

# BRIEFLY

**Quake hits Mongolia:** An earthquake registering 6.7 on the Richter scale occurred early on Monday in the northern part of Mongolia. Chinese state television reported yesterday. Reuter says from Beijing.

It said the quake struck an uninhabited area of grassland and mountains and there had been no reports of casualties or damage.

**Wan Li awarded doctorate degree:** Wan Li, former chairman of the standing committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) of China, was awarded an honorary doctorate for public service in Beijing yesterday, says Xinhua.

William Kirwan, president of the University of Maryland at College Park of the United States, awarded Wan the degree at the Great Hall of the People here this afternoon.

In his speech at the ceremony, Kirwan said that it was an honour of his university to award Wan the degree.

**Two Palestinians shot:** Two Palestinians were shot and wounded Monday night at an Israeli military road block, north of Jerusalem, Israeli radio reports, AFP says from Jerusalem.

It said soldiers opened fire on a vehicle which they said had failed to stop when ordered to do so. One Palestinian was badly injured, the other less seriously hurt.

Early Monday, four Israeli soldiers were wounded, one seriously, when a grenade was thrown at them in Rafah, in the south of the Gaza Strip, military and Palestinian sources said.

**4 drown in Indonesia:** Four people were drowned and at least 14, missing in weekend floods on Indonesia's main island of Java, officials said yesterday, Reuter reports from Jakarta.

Flood waters left thousands of people homeless and short of clean water and food, local newspapers said. Gales hit Bandung in central Java, uprooting trees, flattening telegraph poles and destroying houses.

"Rains continued to fall in several villages and waters are rising," a police official said by telephone from Bandung, 130 km (80 miles) east of Jakarta. "Four people earlier reported missing have been found, all dead."

**2 neo-Nazis held in Germany:** Two neo-Nazi youths were jailed Monday for a racist attack on members of the US Luge (Toboggan) Olympic team at Oberdorf in Eastern Germany, last October that caused international outrage, AFP reports from Suhl.

Silvio Eschrich, 21, who admitted punching Duncan Kennedy several times, was sentenced to two years and eight months in prison. Tino Voelkel, 16, who said he only pushed the US athlete, was sentenced to one year.

Both were already on suspended sentences.

**Explosions claim 4 in Karachi:** Explosions at a firecracker factory killed four people and wounded seven in Pakistan's biggest city of Karachi, police said yesterday, Reuter reports from Karachi.

The explosions took place in a factory in Orangi town, western Karachi on Monday, police said.

**Former ROK premier Chung dead:** Former South Korean Premier Chung Il-Kwon died of lymph cancer in a hospital in Hawaii late Monday at the age of 77, Yonhap news agency said yesterday, AFP reports from Seoul.

The agency said Chung, a former ambassador to Paris and Washington, had been undergoing cancer treatment since 1991 and was hospitalised late last year when his condition deteriorated.

A graduate of Japan's military academy, he was a commander during the 1950-53 Korean war and served as Foreign Minister before becoming Prime Minister from 1964 to 1970.

**British customs seize 250 kg cocaine:** British customs officers and police have seized 250 kilograms of cocaine in Manchester, central England, BBC TV reported on Monday, Xinhua says from London.

The amount of cocaine, which was smuggled into Britain in a consignment of fresh flowers by air, was worth some 50 million pounds (75 million US dollars).

After a four-month intelligence operation, British customs officers and police waged a raid on a Manchester warehouse and arrested two Colombians.

## Akashi against NATO airstrikes on Serbs

GENEVA, Jan 18: The UN Secretary General's special representative for the former Yugoslavia has recommended against using NATO warplanes to free up two Serb-blockaded areas in Bosnia-Herzegovina, a UN official said today, reports AFP.

Yasushi Akashi delivered his assessment on a NATO proposal to use air power to relieve trapped Canadian UN troops in the eastern enclave of Srebrenica and to reopen Tuzla airport in Bosnia's northeast.

The UN official, who asked not to be named, said Akashi gave his report Monday to UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali who must authorise any air operations in Bosnia.

Informed sources said Akashi argued against using warplanes in Srebrenica since the Serbs had given their agreement in principle to the rotation of the Canadians and only technical points remained to be resolved.

Bosnian Serb strongman Radovan Karadzic said today his self-proclaimed 'parliament' has decided to allow UN troops into Srebrenica to relieve UN soldiers trapped there for the last six months.

