

MID-EAST e-NEWS

An electronic journal of the Middle East, for those who want to be informed.

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Welcome

The Cyprus referenda specified by the Annan plan for reunification occurred on Sunday. The Greek Cypriots in the south voted 3-1 against the plan, but in the north the vote was reversed with 65% voting for reunification. The consequence of the vote is interesting:

The 'green line' that was recently opened (by the Turkish side) for residents to pass through will become an eastern border of Europe – Residents of North & South will be entitled to EU citizenship – Turkish-Cypriots will also be able to participate in voting for Cyprus' EU representatives.

On page 4 is an account of the 1974 invasion of Cyprus. Strong emotions are aroused when it is discussed, particularly amongst the Greek Cypriots who lost their homes as a result of the invasion.

In Jordan the government has paraded the terrorists arrested for planning the chemical bomb attacks that could have killed 20-30,00 people (today's newspaper says 80,000!) We live between two of the targeted sites, the security department and the US embassy, and are glad that the security services are effective in this area.

N. Africa	Mubarak visits Bush in TX	50 die in Diibouti floods	Qadhafi to visit Europe																								
Lifting of sanctions on Libya	Algeria: Bouteflika wins 85% of vote	Norway to invest in Libyan oil	Libya sanctions lifted																								
Sudan	Darfur ceasefire agreement	UN team blocked by gov't.	UN team allowed in																								
Violence continues in Darfur; US imposes deadline for progress	Ceasefire in effect	Mediators called in to talks	Talks actually begin																								
Cyprus	Gk Cyp demo against plan	Denktash calls for 'No' vote	Greek gov't opposes reunif. Minister resigns																								
Reunification hopes before EU entry May 1		Erdoğan chides Denktash	Turkey pushes Annan plan																								
Iran			Gk-Cyp 75% NO Tk-Cyp 65% YES EU to aid Turkish-Cyp																								
Unwillingness to submit to nuclear inspections	Rafsanjani praises As Sadr	2500kg Afghan morphine seized	Gov't denies nuclear charges																								
Pakistan	Militant caught with explosives																										
Alignment with the US resented by populace	Police station attacked – 5 die		Tribesmen move against Al Qaeda																								
Afghan.	Anti-opium drive planned	Earthquake in Hindu Kush mts.	Deadline for Al Qaeda hosts extended																								
Taliban resist US forces; anti-opium drive begins; Warlords surrender militia/weapons	Dostum attacks neighbor	Taleban claim 3 districts	Tribesmen shielding Al Qaeda surrender...																								
Arabia		Gardez: 1 st TV broadcast in 12 yrs	Fuel truck bomb injures 3 civilian																								
Saudi gov't acts against Al Qaeda; Arab summit cancelled	Yemen: Al Qaeda cells dismantled		Gov't talks with Taleban on disarming																								
Syria	Summit possible in May		NATO visit																								
Kurds demonstrate	Bashar Assad visits Jordan	1000 Svrian Kurds in prison																									
Iraq	Shiite attacks, led by M. Al Sadr	Major violence erupts	Foreigners kidnapped																								
Kidnappings; Siege of Fallujah; As Sadr leads insurrection; relics being looted	Mosque in Kufa is Sadr's base	Ukraine forces cede Kut	9 US missing in Sunni triangle																								
Asia		24 die in Fallujah mosque	As Sadr pulls out of 3 cities																								
Eruption of violence in Uzbekistan		Ramadi: 12 marines die	S Korea to send troops																								
Jordan	Police seek bombers. explosives		US troops retake Kut																								
Terrorist attack thwarted	Al Q'da suspects held	King visits Sudanese president	Fallujah truce																								
Israel			Sadr refuses to disarm																								
Gaza pullout discussed; Road Map lapses; Fence/wall & settlements grow.	Sharon to remove Gaza settlements	UK backs Gaza pullout	Mortars kill 22 in jail																								
Palestine		Church workers denied visas	39 die across Iraq																								
Anarchy increasing; militias dominate life; recruit suicide bombers	Clashes in Haram Al-Sharif	Sharon visits US	Fallujah siege lifted, some arms surrendered																								
	Dahlan warns of chaos after pullout	Likud opposes Gaza plan																									
		US endorses Gaza plan. no return to '48 homes	Baathists can return to posts																								
		Israel assassinate Rantissi	68 die in 3 car bombs																								
			WMD search – 2 die																								
			14 marines die in battle nr Syr. border																								
			Raid kills 4 terror suspects																								
			Prince Ali to wed																								
			US soldier shot in Kosovo																								
			King cancels visit to US																								
			'Honor crimes' criticized																								
			Bomb plot to kill 30,000																								
			3 ministers reject pullout																								
			Gaza settlement assault foiled																								
			5 die in Gaza clashes over rocket attacks																								
			Death sentences given in Gaza rape case																								
			5 more die in Gaza																								
			Cabinet may quit over US stance																								
Apr.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T

