Israel Parliament Will Not Disband to Face Election

BY RICHARD HAMILTON

The Israeli Parliament on Sunday voted to end its own existence and go to early elections, a move that could bring the country closer to a political crisis.

The decision by the Israeli Parliament to dissolve itself was a response to a constitutional crisis that has paralysed the country for weeks. The move was a surprise, as most analysts expected the Parliament to remain in place until the end of the year.

The Parliament's decision was hailed by many as a positive step towards resolving the crisis. However, others have expressed concerns that the move could lead to further instability in the country.

Many analysts believe that the election will be a crucial test for the country, as it will determine whether the country can move on from the current crisis or whether it will continue to be mired in political turmoil.

The election is expected to be held within the next few weeks, and it will be closely watched by both domestic and international observers.

In other news, the United Nations has called for a ceasefire in the region, following a series of deadly clashes between Israeli troops and Palestinian protesters.

The UN has urged both sides to exercise restraint and work towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Meanwhile, the US has announced that it will be scaling back its military presence in the region, following a series of attacks on US military bases in Iraq.

The announcement has been met with mixed reactions, with some seeing it as a positive step towards reducing tensions in the region, while others have raised concerns about the potential impact on security in the area.
In Maya Ruins, Scholars See Evidence of Urban Sprawl

Outlying Districts Show Remnants of the Strip Malls of Antiquity

By JOHN NOBLE WILFORD

Long before there were places like Scarsdale and Scarsdale, Frank and Patsy Ann, the ancient Maya of Central America appear to have had cities with their own versions of suburbia. Archaeologists have uncovered what they say is a prime example of Maya suburbia in the ruins of Caracol in Belize. Excavations by Dr. Diane Z. Chase and Dr. Arley F. Chase, archaeologists at the University of Central Florida in Orlando, have revealed that beyond the grand palace at the core of Caracol, one of the largest Maya cities, lay crowded settlements of workshops and modest dwellings of poor construction. They likened this to the poor neighborhoods and industrial zones that surround the centers of modern cities.

The surprise came when the archaeologists investigated the land immediately beyond this and found evidence of Caracol's urban sprawl. Specialized structures were set among terraced fields and reservoirs. Here and there small markets and government buildings stood up on piles, built on open space, which the archaeologists contended were not unlike today's strip malls.

"Both the 'sprawling' and 'suburbanization' of modern society appears to be reflected within the Caracol Maya," the Chases report, "recently at a conference of anthropologists in Spain. "The similarities in growth patterns between ancient Maya and contemporary urban forms are striking and suggest that similar social stimuli may have been operating in the past.'"

The Chases, a husband-and-wife team, have spent 24 years studying the Caracol site. They had earlier challenged the conventional wisdom that the Maya had an incomprehensible simple social structure divided sharply between the rich and nobles on top and the multitude of poor working peasants. In the tombs and other ruins of Caracol.

Archaeologists have partially excavated this palace and temple complex in Caracol. They believe it was inhabited by members of the ruling elite.

Maya Suburbanites

Archaeologists believe that the Maya city Caracol grew outward in a pattern similar to contemporary cities since it appears to have had a network of roads connecting it to "villages" of suburbs.

OUTER RING Maya Suburbs

Independent suburban communities. Yax, K'axab, shown below, were englobed by Caracol and grew.

The complex at bottom of hill was the original center of rituals before Caracol's sprawl reached it. The larger structures were probably temples. Administrative buildings built after Caracol took control, probably including a marketplace. Closeway heading back to Caracol. Residential family units. Closeway leading back to Caracol. Large places surrounded by structures for administrative and economic purposes. Residential family units. Closeway leading back to Caracol. Communities like Punukul, shown below, were newly built on vacant land as Caracol sprawled outward. Residential family units. Closeway leading back to Caracol. Roads for heavy traffic.

they found evidence of a growing middle class in Maya cities.

The findings echoed another important trend in Maya society, which is that the Maya organized their cities so that the rich lived at the center and the poor on the outskirts. This tradition, now backed up by a new century-old hypothesis by D. B. Price, a Spanish historian.

Like other Maya specialists, Dr. Marcia and Diana Chacon have investigated the degree of settlement patterns in the Mayan city of Caracol were interesting and important—estimated to encompass an ever-expanding number of households beyond the city's central areas.

"For the first time, Maya archaeologists, we are interested in the downtowns," Dr. Marcia said. "We are not yet beginning to explore the periphery, and it's a new frontier, entered into.

Dr. Arthur Demarest, a Maya archaeologist at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, said that he tested in agreement with the Chacon's findings.

"Caracol's dispersed parts do appear to be more economically integrated than those in most Maya centers," he said.

Archaeological evidence shows that people lived at the Caracol site from about 100 B.C. through A.D. 900, a period that included the Maya civilization's collapse. The city reached its peak of power in the southern lowlands between A.D. 700 and 800, when its population was at least as large as 100,000. Only Teotihuacan and Tikal, in southern Mexico and Guatemala, are comparable to Caracol.

"Time passes slowly here, and the Chacans argued that the long-standing settlements into an integrated urban whole.

"These roads were built and maintained to give long travel in the rainy season. They were far traveled by foot, where being a horse or other beast of burden for non-Caribbean America. Some of the roads ended at plazas about a mile and a half from the center, as part of the main area of the city's central area. Archaeologists have found a number of residential buildings, including a few in the ancient urban core, but with a scale more appropriate for fast travel rather than wheeled carriage or armored travel," the Chacans concluded in their report.

"Other Maya cities, such as the next to the central area, and the next to the central area, and the most critical issue concerns the ways they were engaged in the planning of the city's central area. If their center lines were strong, this may have been an example of urbanization in a more or less modern sense. Otherwise, these were simply neighboring but probably independent communities.

Dr. Diana Chacon saw in this pattern of an ancient core that the modern phenomenon described by Jose Garza and his team in his book, "The Maya," an example of the way communities where people not only live in the shadow of a larger city but have also developed additional means of creating wealth and power outside the central city. These people build their own wealth, corporate and administrative infrastructure, becoming smaller entities.

"A Caracol's future will be set by the system of causeways, and their probably justifying their thinking of it in terms of suburbs," Dr. Demarest said.

In the past, archaeologists have mapped causeways leading out from the heart of several Mayan cities. They have usually been interpreted as roads leading from the central palaces and temples to existing urban centers.

"We tend to agree with the Chacans," Dr. Demarest said, "that the causeway system at Caracol was extensive, more than it was just for ritual purposes, and it was probably a multifunctional road system with a variety of uses and functions.

The social status of people living in different parts of the city was based on the size of residential buildings, the quality of stonework, the distribution of painted objects in the dress, the number of caves in the city, and use of some of those burned there.

The Chacans' research, which was published in the Journal of Field Archaeology, found that the causeway system at Caracol was extensive, more than it was just for ritual purposes, and it was probably a multifunctional road system with a variety of uses and functions.