

International

US BUYS TIME IN MIDEAST,
BUT ALSO WOES

(AP)— The Obama administration has managed to buy time and may have staved off an embarrassing and politically awkward showdown over Palestinian statehood at the United Nations. It may also have maneuvered itself into a corner.

The U.S. and the rest of the international diplomatic Quartet of Mideast peacemakers endorsed specific timelines for restarting Israeli-Palestinian peace talks Friday. The U.S. hopes that new talks aimed at drawing a Palestinian state will persuade the Palestinians to put their separate bid for full statehood recognition at the U.N. on hold.

Seeking to avert a confrontation over the Palestinian U.N. bid, the Quartet members — the U.S., EU, U.N. and Russia — issued a statement urging the Israelis and Palestinians to return to long-stalled negotiations and reach an agreement no later than the end of next year. There are interim deadlines for progress on certain issues.

Within 30 days, the Quar-



tet said, the Israelis and Palestinians should agree to an agenda and parameters for peace talks and produce comprehensive proposals on territory and security within three months. The Quartet said it then expected the parties to "have made substantial progress" within six months. To encourage or prod the two sides at a particularly difficult moment, it said Russia would host an international conference at some point in

the process.

The Quartet statement was radically different from what diplomats had been hoping to draft since it became clear that Abbas would not back down. U.S. and European officials had been trying to craft a statement that would itself outline parameters of the negotiations, including a reference to borders being based on the 1967 lines and affirm Israel's identity as a Jewish state.

Instead, it focused on deadlines and did not mention potential deal-breakers like the Palestinians demand for refugees to return to their ancestral lands or the status of Jerusalem, which each side claims as a capital.

The final statement repeats the goal of having a deal done in one year's time that Obama proposed in 2010. Obama had wanted a peace deal by September but was forced to retreat when talks broke down after less than one month and never resumed. The hopes raised by a yearlong deadline may be dashed in a similar fashion.

Yet more problematic could be that the envisioned timeline places what will be the most difficult points of contention on the negotiating table in the middle of the 2012 presidential election, a time when Obama himself probably will be focused on domestic concerns like the economy and vulnerable to charges from Republicans that he is being anti-Israel if he seeks to press the Jewish state to make compromises.

Hunt



A hunting bird chases its prey, a hare, during a festival of traditional sports in the East Kazakhstan's city of Ust-Kamenogorsk. (AFP)

Occasional Column

KUWAIT THEN AND NOW --- II
"FROM JAMAL TO OPEL"

I ended part I of my column with the observation that the development of Kuwait is summed up in the proverb "From Jamal to Opel".

Jamal, means camel in Arabic. I was rather surprised to learn that even some motorists did not know Opel. Opel (full name Opel Record) is or was a classic German car.

Kuwait today is the most air-conditioned city in the world—imagine how people in old Kuwait survived with hand drawn fans, at least until the coming of electricity in 1913.

No longer is the Indian rupee the official currency of Kuwait. So also is the fate of Maria Thresea dollar. These have been replaced by Dinar decades earlier, in the time of Shaikh Abdullah Al Salem Al Sabah. The word "Dinar" most likely comes from the Roman currency "Denarius" and fits from the Arabic word "Fulus" meaning 'money'. How many



people who are getting subsidised or free medical attention in Government hospitals today will recall that the first fully qualified doctor came to Kuwait as late as 1904? He was an Indian, Dr. Daudur Rahman, and the man who was instrumental in bringing him was no other than Shaikh Mubarak Al Sabah, together with Major Knox, the first British Political Agent in Kuwait.

The evolution of Kuwait can be traced to the inception and growth of several institutions of societal importance. Mukhtariya is an example. As I understand on the basis of authentic oral accounts, the first Mukhtariya in Kuwait came into being in 1961. It may be recalled at this point that 1961 was the year of the abrogation of the Anglo-Kuwait Treaty of 1899.

For information of many readers I will explain what is Mukhtariya. The head of the Baladiya

or Municipal Corporation is the Mayor of Kuwait. Next to him is a Mukhtar or Deputy Mayor. Each Mintaqa or district of Kuwait has a Mukhtar which is a prestigious position as it has the concurrence of the highest levels of the State.

Personally I knew a Mukhtar somewhat closely almost twenty-five years ago - a rare privilege for an expatriate, especially a non-Arab. I lived in Faiha in a house owned by an enlightened businessman Abdul Rahman Abdul-Khalid Al Bassam. He introduced me to area Mukhtar Khalid Fahd Al Rasheed who, impressed by my role as a Kuwaitiphile, sometimes expressed his opinion about dealing with those among the expatriates who are real nuisance. Both my contemporary Kuwaiti friends are no longer alive and now I, a septuagenarian, am awaiting my turn.

A student of history will

note that both the families appear in the list of those who carried on trade with India. As stated by Khaled Al Bader, one of the sons of the late Khaled Fahd Al Rasheed, his family had trade relations with undivided India and their merchant boats including the Kuwaiti Dhow carried goods to and from Bombay and Karachi. Mukhtariya is a subject for a full article but I am deterred by considerations of brevity. However, I must note one point. It is that several Mukhtars are remembered by the socially commendable act. For example, the present Mukhtar of Faiha, Mohammad Zahi Al Hwas, formerly an intelligence officer, combines his official duties with meaningful activities, in this case specifically by sending convoys of Muslims for performing the religious duty of Hajj.