Diplomats in Geneva said the Serbs were wary of allowing the rotation to be used as a pretext for strengthening the UN military presence in the besieged enclave.

Karadzic, cited by the Yugoslav Tanjug news agency, said Dutch UN troops scheduled to replace the Canadians in Srebrenica would be allowed to go in "as of tomorrow" provided they were "the same number and with the same weapons".

However, he ruled out any reopening of the Tuzla airport. Akashi said that the reopening of Tuzla airport, closed since May 1992 by Serb shelling from the surrounding hills, was not worth the effort since land access to the city was often possible, the sources said.

They said Akashi further maintained that any air raids could unleash Serb reprisals against UN troops protecting relief operations in Bosnia.

Boutros-Ghali met Monday with Akashi and other top aides and ordered plans drafted to unblock Srebrenica and Tuzla airport, a spokeswoman said. But she gave no sign whether he would authorise NATO air strikes.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation summit last week proposed using warplanes in Srebrenica and at Tuzla airport

# Israel to hold referendum before withdrawing from Golan Heights

JERUSALEM, Jan 18: Israel announced Monday that it would hold a referendum before making any significant withdrawal from the Golan Heights, which it seized from Syria in 1967, reports AFP.

The government will organise a referendum since there will be a significant territorial price asked of US on the Golan Heights," Deputy Defence Minister Mordechai Gur told parliament, a day after the US-Syrian summit in Geneva.

Gur, who did not specify the scope of a possible withdrawal, said he was speaking on behalf of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and the government.

However, Environment Minister Yossi Sarid told reporters the government had not yet taken any decision on a referendum.

The government is not obliged to hold a referendum, because the law extending Israeli jurisdiction to the strategic heights does not prevent Israeli-Syrian negotiations over the territory's future.

Since 1967, 12,000 Jews have gone to live in 32 settlements on the heights, which were annexed in 1981. Most of them are loyal to Rabin's labour party.

A peace deal between Israel and Syria hinges on future control of the strategic plateau, as underlined in Geneva by Syrian president Hafez Al-Assad in his talks with US counterpart Bill Clinton.

Gur said he Israeli government "considers the Golan an essential zone for the security of Israel, in any type of conflict, whether it be conventional war or a war with missiles".

There would be no agreement with Syria "without a clear and detailed solution taking into account each of these factors," he stressed. "We will make no concession on Israel's security."

Gur said the government was also fully aware that "our comrades (Israeli settlers) did not settle on the Golan to live under Syrian sovereignty."

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leaders that Assad was serious when he spoke of peace at the Geneva summit.

Dennis Ross and Martin Indyk were giving Rabin, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and President Ezer Weizman an upbeat assessment of the summit.

Ross said Assad "broke new ground publicly by talking about the end of the Israeli-Arab conflict, by talking explicitly about the strategic choice of peace with Israel, and by also referring to normal and peaceful relations."

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# Off the Record

## Duchess of York moved to tears

LONDON: The Duchess of York, the estranged wife of Prince Andrew, said Tuesday she was moved to tears after reaching a 20,000 foot Himalayan peak with a group of disabled people, reports AFP.



The mountains made her feel small and had given her a calmer outlook on life, she told GMTV in a pre-recorded interview to be shown on independent television later Tuesday.

Looking slim and tanned, the 34-year-old Duchess, commonly known as 'Fergie', spoke of the trek last October accompanying seven disabled people up the mountains in Nepal as patron of the Charly MacIntyre Care.

"The truest statement is when people say the mountains make you feel very small, basically, that's what I got out of it," she said.

She recalled the reaction of one of the group when they reached the peak, saying: "When we got to the top, at 20,000 feet, Paul turned to me and said: 'This really is heaven,' it left me sitting there, pouring tears."

"I started to be a little more calm, started to look at myself a little more fully and tried to understand there is a huge world out there and lots of greater opportunities and just to take a much calmer look on life."

## Videotaped deaths

LANSING: A drunken man who met with his ex-wife to discuss their divorce settlement videotaped himself shooting her to death, then killing himself, reports AP.

"After seeing the tape, there's no doubt in my mind he planned this," Police Chief Mike Smith said.

Police said Raymond Nolan met with his ex-wife, Joan Nolan, and the couple's respective lawyers on Monday to discuss how they would divide their property. He set up a camera to videotape the meeting at his home.