The Israel/Palestine Conflict (Events since 1967)

In e-NEWS issues 1-10 we looked at the historical aspect of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, working our way back through the various events that still cast their shadow over the region. Today we begin a short series, looking at the more recent events, since the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza strip in 1967.

1967 **Six-Day War** (June 5th-10th)

5th
6th
7th
8th
9th
10th

Palestinian raids into Israel from Syria had increased in 1966/67, with support from Syria. Egypt, still Syria's close ally, closed the Straits of Tirana to shipping (WHEN???), sealing off the Israeli port of Eilat and in early June Egypt and Jordan signed a mutual defense pact.

Israel raids Egyptian air bases
Jordanian army surrounded in West Bank
Israeli army reaches Wailing Wall, firing stops in Jerusalem
Israel occupies Nablus



The Wailing Wall

Israel occupies Golan

1968 **Karameh** March 21

Al-Fateh, Yassir Arafat's organization, stepped up their activities from within Jordan after the loss of the West Bank in 1967. In 1968 one of their bases was at Karameh, in the Jordan valley opposite Jericho. One of the mines they planted damaged an Israeli school bus, injuring some children and killing a doctor traveling with them. Israel's reprisal was strong, but the Jordanian army moved into position to defend any incursion into Jordanian territory. Israeli troops & tanks cross the Jordan, paratroops land behind Karameh by helicopter. Israeli Air Force supports the ground troops, attacking Jordanian gun positions and tanks. Jordanian troops disable a number of Israeli tanks, about 93 fedayeen are killed in Karameh, and the village is razed to the ground.

1970 **Black** **September**

June
August
September 1
6
17
19
22
25
27
October 1

Karameh, justifiably or not, raised the prestige of Arafat's Al Fateh. As a result the Palestinian organizations became increasingly active in Jordan, becoming an authority to themselves. Palestinian shopkeepers were offended by the "protection money" demanded by the fedayeen daily, "for the cause". By 1970, however, the authority of the Jordanian government was seriously threatened by their presence.

Fedayeen attack Jordan's Mukhabarat (security police) HQ, and fire on the King as he arrives. Army troops are transferred to posts around Amman. Fighting occurs between troops and fedayeen. King Hussein's car is ambushed, he escapes after hours in hiding. 3 airplanes are hijacked by Palestinian guerrillas (passengers released, planes blown up later). Army enters Amman and other cities (11:30pm) Syrian army attacks Jordan near Ramtha. Combined Army & Air Force assault repels Syrian forces. Ceasefire attempted, Arab countries meet in Cairo in an attempt to negotiate. General Daoud resigns, is succeeded by Wasfi Al Tal.

Nasser (Egypt's president) dies.

