

other ways to intensify efforts at higher levels to change the minds of the Americans," he said.

American officials have repeatedly said that the U.S. was seeking direct negotiations between Israel and the concerned Arab states and have expressed no real enthusiasm for the conference idea as proposed by Jordan.

Mr. Masri noted that while the U.S. had not accepted the proposal in its form it had also not rejected it either. Washington "is not categorically rejecting the proposal but they (American offi-

cialists) made it clear that Jordan was seeking a "proper international conference" with the active participation of the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council and all parties involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Jordan cannot accept the American and Israeli ideas of turning the conference as a ceremonial function to launch direct talks between Israel and the concerned Arab states, said the foreign minister.

doubted PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat would agree to such a move. Reports from Tunis indicated that Fateh had agreed to annul the accord as part of an agreement it reached with several other PLO factions to convene a session of the Palestine National Council (PNC) in Algiers on April 20. PLO Executive Committee member Mohammad Milhem was recently quoted as saying the PNC was not expected to abrogate the Feb. 11 accord.

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Jordan seeks 'proper conference'

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Answering a question on statements attributed to Mr. Arafat that the PLO was willing to attend the proposed international conference as part of an Arab delegation, Mr. Masri said he did not believe it reflected the PLO's final position. "We hear different and conflicting statements from PLO officials every day, and I do not think any of these statements reflect the final stand of the PLO over the issue," he said.

On Egyptian efforts to "reconcile" Jordan and the PLO, Mr. Masri said the efforts did not produce any breakthrough but he added that the "Egyptians are now more sympathetic with our point of view."

On Jordan's efforts to bring about a more active Soviet involvement in efforts for Mideast peace, Mr. Masri said "we have confidence in the Soviet motives" to take an active interest in the region's issues and that Moscow was "now more flexible." He did not elaborate.

Replying to a question on the split within the Israeli government over the international conference idea, Mr. Masri said "both sides (the Labour Party led by Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and the Likud bloc headed by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir) will have to sit down and

reach an agreement or hold general elections."

On other issues in the region, Mr. Masri said Jordan supported the Feb. 22 deployment of Syrian troops to keep peace in west Beirut if it helped the war-torn Lebanon into security and stability. "We believe it is actually a good step especially if it will lead to restoring security and stability to all of Lebanon and to lifting the blockade of the Palestinian refugee camps" in Beirut and South Lebanon, Mr. Masri said.

Jordan has repeatedly called for an end to the siege of the camps laid by the Syrian-backed Shi'ite Amal militia. Mr. Masri said Monday that there was no change in the Jordanian stand.

The foreign minister said discussions between Amman and Damascus were continuing over the Lebanese political situation as well as efforts to convene the proposed international peace conference. He said both Jordan and Syria had been coordinating positions on several issues related to developments in the region and that he himself was in constant touch with his Syrian counterpart Farouk Al Sharaa.

Mr. Masri described Jordanian-Syrian relations as "very good" but said there was no development towards reconciliation between Syria and Iraq.

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