Nolan was obviously intoxicated, and could be seen on the tape consuming four beers over a period of about 15 minutes, Smith said. When Nolan pulled a 9-millimeter handgun from his back pocket, the lawyers fled the house and called police.

The videotape then shows Nolan putting his ex-wife in a choke hold, moving her in front of the camera and trying to force her to admit something "he felt he was unjustly accused of," Smith said.

"Go ahead and shoot me. I wasn't doing that," Mrs Nolan says at one point, but then begs her ex-husband to let her go.

Smith said Nolan shot his wife in the back of the head, then put the gun to his own head and pulled the trigger, but it misfired. He then reloaded and shot himself in the chest, Smith said.

## Coldblooded murder to avoid paying \$6 fare

WEST PALM BEACH: A 13-year-old girl shot a cab driver to death to avoid paying a 6 dollar fare, police said, reports AP.

The sixth-grader was dry-eyed during questioning Monday in the slaying of 39-year-old Yves Quettant, who was shot in the back of the head, police said.

"No tears. Just cold. We're talking about coldblooded, premeditated murder committed by a 13-year-old girl who shows no remorse," Sgt. John English said. "It's frightening."

Police want the girl prosecuted for murder as an adult. Quettant was slain after picking up the girl and two of her friends at a mall Saturday night.

The girl's mother said her daughter hadn't mentioned the shooting.

"She acted like a 40-year-old, like nothing happened," the mother said. "There was nothing, not one tear. She didn't care at all."

## Major denies speaking against his colleagues

LONDON, Jan 18: British Prime Minister John Major categorically denied the reports that he spoke last Thursday of 'crucifying' right-wingers in his cabinet, Downing Street sources said yesterday, reports Xinhua.

According to a BBC TV report this evening, John Major was "appalled" at such reports published in the tabloids which had been supporters of his Conservative Party.

Late Saturday, two tabloids in London, the Sun and the Daily Mail reported that John Major held a farewell dinner to his Chief Press Secretary Gus O'Donnell in No 10 Downing Street last Thursday. He was reported to have vowed to 'crucify' ministers whom he blamed for the currently hot dispute on his 'back-to-basics' policy.

These reports said the prime minister bowed to pressure from senior Tories to clamp down on the 'straying' ministers.

These reports also said that John Major warned any minister who brings shame on his Tory party faces immediate dismissal, and any senior figures who step out of line will no longer be protected by his government and party machine.

The reports said the prime minister's decision to get tough

## Fahd, Leghari call for Afghan ceasefire

RIVADH, Jan 18: King Fahd and Pakistani President Sarda Farooq Leghari called Monday for an unconditional ceasefire to end weeks of factional fighting in Afghanistan, reports AP.

A joint communique at the conclusion of a two-day visit by Leghari to Saudi Arabia reminded the warring Afghan leaders that nearly a year ago, they signed a peace pact in Islam's holiest city of Mecca and should honour it.



British Prime Minister John Major leaves the Scott Inquiry Jan 17 in London where he was questioned about Britain's sale of arms to Iraq in violation of a United Nations embargo during the years preceding the Gulf War. Major testified that he neither participated in nor had knowledge of British military sales to Iraq. — AFP photo

## Zhirinovskiy wins control over 5 parliamentary committees

MOSCOW, Jan 18: Russian nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy won control Monday over five parliamentary committees, and a devout Communist was elected head of the lower house's security committee, reports AP.

However, reformer were appointed to head several important committees on economic affairs as well as the State Duma's defence committee, the Interfax news agency said.

Leadership over key committees is vital for a party's success and allows it to pursue its policies with more ease. It is now especially important for reformers who found them-

politics created especially for them, Interfax said. Neither is considered important.

Russia's Choice, the main pro-reform faction in the 450-seat Duma, will control the committees on media, organisation of Duma activities, health and the important defence committee, it said.

Russia's Choice lawmaker Mikhail Mityukov also was named first deputy speaker under Communist Ivan Rybkin.

Another pro-reform bloc, led by economist Grigory Yavlinsky, won control over key economic committees on budget, taxes, finances and banks, as well as the foreign affairs committee.