By April of 1971 the Palestinian guerrillas had been forced out of the cities. During May and June a strong assault by Jordan's Bedouin army, intensified by the killing of an Ajlun farmer, drove the last of the troublemakers out of the country. Later in 1971, at a peace conference with the PLO in Cairo, Wasfi Al Tal was assassinated by them.

1972

At the Olympic Games in Munich, 9 Israeli athletes were killed by Palestinian terrorists.

1973 **Yom Kippur** **War** (October)

6
14
25

Since 1967 the Israeli Army had been in positions along the Suez Canal, and had occupied Syria. In October of 1973 Egypt and Syria together went to war against Israel with the intention of removing the occupation forces from their territory. In the initial days of the conflict both of these objectives were achieved. Israel lost 300 tanks in the Egyptian offensive, and had to retreat as the Egyptian army advanced. Syrian forces took control of the Golan, advancing to within sight of the rich towns of Galilee. Israel had to pull back in these areas, but received immediate aid from a massive U.S. airlift of modern military equipment.

Egypt & Syria attack & repel Israeli forces in Suez and Golan
Counterattack on Golan recovers the whole of the Heights, to within 30 miles of Damascus
Tank battle in Suez, involving 2,000 tanks
Ariel Sharon leads a force across the Suez Canal, cutting off Egyptian supply lines.
UN Ceasefire (Security Council Resolution 338)

Israel had suffered almost 10,000 dead and wounded, but had retained the territory under its control. Though it had successfully resisted the assaults it suffered a severe blow to its reputation of invincibility, particularly in the Arab world.

Color

One of my favorite authors has, for many years, been John Buchan. His novel, 'Thirty-Nine Steps' (he denigrated his books by calling them 'shockers') had been the origin of more than one film, but another of the four books in the same series is called 'Greenmantle'. This deals with the Axis aim during World War I of diverting an incipient Muslim movement towards their own ends. In the thrilling climax of the book the hero, a Middle-Eastern explorer modeled on a real-life 'orientalist', sweeps to victory on horseback at the head of partisan force, wearing the "green cloak" of the title.

Green is one of the strongest of four colors that are significant in the Islamic world. The domes of mosques are frequently, though not always, various shades of **green**, as are various emblems used in the culture. Other colors include white, black and red. **Green** is particularly associated with the Muslim prophet, Mohammad, who is known from written records to have worn a **green** cloak.

(Earlier, pre-Islamic, folk takes associate green with immortality, including stories of **Al Khadir**, whose name means 'green'). the desert Arabs also have positive associations for the color, it being representative of the desert oasis, the color of nature, and their concept of paradise. This latter idea is referred to in the Koran, Sura 55.

When Ali, Mohammad's nephew, was being opposed by the Ummayyads his supporters were known as the *Mubayyida* in reference to their **white** robes (Abyad [m.], or Byadeh [fem. or pl.] means 'white' in Arabic). In later years opposition to the Sunni Caliphate would be expressed by

the wearing of **white** clothes. During the Golden Age of the empire in Baghdad, to obtain the support of the Shi'ites, Al Ma'mun named the Shi'ite imam, Al Rida, as his successor. Al Rida wore **white** at the ceremony. Additionally, Ma'mun called for his supporters to wear **green** (a **Shi'ite** color) rather than the **black** of his **Abbasid** dynasty. Upon the assassination of Al Rida the color was changed back to the **Abbasid black**. The **Fatimid** dynasty, where Ma'mun's Abbasid descendants took refuge after their defeat in Baghdad, also used **green** as their color. Here it can be seen that **green** was a religious, and **black** a political/tribal motif. For the **Abbasids**, **black** was a symbol of mourning, in remembrance of the Battle of Karbala, where Ali's son, Hussein was killed. (The Shi'ite festival of Ashura commemorates the massacre.)

