

world beat

Israel asks for withdrawal aid

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel said Tuesday that the withdrawal of its troops from Lebanon could provoke a wave of violence, and appealed to the United Nations and the Beirut government to move into vacated areas before fighting starts.

"There is indeed a danger of massacres in Lebanon," Prime Minister Shimon Peres told high school students in the northern town of Yoqnam. Peres said that Israel wanted to avoid bloodshed, but added, "I don't know if we will succeed."

The Israeli Cabinet approved a three-phase withdrawal plan Monday. The withdrawal will begin in five weeks.

Israeli troops have occupied southern Lebanon since the 1982 invasion. Peres said Mon-

day that the last Israeli troops should leave "by the summer."

But other sources said the pullback may stretch into the autumn.

Some Israeli officials said the phased withdrawal could also lead to a confrontation with Damascus if Syrian forces in eastern Lebanon move into areas evacuated by Israel in the second stage of the withdrawal.

Israeli troops will leave the Mediterranean port city of Sidon in the first stage of the pullback, and Israelis feel Shiite and Sunni Moslem militias as well as Palestinians could fight for control of the city.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin met U.N. Undersecretary General Brian Urquhart to outline the withdrawal plan. He also urged that U.N. peacekeeping forces and the Lebanese army take control of areas Israel evacuates.

The final phase of the planned withdrawal will see Israel retreat to its international border, ending an occupation that began with the June 6, 1982, invasion.

Report affirms Hatfield probe

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Senate Ethics Committee report, released Tuesday, supports findings released in October which said "no credible information" exists that Sen. Mark Hatfield of Oregon was involved in a conflict of interest over his wife's acceptance of \$55,000 in real estate fees from a Greek businessman.

However, Justice Department sources said a probe into Hatfield's activities by the department's criminal division is continuing and has yet to reach conclusions.

And the Ethics Committee report discloses a conflict in

testimony over whether the senator was offered the presidency of a company promoting the building of a \$10 billion oil pipeline across Africa.

Reporting on the contents of 700 pages of private testimony from 22 people, the report said that "not one witness provided evidence of any corrupt behavior on the part of Sen. Mark O. Hatfield."

The report summarizes the testimony of key witnesses, including four former associates of Greek businessman Basil Tsakos. The witnesses testified they suspected that the payments to Antoinette Hatfield, a Washington real estate broker, were intended to influence her husband and win his support for a trans-African oil pipeline — a pet Tsakos project.

These witnesses also said they knew of no work performed by Hatfield for the Tsakoses

that was worthy of \$55,000 in payments.

But the report also includes testimony from associates of Hatfield, who said she did considerable work for the Tsakoses and deserved compensation.

The committee said that testimony and documents show that the relationship between Antoinette Hatfield and the Tsakoses began on a professional plane and continued that way, even though the two women developed a personal friendship.

"Documents and testimony indicate that Mrs. Hatfield did, in fact, perform real-estate related services for Mr. and Mrs. Tsakos in the period 1981-1984," the report said.

Both Tsakos and Hatfield were interviewed by Ethics Committee staff, and their statements provide at least one conflict.

Tsakos, according to the report, said he never discussed with Hatfield the prospect of the senator's becoming president of the businessman's Trans-Africa Pipeline Co. (TAPCO).

The company was formed to promote the building of a pipeline to carry Middle Eastern crude oil across sub-Saharan Africa from the Red Sea to the Atlantic Ocean, thus avoiding the troubled Persian Gulf.

The committee report quoted Tsakos as saying he would not have initiated such a discussion because it would have been "unseemly" to offer a U.S. Senator "a position of lesser status."

Other witnesses told the committee that they had heard Tsakos discuss such a possibility.

And Hatfield said that in 1983 when there was public speculation over whether he would seek re-election in 1984, Tsakos did offer him the presidency of the company.

"The senator testified that he responded to the offer by replying that if he decided not to run for re-election, he would instead return to university life," the report said.

Hatfield told the committee that his only interest in the pipeline concept was his belief that it would make a contribution to regional peace — and reduce U.S. military requirements — by reducing the necessity to ship Middle Eastern oil through the Persian Gulf and the vulnerable Strait of Hormuz.

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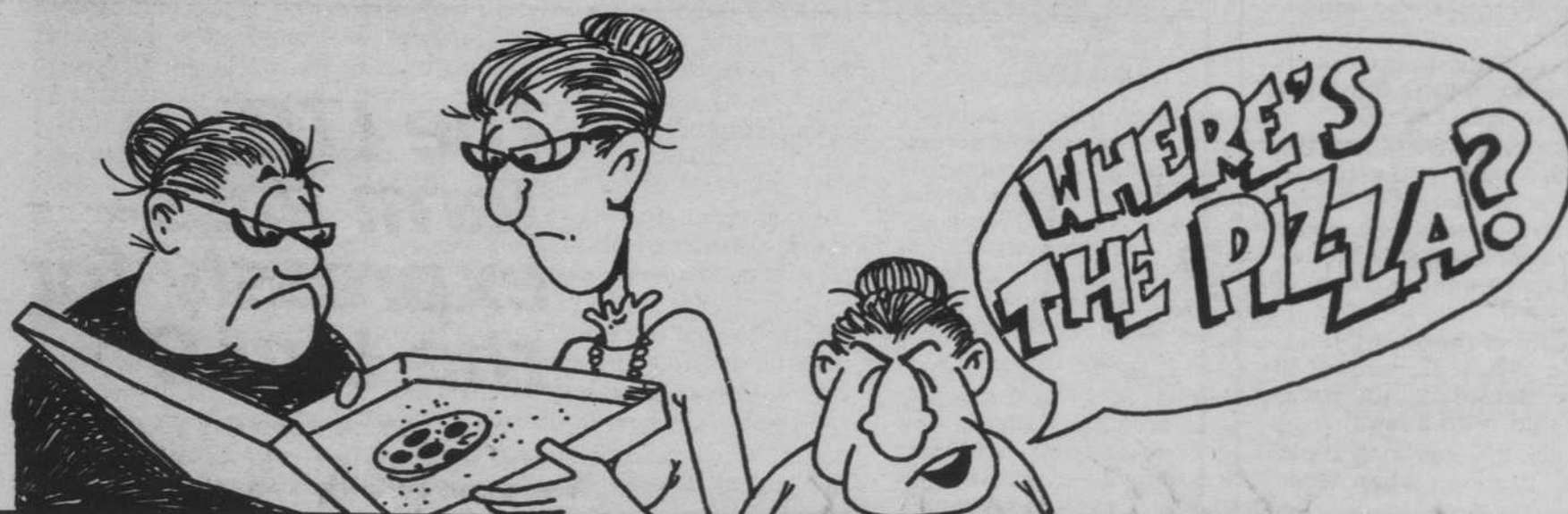
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