## Myanmar junta may free Suu Kyi in July

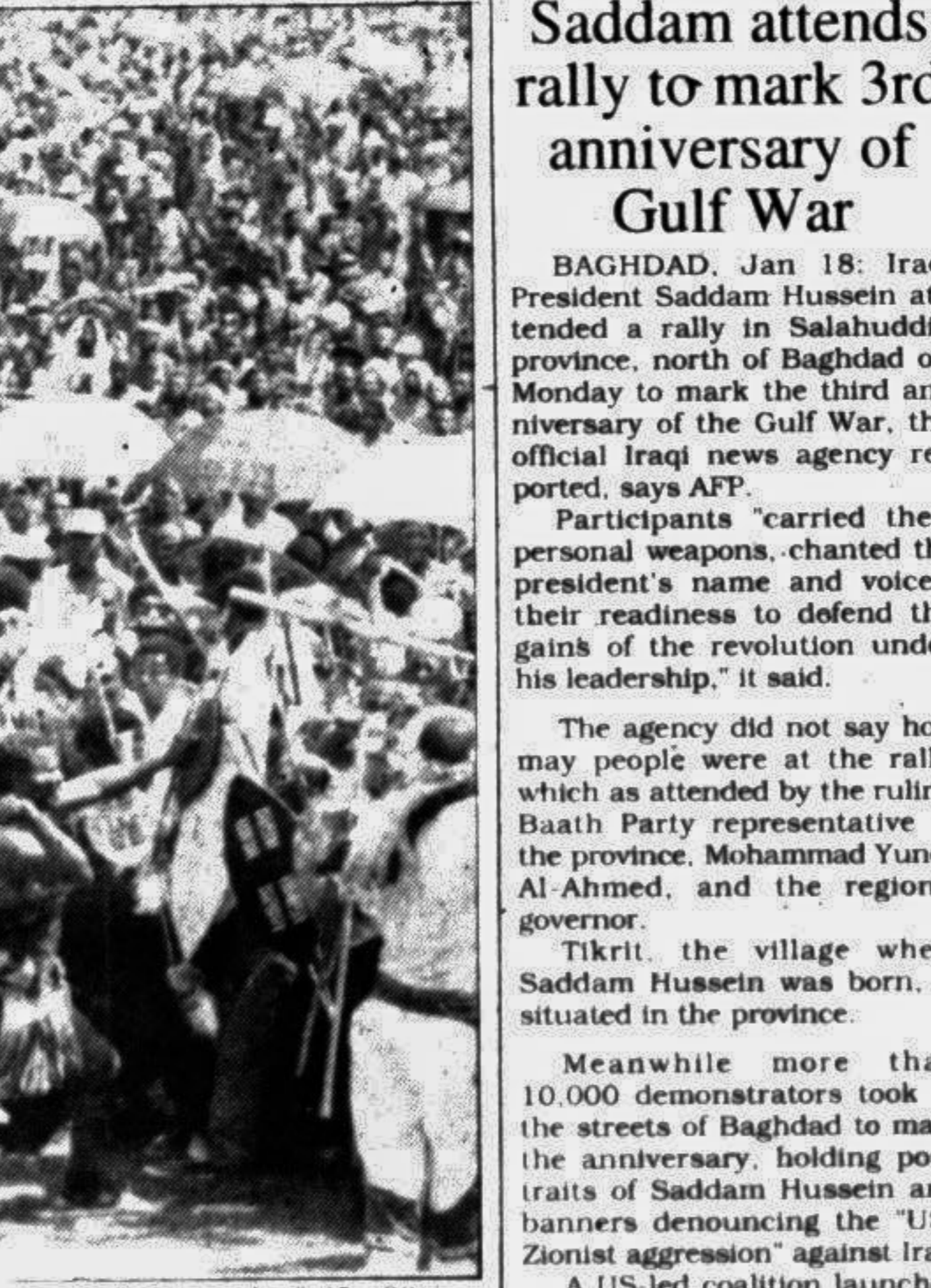
TOKYO, Jan 18: A leader of Myanmar's military junta has hinted that Nobel Peace Prize-winner and democratic movement leader Aung San Suu Kyi, now under house arrest, could be freed in July, according to a Japanese newspaper, reports AFP.

Khin Nyunt, first secretary of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), and the regimes' number two, told Japanese journalists that the question would be dealt within accordance with existing law which limits the duration of a house arrest to five years.

Aung San Suu Kyi, 48, former leader of the Myanmar National League for Democracy (NLD), was arrested on July 20, 1989 since when she has been under house arrest in her Yangon home for associating with anti-government rebels.

The Asahi daily newspaper stressed that the Myanmar leader, talking to a group of visiting Japanese journalists, had not explicitly said that she would be released.