Red was also an early color in the Islamic realm, being first used by the **Khariji**, soon after the assassination of Uthman, the third Caliph. The autonomous Arab rule in Spain used **red** as its emblem, for about 4 centuries from 756 AD. Today, however, red is particularly associated with the **Sharifians**, descendants of Muhammad through his grandson Hassan, of which Jordan's **Hashemite** rulers are members. (Sharif Hussein bin Ali, whose support the British obtained in the push to drive the Turks out of Arabia during WWI, took his title from his ancestors. *Sharif* means 'honorable'.)



The early banners of Islam may well have been predominantly **green**, if indeed banners had been carried in those days, which is disputed. The modern flag of Saudi Arabia is almost entirely **green**, with the **Shahadah** written on it.



The Arab Revolt of 1917 was instigated by the British and led by Sharif Hussein and his sons.

They deliberately took the green, white and black of historic Islam, adding the red significant to the Hashemites, in their attempt to recreate a united Arab kingdom after centuries of Ottoman rule (see e-NEWS 3).

A note about the Iraqi baby, Thafir, who we introduced in the previous issue of e-NEWS.

Dear friends,

Sunday, April 25th

We've just finished a late-night screening of The Passion of the Christ for Thafir's parents, who came up to Jerusalem for the Sabbath. A couple of times we had to explain to border police how it is that an Iraqi couple ended up in the city! This morning the parents came with us to the Narkis Street congregation, where all were invited to reenact the washing of the disciples' feet by Jesus. In a scene that brought tears to some of those watching, a female Jewish believer knelt to wash the feet of Thafir's mother Anwar.

Thafir's condition continues to be stable and somewhat improved, so much so that in just a few hours (Sunday morning in Israel, late Saturday evening in the US) Israeli doctors will attempt to wean him from artificial respiration. If they succeed this will be a turning point in Thafir's very slow recovery following heart surgery. I've assured both Thafir's parents and the doctors that we will be praying. Dr. Tsion Hourii, head of the ICU, quipped "Keep praying the same prayer you've been praying," as he is pleased with Thafir's progress in the past week.

Thafir is now 24 days after surgery. By way of perspective, the little girl who waited with us seven hours to get out of Gaza on Tuesday, one-year-old Maha (pictured), had her heart surgery on Thursday and by Friday morning was already off the respirator and reaching out to be nursed by her mother. Thank God for this good result, and that her family too is experiencing the unconditional love of God as expressed by caring neighbors.



Cyprus (1974 and all that)

Historically, Cyprus has experienced the same vicissitudes of time as its neighbors, passing from Assyrian to Egyptian, Persian to Greek, Ptolemaic, Roman (Western and Byzantine), Crusader, Venetian and Ottoman rule. Many of the Crusader forts are still standing.

The decline of the Ottoman empire had hastened in the 1800s, and Cyprus was passed to British control in 1878 as a result of the Russo-Turkish War. (This Russian interest in Turkish territory continued until the revolution in 1917, being a major issue in the Great War).

When Britain took control, one of their first decisions was the

denial of political union with Greece, the petition for *Enosis* being presented to them by the Cypriot Archbishop. When Turkey joined the Axis powers in the 1914 war, Britain annulled the 1878 treaty and actually offered Cyprus to Greece, in return for Greek support in the war. (When Greece demurred, Britain withdrew its offer.) Riots in 1931 caused the British to ban all political action and abandon the legislature. After World War II, Britain began to divest itself of many of its dependencies, and Cyprus was one of them. *Enosis* had never really gone away as an issue in the strictly Orthodox population, and against this background Britain began the process of independence in 1946.

Enosis The Orthodox Church of Cyprus stood strongly behind the move for union with Greece, particularly as a reaction to local communist support for the idea. Bishop Mihail Mouskos requested a referendum on the issue, but this was refused by Britain in 1950. Mouskos became Archbishop Makarios III in October of 1950 and continued to push the issue. Britain was unwilling,

because of Cyprus' strategic situation, to allow further discussions on the issue of *enosis*, and a EOKA, Cypriot militant group, began a guerilla campaign against British institutions.

