



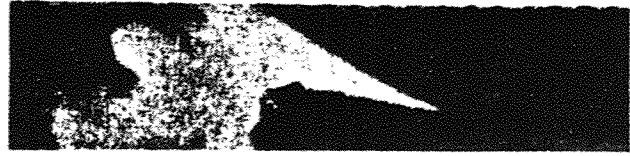
# Al-Jazirah

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 الموافق ١٠ سبتمبر  
 م ١٩٧٨

31—SUNDAY, September 10, 1978 ● Shawwal 8, 1398 A.H.

المن : ريال واحد



## West Bank mayors in Washington

U.S. State Department officials have confirmed the presence in Washington of the Mayor of Ramallah, Karim Khalaf, and the Mayor of Halhoul, both in the occupied West Bank.

But they denied that the presence of these two prominent Palestinian leaders has anything to do with the Camp David summit. According to the State Department, the invitations to both mayors were extended some time ago.

Meanwhile in Thurmont, Maryland, near Camp David, a group of Arab-Americans stressed in a press conference that there could be no real peace talks without Palestinian representation.

Despite the State Department denials, there was considerable speculation in Washington that the Palestinian visitors may

ates have continued to send messages that they remain willing to enter the negotiations and will take steps, including accepting UN Resolution 242, if they are offered a role.

But the White House is now known to favour the old Kissinger policy of blocking the PLO, encouraging West Bank leadership willing to co-operate with King Hussein, and deferring solution of the Palestinian issue.

At the press conference in Thurmont, the spokesman for the group of Arab-American community leaders, Dr Hisham Sharabi, President of the National Association of Arab Americans, read a prepared statement in which he said the purpose of the press conference was to remind the American public that an essential party to

in some way be connected with the Camp David proceedings.

Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan toured the occupied West Bank, speaking with Palestinian leaders, immediately before leaving Israel for the summit.

His discussions then may have had to do with contingency planning for some form of Palestinian participation in talks.

Other Palestinian West Bankers mentioned are Hikmat El-Massari of Nablus and Daoud Doudin of Hebron, both respected notables who served in important capacities in the Jordanian government.

The Carter administration has completely backed away from any dealings with the PLO, even though the Arafat moder-

the Mid-east conflict, the Palestinians, were not included in the Camp David talks.

"The Palestinians," Sharabi said, "are the key to Mid-east peace." Therefore, he noted, there could be no real peace talks as long as the Palestinians were excluded.

But when questioned, Sharabi refused to say that the delegation was specifically calling for PLO participation in the negotiations. He would only say that it "appears the Palestinian people have chosen the PLO to represent them."

The statement concluded by urging the participants at the Camp David talks to "take the necessary steps to end Israeli occupation of Arab lands and to recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people as outlined in UN resolutions on the Palestine question."

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