Asked to confirm that Suu Kyi would be released in July, as cited by Japan's Jiji press agency, he replied, "I have no more to say. We are not creating a new law (to deal with her) but are dealing with the matter in accordance with existing laws."



A Zulu warrior attempts to keep the crowd of 35,000 in check before king Goodwill Zwelithini addresses followers after meeting South African President Frederik De Klerk, outside the Union Building, in Pretoria Jan 17. Seven people were killed earlier in the day during a Zulus march to heed a one-day work strike in support of their king. — AFP photo

## Saddam attends rally to mark 3rd anniversary of Gulf War

BAGHDAD, Jan 18: Iraqi President Saddam Hussein attended a rally in Salahuddin province, north of Baghdad on Monday to mark the third anniversary of the Gulf War, the official Iraqi news agency reported, says AFP.

Participants "carried their personal weapons, chanted the president's name and voiced their readiness to defend the gains of the revolution under his leadership," it said.

The agency did not say how many people were at the rally, which was attended by the ruling Baath Party representative in the province, Mohammad Yunes Al-Ahmed, and the regional governor.

Tikrit, the village where Saddam Hussein was born, is situated in the province.

Meanwhile more than 10,000 demonstrators took to the streets of Baghdad to mark the anniversary, holding portraits of Saddam Hussein and banners denouncing the "US-Zionist aggression" against Iraq.

## Assailants attack on Tajik DDM

MOSCOW, Jan 18: Tajikistan's Deputy Defence Minister Nurally Chevraliyev was wounded and driver killed when armed assailants opened fire on their car early today, the Itar-Tass news agency said, reports AFP.

Colonel Chevraliyev was on his way back to Dushanbe, capital of the former Soviet, Central Asian republic, after a visit to the industrial city of Nurek southeast of the capital when the attackers struck the agency said.

It said another person in the car was also wounded but did not identify the victim.

The government has said some small armed opposition groups are still active in the country.

# PLO cautiously welcomes outcome of Clinton-Assad summit

TUNIS, Jan 18: The PLO cautiously welcomed the outcome of the summit between President Bill Clinton and Syria's President Hafez Al-Assad, and called on Monday for renewed Arab coordination on negotiations with Israel, reports Reuter.

The call for fresh Arab coordination is the first hint of PLO concern that a separate Syria-Israel accord could strengthen Israel's position in its negotiations with the Palestinians.

"If these results open the door for a just peace leading to the implementation of resolutions 242 and 425 concerning Syria and Lebanon, then we welcome them," PLO executive

committee member Yasser Abed-Rabbo said.

UN resolution 242 calls for Israeli withdrawal from the Arab lands occupied in the 1967 Middle East war, including the Syrian Golan Heights as well as the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Resolution 425 demands Israel withdraw from South Lebanon.

"We would then believe that they (the results) will constitute a supporting factor in the hard negotiations going on the Palestinian track," Abed-Rabbo told Reuters.

PLO negotiator Nabil Shaath said he did not believe Syria was embarking on a separate deal with Israel.

"I do not believe it and I believe what President Assad said in Geneva emphasises the comprehensive peace, and that is also our commitment," Shaath told Reuters before heading to Egypt to resume talks with Israel on Tuesday on implementing their accord on limited Palestinian self-rule.

The (Clinton-Assad) meeting was strategic. It opens the door to Syria's return to the peace process on the basis of the recovery of all its lands on the basis of resolution 242," he said.

This is in the interest of the Palestinian issue because it gets us back to the comprehensive peace for all Arab parties, and because it creates a new precedent after the Egyptian one, that the genuine implementation of resolution 242 means the withdrawal from all the occupied territories," he added.

Egypt was the first Arab country to sign a peace deal with Israel and recovered the Sinai peninsula.

Assad broke new ground in the peace process on Sunday when he announced that Syria could have "normal peaceful relations" with Israel under a peace agreement.

alone. The PLO responded that its negotiations for the final status of the West Bank and Gaza Strip were to start only within three years.

Syria softened its stance last week when it joined Gulf state and Egypt in a declaration which described the Israel-PLO accord as a first step on the path of peace.

The PLO and Jordan have since made up with economic and other talks on the future of the territories.

But there had been no consultations between the PLO and Damascus before the Geneva summit, and so far, no briefing has been planned after PLO officials said.

Syria, Lebanon and Jordan reapproached the PLO at the time of the secretly negotiated deal, accusing it of not keeping them informed and going