When Greece tried to bring the issue before the United Nations, in 1954, Turkey asserted its position, that the island should revert to its control if Britain withdrew. As the EOKA campaign intensified in 1955 the British attempted to settle the dispute between Greece and Turkey, but in 1956 felt obliged to exile Makarios and the bishop of Kyrenia (to the Seychelles). The reaction of the population to this act was so violent that a state of emergency was declared. An EOKA truce (conditional on the freeing of Makarios) came into force in 1957.

In 1958 Britain unilaterally implemented a plan for an autonomous Cypriot government. This led to inter-communal talks on independence, and some agreement on the framework of a constitution for a republic whose position would be guaranteed

by Greece, Turkey and Britain. Britain would retain two military bases; Makarios would return (he was elected president on Dec. 13, 1959); and a Turkish Cypriot (Fazil Kuchuk) would be vice-president. Cyprus obtained its independence on August 16, 1960. A 1960 Constitution recognized the distinct Turkish community of the island, and established a role for the Turkish minority in government. Nevertheless the Turkish Cypriots withdrew from government in 1963/64, ensuring that the government proceedings from then on were primarily concerned with the Greek population.

The 1963 Troubles The Makarios government proposed constitutional changes in December 1963, which would abolish the Turkish veto over legislation. Fighting ensued, and the Turkish Cypriots began to demand partition. British troops acted to avoid civil war, anticipating the military intervention of Greece and Turkey, and a

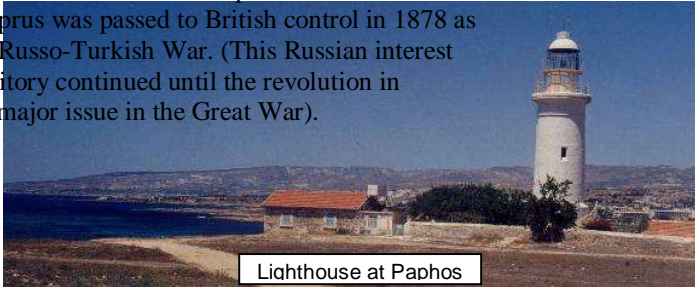
UN peace force was assigned to patrol the island. In 1964 a UN resolution calling for a cease-fire was accepted by all factions, but a true settlement was not forthcoming and the situation continued to simmer during the next decade, with Makarios being re-elected twice during that time.

1974 On July 15th, 1974, Makarios, known since the 1940s for his promotion of *enosis*, was ousted by a coup led by EOKA-linked officers of the Cypriot national guard, supported by the current government of Greece (then ruled by a military junta). They installed their own president, a newsman and EOKA member. Makarios was taken to London where negotiations began, but the junta was unwilling to make concessions. Turkish president, Bulent Ecevit, authorized the invasion and troops were landed at the 'Pente Mili', (fifth mile) from Kyrenia and also parachuted in to the Nicosia area. Fighting over the next month was fierce, with atrocities recounted (and still remembered) on both sides. When Turkish forces landed on the island the Athens junta collapsed. Makarios returned in December.

Today It was not until November of 1983 that the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus declared its independence, with Raouf Denktash as its president, though even today the UN and most nations do not recognize the republic.

The 1960 Constitution remains in force in Greek Cyprus, though in 1985 the number of seats in the legislature was increased from 50 (including 15 Turkish seats) to 80 (24 Turkish). The Turkish seats, and the Turkish vice-presidency, have been vacant since 1964.

Turkey has about 40,000 troops remaining in Northern Cyprus, while the Turkish maintain an army of less than 5,000. The Greek-Cypriot army has about 10,000 members. Additionally, since 1963 the United Nations has had a presence in the island, with a force of between 1,000 and 1,500. Since 1974 this force has maintained security at the Green Line, between North and South.



Lighthouse at Paphos



Larnaca harbor sees many tourists