

mysterious kidnappings — are aimed at sabotaging a growing movement for political talks to end the year-old civil war.

Jumblatt proposed the convening of a conference in Paris to resolve the conflict. All Lebanese parties — including the right-wing Falangists — have accepted the offer. Recent victories of the leftists and the Palestinians have so reduced the leverage of the right that the Falange and their allies are willing to seek a political solution. Falangist warlord Pierre Gemayel conceded in a speech that Lebanon “cannot be rebuilt on the confessional, feudal, and traditional foundation which led to the collapse of the old Lebanon” — a major concession to the left’s demands for political reforms.

The wave of terror now threatens to reverse this political progress and unleash a new round of heavy fighting. The transparent nature of the provocations was, however, apparent to all observers, and the wave of killing was condemned by all the key political forces. According to *An Nahar*, the leading Beirut daily, “there seems to be a group within Lebanon which is determined to blow up any peaceful settlement whenever it is in reach.” The assassinations are widely reported in Beirut to be the work of “foreign agents.”

Intense political pressure is now being applied on the Syrian regime which has been thoroughly discredited for its military intervention into Lebanon. thousands of Syrian troops are battling Palestinians and Lebanese leftists to support the defeated Christian right. The Soviets, Iraq, Algeria, and Libya have attempted to effect a reconciliation between Syria and the PLO, and to persuade Assad to withdraw his troops from Lebanon — but to no avail. Syria refused this week to allow PLO chairman Yasser Arafat to enter the country! A coup against Assad is now openly expected by pro-Iraqi forces and nationalist army officers.

The desperate Assad is increasingly drawn toward provoking a confrontation with Israel in order to use a military crisis to rally support for his crumbling regime. Yesterday, a pro-Syrian Lebanese newspaper predicted that Assad would move toward a showdown with Israel — a threat eagerly seized on by the *New York Times*, which reported that Syria “has now come to choose the path of all-out confrontation with Israel.”

Soviet Prime Minister Kosygin’s visit to Syria will thus be an effort to offer Assad a Middle East peace package. Should Assad refuse this offer — which will likely include monetary support from Libya and Iraq to replace a Saudi subsidy, and Syrian support for the Geneva conference — he will very likely be ousted.

CENTO Meet kicks Off Drive To Militarize Mideast’s Northern Tier

May 29 (IPS) — U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger warned the Soviet Union this week to desist from “disruptive conduct” in any part of the world — a clear allusion to the Soviet diplomatic leadership’s offensive in the Middle East. Kissinger made his cold war threat in a speech in London at a meeting of the foreign ministers of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), whose member countries are Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, the U.S., and Great Britain. In speech after speech, every foreign minister — except Pakistan’s —

echoed each other in denouncing the Soviet Union. Iranian Foreign Minister Khalitbari warned of “highly dangerous repercussions all over the world” as a result of the successful pro-Soviet revolution in Angola. British Foreign Minister Crosland was more explicit. Denouncing Soviet military strength, he demanded: “We have to be equal to the challenge.”

The CENTO meeting touched off a drive to militarize the Middle East’s “Northern Tier” — Greece, Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan — as the first step to breaking working class opposition to regional slave labor programs designed by the International Monetary Fund and the International Labor Organization. The push to transform these four countries — strategically situated along the southern flank of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union — into an anti-Soviet arsenal is also a flanking maneuver against the Soviet Union and its Middle East allies who are consolidating pro-socialist forces throughout the Mideast for an overall peace settlement to the Rockefeller-manipulated Arab-Israeli conflict. Faced with this major political defeat, Kissinger is now moving to retrench militarily along the Soviet Union’s southern border. A renewed Cyprus crisis is being eyed by Kissinger as a likely lever for getting the region — especially Greece and Turkey — to fully accept the “need” to militarize.

Turkey Turns “Islamic”

The focus of CENTO’s militarization drive is Turkey. Turkey is now being forced to abandon its progressive, pro-development outlook and adopt instead a new “Islamic identity.” Both the *New York Times* and the Egyptian weekly *Al-Ahram* this week heralded Turkey’s sudden “Islamic turn.” Weighed down by debt and with no loans or imports coming in from the west, Turkey is looking to the Arab world for cash. Luring Turkey on is the hope of credit from the heavily endowed Islamic Development Bank, formed last year to finance militarization and slave labor projects throughout the Middle East.

Rockefeller’s Saudi Arabian sheikhs have also expressed their willingness to bankroll the plans of the Shah of Iran to police the Persian Gulf and exterminate leftist opposition. This week the Shah announced that “Iran must be strong enough to ensure the security and stability of the region.” Saudi King Khaled, who just wound up a four-day visit to Iran to discuss “Gulf security,” has extended \$1.2 billion to Iran.

Schmidt on the Scene

West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt has been dispatched by Kissinger to the Region to peddle the militarization line. Schmidt arrived May 27 in Ankara to work out the details of joint German-Turkish armaments industry in Turkey, financed by Iran and possibly Saudi Arabia, the next stop on Schmidt’s trip.

In Turkey, Schmidt also posed as the new mediator of the long-standing NATO-provoked Cyprus dispute. Bearing what he called the “German formula” for Cyprus, Schmidt was readily denounced by Cyprus President Archbishop Makarios for pushing a “NATO-EEC solution” — partition of the island, a “solution” sure to trigger another crisis between Turkey and Greece and increased militarization of both countries. This week’s *Manchester Guardian* warned that “time is running out on Cyprus” and that the longer the present situation in Cyprus is allowed to develop the more dangerous it becomes,” opening the way for either partition or “further territorial advances by the Turks until they occupy the whole island.”