chief Palestinian delegate and ardent philatelist Nabil Shaath said of trying to convince Israel to allow the Palestinian autonomy in Gaza and Jericho to issue its own stamps.

Shaath said the main problem was persuading Israel that details like an international telephone code, stamps and the Palestinian pound "are not symbols of a state, they are symbols of any identity."

Israel opposes the establishment of a Palestinian state, but Israeli negotiators finally agreed to the Palestinian stamp, leaving the question of its use abroad for later, Shaath said.

"I have spent all my life collecting stamps," Shaath said, "I have one of the best Palestinian collections going back to the consulates in Palestine ... I have not seen any colony in the world that does not have a stamp."

Palestinian negotiator Jamil Tarifi predicted that the remaining "four or five small things" would be negotiated by next Thursday.

Negotiators will then draft a final document to be approved by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO chief Yasser Arafat.

"I don't believe by the end of next week we can finish everything," top Israeli negotiator Maj. Gen. Amnon Shahak said, "but I believe we're much more serious now and more clear ... things will move much faster."

Tarifi said the committee on civilian affairs had worked out most of the 38 issues on its agenda. Remaining issues include water rights, zoning, archaeology and communications. Electricity and public works were finished Wednesday.

Shlomo Waxe, the director-general of Israel's communication ministry, said an agreement on a Palestinian broadcasting authority was "hours" away, pending approval from



Rabin

Jerusalem and Tunis, where the PLO is based. Palestinians were offered one television channel and a radio station on a single AM radio frequency, with an option to add other frequencies later, Waxe said.

"We think we have a right to more than that," Tarifi said, adding that he hoped the first stations would broadcast from his hometown of Ramallah.

Waxe did not rule out Ramallah as the Palestinian communications center, hinting at Israel's readiness to offer Palestinian autonomy a stake in the West Bank outside the Jericho area.

Negotiators were also close to an agreement on the Palestinian police force. Differences remained on its size and number of weapons.

Palestinians want a 10,000-strong force. Israel agrees to 6,000. Palestinians demand 100 armored vehicles fitted with machine guns, Israelis will allow only 30.

"It is almost achieved," Shahak said earlier of negotiations over the Palestinian police force.

It wasn't clear what compromises were made, although Shaath said coordination between the Israeli army and the Palestinian police had been concluded.

Sarajevo

Continued from Page 1

He said U.N. monitors saw convoys of equipment moving off the hills, and U.N. commanders received information that withdrawals meeting NATO conditions would be completed within 36 hours.

It was the first significant Serb withdrawal of heavy guns since NATO issued its ultimatum Feb. 9. NATO has said all heavy guns within a 13-mile radius of Sarajevo must be removed or placed under U.N. control by Sunday or face

NATO bombardment. Serbs have relentlessly shelled the city from their positions in the surrounding hills for nearly two years.

U.N. and NATO officials had earlier reported that the Serbs were dragging their feet. Aikman told reporters that the quickening pace of Serb withdrawals were "a very heartening sign."

"I hope the air strikes will not be necessary, and they will not occur if the Serbs will comply," President Clinton told reporters in Washington earlier Thursday.

Russia has been the most powerful ally of the Serbs. The promise from Karadzic appeared to reflect Serb acceptance that Moscow had

reluctantly lined up behind NATO to prevent Western involvement in the war.

Bosnian Serb generals have defied Karadzic before, and it was unclear whether they would abide by promises made by their political leadership. Statements by Gen. Manojlo Milovanovic, Bosnian Serb army chief of staff, reflected the frustration of having to pull back and lose superior battlefield advantage.

"We are openly telling everyone: In case of air strikes, all foreigners who find themselves on our territory will become hostages," Milovanovic said in an interview published in the Friday

editions of the weekly Intervju, available in Belgrade.

Churkin said the Serbs had agreed to withdraw their heavy weapons from around the Bosnian capital in exchange for a Russian promise to contribute soldiers to any new peacekeeping duties in the city.

In Moscow, President Boris Yeltsin's spokesman, Vyacheslav Kostikov, said the Russian plan and the positive response of the Serbs "make the NATO bombardments groundless."

Bosnian Serbs had been hoping that Russia's opposition to the NATO ultimatum would prevent any actual air strikes.

Gettin' some grub



Hercules surveys his surroundings at the Dallas Zoo while eats breakfast. The 28-year-old male gorilla is on breeding from the Pittsburgh Zoo in hopes of increasing gorilla population at the Dallas Zoo.

Zulu nationals distrust ANC Mandela concerning election

The Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — A leading Zulu nationalist ridiculed the latest peace offering from the ANC as a ploy Thursday, bolstering fears that political unrest may undermine South Africa's historic election in April.

Mangosuthu Buthelezi, leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party, said the ANC's characterization of new political proposals as a compromise was "utter hypocrisy."

White conservatives, who also are threatening to boycott the first all-race election April 26-28, reacted coolly.

But Buthelezi held out hope of an eventual agreement with the African National Congress and President F.W. de Klerk's white-minority government, which led talks on ending apartheid and allowing the black majority to vote.

"We are committed to participating in the election — provided that they walk that extra mile," Buthelezi told state television.

Conservative whites and blacks, grouped in the Freedom Alliance, fear the ANC will win the election and impose a socialist dictatorship that will trample minority rights.

They want sovereign or independent territories where they can govern themselves and maintain privileges enjoyed under apartheid.

Alliance leaders were expected to meet soon to discuss the proposals announced Wednesday by ANC leader Nelson Mandela.

Mandela said at a news conference his group had dropped its demand for a single-ballot system in the April vote.

The Alliance has demanded that voters cast two ballots — one for a national Parliament and another for regional legislatures. The ANC wanted a single ballot, with the votes applying to both assemblies.

A single ballot would eventually assured the huge majority of seats in both national and provincial legislatures. Two ballots would give regionally based parties — Inkatha in the KwaZulu homeland — a chance to establish power bases in their areas.

Mandela also said the ANC proved amending the new constitution to allow considerable white homeland after the election. He did not give details but the ANC supported handing current Parliament change new constitution to incorporate such a clause.

Both the government and ANC have firmly opposed setting up territories along racial lines, and it was unclear if Mandela's statement indicated a significant shift in policy.

He has previously said he could seek a territory where are the majority and they could control the regional government.

Buthelezi disputed whether offer was a real concession. "There's nothing really in it," he said on state television.

In a statement released, Buthelezi said Mandela had addressed Inkatha's fears that government dominated by the would rewrite the new constitution to strip powers of regional governments.

Mandela said Wednesday the ANC agreed the draft constitution should not be substantially changed by the government in April.

"Mr. Mandela's statement amounts to no more than politicking on life and death issues," Buthelezi said.

Gen. Constand Viljoen, of the Afrikaner Volksfront, said Mandela's announcement of a policy stunt and criticized the leader for making his proposal a news conference before putting them to the Alliance.

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