Dr. A z i m u s s h a n Haider
● azimushan@hotmail.com

Health

Food for thought:
can fish lower your
stroke risk?

(Reuters) - People who eat fish a few times each week are slightly less likely to suffer a stroke than those who only eat a little or none at all.

That's the conclusion of an analysis of 15 studies, each of which asked people how frequently they ate fish, then followed them for between four and 30 years to see who suffered a stroke.

"I think overall, fish does provide a beneficial package of nutrients, in particular the omega-3s, that could explain this lower risk," said Dr.

Dariusz Mozaffarian, a Harvard School of Public Health epidemiologist whose research was included in the analysis.

"A lot of the evidence comes together suggesting that about two to three servings per week is enough to get the benefit." Close to 800,000 people in the U.S.

have a stroke each year, and 136,000 die from it.

Smoking, drinking, being overweight and having high blood pressure and cholesterol are all linked to a higher risk of stroke.

Dr.

Susanna Larsson and Dr.

Nicola Orsini of the Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, Sweden wrote in the journal Stroke that omega-3 fatty acids in fish might lower stroke risk through their positive effects on blood pressure and cholesterol.

Vitamin D, selenium and certain types of proteins in fish may also have stroke-related benefits, Mozaffarian added.

Data for the analysis came from close to 400,000 people age 30 to 103.

The studies were done in the U.S., Europe, Japan and China.

And the people in each study who ate the most fish were 12 percent less likely to have a stroke than those that ate the least.

Mozaffarian's own report separated the effects of different kinds of fish and found that people who ate more fried fish and fish sandwiches didn't get any stroke benefit, not surprisingly.

Fatty fish such as salmon and herring are especially high in omega-3s.

The American Heart Association recommends at least two servings of fatty fish in particular each week.

Space

NASA satellite lands
in unknown location

(AFP) - A decommissioned NASA satellite, the biggest piece of US space junk to fall in 30 years, has crash-landed but the precise location is not yet known, the US space agency said early Saturday.

NASA has repeatedly said there is only a "very remote" risk to the public from the 26 fragments of the Upper Atmosphere Research Satellite (UARS) which were expected to survive the fiery re-entry into the atmosphere.

The satellite fell back to Earth between 11:23 pm Friday and 1:09 am Saturday (0323-0509 GMT Saturday), but the precise re-entry time and location "are not yet known with certainty," NASA said.

"The Joint Space Operations Center at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California said the satellite penetrated the atmosphere over the Pacific Ocean," it later said, noting the landing site was still not confirmed.

On its Twitter feed, NASA said, "If debris fell on land (and that's still a BIG if), Canada is most likely area." The two dozen parts of the UARS that may have survived re-entry could weigh anything from one to 58 kilograms, the space agency said, and the debris field is expected to span 800 kilometers.

Earlier, Canada, Africa and Australia had all been named as possible sites for touchdown of debris from the tour-bus-sized UARS.

The tumbling motion of the satellite has made it difficult to narrow down the location.

And given that the world is 70 percent water, an ocean landing was considered likely.

"In the entire 50 plus year history of the space program, no person has ever been injured by a piece of re-entering space debris," said Mark Matney, an orbital debris scientist at NASA.

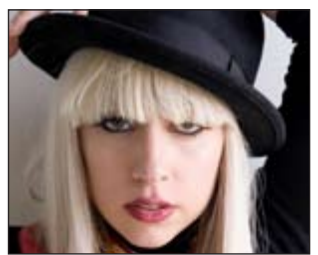
"Keep in mind we have bits of debris re-entering the atmosphere every single day."

Twitter



Beyonce

@peoplemag: Beyonce talks about her pregnancy, says it makes her feel "empowered" <http://ow.ly/6Caco>



Lady Gaga

@heatworld: Lady Gaga to meet President Obama and stop bullying t.co/4Q2Ns7Ur



Sir Alex

@goal_intl: Sir Alex Ferguson hits back at Owen Hargreaves' complaints that he was treated as a 'guinea pi...' bit.ly/nHFibb #soccer #football



Kendra

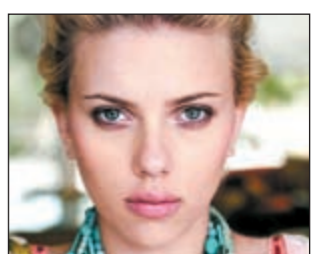
Wilkinson

@peoplemag: Kendra Wilkinson says her husband wants another baby soon -- but she's not ready yet: <http://ow.ly/6Cp75>



Brad Pitt

@celebrainwreck: Brad Pitt Has Got Great Ball Skills, Says His Moneyball Co-Star bit.ly/n8k99Y



Scarlett

Johansson

@celebrainwreck: Scarlett Johansson Nude Photo Scandal: FBI Not Investigating Agents and Reps bit.ly/q631A8



Prince Michael

@peoplemag: Michael Jackson's son, Prince Michael, to make first solo appearance <http://ow.ly/6Ceca>